

# Indigenous narratives about suicide in Alto Rio Negro, Brazil: weaving meanings<sup>1</sup>

Narrativas indígenas sobre suicídio no Alto Rio Negro, Brasil: tecendo sentidos

**Maximiliano Loiola Ponte de Souza**

Fundação Oswaldo Cruz. Instituto Leônidas e Maria Deane.  
Manaus, AM, Brazil.

E-mail: maxkaelu@hotmail.com

## Resumo

Higher suicide mortality rates are recurrently found among indigenous in comparison with surrounding populations, including in São Gabriel da Cachoeira, in the state of Amazonas, the Brazilian city with the highest percentage of self-declared indigenous people. To understand how suicide is represented in specific indigenous contexts is a qualitative and relevant dimension, but poorly explored. The aim of this study was to analyze seven narratives about suicide of a kumu (traditional healer) from the most populous indigenous community of São Gabriel da Cachoeira. In the analytical and interpretative process, we attempted to make the practice of double hermeneutic, interpret the interpretation of the narrator, seeking support on the classical and contemporary ethnographic literature, theories about the construction of the person and of kinship in the Amerindian context. The analysis of the narratives allowed reconstructing suicide as a phenomenon associated with conflicts deeply inserted in socio-cultural and historical aspects of the indigenous populations of that region, which refer to intergenerational tensions, gender and kinship. The management of these conflicts seems to be compromised, since traditional strategies appear to lose their symbolic effectiveness, and other appropriate alternatives were not found to replace them. Alcohol use, although an important element in the understanding of suicide, should not be taken as the central explicative element, but above all as a catalyst of these conflicts.

**Keywords:** Suicide; Indigenous Population; Narratives; Transcultural Psychiatry.

## Correspondence

Fundação Oswaldo Cruz. Instituto Leônidas e Maria Deane. Rua Teresina, n 476, Adrianópolis. Manaus, AM, Brasil. CEP: 69057-070.

<sup>1</sup> This study is linked to the project Saúde e Condições de Vida de Povos Indígenas na Amazônia (Health and Life Conditions of Indigenous People in the Amazon) PRONEX/FAPEAM/CNPq, and was financially supported by the Instituto Brasil Plural (IBP).

## Abstract

Taxas de mortalidade por suicídio mais elevadas são recorrentemente encontradas em indígenas quando comparadas a populações circunvizinhas, inclusive em São Gabriel da Cachoeira, Amazonas, município brasileiro com maior percentual de autodeclarados indígenas. Entender como o suicídio é representado em contextos indígenas específicos é uma dimensão qualitativa, pouco explorada e relevante. O objetivo deste artigo foi analisar sete narrativas sobre suicídio de um kumu (curandeiro tradicional) da mais populosa comunidade indígena de São Gabriel da Cachoeira. No processo analítico-interpretativo realizou-se uma dupla hermenêutica, ou seja, interpretar a interpretação do narrador, buscando apoio na literatura etnográfica clássica e contemporânea, nas teorias sobre o processo de construção da pessoa e do parentesco no contexto ameríndio. A análise das narrativas permitiu reconstruir o suicídio como um fenômeno associado a conflitos que se ancoram profundamente em aspectos socioculturais e históricos dos povos indígenas daquela região, que remetem a tensões intergeracionais, de gênero e no campo do parentesco. O gerenciamento desses conflitos parece estar comprometido, já que estratégias tradicionais parecem perder a eficácia simbólica e outras não foram adequadamente encontradas para substituí-las. O consumo de álcool, embora seja um elemento importante para compreensão do suicídio, não deveria ser tomado como elemento explicativo central, mas, sobretudo como um catalisador desses conflitos.

**Keywords:** Suicídio; Populações Indígenas; Narrativas; Psiquiatria Transcultural.

## Introduction

High rates of mortality by suicide are recurrently found in indigenous populations when compared to surrounding populations (Kirmayer et al., 1996; Silvikien et al., 2006; Oslon; Wahab, 2006), including in Brazil (Souza; Orellana, 2012a). In the municipality with highest percentage of self-declared indigenous people (over 75%), São Gabriel da Cachoeira, located at the Alto Rio Negro region, in the state of Amazonas, a mortality rate for suicide in indigenous people of 41.9/100,000 was observed, a number 20 times higher than that observed among non-indigenous people. The highest rates were observed among young males (Souza; Orellana, 2012b).

Indigenous peoples from the Alto Rio Negro region, similarly to other native peoples, were and still are victims of violence, had their lands invaded, their culture underestimated and their worlds transformed radically (Andrello, 2006; Lasmar, 2006). Here we agree with the understanding of various authors who point out that to understand the high rates of mortality by suicide in native groups it is necessary to consider the impact of these transformations on their symbolic universes (Kirmayer et al., 1996; Silvikien et al., 2006). It is necessary to understand that this is a complex sociocultural phenomenon that cannot be simply reduced to a psychiatric issue or mental health issue. On the other hand, it is important to note that the indigenous peoples who live with this phenomenon need to seek collective strategies to understand it, according to their own symbolic systems, which are also being transformed dynamically.

Understanding how suicide is represented in specific indigenous contexts is a qualitative dimension, little explored, and relevant, as it allows inferring how the phenomenon is explained locally, and on which cultural bases this explanation is constructed. These issues, in addition to undeniable academic interest, are important starting points for the construction of less ethnocentric strategies to deal with the issue.

Qualitative studies that use narratives of people related to suicides have been increasingly carried out (Hoifodt et al., 2007; Owens et al., 2008; Owens;

Lambert, 2012). In these studies, the interviewees talk about the specific suicide of people to whom they were related. However, they usually do not speak about suicide as a broader social phenomenon that occurs in the society in which they live.

In the Alto Rio Negro context, there are Indigenous people, generally older people, whose reputation comes from their deep knowledge of the myths, the *kumus* (Buchillet, 2004). Their knowledge can be used both for beneficial purposes (healing rituals) and evil purposes (shamanic aggressions). People with these attributes are important key informants to understand the phenomena related to the process that includes health, disease and death, and also suicide, as they are representatives of the native knowledge, based on tradition and on the daily practice of dealing with people who come to them seeking aid to the problems that afflict them (Reichel-Dalmatoff, 1986). Thus, the objective of this article was to analyze the narratives about suicide told by a *kumu* of the largest community of indigenous people in the municipality of São Gabriel da Cachoeira, Iauaretê, which has recently undergone important sociocultural transformations related to the contact with the non-indigenous Brazilian society, seeking to understand the sociocultural bases on which they are founded.

## The narrator and his narratives

Since 2002, I conduct research in the Alto Rio Negro region (Souza; Garnelo, 2007; Souza, 2009; Souza et al., 2010; Souza et al., 2011; Souza, 2011). I also participate in the training of local human resources and in the supervision of health professionals working in the region. These activities, which demand my staying in the region for periods ranging from a few days to almost a year, have allowed me, over the years, to establish relationships with different social actors.

One of these actors is a native, a 75 years-old *kumu*. My relationship with him goes back to the time of the fieldwork of my PhD research, in 2006-2007 (Souza, 2009). Whenever I return to Iauaretê I talk at length with him and, in 2012, when I was teaching a training course for indigenous health

agents, I informed him I was starting to research the issue of suicide among indigenous people in São Gabriel da Cachoeira. Upon receiving this information, he spoke for more than 3 hours, and also narrated a series of seven narratives related to the theme of suicide. These are the narratives that will be analyzed in this article.

Importantly, in theoretical terms, narratives should be understood as symbolic expressions that explain and instruct on how to understand what happens, being, therefore, part of the strategies used for the construction of meaning in relation to the events that are experienced. When people tell stories, they also express their worldviews, conflicts, and how these interconnect with the event they are narrating (Langdon, 1994). The narrative process must be understood within its dynamic character, because through it past events are narrated in a manner congruent with their current comprehension; the present is explained having the reconstructed past as reference, and both are used to generate expectations about the future (Garro, 1994). Additionally, it is important to emphasize that the narratives must not be conceived only as a single product, because, in their construction, the narrator employs the cultural principles and logic of a particular group (Good, 1995).

The starting point for analysis of the narratives was a set of questions adapted from the proposal of Gomes and Mendonça (2002): a) in which temporal context did they occur?; b) who were the characters?; c) which were the events mentioned in the narrative?; d) what are the implicit conflicts?

In the analytical and interpretive process, we essentially sought to apply the double hermeneutics (Giddens, 1978): to interpret the interpretation of the narrator. With this objective in mind, we sought to base it mainly on the classic ethnographic literature on the Alto Rio Negro region (Hugh-Jones, 1979; Jackson, 1983; Chernela, 1983; Reichel-Dalmatoff, 1986) and also on the contemporary literature on the subject (Buchillet, 2004; Andreello, 2006; Lasmara, 2006, Souza; Garnelo, 2007; Souza, 2009; Souza et al., 2010; Souza et al., 2011; Souza, 2011), on the theories about the process of construction of the self (Seeger et al., 1987) and of kinship in the Amerindian context (Castro, 2002), summarized below.

## Analytical bases

### Alto Rio Negro ethnographic summary

In São Gabriel da Cachoeira there are approximately 30 thousand indigenous people (IBGE, 2012), of over 20 ethnic groups, spread from the central part of the municipality to the hundreds of communities of varying sizes, scattered along the rivers. Locally, they adopt linguistic exogamy (marriage between people of different ethnic groups and speaking different languages), with patrilineal descent. The preferred marriage is between cross-cousins, who ideally exchange sisters (Jackson, 1983). These exchanges promote, in addition to marriages, political alliances between different ethnic groups. In each place of settlement - given the rules of patrilineal descent and patrilocal residence after marriage - lived men (and their unmarried sons and daughters) of a same ethnic group and their wives from other groups (Chernela, 1983).

The indigenous people of the region have been in contact with the Brazilian society for over three centuries (Wright, 2005). Catholic missionaries have been in the region since the early days of contact. From the 1920s, mission centers were established to deploy a project for civilizing and teaching catechesis, having as one of the strategies the installation of boarding schools, depriving young people of initiation rituals that marked the passage from childhood to adulthood (Andrello, 2006).

At Iauaretê, in the Brazil-Colombia border, one of these centers was installed (Andrello, 2006). Currently, there are more than three thousand indigenous people from different ethnic groups. Its populational growth is credited to the deactivation, in 1986, of the boarding school that existed there, motivating the migration of entire families with the purpose of giving continuity to the education of their children (Andrello, 2006). The indigenous leaders have important concerns regarding local youth, especially because of their involvement in events of interpersonal violence (Souza et al., 2011; Souza, 2011; Souza et al., 2010),

as well as with suicide, which mainly occurs in situations of consumption of alcoholic beverages.

In the context of the region, misfortune, including disease and death, would be represented usually as something sent from outside that affects someone. In *dessano*, one of the languages spoken in Rio Negro, the term that “means disease is *doreri* derived from the verb *dore* [...] [whose] main senses [are]: ‘send’, ‘submit’, ‘order’” (Buchillet, 1988, p. 29). Pereira (2013) described the strong association that his indigenous interviewees that live at the central part of São Gabriel da Cachoeira made between suicide and “damage” or “spell”, terms used to refer to shamanic enchantment, in Portuguese. Thus, the translation of the biomedical concept of suicide for that context becomes even more complex and difficult, since suicide is locally represented as a result of a third-party action, and not of the suicidal person (Souza; Ferreira, 2014).

### Construction of self

Seeger et al. (1987) defend the thesis that in South American lowlands the process of constructing the indigenous self has the bodies as vehicles, which, by being culturally manipulated, produce social beings. In line with this view, the passage from childhood to adulthood in many indigenous contexts usually or used to be mediated by initiation rituals, that generally focus on the body of the initiatee (Clastres, 1974; Turner, 1977).

Through these rituals, society would print “its brand on the body of the young man” (Clastres, 1974, p. 128). The ritual would be the means by which society “branded” the body of the young man with its law. In the Alto Rio Negro region, the male initiation rites are related to the complex mythical-ritual *Jurupari* and to the worship of sacred flutes (Reichel-Dalmatoff, 1986). When the voice of the children began to change, they were separated from their family group. During this separation, the initiatees were extensively briefed by older men about the myths and cultural rules of their group. During the ritual, the young man was presented to the sacred flutes and had his body painted and ornamented with the body ornaments of his group. Finally, the

young men participated for the first time in the ritual, collective flogging, in which all men would participate over their lifetime (Hugh-Jones, 1979).

The initiatee, the one who is in the process of initiation, but who has not yet concluded it and nor had his body properly transformed, is in a liminal phase (Turner, 1977), escaping the sociological classifications, being marked by ambiguity, vulnerability to disease, and to the attacks of beings from another world (Reichel-Dalmatoff, 1986). The purpose of the ritual would be to refer him to a defined and whole status, making them equal to the other members of the group.

Thus, to think how the representations about suicide are constructed and their particular correlation with the youth in Iauaretê, we took into consideration the structural importance of the initiation rites and the need for symbolic and practical reorganization with their disuse.

### **Construction of kinship**

Castro proposes that in the Amerindian context the first relation is that of difference, of otherness and exteriority, which is associated with the innate dangerousness, which needs to be domesticated somehow. In the symbolic logic of kinship, this is a relationship of affinity, which, in turn, “takes the place of the given in the cosmic relational matrix” (2002, p. 406).

The consanguinity, that is, the kinship and commonality, must be understood, in that context, as the result of human action, belonging, therefore, to the “sphere of the constructed” (Castro, 2002, p. 406). The establishment of real relations of affinity (marriages, for example) contributes in the sense of extracting the difference from the common aspects, making them consanguine, favoring the coexistence in the local and routine context. However, this process is always partial and unfinished. Affinity and the associated risks can emerge at any time, but especially in times of crisis. According to Castro (2002), the common aspects are “in different manners, the line of fracture of the local group” (p. 426, emphasis added by me).

According to this theory, the opposition between consanguinity (kinship, commonality, “we”) and

affinity (difference, otherness, “other”) occurs concentrically. In the center of the social field are the consanguine ones, in the periphery, the kin, and, outside, the enemies. At local level, in everyday relationships, the cognate kin (those whom in fact they married) and coresidents are attracted to the pole of consanguinity by eating rituals and exchange of bodily fluids. On the periphery and outside the relational field, the distant consanguine ones and the other kin are included by affinity, by difference and become “others”.

In the specific context in which the narratives were produced, it is often heard that the suicides are almost invariably preceded by banal conflicts. The idea that is pursued here is to seek a sense for the supposed banality of these conflicts, exploring possible cracks and fractures in the field of kinship as an important factor to comprehend the meanings attributed to suicide locally.

Thus, in this text we use two distinct, though complementary, analytical keys to understand suicide narratives: the processes of construction of self and of kinship. Such choice, on the one hand, distances this approach from the traditional psychiatric approaches relating suicide to mental disorders and, on the other hand, enables us to deal with suicide based on categories structuring the indigenous sociocultural universe. It is a fact, however, that this theoretical choice may not be sufficient for a totalizing approach to the matter, which is not the purpose of this text.

## **Presentation of the narratives**

### **1<sup>st</sup> Narrative**

By the igarapé of Inhambu area, there was a young man who lived with his father and stepmother. She sometimes saved and sometimes did not save food for him, and constantly complained: “You eat so much!”. After much suffering, the young one took a rope and tied around his neck. After a week, the stepmother noted that an agouti always appeared to eat the remains of cassava that she threw away after preparing the flour. It was the young man who had transformed into the agouti and, without anyone

knowing, never left the place, he was always there eating. One day she told about the agouti to people in her community who took a shotgun and shot the agouti/man. One night, the young man appeared to the father in a dream and said: “Daddy, it was no agouti, it was me”. Then the father awoke, and was thinking: “Gosh ... my son turned into an agouti...”. The other day, the stepmother told him: “You know that agouti that was eating the cassava dough? Now it is gone. It is no longer here”. The father then said: “It was my son! He died hung just because of you. You mistreated him much, scrooged food ... and he died just because of you. He received the lead bullet only because of you”. So the woman got sad. Every time she talked to other women, she said: “I didn’t think it would happen like that with my stepson. My mother told me that the young man should eat little and not too much. And it was because of this advice I told him: ‘Eat little’ [in a lovingly tone]. But I lost my husband’s child. Do you see! Take good care of your children”.

## **2<sup>nd</sup> Narrative**

My grandfather, who was from the time of the longhouses, used to tell me that suicide occurred when women were pregnant without getting married and the brothers did not treat them well. These women drank timbó (root extract). When they drank caxiri (traditional fermented alcoholic beverage), the brothers were encouraged and said to the sisters rudely: “You’re not doing things the right way!”. Sometimes even beat the sisters. There they were sad and drank timbó. According to my grandfather, there was a belief that a woman who got pregnant without having married was a sign that the father or the mother of the girl would die. They believed it. So suicides hardly occurred. (The belief would inhibit pregnancy not permitted by parents, as that could cause their deaths. If this pregnancy was less common, conflicts with brothers would not be usual, which would make this kind of suicide unusual.) And then the priests arrived and began to dominate the region. They travelled across the communities and explained about things, about what was true and what wasn’t.

## **3<sup>rd</sup> Narrative**

Here in Iauaretê began the suicide with “medicinal plants”. See the case of the teacher. He had a friend (lover), a woman who used bará (aphrodisiac herb). So, in the parties of caxiri, he always stayed with her. This woman’s husband did not bother her, and his wife was angry every time this happened. Then, after a year, his wife hanged herself.

## **4<sup>th</sup> Narrative**

After a year, a young son of a resident of the village of São Miguel hanged himself. It occurs that there are some parents who want their children to do their will. They tell their child: “Don’t leave!”, “Stay here!”, “Don’t go to the parties!”. They treat the children like beasts! In the case of this one who committed suicide, his father told him these things, but the son always went out to the party, to be playing, even his father having forbidden. When the father saw that he had disobeyed and went to the party, he wanted to beat his son. The son ran, ran. And the father ran behind him... When he realized he wasn’t going to get away, he threw himself into the river, swam and went to the port of another community. There he took the rope and hanged himself.

## **5<sup>th</sup> Narrative**

Then there was a young woman in another community who hanged herself because of a boy. Her father didn’t want to give her away in marriage to the boy she was dating. Then she became sad and hanged herself.

## **6<sup>th</sup> Narrative**

Also, there was the son of a man. It was also because of alcoholic beverages. He kept drinking, drinking... and here each community has a certain time of the evening to complete the festivities, around 9 or 10 p.m. But he just came back around 2 a.m. Then the father didn’t like, scolded and the son was sad... (the narrator, by gestures, indicates that the young man hanged himself).

## 7<sup>th</sup> Narrative

And there are many young people who were saved (that is, that did not die by suicide). It happened in various places. It seems that there's a spirit that comes out of the Pato community. They say it's a kind of ghost that approaches the young people with a rope. It grabs the rope and ties around the neck of the young one. It appears at night. Then, the young people pass out. Before, I thought it was a damage (a shamanic spell), but it's not. There was also the son of F. He and his friends drank caxiri that day. Around 6 p.m. he went there to the capoeira to relieve himself. While he was there three young spirits appeared and came near him. Then he lost his senses. They wanted to tie the rope around his neck, but he was holding. Screaming was not an option, he could not do it. Around half past seven, the father went looking for him. Meanwhile, the son of F. was grappling with those young spirits, fighting to withstand the pressure of the rope. With the arrival of the father, the spirits went away, and the son told what had happened to him. One of the young spirits was our acquaintance, our kin from Piraquara. He was a young man who had hung himself. And there were two others. They had already died! They were friends of F's son.

## Weaving meanings

### Time-spaces

The informant presented, sequentially, a set of seven narratives of varying sizes and complexity, which could be separated into three groups, according to the time-space in which they occurred.

In the first narrative, men interacted in a liminal and fantastic world, in which one died several times, people turned into animals, and these are endowed with a certain humanity. This narrative is a kind of "myth-narrative" (Hill, 1998), which differs from the classical myths because the characters are not ancestors of humanity, but the very men who live in a world similar to that found in the myths.

The second narrative is set in an era in which indigenous peoples lived in large longhouses, the

time of the 70 years-old narrator's grandparents memories, which is also associated to the time of intensification of contact with the non-native, mainly through Catholic missionaries. Here, we call this time "ancient".

The other five narratives take place nowadays. The characters are contemporary, acquaintances, neighbors and even relatives of the narrator. Currently, there would be a greater variety of conflicting situations related to suicide, including old dramas (2<sup>nd</sup> narrative) being staged in new contexts (5<sup>th</sup> narrative). There would even be, in the representational field, a trend of increase in the number of suicides in this space of time, as there was the presentation of five narratives, while in the previous only one was observed for each. There is also greater diversity of people who killed themselves (young people of both sexes, married people), when compared to the other times.

Being found in different time-spaces, suicide is represented as a possible path to be used by certain people, under certain conditions, to deal with tensions and conflicts, which in one way or another have always existed. Thus, the seven narratives presented turn out to compose a single metanarrative that seeks to describe the evolution of suicide across different time-spaces.

The indigenous discourse that presents the past as a near-perfect time, as opposed to a present in which life is more difficult is often observed in the literature. In times past, pajés (shamans) were more powerful, the older were wiser, young people were stronger, people were healthier, work was less heavy, etc. We also observed indigenous discourses that argue that certain social roles, concepts or institutions, considered as having been introduced in their society by non-indigenous people, such as teacher, civilization, religion, school, would have always existed in the indigenous culture, although slightly different (Andrello, 2006; Lasmar, 2006).

Both discourses seem to be culturally developed strategies, on the one hand, to demarcate the precariousness of contemporary living conditions of indigenous peoples and, on the other hand, to create a sense of cultural continuity in the face of disruptions associated with the historical ethnocide

of which they were victims. Suicide, therefore, is represented in that same discursive framework; it would be something that has always existed, and at the same time it would also be a dynamic phenomenon, changing, in this case, becoming more complex and severe in today's context.

## Liminality and coercion

In six narratives, people who died (or almost died, 7<sup>th</sup> narrative) were young and single. In the contemporary context of Iauaretê, the category youth is associated with different representations. One of them is being a stage of life related to disobedience (Souza et al., 2011).

The relation between youth and disobedience is found in the myth of Jurupari. In this myth, the initiatees were constantly disobedient with Jurupari himself, a demiurge, responsible, in the mythical times, for the initiation of young males. This representation of youth is symbolically linked to disobedience and, therefore to the role of initiatee, i.e., someone who is in a moment of life in which it is necessary to assimilate the rules of the group, but would have a tendency to disobey them (Souza et al., 2011). The initiation rituals, the ritualized advice, and the learning mediated by example are considered the main traditional strategies for introjection of group norms and values in this context (Jackson, 1983; Reichel-Dalmatoff, 1986; Chernela, 1983).

In the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> narratives we have, on one side, suicidal young people who were disobedient, and, on the other, their parents or siblings, who rebuked them, seeking to discipline their behavior. In the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> narratives, the disobedience of the suicidal young females was related to sexual/emotional involvement with people not permitted by their families. In the second narrative, we have clearly the hostile treatment and even aggression on young women by their brothers. In the fifth narrative, even in the absence of explicit aggressiveness, the refusal of the father to allow the relationship was enough to sadden the young woman, who kills herself.

In the 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> narratives, the suicidal young males, did not obey the rules related to alcohol con-

sumption and participation in parties. Importantly, here we deal with the challenges of regulating juvenile alcohol consumption based on traditional sociocultural rules in the contemporary context. However, the aim is not to seek associations between biomedical pathologies related to alcohol consumption and suicide, as will be evident in this and in the following sections.

In the 4<sup>th</sup> narrative, we have an authoritarian father that attempts to impose his will on his son, chasing him to beat him because of a disobedience. Cornered and about to be publicly attacked, the young man commits suicide. In the 6<sup>th</sup> narrative, we have a different father, since the rules to be followed are not only his, but collective, of the community itself. Seeing that these rules were not obeyed, he "scolds" his son, who does not run away, but gets sad and kills himself.

The concern with the sexual behavior of daughters and sisters is something well described in the ethnographic literature of the region (Lasmar, 2006). Among other reasons, it is based on the fact that, locally, exogamic marriages are ideally carried out through exchanges of women between distinct groups (Jackson, 1983). For a young bachelor, a potential partner would be the sister of his brother-in-law. If the marriage of a young man does not abide by this logic, it can affect both the future marriage of his brothers and the political alliances of his parents, uncles and grandparents. It is also noteworthy that in Iauaretê, as well as in the central part of the municipality of São Gabriel da Cachoeira and in other former missionary centers, nowadays, different ethnic groups coexist (Andrello, 2006). At least in theory, such situation increases the probability of conflicts of this nature, as in these sites there are not only young people of the same ethnic group living together, whose relationship is forbidden by the rules of linguistic exogamy, but also young people of different groups, without cultural restrictions for interpersonal involvement.

On the other hand, the literature shows that the consumption of traditional alcoholic beverages of higher alcohol content would only begin after undergoing the initiation rituals (Reichel-Dalmatoff,



1986; Hugh-Jones, 1979). Contemporary data point to an earlier alcohol consumption, particularly among young males, and major difficulties of the older to discipline alcohol use by them (Souza et al., 2010). In addition, alcohol would be closely related, although in a complex way, to interpersonal violence (Souza, 2011). Adults complain that young people are disobedient, and young people say they do what they see their parents doing, that is, they would be following their example when it comes to drinking. In addition, the data in the literature indicate that young people resent the fact that the fatherly advice does not get in their heads, because, unlike in the past, they are not given using “cigar smoke”, referring to the advising held erstwhile, in a more ritualized context (Souza; Garnelo, 2007).

We can also observe, through the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> narratives, that, even in the absence of violent coercive means for disciplining the behavior of young people, they committed a violence against their own lives. According to the classic ethnographies of the Alto Rio Negro region, to say what someone should do, ordering or demanding, would be something inappropriate and offensive, particularly in the case of an adult (Jackson, 1983; Reichel-Dalmatoff, 1986; Hugh-Jones, 1979). The contemporary indigenous young person, in the absence of initiation rituals, has an ambiguous social status, being sometimes represented as an adult, sometimes as a child (Souza et al., 2011). Feeling as an adult and being treated in an inappropriate manner even for a child, dissatisfaction seems inevitable. Discomfort would not be related only to what is explicitly ordered, nor what is imposed, but to the very denial of his or her status as a full person. In cases in which there was no explicit violence, as in the 4<sup>th</sup> narrative, the father treated the son “as a beast”, symbolically excluding him, therefore, from the field of kinship, and denying his own humanity. This analytical perspective offers a possible interpretation for the deep juvenile sensitivity and to the strategies to discipline their behavior presented in the narratives, by violent methods or not, and their relation to suicide.

Finally, the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> narratives deal not only with the relation between suicide and disobedience. They deal, especially, with conflicts

involving the attempt to discipline the behavior of young people, which takes place in a context in which the strategies considered as traditional for the introjection of rules and values (initiation rites, ritual advising, examples) would not have been fully used. In an alternative way, they use coercive methods, violent or not, to discipline the deviant behavior of young people, who seem to understand their use as an act of denial of their own condition of full human person.

### The “others” and predation

In the 1<sup>st</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> narratives, the suicidal young people are apparently exempt from any responsibility for their deaths. Suicide would be related to hostile contact of young people with “others”, who would be outside their circle of kinship.

The stepmother, the young man and his father, characters in the first narrative, are coresidents. With the young man’s father, the stepmother establishes sexual relations (exchange fluids), being drawn to the field of consanguinity. On the other hand, she limits the food given to the young man, not establishing a relationship properly mediated by the eating ritual, thus remaining as a different, a non-relative. In the 7<sup>th</sup> narrative, one of the spirits would even be, in life, a “relative” of the young character of the narrative. However, in dieing by suicide and leaving this world, there would be a sort of dissolution of kinship and subsequent adoption by the spirit of a predatory behavior, typical of the non-relative enemies (Castro, 2002).

Importantly, another representation associated with the youth in Iauaretê is the idea that it would be a phase of life in which a privileged relationship with the otherness is established (Souza et al., 2011). In the myths, young people meet the wātî, dangerous forest creatures (Galvão; Galvão, 2004), and in the narratives about contact, they are the first to see the whites (Andrello, 2006). This representation seems to be founded on the symbolic association between the young unmarried initiated and the warrior, since both had in common the fact of being directed to the outer limits of their kinship group. After initiation, the young man starts to seek marriage partners in

other groups and could be recruited for war raids against enemies. In the current daily life in Iauaretê, the young men compete in sports championships and for the preference of young women, as well as being recruited as “bouncers” for parties, establishing the first contact with the “others” from outside.

It is understood, therefore, that this attribute of youth being a phase of life focused on contact with the “other” would be another factor to contribute to the juvenile vulnerability to suicide, given the innate dangerousness of the “other”, be it a fairly consanguine kin or explicit enemies. This vulnerability expands since it is understood that nowadays young people would not follow certain ritual procedures of protection against situations of contact with otherness, be it because of their already known disobedience, or because they have not learned, with their parents or grandparents (Pereira, 2013).

Another common aspect observed in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> narratives is that even after the suicide, young people maintain a certain type of existence. The young man of the first narrative transmutes into an agouti, and, in the 7<sup>th</sup> narrative, young suicides assume the role of predating spirits. In both cases, the suicides, though dead, continue to interact in a hostile manner with people that are alive: whether in the form of agouti, disturbing the daily life of the stepmother, or as spirits who prey on the young. Given this scenario, a circle of new effective deaths is established, as in the case of the second death of the young man/agouti, or not, as in the attempt to tie a rope to the neck of the young man in the 7<sup>th</sup> narrative. This circularity in which deaths by suicide - particularly among young people - lead to more suicides is found in different indigenous contexts (Kirmayer et al., 1996).

This mechanism appears to be part of a process of construction of a culturally sanctioned meaning for the phenomenon of suicides in series, between related people. This phenomenon is usually designated in the literature as “suicide by contagion” (CDC, 1994). This academic designation reflects a comprehension of the phenomenon, founded on explanatory models based on the field of biomedicine, in which germs would spread between hosts who establish contact. This model is distinct from

the indigenous one, which is constructed from other issues, such as weaknesses in the process of constructing kinship and predation of the living by the dead. It is also noteworthy that biomedical understanding of “suicide by contagion” finds no echo, including in popular urban interpretative models about suicide (Owens et al., 2008; Owens; Lambert, 2012).

### **The female dangerousness**

In the third narrative, there is the only case in which the person who commits suicide is not young, but a married woman. In this narrative, it is implied the accountability of female characters by the suicide described. On one side, there is a suicide that is liable for her death since, unlike the “betrayed” husband, she adopts a possessive attitude, wanting to retain her partner exclusively for herself. On the other side, there is the lover of the husband of the suicidal woman. She, when using aphrodisiacs, would employ, in a moment of male weakness (drunkenness), an unfair strategy of seduction.

In this narrative, suicide would not have occurred if one woman had not used aphrodisiacs, or if the other one accepted her husband’s extramarital relationship, as the cheated husband had accepted. It is implicitly suggested that these women acted so as to corrupt the peace and harmony of the male universe, either by lust or possessiveness.

The issue of female accusation of lack of generosity and its relation to suicide can also be found in the first narrative. This theme appears explicitly in the fact that the stepmother scrooges food for the stepson. In the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> narratives, a kind of lack of female solidarity with issues of the male universe can also be found, since young people wished to establish affective/sexual relationships with no concern regarding any problems that would be posed to brothers and parents.

In exogamic, patrilocal and patrilineal societies, as in the Alto Rio Negro one, women are often represented as having a certain degree of dangerousness. In these societies, the daughter will leave the group and generate children for others. For the group of her husband, she will be a foreigner.

In everyday relationships, she will be drawn to the pole of the consanguine. Despite this process, “in a conflict situation, [her] loyalty to the community of her husband is more readily held under suspicion and the guilt by fissions will tend to focus on her” (Lasmar, 2006, p. 103). The woman as a symbol of alterity represents the opposite of the idealized self-image of the brothers group, who linked by bonds of kinship see each other as being committed to cooperation and harmony.

Therefore, in the third narrative one more important element is observed in the representation of suicide in this particular context. This element is grounded on the peculiar the relations between genders are established, and how these relate to the system of kinship, which is even more complex in the contemporary world in transformation.

### **Alcohol, previous conflicts and impotence**

In all narratives, except for the 7<sup>th</sup>, there is the existence of a prior conflict involving the suicidal person and some other character: frugality with food by stepmother (1<sup>st</sup>), juvenile disobedience (2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>), tensions between people involved in a love triangle (3<sup>rd</sup>). In almost all the narratives, the conflict was made explicit more poignantly during the consumption of alcoholic beverages (2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>). In the 7<sup>th</sup> narrative, although there is not a conflict clearly made explicit, the near-death occurs in a context also associated to the use of alcohol.

Studies point to the association between alcohol consumption and suicide in indigenous populations (Calabria et al., 2010), including in São Gabriel da Cachoeira (Souza; Orellana, 2013; Orellana et al., 2013; Pereira, 2013). Previous studies conducted in indigenous communities located in this municipality point the situations in which alcohol is consumed as propitious moments to bring up conflicts that are eclipsed in everyday life. On these occasions, relations strained by conflicts can be restored and friendships rekindled, as well as enmities, fissions and disputes can be made explicit, also violently (Souza; Garnelo, 2007).

Similarly, the narratives bring the idea that the suicides occurred at the moment previous conflicts

were made explicit under mediation by alcohol consumption. Thus, taking alcohol as explanatory variable in isolation disregards the complex relation between the use of this substance and previous conflicts which, as seen, are deeply rooted in complex relational dimensions.

On the other hand, we must also pay attention to representations contained in the narrative of how the transformations associated with the contact could, somehow, contribute to the escalation of these conflicts. There is, implicit in the first (“mythic time”) and in the second (“old time”) narratives, the idea that the maintenance or loss of certain beliefs held in past times could, somehow, have a correlation with the conflicts that resulted in suicide nowadays.

In the first narrative, the stepmother defends her behavior of limiting access of her stepson to food by citing advice she received from her own mother. It is possible to assume that this restriction would be associated with dietary rules that preceded the male initiation rituals (Reichel-Dalmatoff, 1986; Hugh-Jones, 1979). In the absence of rituals, these restrictions would partly lose their meaning. And, thus, that which the stepmother had learned with her mother, in addition to useless, became deleterious.

In the second narrative, there is the account of the existence of a prior belief, which posited that a young woman who got pregnant without being married would be a sign that one of her parents would die. The belief of people on this idea would be a factor that would limit the occurrence of suicides. On the other hand, this belief came to be shaken by the activity of the Catholic priests in the region. Thus, under the missionary influence, a belief that would have a preventive action on a conflict which is potentially serious enough to generate the context for suicide would have been lost.

These aspects point to important transformations that would have an impact on symbolic systems structuring the mediation of certain conflicts. Thus, as for suicide, old beliefs could not be recruited in contemporary daily life, either because they are not suitable for this transformed world, or because they were lost, and people do not care about them anymore.

In the 7<sup>th</sup> narrative, the narrator, who is also known as an important kumu, explains that he previously thought suicide would be caused by a damage (spell). In other words, before learning that spirits of young people killed by suicide would be attacking other young people, leading to their deaths, the narrator thought suicide would be caused by shamanic enchantments. Being caused by sorcery, there would be the possibility of other kumus, like himself, being causing the deaths, but also of being able to avoid them by formulating counter-spells. But being suicide caused by spirits, the kumu is exempt of any responsibilities, as well as it justifies the inefficiency of his knowledge in preventing them. Here we have a traditional connoisseur rejecting the prospect of the informants of Pereira (2013), who associated suicide to shamanic incantations. This rejection and the proposal of an alternative explanatory model give meaning to the narrator's own inability to face this problem.

That is, we have in the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> narratives clues that point to a certain perplexity in dealing with the phenomenon of suicide. Old beliefs in a transformed context become deleterious, other old beliefs, potentially useful, were lost, the knowledge of their kumus would not be enough to prevent suicide and related conflicts.

## Final remarks

The analysis of the narratives presented in this article enables presenting a counterpoint to the recurring discourse in São Gabriel da Cachoeira that indigenous suicide, especially of young people, would be due to the use of alcoholic beverages, with apparently banal motivation.

Alternatively, suicide emerges from the analysis of the narratives as a phenomenon associated with the conflicts that are grounded deeply in socio-cultural and historical aspects of the indigenous peoples of the Alto Rio Negro region, which refer to intergenerational tensions, as well as to tensions related to gender and kinship. Furthermore, the management of these conflicts appears to be compromised, since traditional strategies seem to lose their symbolic effectiveness and others were not

appropriately found to replace them. Consumption of alcohol, although an important element for understanding suicide, should not be taken as central explanatory element, but primarily as a catalyst of prior conflicts.

There are a few points that emerged in the narratives, but that were not explored in minute details in the analysis undertaken. One of them is the recurrence of hanging as a method to commit suicide. Literature that discusses the issue of preference for use of hanging for suicide among the Guarani of Mato Grosso do Sul is abundant. Authors such as Pimentel (2006), for example, connect this preference to complex issues related to the symbolic attempt to provoke self-termination of one of the two souls that the Guarani have, which would be associated with speech and word (Pimentel, 2006). However, in the literature that deals with the Alto Rio Negro region we have no related studies, which points to the need for research that can explore this issue minutely.

Another important point is the relation between the conflicts and individual experiences of suffering of the people who died. This issue also requires a detailed future exploration. It is mentioned in the narratives that the conflicts would generate, in the suicides, feelings of grief (1<sup>st</sup>), sadness (2<sup>nd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>) and rage (3<sup>rd</sup>). Would these feelings be normal and expected emotional reactions in response to conflicts chronically maintained and managed precariously in daily life? Could they be symptoms of psychiatric cases? Could it be both conditions? The literature on the theme is divided, both with authors arguing that in “non-Western” contexts, including the indigenous one, there would be less association between psychiatric disorders and suicide, as there are those who argue the opposite (Vijayakumar, 2006; Phillips, 2010).

In polarized situations such as this, there are both the risks of “medicalization” and “anthropologicalization” of suicide in general, and of indigenous persons in particular. In the first way, by bringing the understanding exclusively to the field of biomedicine, pharmacological and psychotherapeutic intervention strategies focused on individuals are justified, disregarding all sociocultural and historical context to which suicide would be related.

On the other hand, by adopting the second way and understanding suicide as the understandable result from a set of sociocultural processes, there is the risk of adopting a naturalizing attitude and providing subsidies for discourses that justify the restriction of the access of indigenous people to treatments that could improve quality of life. Both paths are reductionist.

Finally, the narratives about suicide presented here indicate that complex issues such as these require strategies that articulate actors, knowledge, and disciplines. They require intersectoral actions, including those concerning mental health, that seek to understand and reconstruct senses, construct culturally sensitive ways for conflict mediation, and add to them, in a responsible way, the different alternatives available, both from traditional indigenous medicine and from modern biomedicine.

## References

- ANDRELLO, G. *Cidade do índio: transformações e cotidiano em Iauaretê*. São Paulo: UNESP/ISA, 2006.
- BUCHILLET, D. Interpretação da doença e simbolismo ecológico entre os índios Desana. *Boletim do Museu Paraense Emílio Goeldi*, Belém, v. 4, n. 1, p. 27-42, 1988. Série Antropológica.
- BUCHILLET, D. Sorcery beliefs, transmission of shamanic knowledge, and therapeutic among Desana of the upper Río Negro Region, Brazil. In: WHITEHEAD, N. L.; WRIGHT, R. *Darkness and secrecy: The anthropology of assault and witchcraft in Amazonia*. Durham; London: Duke University Press, 2004. p. 109-131.
- CALABRIA, B.; DORAN, C. M.; VOS, T.; SHAKESHAFT, A. P.; HALL, W. Epidemiology of alcohol-related burden of disease among Indigenous Australians. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health*, Sydney, v. 34, p. 47-51, jul. 2010. Suplemento 1.
- CASTRO, E. V. de. *A inconstância da alma selvagem*. São Paulo: Cosac Naify, 2002.
- CDC - CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION. Suicide contagion and reporting of suicide: recommendations from a National Workshop. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, Washington, D. C., v. 45, p. 13-17, abr. 1994.
- CHERNELA, J. M. *Hierarchy and economy in the Uanano (Kotiria) speaking peoples of middle basin*. 1993. Tese (Doutorado em Antropologia) - Columbia University, Nova York, 1983.
- CLASTRES, P. *A sociedade contra o Estado*. 2. ed. Rio de Janeiro: Francisco Alves, 1974.
- GALVÃO, W. S.; GALVÃO, R. C. *Livro dos Antigos Desana*: Guahari Diputiro Porá. São Gabriel da Cachoeira: Federação das Organizações Indígenas do Rio Negro, 2004.
- GARRO, L. C. Narrative representations of chronic illness experience: cultural models of illness, mind, and body in stories concerning the temporomandibular joint (TMJ). *Social Science & Medicine*, New York, v. 38, n. 6, p. 775-88, 1994.
- GIDDENS, A. *Novas regras do método sociológico*. Rio de Janeiro: Zahar, 1978.
- GOMES, R.; MENDONÇA, E. A. A representação e a experiência da doença: princípios para a pesquisa qualitativa em saúde. In: MINAYO, M. C. S.; DESLANDES, S. F. *Caminhos do pensamento: epistemologia e método*. Rio de Janeiro: Fiocruz; 2002. p. 109-132.
- GOOD, B. J. *Medicine, rationality, and experience: an anthropological perspective*. Cambridge: Morgan, 1995.
- HILL, J. D. Myth and History. In: \_\_\_\_\_. *Rethinking history and myth: Indigenous South American perspectives of the past*. Denver: University of Illinois Press, 1998. p. 1-34.
- HOIFODT, T. S.; TALSETH, A. G.; OLSTAD, R. A qualitative study of the learning process in young treating suicidal patients: from insecurity to personal pattern knowledge and self-confidence. *BMC Medical Education*, v. 7, jul. 2007. Disponível em: < <http://www.biomedcentral.com/content/pdf/1472-6920-7-21.pdf>>. Acesso em: 22 out. 2015. doi:10.1186/1472-6920-7-21.
- HUGH-JONES, S. *The palm and the Pleiades: Initiation and Cosmology in Northwest Amazonia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979.

- IBGE - INSTITUTO BRASILEIRO DE GEOGRAFIA E ESTATÍSTICA. *Os indígenas no Censo Demográfico 2010: primeiras considerações com base no quesito cor ou raça*. Rio de Janeiro, 2012.
- JACKSON, J. E. *The fish people: linguistic exomamy and Tukanoan an identity in northwest Amazon*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983.
- KIRMAYER, L. J. et al. *Suicide among aboriginal people in Canada*. Ottawa: Aboriginal Healing Foundation, 2007.
- LANGDON, E. J. M. *A negociação do oculto: xamanismo, família e medicina entre os Siona no contexto pluri-étnico*. 1994. Tese (Concurso para professor titular de Antropologia) -Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina, Florianópolis, 1994.
- LASMAR, C. *De volta ao lago de leite: gênero e transformação no alto Rio Negro*. São Paulo: UNESP/ISA, 2006.
- OLSON, L. M.; WAHAB, S. American indians and suicide: a neglected area of research. *Trauma violence, abuse*, v. 7, p. 19-33, jan. 2006.
- ORELLANA, J. D. Y.; BASTA, P. C.; SOUZA, M. L. P. Mortalidade por suicídio: um enfoque em municípios com alta proporção de população autodeclarada indígena no estado do Amazonas, Brasil. *Revista Brasileira de Epidemiologia*, São Paulo, v. 16, n. 3, p. 659-69, 2013.
- OWENS, C.; LAMBERT, H.; LLOYD, K.; DONAVON, J. Tales of biographical disintegration: how parents make sense of theirs sons suicides. *Sociology of health & Illness*, Oxford, v. 30, n. 2, p. 237-254, 2008.
- OWENS, C.; LAMBERT, H. Mad, bad or heroic? Gender, identity and accountability in lay portrayals of suicide in late twentieth EnglandCulture. *Medicine and Psychiatry*, v. 36, p. 248-371, jun. 2012. Disponível em: <[http://www.researchgate.net/publication/221877679\\_Mad\\_Bad\\_or\\_Heroic\\_Gender\\_Identity\\_and\\_Accountability\\_in\\_Lay\\_Portrayals\\_of\\_Suicide\\_in\\_Late\\_Twentieth-Century\\_England](http://www.researchgate.net/publication/221877679_Mad_Bad_or_Heroic_Gender_Identity_and_Accountability_in_Lay_Portrayals_of_Suicide_in_Late_Twentieth-Century_England)>. Acesso em: 22 out. 2015.
- PEREIRA, M. M. *Representações sociais sobre suicídio indígena em São Gabriel da Cachoeira - AM: um estudo exploratório*. 2013. Dissertação (Mestrado Multidisciplinar em Saúde, Sociedade e Endemias na Amazônia) - Universidade Federal do Amazonas, Manaus, 2013.
- PHILLIPS, M. R. Rethinking the role of mental illness in suicide. *American Journal of Psychiatry*, v. 167, n. 7, p. 731-733, 2010. Disponível em: <<http://ajp.psychiatryonline.org/doi/pdf/10.1176/appi.ajp.2010.10040589>>. Acesso em: 22 out. 2015.
- PIMENTEL, S. K. *Sansões e Guaxos: suicídio Guarani e Kaiowá: uma proposta de síntese*. 2006. Dissertação (Mestrado em Antropologia Social) - Faculdade de Filosofia, Letras e Ciências Humanas da Universidade de São Paulo, São Paulo, 2006.
- REICHEL-DALMATOFF, G. *Desana*. Bogotá: Procultura, 1986.
- SEEGER, A.; DA MATTA, R., CASTRO, E. V. de. A construção da pessoa nas sociedades indígenas brasileiras. In: OLIVEIRA FILHO, J.P. (Org.). *Sociedades indígenas e indigenismo no Brasil*. Rio de Janeiro: Marco Zero; UFRJ, 1987.
- SILVIKEN, A. Prevalence of suicidal behavior among indigenous Sami in northern Norway. *International Journal of Circumpolar Health*, Oulu, v. 68, n. 3, p. 204-211, 2009.
- SOUZA, M. L. P.; GARNELO, L. Quando, como e o que se bebe: o processo de alcoolização entre populações indígenas do alto Rio Negro, Brasil. *Cadernos de Saúde Pública*, Rio de Janeiro, v. 23, n. 7, p. 1640-1648, 2007.
- SOUZA, M. L. P. *Juventude, uso de álcool e violência em um contexto indígena em transformação*. 2009. Tese. (Doutorado em Saúde Coletiva) - Instituto Fernandes Figueira, Fundação Oswaldo Cruz, Rio de Janeiro, 2009.
- SOUZA, M. L. P.; GARNELO, L.; DESLANDES S. F. Modos de vida e modos de beber de jovens indígenas em um contexto de transformações. *Ciência & Saúde Coletiva*, Rio de Janeiro, v. 15, n. 3, p. 709-716, 2010.
- SOUZA, M. L. P.; GARNELO, L.; DESLANDES S. F. Histórias-míticas e construção da pessoa:

- ambiguidade dos corpos e juventude indígena em um contexto de transformações. *Ciência & Saúde Coletiva*, Rio de Janeiro, v. 16, n. 10, p. 4001-4010, 2011.
- SOUZA, M. L. P. Observações empíricas e experiências subjetivas na escolha de referenciais teóricos em pesquisa etnográfica no campo da saúde indígena. *Saúde em Debate*, Rio de Janeiro, v. 35, n. 91, p. 607-614, 2011.
- SOUZA, M. L. P.; ORELLANA, J. D. Y. Suicide among the indigenous people in Brazil: a hidden public health issue. *Revista Brasileira de Psiquiatria*, São Paulo, v. 34, p.489-492, dez. 2012.
- SOUZA, M. L. P.; ORELLANA, J. D. Y. Suicide mortality in São Gabriel da Cachoeira, a predominantly indigenous brazilian municipality. *Revista Brasileira de Psiquiatria*, São Paulo, v.34, p.24-27, mar. 2012b.
- SOUZA, M. L. P.; ORELLANA, J. D. Y. Desigualdades na mortalidade por suicídio entre indígenas e não indígenas no estado do Amazonas, Brasil. *Jornal Brasileiro de Psiquiatria*, v. 62, n. 4, p. 245-52, 2013.
- SOUZA, M. L. P.; FERREIRA, L. O. Jurupari se suicidou?: notas para investigação do suicídio no contexto indígena. *Saúde e Sociedade*, São Paulo, v. 23, n.3, p. 1064-1076, 2014.
- TURNER, V. Variations on the theme of liminality. In: MOORE, S. F.; MYERHOFF, B. G. *Secular ritual*. Amsterdã: Van Gorcum, 1977. p. 36-52.
- VIJAYAKUMAR, L. Suicide & mental disorders - a maze? *Indian Journal of Medical Research*, v. 124, p. 371-374, out. 2006. Disponível em: <<http://medind.nic.in/iby/to6/i10/ibyto6i10p371.pdf>>. Acesso em: 22 out. 2015.
- WRIGHT, R. M. *História indígena e do indigenismo no Alto Rio Negro*. Campinas: Mercado de Letras; São Paulo: Instituto Socioambiental, 2005.

---

Received: 02/11/2015

Approved: 10/01/2015