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SOCIAL ORIGINS OF FOLK ILLNESS AMONG NGAWBERE
OF THE NORTHERN VALIENTE PENINSULA:
THE CASE OF chakore AND ha ko botika

By

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ABSTRACT

SOCIAL ORIGINS OF FOLK ILLNESS AMONG NGAWBERE OF THE NORTHERN VALIENTE PENINSULA: THE CASE OF chakore AND ha ko botika

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The focus of the dissertation is the social origins of two folk illnesses in an indigenous enclave that self-identifies by the name Ngawbere. The peoples of this enclave are, and have been, marked by marginality to other peoples in Panama. Imbedded in Ngawbere ideas about their place in the regional society as well as the country in which they live is a strong notion that they form a separate society, or "nation," within the nation-state of Panama. As the principal indigenous population on the isthmus to have survived the program of pacification engineered by the Spanish during the colonial period, Ngawbere continue to reside on their homelands in western Panama.

Paramount for an understanding of Ngawbere society is their emphasis on meeting subsistence obligations by "pulling together" through mutual assistance to help one another. Priority in help seeking is given to cognatic kinsmen, before approaching affinal kin relations. Naming practices are described as a way of suggesting how Ngawbere emphasize social interactions based on the principle of mutual assistance, as well as provide a little comic relief from social conflicts in meeting social obligations. Both curative and ritual practices emphasize the participation of family and households in a manner very much along the lines of the exchange relations that

form the basis for mutual assistance among Ngawbere.

When the folk illness known as chakore or that known as ha ko botika occurs, cognates "pull together" to provide appropriate health care for the victim. Whereas chakore reflects an inter-familial tension inherent in Ngawbere society as young women seek to flee their part in the formation of linkages between families, ha ko botika represents a tension existent between Ngawbere and other peoples in the province. The indigenusness of chakore is reflected in local interpretations that associate its occurrence with forces representing now extinct indigenous populations as well as the use of illness discourse that reflects an inherent inter-familial tension. Whereas Ngawbere accept chakore as an aspect of their indigenusness, they view the general characteristics of ha ko botika as contrary to the practice of mutual assistance that forms the foundation of Ngawbere society.

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metre kroke

Molo, Cookie, Yiyi
(his, hers and mine)

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LIST OF ORTHOGRAPHIC CONVENTIONS

Abbreviations:

ANCR = Archivo de Costa Rica

ANP = Archivo de Panamá

DAI = Documentos del Archivo de Indias

Two letters (both capitalized) indicate a man's name, for example, GR.

Three letters (the first capitalized) indicate a woman's name, for example, Let.

Phoneticized Spelling of Foreign Words:

The ng is pronounced as the final sound in sing.

The u is pronounced like the vowel sound in could.

The use of dieresis (as in tü) indicates the nasalization of vowels in ngawbere words.

For both Spanish and ngawbere words, the ñ is pronounced as the middle sound appearing in canyon.

As in Spanish, the penultimate syllable of many ngawbere words is stressed and, therefore, carries no accent mark.

Punctuation:

Parenthesis () encloses italicized Spanish words, for example, (comunidad).

Brackets [] enclose italicized ngawbere words, for example, [hu tawte].

INTRODUCTION

Whereas Ngawbere ("people with premonition") is the name by which the largest indigenous population of Panama self-identify, ¹ Guaymí is the name that they were given by the Europeans who settled on the isthmus of Panama. This difference in nomenclature reflects more than the presence of distinct languages, however, since Ngawbere and the Iberian-derived "Castelauro" population that surround them have maintained opposing attitudes toward each other over the centuries (Guardia 1975).

Background

The term Guaymí originally referred to all of the indigenous peoples of western Panama as a whole. At the time of Spanish contact, Ngawbere were a small population of around 38,000 to 62,000 persons belonging to a language group of Guaymí-speakers that included the more numerous Murire, Penonomé and Doraces-Changuinas (R. Gunn 1980:9-17; P. Young 1971:74-81, 1985:357-358). Once the other populations were exterminated by the Spanish, the term Guaymí came to designate Ngawbere; the term Bogotá replaced the historic term Murire that had been the name given to the people who today self-identify as Buglere, a population considerably reduced in numbers. The five to six hundred who survived from historic times fled to the Atlantic coast along Río Calobevora, rather than face death or defeat at the hands of the Spanish (Herrera and González 1964).

Ngawbere experienced neither defeat nor annihilation throughout the

period of European encroachment; isolated from outsiders, they remained on their homelands from the time of contact to the present. Today the population who self-identify as Ngawbere number more than 70,000 people.

The term Guaymí apparently was derived from the word ngwamigda in the language spoken by Buglere and refers to someone who is Amerindian (J. Gunn and R. Gunn 1984, personal communication). That this word rather than its counterpart ngawbe in the language spoken by Ngawbere was incorporated into the political discourse of Panama suggests that the Spanish engaged in more intense contact with Buglere than Ngawbere. The minimization of outside contacts assured Ngawbere survival during the colonial era, but, more strategically for the present study, it reflected a long-term process of marginalization that has been experienced by Ngawbere for the past several millenia.

The Teribe are the only other indigenous population in western Panama. As descendants of one of the Talamancan groups that were located aboriginally in what today is eastern Costa Rica, they experienced a reduction in numbers much like the Buglere. The four hundred Teribe who live today in northwestern Panama near the Costa Rican border along Río Teribe are remnants, having been reduced in numbers through warfare and disease. Rather than flee or continue to fight their neighbors as well as the Miskito, they permitted themselves to be relocated to their present location some two centuries ago (Torres de Araúz 1964).

Research Problem

The present study concerns Ngawbere and examines a part of what it means to be survivors of a program of extermination and exploitation that

tellingly was called pacification by those who were assigned to implement the program among the indigenous populations of the isthmus of Panama.

The study considers the way that Ngawbere marginality has continued over the centuries and indicates how that marginality is reflected differently in two folk illnesses. Since most studies of folk illness narrowly consider the sociopsychological (Westermeyer 1976; Lebra 1976) or, more recently, the biobehavioral manifestations of its occurrence (Simons and Hughes 1985; Rubel, O'Neill and Collado-Ardón 1984), research has placed more emphasis on a biological basis for folk illnesses and sought to answer the question of their human universality or cultural specificity. This emphasis on the biology of folk illness obscures an understanding of how local populations view the occurrence of folk illness and denies the impact that political economic factors have on a population's health.

The focus of study examines two folk illnesses that are manifested differently within Ngawbere society. One reflects the inter-familial tensions that arise from an emphasis on family over non-family, and the other reflects the inter-societal tensions that occur in response to the precarious position facing Ngawbere, at one time an enclave among the prehistoric populations of Panama, but today as an enclave population within the nation-state of Panama.

Before reviewing the literature on enclaves and the marginalization of Ngawbere in the next two chapters, comments are in order regarding the field methods that were employed in the present study.

Fieldwork

The field research upon which this study is based was conducted among Ngawbere of the northern Valiente Peninsula, from March 1982 to April 1984 and from November 1984 to April 1985. In the field, the investigator lived with a family in a community (Cusapín) that has one of the largest concentrations of indigenous population along the Valiente Peninsula, and, for that matter, the rest of Bocas del Toro Province. Relying on the host family's kin network as well as his own initiative, the investigator visited each of the homesteads in the northern half of the Valiente Peninsula. Most of the visits varied from one to several days, but a few homesteads were visited on a fairly regular basis. In addition, three visits were made to Ngawbere homesteads in Río Jalí, which lies adjacent to Cricamola River, and more than a dozen visits were made to the principal islands in the Chiriquí Lagoon supporting Ngawbere population. Unless otherwise indicated, however, materials in the dissertation refer to Ngawbere of the northern Valiente Peninsula (Figures 1 and 2).

The field research combined a number of strategies. The reason for this was a lack of ethnographic material from Bocas del Toro Province, and, hence, no information from which to formulate guidelines for working with Ngawbere in that province. The principal method of study relied on participant-observation as Ngawbere went about their daily lives, as well as structured and unstructured interviews; similar methods were used by John Bort (1976:3-7) who has worked in Chiriquí Province. Whenever possible, structured interviews were conducted employing an interview schedule. Otherwise most of the interviews entailed asking a number of

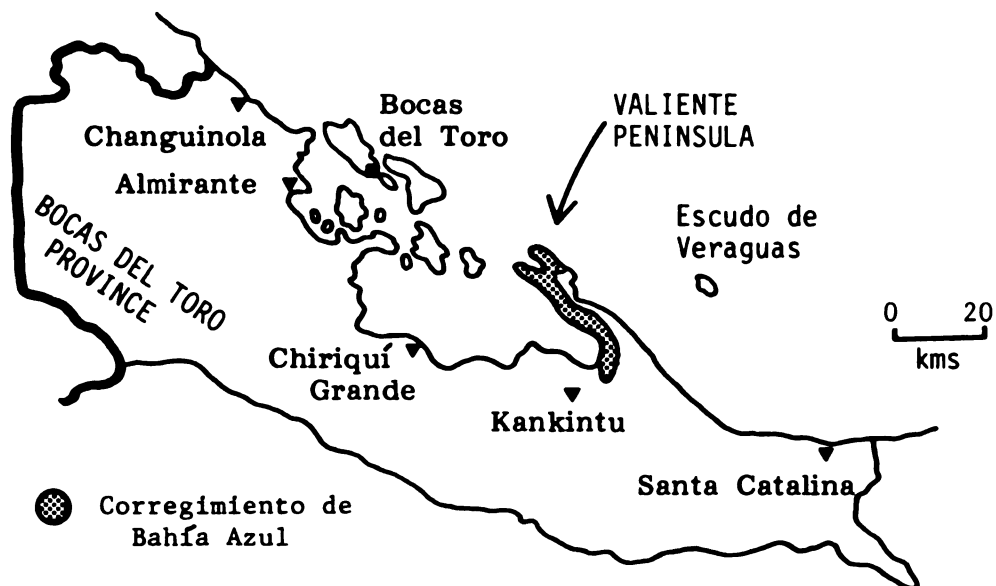


Figure 2. Corregimiento de Bahía Azul in the Valiente Peninsula, Bocas del Toro Province.

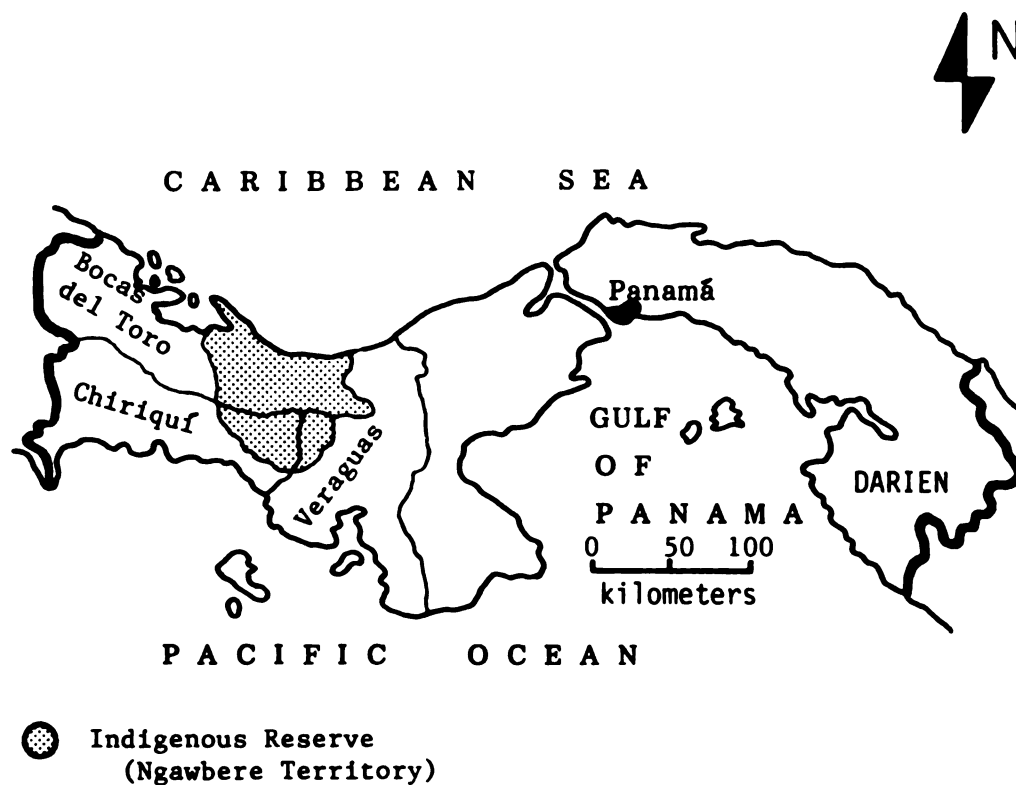


Figure 1. Indigenous Reserve, Western Panama.

people a variety of questions on a single topic, as the occasion arose. Sometimes the same person ("tutor") was interviewed more than once; owing to logistical constraints, interviews often were spaced several weeks apart. The bulk of the ethnographic data used in the present study, therefore, was collected, then refined or verified, by asking different people the same questions and observing similar activities in different settings.

Since more Ngawbere speak ngawbere and Spanish than English (a little of which is spoken primarily by elderly men), the former two were used as the languages of fieldwork rather than the latter. While in the field, the investigator spent many hours studying the local language, developing lexical lists, and examining the manner in which Ngawbere engage in conversation.

The primary corpus of ethnographic data includes a series of illness episodes (N = 245) which were monitored as intensively as possible during fieldwork. Episodes were observed in locales throughout the northern Valiente Peninsula. From these observations, field data have been chosen to present a general picture of how Ngawbere recognize illness and to provide documentation for the two folk illnesses examined herein. Supplementary data was collected on subsistence activities, fishing practices, construction of houses and boats, social gatherings of various kinds (school events, religious meetings, political elections, funerals), and all the major Ngawbere rituals except the rites for puberty and the Pole-Throwing Festival.

Following fieldwork, several weeks were spent examining historical documents available in the national archives of Panama and sketching maps

from cartographic materials. The archival materials and the cartographic analysis complement the ethnographic data collected during the field investigation.

Note to the Reader

The spelling of ngawbere words differs slightly from the romanized format that is employed by Alphonse (1956, 1980, 1983), Reverte (1963) and the Summer Institute of Linguistics (mainly Arosemena and Javilla 1979, 1980). The orthography used herein more closely follows the phoneticized spelling appearing in P. Young (1971). The term ngawbere refers to the language spoken by the study population, who, as already indicated, refer to themselves as Ngawbere.

The names of individuals appearing in the text as part of the case materials are fictitious. The place names for Ngawbere "homesteads" (called caseríos in Spanish) appear correctly according to popular usage, that is, they appear in ngawbere. The term "community" is used to refer to the six adjoining homesteads that form the study community (Cusapín) where the field investigator lived. Unless indicated, the place name Bocas del Toro refers to the province rather than the provincial capital or the district of the same name.

Notes

1. Adding the suffix -be to the root stem ngaw, Ngawbere designate other indigenous populations who are unknown to them and have no formal name. Ngawbere have specific terms for native peoples in lower Central America but they refer to Native Americans in the United States as ngawbe. In Spanish, Ngawbere refer to Amerindians with the phrase la raza de nosotros, rather than the expression indio. Panamanian writers use the term indio as defined by a person's descent from indigenous origins and the experience of social oppression by dominating structures; see the discussion of ethnic and class relations in Panama in two studies (i.e., Falla 1979:7-21, 48-53; Cabarrús 1979:64-79) contracted by Centro de Capacitación Social, a Panamanian activist group supported by the Catholic Church.

Chapter 1: FOCUS OF STUDY

This chapter assesses some of the major concerns in the anthropology of Middle American peoples and describes the theoretical issues on which the dissertation will focus.

The analytic interests of Middle American research have shifted since the 1940s and 1950s when investigators provided detailed accounts of the subsistence practices and sociocultural foundations of the way of life of people in single communities. More recent research has indicated that such a narrow focus on the local community as a closed corporate entity had obscured its linkages, often quite numerous, within larger regional, national and international political-economic systems, and underestimated the effect these systems exert over the local population.

Several models have been proposed to account for the sociocultural consequences of these linkages and the ways local populations experience the processes of modernization and civilization; most of the research has focused on MesoAmerica rather than the lower Central American countries of Middle America. The majority of these models have taken a theoretical position that Middle America is part of a single system of commerce that shares international linkages with the rest of the world. This "single-¹system" position is a longstanding tradition in Middle American research² that emphasizes the study of differential changes in social practices and institutions in a regional setting, and attributes their change to such factors as urbanization and Westernization. The most popular framework

for describing the trajectory of change is that of a continuum, whereby the loss of indigenous practices is associated with the acquisition of characteristics from the dominant society. Continuums have been used to model the process of ladinoization in rural Guatemala (Adams 1959[1956], 1957), and the formation of a separate folk culture within regional society in the Yucatan Peninsula (Redfield 1941).

Another approach has considered exploitation in Middle America by examining the impact of political economic forces on the structuring of ethnic and class relations. Proponents of this approach draw an analogy between the treatment of indígenas today as an "internal colony" and their exploitation during the colonial era (for example, Stavenhagen 1968[1963]:60-63, 1975:199-215, 1980[1978]:16-19). Whereas a dual society was generated through the introduction of mercantile capitalism in the New World, the contemporary development of a global capitalist system has been accompanied by the formation of a class structure in MesoAmerica (Stavenhagen 1968[1963]:46-49).

Still another position considers the antagonisms between Indians and Ladinos wherein the views each holds regarding the other are studied as "inverse images" (Hawkins 1984). Where Spanish policy was the harshest is where there is a greater likelihood of finding inverse images between Indians and the larger society. Taking an interest in the effect that division of labor has on the way people view the world around them, the principal proponent of this viewpoint contends that Spanish policy was the "mold" and the colonial program was the "fire," whereby aboriginal society and culture were "melted down" and "recast" (Hawkins 1984:23-24, 349-383).

The basic problem studied from these theoretical positions is the question of why there is evidence of unequal participation in the existing social, economic and political arenas of a regional society. Those who participate the least often are viewed as folk peoples whose marginality to the larger society is the focus of inquiry. When their marginality includes either territorial isolation or extra-territorial encapsulation by the larger society, these folk peoples are viewed as a special case known as an enclave.

Enclavement

The work on regions of refuge by Aguirre Beltrán (especially 1957, 1979[1959]) has provided a benchmark study of the mechanisms that are deployed by dominant structures in exerting control over rural peoples, and how the effect(s) of domination are least felt by the more isolated segments of regional society. Using Mexico as the case for his analysis, Aguirre Beltrán describes the circumstances creating the conditions which have promoted the integration of some Indian peoples in MesoAmerica, while inhibiting integration of the rest. He postulates that these circumstances are the result of historic processes aimed at domination; his model elucidates how a large portion of the indigenous population was insulated and never integrated during Spanish colonialization. Faced with the imposition of foreign elements and structures (such as forced labor during the colonial era, salaried work and private property in more recent times), a number of indigenous peoples resisted by fleeing to the least accessible, least hospitable areas of the nation-state (Aguirre Beltrán 1957:30-33, 68-71). Today many Indian communities form satellite

populations surrounding predominantly Ladino centers in southern Mexico and portions of Guatemala, where are located some of the least accessible areas in MesoAmerican (Aguirre Beltrán 1957:180-183, 1980 [1953]:36-52).

Several methods of domination are enumerated in Aguirre Beltrán's model: racial segregation, political control, economic dependence, unequal legal treatment, social distance and missionary action. He contends that the main rationale for maintaining these mechanisms of subordination is through an ideology of Ladino superiority over the Indian. He suggests that the formation of ethnic identity justifies exploitation of the Indian and inhibits integration of the indigenous population, thereby continuing their marginality to the Ladinos who control the political-economic structures which both dominate, and give rise to, a dual sector economy (Aguirre Beltrán 1979[1959]:121-141). Since his model implies that these structures are region-specific, some of the comments he makes anticipate Hawkins' (1984) effort to revise current conceptualizations of society and culture in Middle America as outcomes of political economic processes. As stated by Aguirre Beltrán (1979[1959]:138), "Both [Indians and Ladinos] conceive of themselves in terms of contrast: all the defects, vices and weaknesses imputed to the other have counterpoints in the perfections, virtues and talents they attribute to themselves."

One of the main objectives of Aguirre Beltrán's work has been the development of programs designed to facilitate the integration of Indian peoples in Mexico, primarily through a program of literacy and the construction of a system of roads (Aguirre Beltrán 1957:53, 190-191, 1976:38, 1979[1959]:6-7). As his model for development considers

dispersed settlement and isolation, along with monolingualism, as the major obstacles to integration, the first step in his program is literacy and the last step is a sanitary infrastructure (Aguirre Beltrán 1976:38-39).³ Although designed specifically for Mexico, this model has been adopted elsewhere in Latin America, including the Republic of Panama (Blanco 1984, personal communication).

The majority of research that has used the region of refuge model has considered rural populations in MesoAmerica explicitly rather than other parts of the world or, even closer geographically, lower Central America. For example, research on Tarahumara in the Sierra Madre of northern Mexico indicates that residents of the canyon environment once actively resisted Spanish efforts to control the region; when their warring efforts were squelched by the Spanish, they withdrew into the canyons where today they have no major contact with the regional centers, except through Catholic missions (Kennedy 1978; Griffen 1981; Aguirre Beltrán 1980[1953]:153-207). As another example, a study of the regional structure in Chiapas de los Altos (southern Mexico) suggests that its social system is dominated by Ladinos who have kept the rural population marginal to the larger economic centers along the Yucatan coast where henequen is grown (Collier 1975). When demographic pressures enter the picture, groups such as the Chamula of Chiapas have become involved in a regional agrarian structure oriented to the henequen plantation economy (Pozas 1977[1959]).

One of the implications of research that follows the region of refuge model in Middle America is that Indians are less than willing participants in the Indian way of life that is attributed to them. For

example, Friedlander (1975, 1976) describes how Indian identity is a reflection of the view held by the dominant society that an Indian is defined by language, exotic behavior (such as traditional weaving) and a lack of access to resources. Using the case of Hueyapanos in Mexico, she (1975:71-100) suggests that symbols expressing Indianness have changed over time, but the position of the Indian as a subjugated people has not, and indicates that unfair political and economic practices serve to maintain the Indian's inferior position in the national system. Her statement is reminiscent of Fuente's (1968:81-82) comments on the devaluation of Indians by Ladinos but contradictory to his claim that Indians accept their "ascribed inferiority" (1967:435-436, 1968:92).

Concern for a broader view of an oppositional tension is presented in discussions that consider North America as one of several economic centers absorbing products of the Third World. For example, what it means to see oneself as Mexican has been examined for the nation-state of Mexico by way of contrast with the Mexican view of North America (Paz 1961, 1972). As another example, a view of the people of the isthmus of Panama as Castelauros has arisen within an intellectualist tradition that veered from, and contrasts itself with, the development of an economy⁴ geared toward international linkages (Guardia 1975).

For lower Central America, there is no comprehensive study of exploitation similar to that prepared by Aguirre Beltran, although some work has focused on specific regions such as Mosquitia (Floyd 1967) and the isthmus of Panama (Guardia 1975; Castellero Calvo 1970). An implicit use of the model postulated by Aguirre Beltrán appears in a series of three volumes which collate materials from recent studies of rural

peoples facing fronterization in isolated regions of lower Central America (edited by Helms and Loveland 1976; P. Young and Howe 1976; Loveland and Loveland 1982). These studies emphasize such consequences of "frontier" contact as changes in sex roles, the formation of urban associations, creation of mixed economic strategies, reduced ritual participation and the transformation of local mythology. Any mention of structures exploiting these indigenous populations is left implicit throughout the series. Helms' (1976) introduction to the lead-off volume emphasizes linkages between the heartland of Middle America (namely, MesoAmerica) and one part of the "rim" surrounding it (namely, lower Central America). She sets the stage for the volume's contributors by describing an increase in contacts between Indians and Latinos⁵ in the corresponding frontier areas. Neither she nor the other authors of volume introductions cite the region of refuge model nor do they use terminology articulated either by Agirre Beltran or other indigenistas (i.e., those who take as their goal the integration of the Indian into national society; see Stavenhagen 1968[1963]:12-13).

Groups that avoided colonial domination, and even those that once were a part of the colonial process, now face marginalization and proletarianization. For example, the Miskito of eastern Nicaragua served as and benefited from their role as middlemen in the British quest to gain control over frontier areas occupied by the Spanish from the 1600s on through the 1800s (Floyd 1967; Nietschmann 1973). Their existence today is one of impoverishment, and they remain isolated from the major economic centers of Nicaragua located on the Pacific coast (Helms 1971, 1983, 1986). Since they neither rent land nor make use of innovative

agricultural technology or sophisticated farming implements, their means of livelihood is marginal (see Stavenhagen 1978:32-33) to the Nicaraguan economy. Other groups that once were marginal now face an opportunity for socio-economic development, if not also some degree of political development within a system that seeks to proletarianize them. For example, the Kuna of eastern Panama developed a complex sociopolitical system that allowed them in the past century to extend their settlements to the islands of San Blas and facilitate rural-urban linkages between island and mainland Kuna, especially in Panama City (Holloman 1975; Costello 1983; Swain 1982). A strong authority structure within Kuna society discourages Kuna from altogether abandoning relations with their local communities to become permanent wage laborers (Howe 1976, 1979).

The studies cited above represent a major portion of the research from lower Central America that speaks directly to, or, more often, indirectly to the oppositional conflicts engendered by the marginality of indigenous peoples and the efforts of more powerful groups to dominate them. However, studies examining the relationship of these conflicts to, or their effect on, specific aspects of native culture have been absent in lower Central America research, especially studies that consider a group's subordinate position in society (Castile 1981). There have been no investigations that consider how the co-existence of indigenous and non-indigenous populations within a single system in any of the several regions of lower Central America, or their isolation one from the other, affects patterns of culture within each group, or, more specifically, whether their marginality is reflected in the occurrence of illness.

First, such an assessment requires a review of the context in which

indigenous people have come to be what they are today in relation to the sociohistorical process of cultural formation within a specific region. What it means to be a member in a group of persistent people, such as Ngawbere, has not been well articulated in the literature on peoples of lower Central America. The concept of "persistent peoples" formulated by Castile and Kushner (1981) refers to the sense of corporate survival permeating a group's identity despite acculturation pressures from the dominant society. Based on contemporary observations that a number of groups have persisted as sociocultural entities and resisted assimilation by the dominant society, their position is contrary to acculturation theory which assumes that groups eventually will acquire attributes of the dominant group in society. Research from this perspective seeks to understand how these peoples perceive themselves amidst a larger society wherein they form an enclave. The groups they identify as "persistent peoples" generally exist as bilingual populations who share a sense of historical continuity as a people. Not too infrequently these groups no longer are living on their aboriginal homelands (Spicer 1971; Griffen 1981; Erasmus 1981; Crumrine 1981; compare Jacobson-Widding 1983).

Illness as a Reflection of Marginality

A concern for the occurrence of illness as the proper focus of study within medical anthropology (Fabrega 1974, 1975, 1979) has taken two avenues of investigation. First, the basis for (medical) decision-making has been examined in a number of contexts, most of which assume that illness is a response to intra-societal tension (e.g., J. Young 1980, 1981; Janzen 1978; cf. Lewis 1975). Second, the study of treatment has

emphasized methods of curing organized in such a way as to redress mostly intra-societal conflicts which, again, are assumed to be the main source of imbalance that results in illness (e.g., Kleinman 1980; Fabrega and Silver 1973; Ngubane 1977). For example, the ritual resolution of tension inherent in women's roles according to their dispensability as daughters and sisters, and indispensability as wives and mothers, is the focus of a study of Zulu medicine (Ngubane 1977). A more comprehensive view has considered the occurrence of folk illness as a response to the pressures of living in a multi-ethnic society (Rubel, O'Neill and Collado-Ardón 1984). This view assumes the existence of a pluralism of cultures ("parallel cultures") and has served as a framework for the study of Mexican Americans in south Texas (Rubel 1960, 1966:esp 155-200) as well as a review of research on health and illness among indigenous peoples in MesoAmerica (Adams and Rubel 1967:353-354).

Neither the intra-societal approach to medical decision-making or the description of illness curation, nor the plural society position, considers the question of illness within the context of marginality. There has been no research on how people who lack the impetus of social interaction in contexts where the oppositional "other" is not physically present reflect on their marginal circumstances among themselves, or if in fact they consider it important when alone.

As already suggested earlier, there is a larger issue concerning the theoretical perspective within which both local communities and regional societies are studied in Middle America. The possibility needs to be considered that what appears to be a pluralism of cultures in regional society represents reflections from distinct points of reference. It may

be the case that an illusion of separateness actually is generated by the same social system.

Since the study of marginality has given a voice to the dominated, it follows that a close ethnographic examination of the occurrence of major illness might illustrate some of the concerns of marginality in a context in which only members of the group are present (presumably along with the field investigator), as well as provide material on how people view, and contend with, the social tensions with which they must live.

The present study, therefore, places little emphasis on medical decision-making and local methods of treatment or concepts of illness, although it is concerned with illness occurrence. The primary interest of the present study is an examination of the social origins of two folk illnesses within the context of Ngawbere marginality. Specifically, the dissertation focuses on illness occurrence as a reflection of tension within Ngawbere society as well as a tension between Ngawbere and all others whom they perceive as outsiders to their way of life.

A historical overview of the antecedents of Ngawbere society is presented in the next chapter, paying particular attention to the ways that Ngawbere have remained relatively marginalized over the centuries.

Notes

1. The research also assumes that the indigenous population either has maintained cultural continuity with their ancestors since the time of Spanish contact, or that contemporary indigenous culture, although distinct from Ladino culture, owes much to Hispanic influence.

2. Stavenhagen (1968[1963]:35) states that "both Indians and Ladinos form part of the same economic system within a single society" (author's translation). Redfield (1941:58-85, 1962[1942]) suggests two distinct societies were evident at Contact, but the Spanish program soon created a single society comprising Indians and Ladinos (as well as Mestizos).

3. See also the assessment of Aguirre Beltran by Stavenhagen (1980 [1974]) and Romano Delgado (1980).

4. For another example that was written from an insider's perspective of collective identity, see Thomas (1967) for an autobiographical account of a Puerto Rican struggling to understand the lack of ethnic tolerance in New York City.

5. The term Latino is used in lower Central America (including the Republic of Panama). It implies the same process of sociocultural change that has been described as ladinoización in MesoAmerica and Guatemala (Adams 1959[1956]; Redfield 1962[1956]). The different terminology is more phonetic ("d" to "t") than semantic.

Chapter 2: THE ANTECEDENTS OF CONTEMPORARY NGAWBERE

This chapter is intended to orient the reader to the historical antecedents of the contemporary situation of Ngawbere north of the continental divide in northwestern Panama. The discussion highlights material culled from archival research and places Ngawbere within the context of the literature on enclave populations in Middle America.

There has been more archaeological research on the prehistoric peoples of eastern and central Panama than there has been for prehistoric populations of western Panama. Scholars of Panamanian prehistory postulate that the processes of migration and social formation and the differentiation of languages that are true for east-central Panama in prehistoric times also hold true for western Panama (Cooke 1982, 1984a; Linares 1968, 1970, 1976, 1977; Linares and Ranere 1980; Helms 1979). Therefore, a framework for reviewing Ngawbere prehistory can reliably use material from other prehistoric populations of Panama, and integrate it with ethnonarratives from Ngawbere.

Pre-Contact Inter-Group Exchange

The prehistoric peoples of the isthmus of Panama, according to archaeological evidence, lived in small bands for several millenia prior to European contact; these bands generally constituted a family grouping of no more than 50 people. There is evidence to suggest that a number of these bands were organized as "chiefdoms" (cacicazgos) which were located

in the major river valleys of the isthmus (Helms 1979:10-13, 33-34; Cooke 1982:36-37, 43-44, 51-52; Von Ufeldre 1965[1682]:92; see related synopsis by Creamer and Haas 1985). These chiefdoms were associated with village settlement and increases in population¹ that occurred between 600-1000 B.C. (Cooke 1984a:296-297; Linares and Ranere 1980:243-244). The village settlements depended on maize farming and small mammals for food (mainly the white-tailed deer), and concentrated themselves along the mouths of large rivers on the Pacific side of the isthmus rather than the Atlantic.

The majority of the peoples of prehistoric Panama, however, lived in dispersed settlement and, instead of maize, relied on the cultivation of root tubers and tree fruits such as the peach palm. On both sides of the continental divide, their protein sources were supplemented with fish and crustaceans, often acquired by seasonal trips from the mountains to the coast. Although these groups were marginal in many ways to the nucleated villages, they maintained contact for purposes of commerce and allied themselves with the powerful chiefdoms in time of war. From contemporary linguistic evidence showing the use of borrowed words and even songs between isthmanian populations (Lehmann 1920:I:158-177; Torres de Araúz 1964:22-24; Bletzer 1987:85-86) and archaeological evidence confirming the trans-isthmanian diffusion of ceramics (Linares and Ranere 1980:81-117), it is clear that contacts between the groups and the exchange of commodities was rather common.

A few bands become subject to the control of the more powerful groups in varying degrees, as the populations of the western and central isthmus show little (archaeological) stability during this period (Cooke 1984a:283-284). Some of the bands that resided in the mountains never

came under the control of the chiefdoms. These latter groups inhabited mountainous areas located near Río Cañazas east of Chepo, the Talamanca region west of Almirante Bay, and most of the region south of Chiriquí Lagoon (Helms 1979:47, 60-63; Cooke 1984b, 1985, personal communication). The area south of the Chiriquí Lagoon was the (ab)original homeland of Ngawbere (Figure 3), according to narratives collected during fieldwork.

The region of western Panama around the Chiriquí Lagoon and the Talamanca hill region were less populated than the rest of the isthmus. There is evidence to suggest that this portion of the Atlantic coast maintained settlements only sporadically. For example, there were four homesteads ("hamlets") interspersed by uninhabited tracts of land along the crest of hills on the western edge of the Chiriquí Lagoon (Aguacate Peninsula) from about 900 to 960 A.D., but for unknown reasons they disappeared several centuries before the Spanish arrived. As is true for peoples elsewhere on the isthmus, the people of this coastal settlement maintained contact with those living in what today is Chiriquí Province. (Linares and Ranere 1980:62-66, 292-306).

Post-Contact Indigenous Exploitation

Political jurisdiction for the western half of the isthmus was shifted from La Audiencia de Santo Domingo to La Audiencia de Panamá shortly after Spanish contact (around 1539). The region that was designated as La Provincia de Costa Rica encompassed what today is Bocas del Toro Province, and what today is Chiriquí Province at one time was the eastern portion of La Provincia de Nicaragua. Beyond Chiriquí to the east, almost as far as Panama City, lay La Provincia de Veragua. The

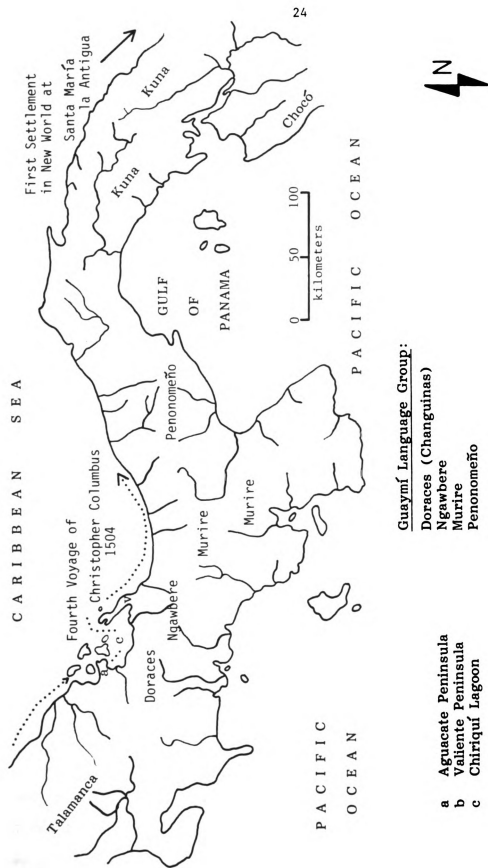


Figure 3. Pre-Contact Dispersion of Indigenous Population, Isthmus of Panama.

historic province of Veragua and portions of Costa Rica corresponded to what roughly was Guaymí territory in prehistoric times.

Expeditions mandated by La Audiencia de Panamá made military forays (entradas de fé y pacificación) into selected river valleys where reports had indicated there were either mineral reserves and/or native population (called yndios in the chronicles) in what today is western Panama. The purpose of the military forays was to secure laborers for encomenderos who had been given trusteeship over the land. Throughout the isthmus, the encomienda strategy was to (a) create aggregated settlements known as pueblos reducidos, and (b) assign jurisdiction over the indigenous population to the Church through the religious centers known as cabildos that were attached to the aggregated settlements. Their goal was to diversify the native crops to corn, beans, plantains and manioc, and coordinate the collection of honey and beeswax from the forest. The product of these labors was taxable and a certain percentage went to Church coffers (Von Uffeldre 1965[1682]:95-96; Fernandez 1886:V:438). For example, all indigenous inhabitants over the age of 19 in the area that surrounded Santa Fé in La Provincia de Veragua were required to produce annual harvests of plantains and corn, and raise cattle. Later, their tax was switched from crops to money (Torres de Araúz 1980a:441-442). A similar program was placed into operation at Cot, located near Cartago (Bolaños Jarquin and Quiros Vargas 1981:12-14).

Claimed by Juan Vasquez de Coronado in the 1560s during one of the earliest expeditions organized by the Spanish (Peralta 1883:230-293, 695n; Von Uffeldre 1965[1682]:99), a portion of western Panama was called Valley of the Guaymí (el valle del quaymí, a.k.a. el valle del duy); this

was the aboriginal home of Ngawbere. One of the first expeditions to enter Cricamola River, the alleged entrance to the Valley of the Guaymí, was that of Pedro Godinez Osorio in 1573. His account describes the local population living in huts "[dispersed] in two's and three's, a quarter league apart" (Peralta 1883:521-526; Fernandez 1886:V:74). Few expeditions had the success of Osorio, such that little material was written, or, if written, has survived, describing the practices of the indigenous population known as Guaymí during this early period.

After 1576, the authority to organize expeditions was given to the Spanish Viceroyalty in Cartago (La Provincia de Costa Rica) who had made plans to establish some fifteen "land grants" (repartimientos) in the Valley of the Guaymí (Peralta 1883:130-134). These land grants were proposed as a boost to the flagging isthmanian economy of the late 1500s. Owing to the loss of able-bodied encomenderos who had left for Venezuela, Peru and Nicaragua with their indigenous charges, Panamanian authorities had turned to trans-isthmanian commerce. These "transit activities" relied more on slave labor than a by-now almost exhausted indigenous population in central Panama (Carmen Mena García 1984:176-197, 340-348). Reports of yndios along the Atlantic coast provided authorities with hopes of renewing agricultural production on the isthmus. From the start, their efforts were unsuccessful. For example, the city that was to be constructed by Diego Artieda on Isla Colón never was built; he was unable to establish any kind of settlement even though his expedition went to the mainland to search for an alternative site (Peralta 1883:545-547, 174, 526n).

Spanish expeditions easily penetrated those areas of the isthmus

having flat terrain, namely, the lowlands and savannahs along the Pacific coast (the Azuero Peninsula and the foothills of what today is Chiriquí Province). Along the steeper hills of the Atlantic coast, entrance into indigenous territory was more formidable and the Spanish were forced to navigate their two-masted sloops and three-masted frigates as far upriver as possible. According to the archival data that is available for the first two-hundred years of Spanish settlement on the isthmus, no more than four military expeditions successfully penetrated indigenous³ (Ngawbere) territory in what today is Bocas del Toro Province.

Those people who lived in the mountains above the savannahs of the Pacific coast sometimes worked for brief periods in the missionary towns, but they eventually returned to the mountains, often taking with them cattle for raising at home (DAI 1623; ANP 1889). Since most of the settlements were located along the transit route that traversed the central portion of the isthmus, or near the administrative center at Cartago, the areas around Santa Fé to the east and the area around Cot to the west were at the respective edges of the frontier borders separating the Valley of the Guaymí from colonial settlements (Figure 4).

Terrain appears to have been as formidable an obstacle in entering Cricamola River and the rest of western Panama (DAI 1565, 1575; Peralta 1883:524-525) as were the raids that were inflicted upon the Spanish by the indigenous groups who inhabited the mountains facing Almirante Bay (Fernandez 1886:V:254-259, 100-114) and Talamancan peoples further to the west (DAI 1583; ANCR 1680; Fernandez 1886:V:235-245, 409-411; Pinart 1887b:119-120). Talamancan yndios gained a reputation for bellicosity both against other indigenous groups as well as the Spanish (Rocha 1964

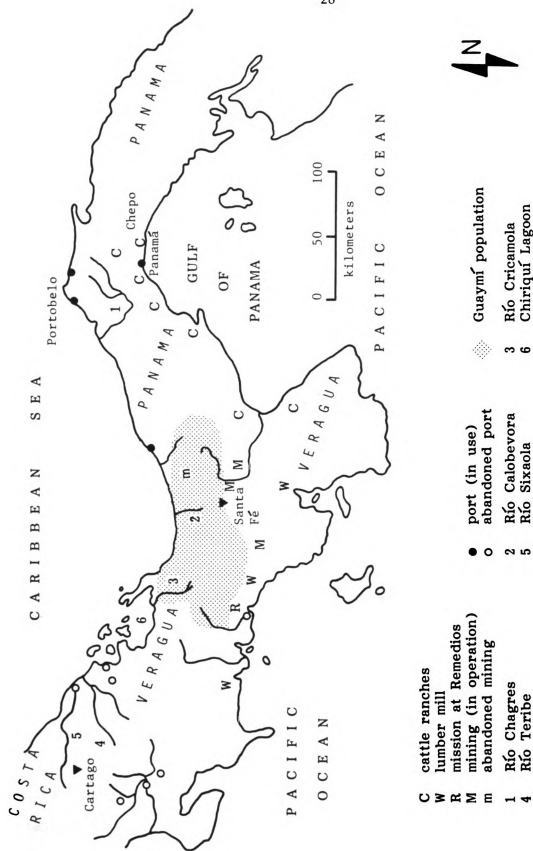


Figure 4. Isthmus of Panama, New Granada circa-1633.

[1682]:103; Franco 1978[1792]:51). During this period of strife with the Spanish, little apparently was written about the more elusive portion of the Guaymí (Ngawbere) who aboriginally inhabited what today is Cricamola River.

A number of isthmanian chiefdoms in central and eastern Panama had been exterminated by the end of the 16th Century. Scores of yndios⁴ had died from disease, starvation and warfare against the Spanish. The indigenous peoples who remained either became Mestizos or withdrew from the areas where the Spanish were encroaching on their lands and took refuge in the mountains of western Panama. The Spanish chronicles that are available tell of an indigenous population scattered on the northern side of the continental divide away from the encroachment of cattle ranches (estancias) established in the rolling hills and savannahs of the southern slopes (in what today is Chiriquí Province). Inhabitants of the former region became known as norteros in recognition of their alleged refuge on the northern slopes. Those remaining on the southern savannahs were called sabaneros (Franco 1978[1792]:43-44; ANP 1889:145; Pinart 1887a:35, 1892:2). The use of separate terms is not an accurate one that reflects cultural identity, however. Despite the fact that the groups in both regions traced their origin to the same aboriginal people, the two names imposed by the Spanish were based on geographic displacement rather than geographic origins.

In 1630, military forays were prohibited by the Spanish Crown. Unlike other parts of MesoAmerica, the Spanish had not been able to establish any kind of infrastructure among the indigenous peoples of western Panama. Mining and the production of cochineal, indigo and

cacao, which were important to the colonial economy elsewhere (Wolf 1982: 135-141), never became isthmanian products. After prohibiting the forays, efforts to penetrate indigenous territory in western Panama fell to the missionary programs (catequización). Initial efforts were made by Dominican priests trained in Lima, Perú. Two documents exist which describe these early ecclesiastic efforts; one was written by a Flemish priest (namely, Fray Adrian Von Uffeldre 1965[1682]) who worked among Ngawbere between 1622-1637; the other was written by a Peruvian priest (namely, Fray Antonio de la Rocha 1964[1682]) who worked among the Doraces-Zuries [a.k.a. Changuinas] from 1637-1642. Other than their work, very little is available that communicates any kind of historical detail about the Church programs in western Panama. Along Cricamola River, efforts were being directed by French priests around the latter 1600s and early 1700s (Atencio 1891[1787]:311-316; Fernandez 1886:V:165-215, 235-245; Ximenez Donosso 1957[1784]:257-258; Palazuelas 1891[1757]: 350-352). For example, two European maps from the 1700s show the name "Taureau" along the eastern coast of the Valiente Peninsula, rather than along any part of the Chiriquí Lagoon.⁵ However, little is known about the impact of the priests' work on the indigenous population. No doubt there are more documents available which were prepared by these French priests, but their whereabouts is still unknown (LeCarrer 1987, personal communication).

There is evidence from narratives heard at Rio Jali that the Spanish system of selecting local residents to serve as commissioners (capitanes) in the 1700s extended even into the region that today is Cricamola River. The commissioner system had been established elsewhere on the isthmus

among rural peoples having irregular contact with the Spanish (Atencio 1891[1787]:300-301). Their purpose was one of "monitoring" indigenous peoples, as a means of protecting them (from Miskito raids, for example) more than controlling them. However, no vestiges of the commissioner system appear in narratives concerning Ngawbere life of the late 1800s or this century, and nothing has been written to assess its impact on the local population in western Panama during the 1700s when the commissioner system was in operation.

To the west of Cricamola River, the program among the Talamancan peoples was directed by Franciscan priests who generally were trained in Santiago de Guatemala. These priests made intensive language studies (clarifying the existence of two distinct languages rather than several as was believed initially), conducted detailed census counts of all the settlements (including counts of houses and families), and established fourteen towns, ten churches, eight monastic centers and six convents (Fernandez 1886:V:430-441, 450-461). The accounts they left behind indicate that of the four populations (naciones) to which they were directing their efforts (two of which they wished to relocate), only three survived and currently reside in reduced numbers in northeastern Costa Rica (Cabecar, Bribri) and western Panama (Teribe). Using their Talamanca program as a model, the Franciscans planned to move eastward among the Doraces-Changuinas into the area between Cricamola River and the Talamancan mountains (Fernandez 1886:V:417, 430-437). Cut short by the yndio uprising of 1709-1711 that culminated in the destruction of mission settlements and the expulsion of Franciscan priests (Fernandez 1886:V:426-476, 369-374), the missionaries' plans were never realized.

Panama remained under the authority of New Spain until 1722, and, then, during a period of shifting jurisdiction, control over the isthmus was given to the Viceroyalty of Peru for seventeen years before being placed under the Spanish crown (Ireland 1971[1941]:212-214). During this time, the Atlantic coast of Panama was besieged intermittently by Miskito incursions; the worst attacks took place around 1729-1731, 1757 and 1775 (Rojas y Arrieta 1929:112, 152; Ximenez Donosso 1957[1784]:258). Miskito efforts were aided and abetted by the British who were carrying out a policy of harassing Spanish settlements and abducting the local population in frontier areas along the Caribbean rim.

There is some question among scholars of isthmanian history whether the people who withdrew from their homelands established separate groups among the bands already living in the mountains, or whether they became incorporated into the mountain population. Helms' statement that "(t)he Guaymí Indians still resident in the mountains are probably descendants of these refuges" (1976:11 [citing P. Young 1971, 1976a]) can be taken to mean that the savannah populations were distinct but (a) they merged with or (b) they remained isolated from those already in the mountains to become Ngawbere and Buglere (western and eastern Guaymí). There is contrary evidence, such as Franco's (1978[1792]:43) comment that the various pre-contact groups speaking distinct languages at one time were "a single nation" (una sola nación), that is, they shared a common origin as Guaymí. Franco neither suggests that the peoples in the mountains were refuges nor that they were living as a single group in the 1700s; for similar viewpoints, see also McNiel (1887), Navarro (1912).

According to ethnonarratives, it appears that some of the larger

groups that fled to the mountains survived intact for a time. Continuing their practice of leaving the mountains to raid the Spanish, however, these groups eventually succumbed to military reprisals by the Spanish (Rocha 1964[1682]:103-104; Pinart 1887b:118; Wassen 1952:89-91). By the mid-1800s, fewer than one hundred survivors of the Doraces were assigned to the protective custody of cattle ranches that had been established by law near Dolega and Gualaca (Candanedo 1862). By the 1880s, the last of these surviving members had passed on (Pinart 1887b: 117-119, 1890:1-3, 1892:1-2). The one group (Ngawbere) that lacked the inclination and the internal leadership to organize counter-raids against the Spanish was ultimately the only group to survive.

Ngawbere narratives collected on the Bocas del Toro coast identify a river valley along one of the western branches of Cricamola River as the aboriginal home of the indigenous population from whom are descended present-day Ngawbere. Other narratives indicate where in Panama and Costa Rica some of the other prehistoric populations once lived. These accounts describe groups that correspond to contemporary populations in eastern Costa Rica (Cabecar, Bribri, Boruca) and western Panama (the Teribe) who in prehistoric times were more numerous.

One of the most frequent narratives heard among Ngawbere of the Valiente Peninsula is the account of a mass flight of the whole coastal population over a short period of time into the mountains, and a slow return to the Bocas del Toro coast centuries later. These prehistoric peoples were temporary inhabitants of the coast, drawn there by the seasonal migration of marine resources such as turtles and sardines. Although the arrival of the Spanish restricted their use of the coast as

an alternative source of protein, there is evidence (Atencio 1891[1787]: 318-319; Roberts 1827:69-70) that the mountain people of western Panama continued to seek protein sources along the coast, on a seasonal basis, after Spanish contact and even during the period of the Miskito incursions. During the late 1700s and early 1800s, English traders evidently knew their seasonal habits and arrived at selected sites along the coast and islands to trade with the indigenous population during the months of May and June, which were the months of the turtle migrations (Roberts 1827:77-79).

Although some authors (e.g., Floyd 1967:87-101; Miranda de Cabral 1963:80-81) hold that the Miskito raids hastened the extinction of groups living to the west of Ngawbere, they say little about the mechanisms used by Ngawbere to survive during this period. Some authors speculate that Ngawbere were spared by Miskito because the mountains of Cricamola River were impenetrable (Atencio 1891[1787]:320-322; Von Ufeldre 1965[1682]: 88). This would suggest that Ngawbere, as well as their territory, were marginal to the plans of the British. Others claim that the Miskito were more interested in forming an alliance than in annihilating Ngawbere (Herrera 1982:68-74; Roberts 1827:49-53, 92).

From the narratives, it is evident that Ngawbere resisted Miskito efforts to enforce tribute payments, using tactics much like those of contemporary Malaysian villagers against tenant landlords or government officials (Scott 1985:28-47). They moved about before the Miskito boats arrived to collect tribute, allowed no one person to speak for the whole group and frequently claimed that they were suffering from poor harvests. When pressed too hard, their "moral passion" was inflamed (Scott 1976:

157-192) and Ngawbere took more decisive measures: they once entertained a large delegation of Miskito (including the Miskito king's son), before poisoning them at a "banquet" (see also Roberts 1827:71; Bourgois 1984b, personal communication).

Fluctuations in Ngawbere Marginality

Beginning in the 1810s, peoples of diverse origins entered what was La Comarca de Bocas del Toro as immigrants. There were English fishermen from the Nicaraguan islands of Providencia, San Andrés and Las Islas de Maíz who came with slaves; English-speaking laborers with families from Jamaica by way of Portobelo (Panama); Spanish-speaking peddlars who came without families from Cartagena (Costa Rica) and Bogotá (Colombia) (Roberts 1827:80-81; Aizpurua 1960:90-91; Anderson 1964:27). At the time that settlements along the Bocas del Toro coast were being established, the size of Ngawbere territory had been reduced slightly. Despite the influx of the first permanent non-indigenous immigrants into Bocas del Toro and extensive population losses among other groups, Ngawbere were the only group in eastern Costa Rica or western Panama that had retained their homelands and, despite a brief period of territorial constriction, some degree of demographic stability (P. Young 1985). Other groups lost large numbers of people or were eliminated completely by the usurpation of their ancestral homelands by the Spanish (Gabb 1981 [1874]:17-19).

The colonial system that was focused on exporting dyes and minerals from a base in MesoAmerica shifted in the 1500s as regional economies became prominent throughout Central America (Wolf 1982:141-157). This was true in lower Central America; for example, "partnerships" formed

between the English-speaking settlers and Ngawbere from Cricamola River led to an increase in their production of cacao and coconuts. Ngawbere learned to dig sarsaparilla roots, and, along with raising pigs and cattle, took to hunting turtles to secure meat and shells for trading with the new arrivals. The non-indigenous population served to link Ngawbere in Bocas del Toro with national and international markets (Roberts 1827:55-58, 78-79; ANP 1873; Boyd 1871, 1873).

Beginning in the 1880s and 1890s, linkages to transnational commerce were instituted on a much larger scale along the Bocas del Toro coast (McCarthy 1976:67, 87, 97; ANP 1877, 1901; Boyd 1904), and the pattern of exchange in which Ngawbere were engaged began to shift. According to the reports of the municipal treasurer in Bocas del Toro in the latter 1880s, for example, there is evidence that peninsular Ngawbere had a slight edge over Ngawbere along Cricamola River in cash cropping and the exchange of such commodities as turtle meat and sarsaparilla. The single trading post owned by two brothers in Bluefields (Valiente Peninsula) paid more than one-hundred-twenty dollars for licensing fees in successive years, when compared to the combined contribution of less than eighty dollars from the three Cricamola River posts (ANP 1887). Ngawbere along the coast of the Chiriquí Lagoon and those of the Valiente Peninsula devoted some of their land to growing bananas, sugar cane, pineapples and cacao, for selling to the company ships that made periodic stops at selected points along the Bocas del Toro coast.

By 1899, the Boston Fruit Company had replaced most of the thirteen independent banana producers operating along the Bocas del Toro coast near Ngawbere territory (Figure 5); they then joined eleven other firms

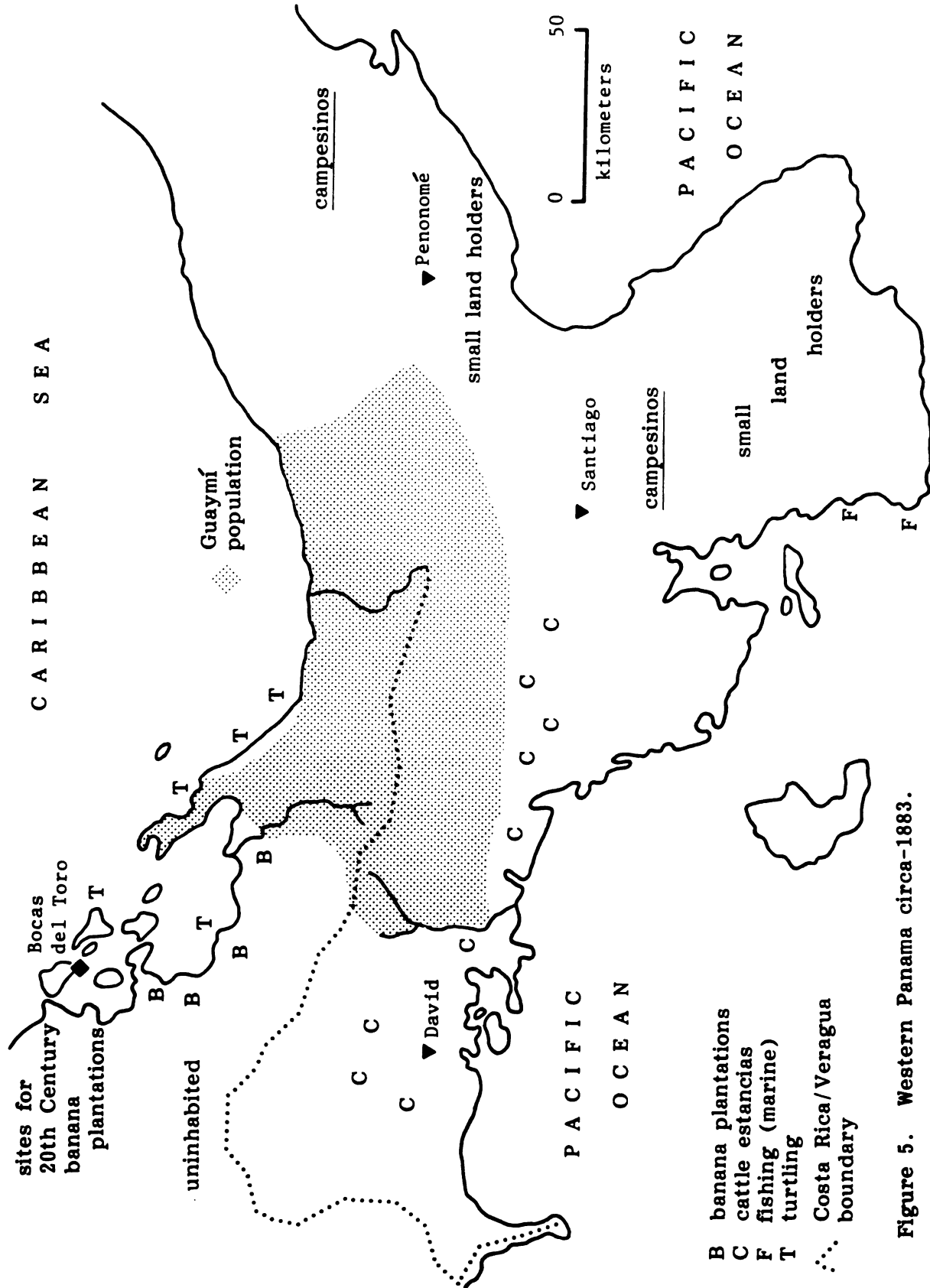


Figure 5. Western Panama circa-1883.

in lower Central America to form the United Fruit Company. After they had consolidated, the Boston Fruit Company became the Chiriquí Land Company (Ellis 1983:35-59). About this time, the Chiriquí Lagoon was hit by a banana fungus (Fusarium). Dubbed "the scourge of Panama" (el mal de Panamá), the fungus soon destroyed nearly the entire operation of banana production and forced the Company not only to move their operation but also to expand its efforts to other commercial ventures, such as cacao and cattle (Kepner 1936).

When the plantations were closed along Chiriquí Lagoon and moved to the lowlands near Río Changuinola, Ngawbere returned to subsistence crops (bananas among them) rather than cash crops. A few Ngawbere along the Valiente Peninsula were able to continue growing bananas in reduced amounts as a cash crop for the regional market, which they sold to ships that continued to operate along the coast. Unable (or unwilling) to compete with the plantations that were producing bananas in quantity, peninsular Ngawbere stopped growing for the market in the 1920s and 1930s. Banana production was facilitated by the arrival of large numbers of Antillian laborers who migrated to Bocas del Toro once work on the Panama Canal was finished; many of the newcomers died from the effects of malaria and yellow fever shortly after arriving in the province (Diez Castillo 1981:84-92). As their involvement in the regional market declined, peninsular Ngawbere began to use the surplus of pineapple and sugar cane for ritual consumption, rather than as cash crops, and incorporated the cacao and bananas into their daily diet. Their shift to consumption from production for the market was an act of retrenchment, not only as a way of affirming ritually their solidarity as Ngawbere but

also as a means of consuming crops already planted in anticipation of the market.

The principal form of contact with the outside world in the early 1900s was the merchant "river posts" (called by Ngawbere tiéndate) (Reid 1980:161-164). Since the 1800s, Ngawbere had obtained commercial items such as soap, cloth, salt, sugar, coffee and, much later, kerosine from itinerant European traders. At the times they lacked these products, Ngawbere continued to use natural materials. There were unsuccessful efforts to introduce Protestant missions among Ngawbere in Cricamola River and the Valiente Peninsula; these efforts lasted less than a year (Anonymous 1889a, 1889b).

The Threat of Proletarianization

In the 1950s the Panamanian rural school system was established in rural areas of Bocas del Toro, and Ngawbere were allowed to work as wage laborers on the banana plantations. They entered the wage labor stream about the same time as the Kuna from eastern Panama (Bourgois 1986:3-5). Workers from both groups served primarily as laborers (obrerros) and cutters (macheteros) (Bourgois 1986:9-11; Reid 1980:125-126; Alphonse 1984, personal communication). During the 1960-61 strikes that halted plantation production, a number of Kuna and Ngawbere formed worker councils (directivas). Ngawbere complained that the Kuna were being given preferential treatment by the Company, but eventually the two indigenous groups aligned with the larger protest movement comprising Latino workers (Pereira Burgos 1961:30-32; Bourgois 1985:34-38). A few Ngawbere today serve as foremen (jefes) in what Bourgois (1985) calls

"low prestige" positions that entail primarily outdoor work. At more than 40% of the workforce, Ngawbere continue to comprise the majority of the day laborers on the banana plantations (Bourgois 1985:3-9).

The inclusion of Ngawbere in the wage labor force also coincided with increases in migration from Cricamola River to uninhabited areas outside the Indigenous Reserve. For example, several men who had been active in the 1960-61 strikes left wage work and settled south of the plantations in one of the many river valleys of western Bocas del Toro (Lozano, Sanson and Taylor 1980:202-205). Others from Cricamola River settled in the tropical forests of eastern Costa Rica (Laurencich de Minelli 1974, 1983), as well as several of the islands in the Chiriquí Lagoon.

Except for a few indigenous growers in the Valiente Peninsula, most Ngawbere remained isolated from either national or international commerce following the demise of banana production in Chiriquí Lagoon. From the 1900s onward, the island population of Bocas del Toro with whom a few Ngawbere had established economic liaisons were active in the practice of receiving indigenous children for purposes of schooling while living with non-indigenous families (Pinzon 1946:131; Reid 1980:17-18, 109-110). A number of Ngawbere spent their youth in the provincial capital in this fashion, returning to their homes at the age of eleven or twelve. Except for a lack of familiarity with the ngawbere language upon returning (much like Juan Pérez Jolote, the central figure in Pozas' [1962] literary account of a Chamula Indian), Ngawbere forgot their experience on the outside when they rejoined their families within the Indigenous Reserve. A number of elder Ngawbere living in the Indigenous Reserve remember

their brief experience as youth in the provincial capital.

Since the 1970s, the number of Ngawbere involved in wage labor has increased (Bort and P. Young 1985; Bort 1983; P. Young 1985), but not to any great extent since the plantation system cannot tolerate too great an expansion in the numbers of workers it employs. Much like the situation in Mexico and Guatemala where only a small percentage of the rural population have been lured from their homelands to work on plantations (Stavenhagen 1978:31-32, 35-36; Falla 1979; cf. Smith 1978:575-576), the majority of Ngawbere continue to live within the Indigenous Reserve. For those who live south of the continental divide, wage work for Ngawbere is on the coffee farms (Chiriquí) and sugar cane plantations (Veraguas). For those in Bocas del Toro Province, the main source of employment is with the banana plantations owned by the Chiriquí Land Company. As will be discussed in the next chapter, the involvement of Ngawbere in wage labor is more temporary than it is seasonal or permanent since most return to the Indigenous Reserve after a few months to a few years of employment.

The Indigenous Reserve

The tract of land occupied by Ngawbere north of the continental divide was declared "Bocas del Toro Reserve" by law in 1935 and 1952 and includes the whole of east-central Bocas del Toro Province and the Valiente Peninsula. The region south of the continental divide, that is, eastern Chiriquí Province and western Veraguas Province, was declared "Tabasara Reserve" (Figure 1, Chapter 1, p. 5) and incorporated into the rest of the Indigenous Reserve by law in 1952 and 1954 (Jimenez Miranda

1984:49-78; Pinnock 1981; cf. Rubio 1956:205-206).

In 1970, the Panamanian census placed the number of Ngawbere living within the Indigenous Reserve at 73,026, which, at 5.1% of the national population, makes them the largest indigenous population anywhere in Panama (Heckadon Moreno 1982:Table 1, p. 88). The number of Ngawbere currently living along the northern Valiente Peninsula surpasses 2700 persons (estimate from the present study), having increased from around 700 in 1940 and 1200 in 1960, according to data from the national census (Contraloría General 1945, 1962). Ngawbere form the majority population in Bocas del Toro Province; south of the continental divide there are fewer Ngawbere than Latinos.

Summary

For millenia prior to Spanish contact, the prehistoric peoples of the isthmus of Panama inhabited the river valleys and maintained networks of exchange with each other. At the time that they began to diverge into separate languages, some of the bands formed small chiefdoms. Several of these chiefdoms eventually became dominant groups that directed commerce and, in some instances, even extracted resources from the smaller groups. Most of the peoples of western Panama, however, were neither organized to any great extent nor even dominated by the other groups. Among these prehistoric enclaves of marginalized peoples were the antecedents of contemporary Ngawbere.

For two centuries following the exploration and settlement of the Spanish on the isthmus, the indigenous population of the isthmus of Panama underwent extreme dislocation and decimation. In eastern and

central Panama, whole areas were ridded of population through the Spanish program of conquest and pacification. When some peoples resisted too little, they were assimilated into the dominant society (primarily in what today is Chiriquí and the Azuero Peninsula). A few peoples left their homelands to take refuge in the mountains of western Panama and a mountainous section of eastern Panama. Except for Ngawbere, the groups who lived in the mountains and continued to retaliate against the Spanish soon were annihilated too.

The arrival of the Spanish altered the prehistoric structures that had begun to dominate the smaller bands scattered throughout the isthmus, but it had negligible effect on the marginal populations of western Panama who lived in dispersed settlements, generally without formal leadership. Among these acephalously-organized survivors were Ngawbere. Having lived through centuries of inter-group contacts and exchange of resources with the other prehistoric peoples of the isthmus, Ngawbere were accustomed to a marginal existence. Ngawbere remained on their homelands, which were the mountains where other populations were taking refuge. Despite their contacts with outsiders, Ngawbere never took the opportunity to settle closer to the people with whom they exchanged goods, work on a regular basis for them or wage war on them, preferring instead to maintain their homes in the mountains away from the centers of political-economic activity. The formidability of the mountainous environment to which Ngawbere already were accustomed and the avoidance of continued contacts with outsiders allowed the Ngawbere population, but not the others in western Panama, to survive the Spanish program of population extermination and displacement.

By the time English-speaking settlements were established along the Bocas del Toro coast, Ngawbere had lost less population than the other groups and they had not been forced from their homelands. For a time, Ngawbere participated in producing cacao and coconuts for the immigrants who acted as intermediaries between small growers living along the coast (among them Ngawbere) and the international market. Later, Ngawbere shifted to producing bananas; then they withdrew completely from participation in regional commerce when banana producers moved from the Chiriquí Lagoon to the western portion of the province. For awhile Ngawbere were sending their children to the provincial capital to live with non-indigenous families for purposes of schooling, but this practice stopped in the 1940s just before the rural school system was instituted in Bocas del Toro.

When transnational enterprises for the production of export commodities like bananas were formed, Ngawbere were denied an opportunity to participate as wage laborers. Non-indigenous settlers were employed first, and then Antillian workers from the Canal project were hired in the 1920s and 1930s. It was not until the early 1950s that the regional system first incorporated large numbers of indigenous workers. The early policy of the banana plantations to limit wage labor opportunities to non-indigenous peoples prevented the formation of too great a wage labor force, which the regional economy would not have been able to handle.

Since the 1950s, Ngawbere have become more involved in wage labor opportunities centering around banana production. Although a small portion of the indigenous population is proletarianized, and for all intents and purposes has severed contacts with their brethren, the

majority of Ngawbere remain within the Indigenous Reserve, marginal to the regional as well as national system of commerce.

This study, therefore, concerns Ngawbere as they were encountered in the early 1980s, after numerous centuries of fluctuation between long periods of isolation and short periods as an enclave in whatever was the contemporary regional economy. As has happened in their past, Ngawbere now face another wave of foreign contacts, this time through the banana plantations (Changuinola and Almirante) and the isthmanian pipeline project (Chiriquí Grande).

How Ngawbere maintain themselves within the Indigenous Reserve, separated from the national as well as the regional society, is described in Chapters 3 through 5. To what extent Ngawbere remain marginal to the regional society and culture of Bocas del Toro, and how their marginality is reflected in two folk illnesses will be discussed in the remaining chapters.

Notes

1. There are indications of population movements in the mountains and savannahs of the isthmus during the period that village formation was taking place along the Pacific coast (Cooke 1984a:283-284).

2. Among other things, the narratives use the term dui as the name of the headwaters for a western branch of Cricamola River where Ngawbere located themselves aboriginally after migrating from what today is Chiriquí Province.

3. Besides Osorio, other expeditions were headed by the following: Juan Solano, Juan Cabral and Velásquez Ramírez (Anderson 1964).

4. Floyd (1973:189-193) counters Las Casas' contention that decimation of the Caribbean yndio population occurred through starvation, overwork, suicide, inability to procreate (when men were separated from women for purposes of labor) and extermination by military raids. He subscribes to Ashburn's (1947) thesis that the major killer of yndios was the diseases that were brought to the Americas by both the Spanish and the slaves they imported from Africa. The situation on the isthmus of Panama replicates many of these same factors, particularly the separation of indigenous families, excessive work and disease (Carmen Mena García 1984:74-82,358). For data on related concerns in Middle America, see also Sauer (1966:283-289), Service (1955:413-416) and Sherman (1979:39-63).

5. The site is listed as Teste du Taureau and teste du tareau on maps that were prepared by a French Naval Engineer (Bellin 1754, 1762, respectively).

6. The terms for the principal groups having a part in isthmanian (pre)history from Ngawbere perspective are: deko (the dominant coastal population that extended their sphere of influence into what today is Veraguas Province), doboba (the people who lived farther away than the kwaranki in the mountains of what today is Costa Rica), dunkonki (the group that was indigenous to what today is the Canal area, and later overridden by Deko), kwaramé, (the people from whom are descended contemporary Teribe), kwaranki (probably several Talamancan groups as a whole), mkora (also known as munkoni, the group that lived above Sixaola River), muoin (the main group who dominated Ngawbere in prehistoric times and occupied a large area of the mountains east of the Talamanca region), musli (the Miskito who came to take tribute from Ngawbere in the 1700s and 1800s), ngawbeba (the people who settled aboriginally at the headwaters of dui from whom are descended contemporary Ngawbere), and odiro (an unknown group who went to Nicaragua in historic times, perhaps the various isthmanian peoples who were captured by Miskito).

Chapter 3: NGAWBERE AND THEIR PHYSICAL AND SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

This chapter presents an overview of the way Ngawbere of the northern Valiente Peninsula view their existence as marginalized people in contemporary times. Their dependence on the land and sea for purposes of subsistence, and their participation in wage labor are described. The chapter also discusses the system of place naming in relation to how peninsular Ngawbere perceive their relationship to the natural and social environment in which they live. Ngawbere along the Valiente Peninsula have remained relatively isolated from outside influence, despite being surrounded by non-indigenous populations for at least the past 160 years.

Overview of the Environment

The Valiente Peninsula extends north from the Bocas del Toro coast about 20 kilometers into the Atlantic Ocean and forms the eastern boundary of Chiriquí Lagoon (Figure 6). To the east of the Valiente Peninsula is a sparsely populated area inhabited by scattered settlements of Ngawbere, and to the south lies Cricamola River, the heart of Ngawbere homeland. To the southwest are small groups of Ngawbere on the coast and inland along the rivers, and much farther to the west are a few small settlements of non-indigenous subsistence cultivators near the banana plantations of the Chiriquí Land Company. Recently settled in the past decade, at least one small Ngawbere homestead is located in this general area. Nearby, the banana plantations encompass more than several hundred

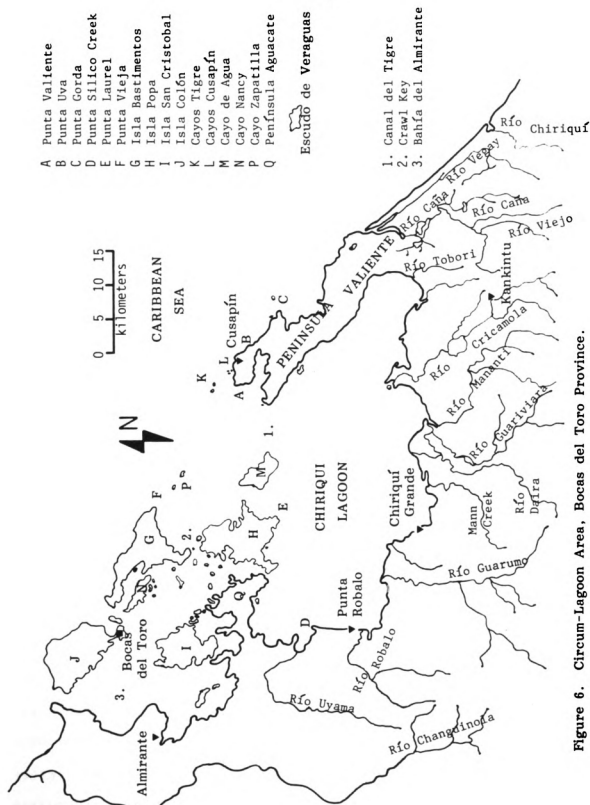


Figure 6. Circum-Lagoon Area, Bocas del Toro Province.

square kilometers on some of the best land in the province.

Isla Colón and Isla Bastimentos, as well as the western coast of Bocas del Toro Province, are inhabited by a predominantly Afro-Antillian fishermen; Ngawbere refer to these people as Chen. Spanish-speaking Latinos live on the other islands and along those portions of the western coast that are uninhabited by either Ngawbere or the Afro-Antillians; Ngawbere refer to these people as Suliare. Chen are descendants of the first wave of Caribbean laborers "introduced" into the region in the 1800s by both Suliare and British colonists (known as Ikleré), as well as a second wave of former Canal employees who migrated into Bocas del Toro in the 1920s and 1930s (Diez Castillo 1981:90-92). Whereas the first wave was primarily English-speaking, the second wave was Spanish-speaking. The specific term Bocatoreño is used locally by the non-indigenous population as a means of designating that one's origins stem from those people migrating into the region at some time within the past 160 years; the term is synonymous with the term Latino that is used by Panamanians to refer to their mixed Middle American heritage.

Whereas the non-indigenous population along the Bocas del Toro coast rely on marine resources (through fishing and turtling), the indigenous population is dependent on the lands and rivers for subsistence purposes. Ngawbere distinguish between the coastal population as those "[who] fish-fish" [qwarí-qwarí], implying that the latter perform little work, and themselves as those "[who] inhabit the land [they work]" [Ngawbere koité]. Reference to a land/sea opposition reflects a much broader distinction made by Ngawbere between themselves as "indigenous" to the land and all others as "outsiders" [chiwí] who arrive by sea.

Terrain

Most of the peninsular terrain is hilly and rocky. Elevation in the Valiente Peninsula is graduated from sea level to a series of small hills in the central and southern portions (high elevation 102 meters) to a range of steep hills in the northern portion (high elevation 213 meters) (Figure 7). The few sections of flat terrain are swampy patches located near the mouths of streams.

The sections of the coast of Bocas del Toro adjacent to the base of the Valiente Peninsula are drained by large rivers, rather than the many streams which drain the central and northern portions of the Valiente Peninsula. For this reason, much of the Bocas del Toro coast is swampy lowland. Ngawbere view the flow of water through the hills as a necessity wherever human settlement is established. They contrast the daily movement of streams with the stillness of swampwater and, pointing to these differences in drainage, indicate that their settlement of the Valiente Peninsula concentrated itself initially near the sources of the larger streams located in the hills.

Ngawbere view the rugged terrain [ko dibí] of the peninsular hills as smaller versions of the mountainous environment where most of the Ngawbere population live in Cricamola River. Whereas the hills and mountains are viewed as sources of strength and sustenance, the coastal swamps are perceived as obstacles to any form of human settlement or subsistence production.

Peninsular Ngawbere tell narratives of family migration and early peninsular settlement which indicate a sense of cultural affinity that they share with Ngawbere who live in the valleys of Cricamola River

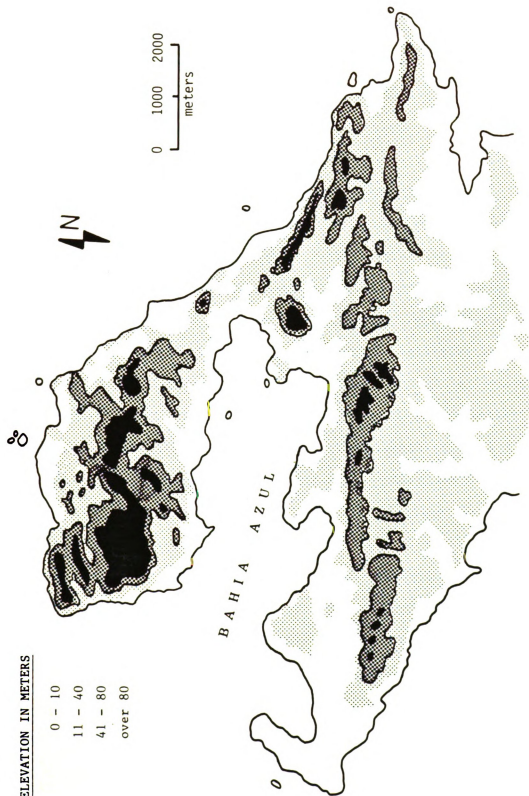


Figure 7. Elevation, Northern Valiente Peninsula.

tributaries. Contrasting their own origins with those of the non-indigenous population, Ngawbere say that to be born Ngawbere is to be descended from those who were born in the hills and mountains "above the [river's] arms" [*kudébiti*], whereas living near the swamps and deriving one's livelihood from the sea is a way of life that is associated with the non-indigenous population inhabiting the coast.

Settlement and Transportation

Ngawbere settlement in the northern Valiente Peninsula occurred sporadically as people from Cricamola River came to the coast in the 1800s. When banana growers began establishing plantations along the Chiriquí Lagoon coast at the turn of the century, Ngawbere migration increased. Settlement of the Valiente Peninsula initially comprised small homesteads of mostly siblings with their respective families, as siblings followed siblings (cousins) often through an arrangement to marry someone who had migrated earlier. Descendants of these families remained in the Valiente Peninsula, and either continued to live on the same land or claimed new land quite close to that which had been claimed by earlier generations.

Today there are seven larger peninsular homesteads in the northern Valiente Peninsula ranging in size from 13 to 102 households, as well as a number of smaller homesteads (Figure 8). The mean number of households for the seven larger homesteads is 39 (inhabited by different families), whereas the smaller homesteads comprise less than twelve households whose members belong to, or have married-into, the same family.

As already indicated, peninsular homesteads (with one exception) are

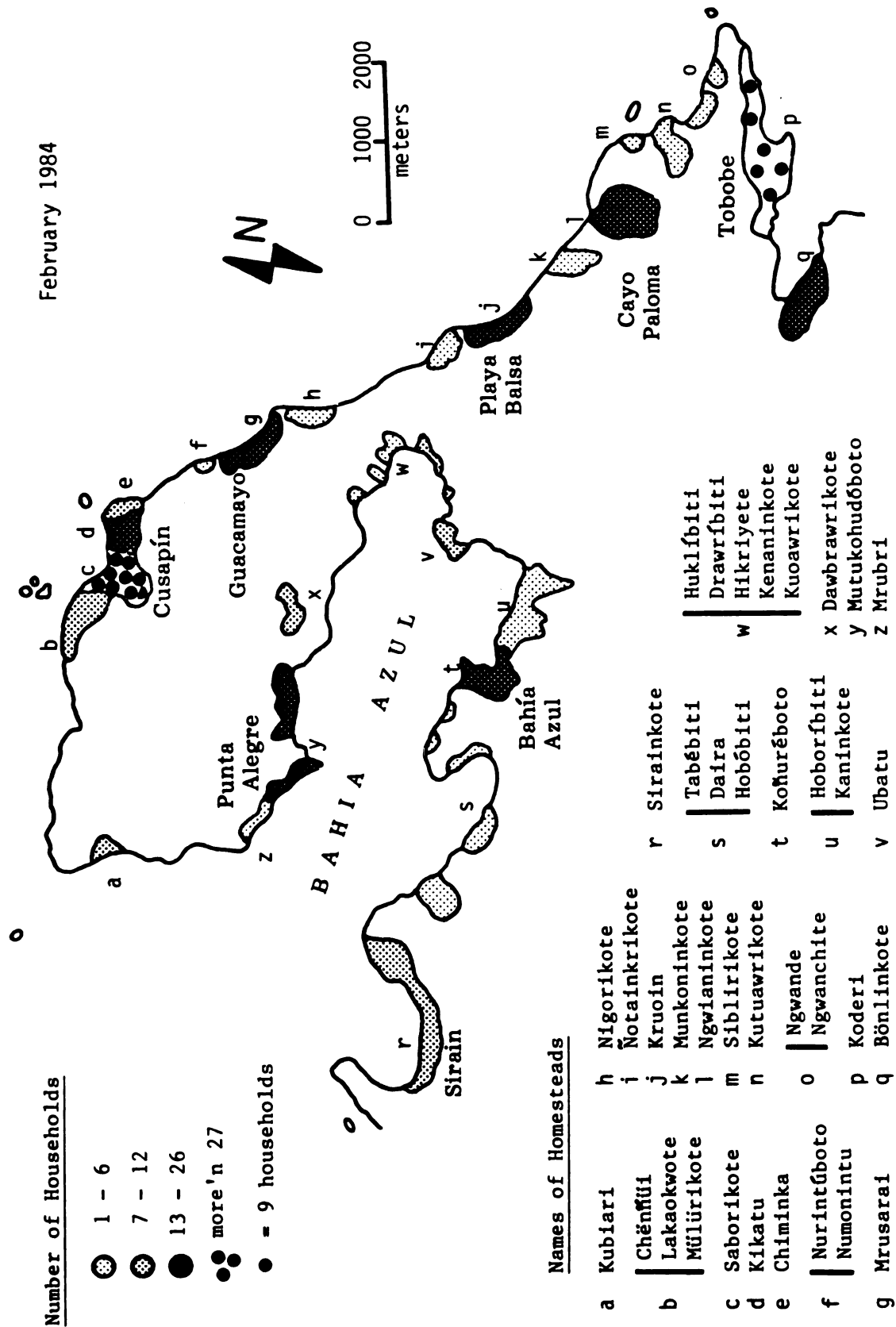


Figure 8. Homesteads, Northern Valiente Peninsula.

located along beaches that have sheltered harbors and at least two streams that can be used for drinking water and toilet facilities, respectively. Ngawbere, therefore, have become a coastal population following their migration from the mountains. For the most part, the larger homesteads have grown at a slightly faster pace than the smaller ones. For example, the geographic center of one of the fastest growing homesteads in the northern Valiente Peninsula moved westward since its initial settlement (Figure 9). The two original families cleared land by streams called Oreri and Sabori, respectively. Their descendants and later Ngawbere immigrants were allowed to settle to the west of these two streams. Today this community comprises six homesteads (Figure 10) and, by the estimates of Ngawbere, has one of the largest concentrations of Ngawbere population within the Indigenous Reserve.

Ngawbere take note of their more recent settlement along the beaches which have sheltered harbors. In these areas, they have developed a system of ditches to drain the swamps to make the land inhabitable. They indicate that their pattern of later settlement was a response required by a peninsular environment that has only hills and streams, instead of mountains and rivers. Ngawbere recognize that their means of livelihood has become "coastalized." "[Our] surroundings differ," they say, "Now we are coastalized." Their statements are intended to reflect a historic continuity with those who settled the Valiente Peninsula before them, without implying that they are anything other than Ngawbere, much like Barth's (1967) contention that Swat continue to think of themselves as Swat despite having moved to the national capital.

As they migrated to the Valiente Peninsula, Ngawbere adapted a

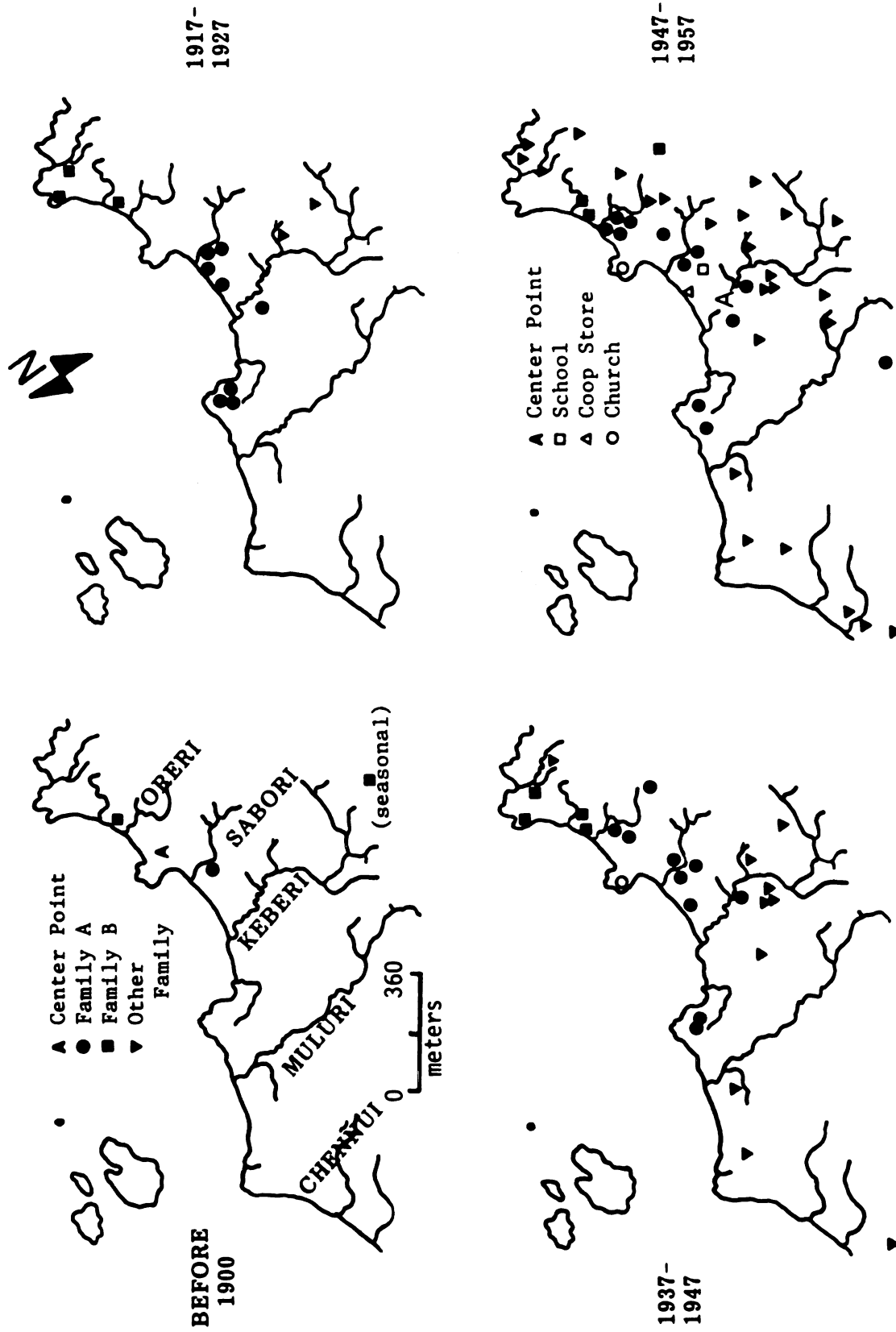


Figure 9. Residence and Descent in Cusapín.

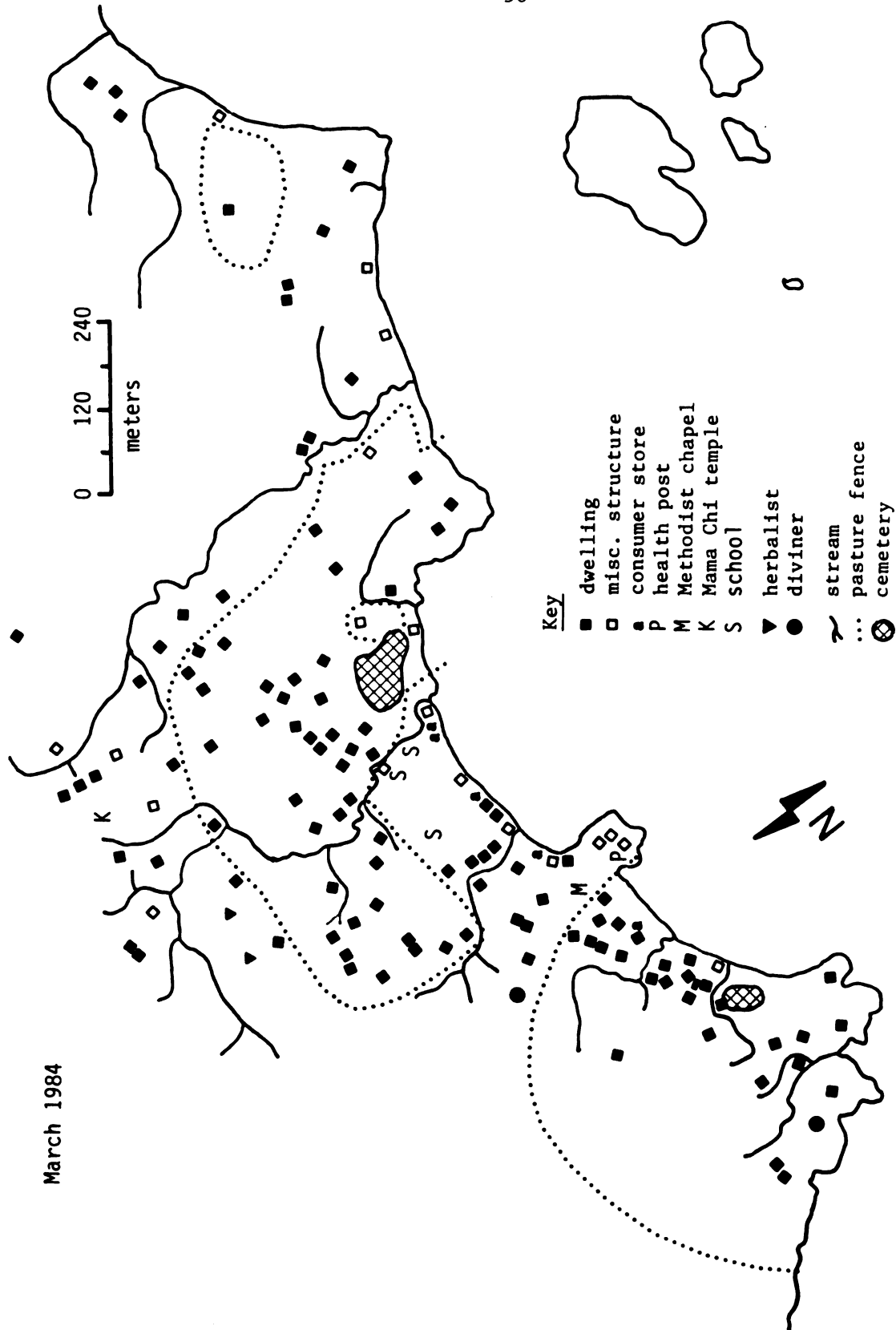


Figure 10. Cusapín, the Study Community.

coastal housing style that relied more on the natural materials of the coast than what they had been using in the mountains. Narratives² indicate that the original housing style was round, with high roofs. Despite a shift in housing from round to rectangular shapes, especially along the coast, platforms are used to keep people off the ground while sleeping at night. Today staggered "living platforms" have raised the function of cooking from the ground, while keeping it "lower" than the sleeping area. A shift from natural to commercial materials has occurred only in the past decade, however. Ngawbere distinguish between houses made from natural materials and those comprising either aluminum sheets for roofing and/or mill lumber for floors and walls, but natural material is preferred for the roof, since they claim that palm thatching lasts longer and experiences fewer leaks than the aluminum sheets. Even today, regardless of what materials are used, all of the houses in the Valiente Peninsula³ continue to be built on supports above the ground.

Throughout the entire province, the major mode of transportation is by boat and by foot. Except when rough seas make travel impossible, boat travel is the only means of transportation between the northern Valiente Peninsula and other parts of the province. Since the introduction of motors among peninsular Ngawbere sometime in the past 30 to 40 years, long distance travel between points along the provincial coast is accomplished in log-hewn canoes powered by outboard motors. Smaller versions of these same craft using either sails or paddles are employed for short distance travel, especially along the peninsular coast. All the homesteads in the Valiente Peninsula are connected by foot trails, and there is a little-used foot trail which connects the northern portion

of the Valiente Peninsula with a few of the homesteads along the southern peninsular coast and even Cricamola River.

Provincial Government

Bocas del Toro Province is divided into three districts (namely, Bastimentos, Chiriquí Grande, Bocas del Toro), and each district is further divided into smaller units known as "parishes" (corregimientos). The governor appoints a resident as the local magistrate (corregidor) and another as mayor (alcalde) to govern local matters in each parish and district, respectively. There also is a system for selecting legislators at the national level, whereby four elected assemblymen (representantes) represent the province before the National Assembly. The right to elect the assemblymen is "rotated" every two years among four separate parishes within each province.

The primary responsibility of the mayor is the approval of licenses for the operation of commercial establishments within his district. The magistrate oversees the recording of vital statistics on births and deaths, enforces municipal laws regarding domestic animals and arbitrates complaints involving land ownership or public disturbances. During the period of fieldwork, the magistrate of Bahía Azul and the mayor of the District of Bocas del Toro were Ngawbere, and one of the four provincial assemblymen was a resident of Bahía Azul. None of the three became greatly involved in local affairs, however, preferring instead to allow the heads of families to handle most complaints involving land disputes and public disturbances. When requested, the Bahía Azul magistrate arbitrated some land disputes in congress with the heads of families.

Ngawbere prefer traditional ways of litigation over Panamanian laws, and, hence, they distinguish between the "rules of Ngawbere [culture]" [lei Ngawbere] and the "rules of government" [lei chiwi].

Religious Organizations

A total of three Protestant denominations have organized local congregations among peninsular Ngawbere. All three congregations are sponsored by a parent organization in the national capital, but local residents serve as lay preachers.

As the oldest and largest, the Methodist mission has been operating for over 60 years in the Valiente Peninsula. They have constructed cement block facilities in two of the larger homesteads, and local residents in two other locales have constructed smaller chapels using natural materials. Following the lead of a single individual who was converted while working on the banana plantations, two Protestant denominations in the past decade have established a small following in several peninsular homesteads. One of these, the Panamanian Jehovah's Witness Society, has constructed a small wooden chapel in one homestead, and local residents from this homestead visit other homesteads for purposes of proselytizing. And still another homestead has a small chapel constructed with the support of the Apostles' Creed mission.

Most of the local residents, however, belong to the native Ngawbere church known along the Bocas del Toro coast as Mama Tata (and elsewhere in Ngawbere territory as Mama Chi). The main Mama Tata facility along the northern Valiente Peninsula is located in the community of Cusapín, although many homesteads along the peninsular coast have a small chapel

or local household wherein Mama Tata services are held. The movement has been active throughout the Valiente Peninsula almost since its inception in Chiriquí Province some twenty years ago.⁴

Members refer to their nativistic movement variously as "the Catholicism of Ngawbere" [Ngawbere katóliko] and "the way of the cross" [krusogobran]. Both epithets refer to the syncretistic nature of the movement wherein Ngawbere have incorporated more from the teachings of Catholic than Protestant missionaries over the centuries. Ngawbere note similarities between their poverty and the teachings of Catholicism, but they have not adopted Christian tenets without modification. Despite an observation that both groups are poor "wilderness" people who derive a part of their livelihood from fishing, Ngawbere distinguish their origin from those of the Christians who live across the sea. As a result, the Mama Tata movement refines its teachings from time to time to emphasize a separatistic attitude toward inter-ethnic relations. One of the focal points of Mama Tata philosophy in this decade is a call to members to reduce their reliance on cash by increasing their involvement in a horticulture-oriented livelihood within the Indigenous Reserve.

Whereas the Protestant denominations maintain informal ties with their respective organizations in the national and provincial capitals, the Mama Tata church seeks to maintain active ties throughout the Valiente Peninsula as well as along the coast as far east as Río Caña and as far west as the banana plantations. To this end, Mama Tata leaders attend organizational meetings with similar groups in Río Caña, Río Cricamola, Río Jalí, Changuinola, Almirante and the Chiriquí Lagoon islands. (Refer to Figure 6, p. 48)

Ngawbere Livelihood

Land-Use

The unsettled portion of the northern Valiente Peninsula is covered with regrowth vegetation of varying density that is interspersed in many areas with evergreens, deciduous trees and, near the beaches, mangrove swamps. Ngawbere in the Valiente Peninsula refer to the tropical forest environment as "[that which] appears rumpled, ruffled" [konsen] in an allusion to the uneven appearance of the forest vegetation. The undergrowth is reduced more where the tree canopy is thickest owing to a lack of sunlight penetrating to the forest floor. Along the ridges it is reduced the most, since the staggering of trees on the slopes allows more sunlight to penetrate than on the ridges (Gordon 1982:59-61).

In contrast, areas of human settlement on the northern Valiente Peninsula show intensive clearing of underbrush, trees and most stumps. In the homesteads having the larger populations, these cleared areas serve jointly as cattle pasture and human settlement. When Ngawbere refer to the pasture lands as "the self imprint-alongside" [hatóbotó], they are alluding to the clearing of a forested area by human labor in much the same way the land surface around a house is denuded by removing all the surrounding weeds and stumps.

There is an interrelationship between the periodicity of forest vegetation growth and the land-use practices employed by Ngawbere. They recognize aspects of these interrelationships and describe the advantages of their land-use practices by making reference to those who preceded them: "my father used to .." [tí umbre ..] or, talking to the field investigator, "the old ones told us .." (los viejos nos decían ..).

The land-use cycle includes a phase of (natural) shrub regrowth for approximately five years after the clearing-planting of a parcel, which is then followed by a (natural) thinning of the shrubs beyond five years as the trees begin to form a canopy above the forest floor (Gordon 1982: 81-88). Leaving the trees atop the ridges serving as forest trails, Ngawbere complement the natural process by planting fruit trees along the slopes and ridges of the hills they have cleared for cultivation.

The primary crops on which Ngawbere depend for food along the northern Valiente Peninsula are root tubers, banana plants and fruit trees. Less work is required to produce these crops than the more labor-⁵intensive corn and rice, which form the basic diet of rural peoples in other areas of tropical forest areas in Panama and Costa Rica.

Ngawbere produce some four kinds of root tubers (yam, manioc, taro, otoi), several varieties of banana and peach palm, and fruits such as coconut, cacao, breadfruit, mango, soursop, pineapple, sugar cane, malay apple, oranges and others. The yam, peach palm, bananas and cacao provide the bulk of the diet for Ngawbere on the Valiente Peninsula and are augmented in varying amounts by manioc, taro, otoi and breadfruit. When Ngawbere have access to cash, their diet is complemented with mill rice, flour, sugar, salt and coffee.

Horticulture

The form of swidden agriculture that is practiced by Ngawbere along the northern Valiente Peninsula is one of "slash" [ko mete] without the "burn." First, a section of land is cleared. The men use machetes to clear away the brush and the overhanging vines, leaving the larger trees.

A few days after the field is cleared, seeds are collected by each household for planting. Prior to the full moon, the cleared land is seeded [nüko]. Since the controlled shade suppresses weed growth (Gordon 1982:61), leaving the trees reduces the weeds which would compete with the seedlings once they begin to grow. After planting, the trees are cut down [kri nete]. This opens the field to sunlight, which promotes the growth of the seedlings as well as weeds.

The harvest period for the yam occurs simultaneous with its planting. Machetes and digging sticks are used to extract the yams from the earth. Since the "head" [dokwo] of the yam serves as its seed, the "heads" of the harvested yams are replanted in the loosened earth from which the whole yam was extracted. This allows the loosened earth to serve as the bed for (re)planting before the rains harden the earth, and eliminates having to loosen a new patch of earth with either a digging stick or machete.

Fields are replanted each year for some two to five years following their first planting. Then the land is left to fallow for periods of eight or more years. The term konsenta (after konsen, 'rumpled, ruffled appearance') means "repeated forestation" and denotes the forest in general or a fallowing field in particular; konsenta refers to re-growth vegetation that springs up after a field is cleared. For the first five years, as already indicated, the re-growth vegetation is thick, but after five years it thins out as a new canopy of trees develops above the undergrowth below. There is another advantage to letting the fields fallow, since many of the tree species which have been cut require about eight to ten years to reach a diameter which is the right size for the

triad logs used in the domestic cooking fire.

Although most of the planting of yams is accomplished in the same fields from which they are harvested, fallowing fields occasionally are re-introduced into the agricultural cycle. To do this the land is cleared (as described above), and the fullest yam "heads" are set aside along with yam "heads" borrowed from neighboring households. This means that lands are cleared thoroughly when first introduced into the agricultural cycle and when they are returned to use, but only cleared minimally in those portions, and at the same time, that the crops are being harvested.

Procurement of Protein

Fishing, turtling and sardine catching are the major activities for procuring protein. Whereas fishing is a year-round activity, turtling and sardining are seasonal.

The principal means of fishing is hand-lining, either by using bait [gwa kite] or, less often, by trolling with handmade lures [gwa hoge]. The men customarily travel to offshore sites which they regard as fishing banks, or they fish from the beach and rocks along the peninsular coast. During periods of calmer weather, the younger men go skin diving along the shore, where they secure a variety of reef fishes, lobster and crabs.

Ngawbere consider May through August as their primary fishing season. These months correspond to the migration of the hawksbill and green turtle to nesting grounds in Costa Rica; their sea routes pass along the Bocas del Toro coast. The principal means of securing the turtle is by boat, using either long lances or nets. Paddling out to

sea, the men use the lances to spear the turtles [ngirí toke] when they surface to breathe. Otherwise, nets are used to catch the turtles; most of the men who set nets travel to two deserted islands in the northern portion of the Chiriquí Lagoon or to Escudo de Veraguas off the Atlantic coast, where they spend several weeks tending their nets. The turtles are butchered, and their meat is distributed among kinsmen much like the distribution of animal meat following a hunt in historic times (Guardia 1982).

Several times during the year, Ngawbere take advantage of the "sardine runs" which occur along the beaches of the northern Valiente Peninsula. When these occur, the women form sardine-catching teams and patrol the beaches in search of the schools of sardines [kuíta kain]. The men sometimes join them during the months of November and February when the two preferred species of sardine arrive in large numbers. Unlike the turtle and lobster, the sardines are caught primarily for home consumption. A small portion of the catch generally is used by the men and young boys as bait for fishing trips.

Cattle, pigs and domestic fowl provide a supplemental source of protein along the northern Valiente Peninsula. Nearly every household raises chickens, and a few raise ducks, although fowl is eaten only on special occasions. Since few households raise cattle or pigs owing to the extra expense, meat sources rarely are limited to consumption by a single household. Instead, when these animals are butchered, the meat is distributed among kinsmen within the homestead and/or sold to unrelated Ngawbere who live within proximity. Notice of an animal butchering often is passed around by word of mouth the day before it is to occur.

Land Shortage

The pressures of land shortage in western Panama that reduce the availability of land for subsistence compel some Ngawbere to migrate to other areas (Bort and P. Young 1985; P. Young 1985; Sarsanedas 1978; Cabarrús 1979; Bort 1976:34-65). For peninsular Ngawbere, the reasons for leaving are opportunities for land, marriage and wage labor.

A few Ngawbere leave for purposes of claiming and working new lands [ko den]. Even though they reside seasonally on these lands for several weeks or several months, Ngawbere are not "homesteading" since their primary residence remains in the Valiente Peninsula. In most cases, the new homesteads are located on the muddy floodplain of Cricamola River or adjoining rivers. Since the closing of school overlaps with the start of the yam cycle, a few families make the effort to harvest and plant on both their family's peninsular lands and land claims elsewhere.

Both men and women are included among Ngawbere who leave for purposes of marriage to someone from a homestead outside the Valiente Peninsula ("marrying-out"). Some of them return to visit their natal homesteads, frequently in some cases in order to continue working family lands during the harvesting/planting season, or less frequently in those cases where their share of family lands is minimal.

There are a few Ngawbere who re-initiate contacts with their natal homesteads following an absence of several years. This practice appears most common in Cusapín which has an extended school program of grades 7-9. Since many areas of the Indigenous Reserve lack schooling beyond grade 6, those who have ties to Cusapín make the most of them in order to send their children for additional schooling. While in school, these

children live with relatives in Cusapín.

The majority of Ngawbere who leave are young men who are attracted by the opportunity for wage labor in the western portion of the province ("working-out"). Most work as unskilled laborers. Since relatively few Ngawbere ever find opportunities for seasonal employment, many remain away from their natal homesteads for extended periods. For all intents and purposes, employment for these Ngawbere is "semi-permanent." After a number of years, the men return home to the Valiente Peninsula. Thus, a number of households in the Valiente Peninsula have direct access to one or more kinsmen who are employed in the wage labor force (Table 1). Wage work brings access to cash and medical insurance.

The most common form of wage work for Ngawbere is on the plantations owned and operated by the Chiriquí Land Company. Among the 102 households in Cusapín, almost two-thirds (64%) of the "semi-permanent" wage laborers work on the banana plantations; the parents and/or spouses of each worker continue to live in the peninsular homestead. The workers' housing is limited to the plantation camps, as housing in the plantation towns of Changuinola and Almirante is too expensive for the workers' wages. Since members of the family are allowed to visit the workers, they arrange their visits to coincide with the workers' payday on the fifteenth of each month. Men with boats from the larger homesteads transport the workers' wives and children, leaving a day before payday and returning to the Valiente Peninsula two to three days later.

The Chiriquí Land Company permits its workers vacation periods which vary from 15 days to two months. Sometimes the vacation period is divided, and the worker has the opportunity to return home to his natal

Table 1:
ESTIMATE OF EXTERNAL WAGE LABOR PARTICIPATION FOR CUSAPIN MALES,
BY LOCUS OF EMPLOYMENT, MARCH 1982-MARCH 1984
(N = 98 HOUSEHOLDS)

Residence in Community	TEMPORARY OPERATION		PERMANENT OPERATION					
	pipeline ^a		C.L.C. ^b		Govt ^c		Other	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
household head	12 ^d	52.2	10	11.1	12	38.7	1	5.0
sibling of household head	3	13.0	4	4.4	0	0	3	15.0
sons (virilocal)	4	17.4	48	53.3	12	38.7	14	70.0
spouses-uxorilocal	4	17.4	28	31.1	7	22.6	2	10.0
	23		90		31		20	

a) Includes trailcutters, supply loaders, boathands, kitchen help and other laborers for Petroterminal de Panama, the transisthmanian pipeline project (oleoducto), which, according to Morón (1982:203), comprises about 40 percent government ownership (through COFINA de Panama) and 60 percent North American ownership (through Northville Industries). Most of the workers were "laid off" by June-July 1983.

b) Includes packers, washers, porters, cutters and other laborers for Chiriquí Land Company (CLC), a Delaware-based subsidiary of United Brands Company. For a more detailed list of the kinds of employment held by Ngawbere, see Bourgois (1985:Figure 5, pp. 19-20).

c) Includes spray applicators for the malarial eradication program (Sindicato Nacional para Eradicación de Malaria), several rural school teachers for the Ministry of Education (Ministerio de Educación), health assistants for the Ministry of Health (Ministerio de Salud), laborers for the Public Works Ministry (Ministerio de Obras Públicas) and policemen in the national guard (formerly Guardia Nacional, now it is called Las Fuerzas de Defensa).

d) Includes one case of a household head leaving the malarial eradication program to work for the pipeline project, but returning to his former government employment once the pipeline project was completed.

homestead twice in a single year. As Ngawbere use their vacation leave periods to visit their families, the most popular time for leaving work on "vacation" is November and December (Bourgois 1985:45); these two months begin the harvesting and planting of the yam. A few workers occasionally travel to Costa Rica to purchase foodstuffs (salt, sugar, rice) which are cheaper across the border than in Panama. The supplies they purchase are then "sent" with a kinsman to their families, or they "bring" them home during the remaining days of their vacation.

Since most workers eventually return to the Valiente Peninsula, their time away is viewed as a "sojourn." Except for obtaining cash for needed materials and social security insurance, the experience of Ngawbere who perform wage work is of little consequence once they return. Ngawbere describe those who are working on the banana plantations by saying that "[they are] here-there-and-back" [ne dawn kwori]. The statement alludes to the workers' identity as Ngawbere and temporary absence from their homes by stressing their origin from and return to the Valiente Peninsula. For example, several peninsular residents had worked more than ten years with the Chiriquí Land Company before returning to live on the lands of their family or spouse's family.

The next most frequent form of employment is working for the government (about 22% of the "semi-permanent" wage laborers). Most of this employment is with the malarial eradication program (SNEM) and the ministries of education, health and public works. The arrangements for vacation leave are similar when working for the government to that of the Chiriquí Land Company. Some employment such as the malarial eradication program, for example, permits workers a leave period of one month for

each four to six months of work. The school teachers, in contrast, receive some three months leave from mid-December through mid-April.

The remaining wage laborers (about 14%) are employed by local firms in one of the three urban centers in the province, where they generally work as laborers. The others work as lay pastors along the coast.

Between 1982 to 1983, a number of Ngawbere worked for the coast-to-coast pipeline project, even though they knew the work was temporary. Most of them worked less than twenty months before returning to their homes. Since the rate of pay as well as the severance bonus was higher than any other available employment, Ngawbere lauded the hiring of a number of their people. They facilitated the process by providing boats for transportation and by passing along information on desirable kinds of work offered by the transnational company in Chiriquí Grande.

Making the Environment Ngawbere Territory

The use of place names by Ngawbere serves to identify the rights to and the regular use of a given parcel of land. The place name that is chosen is linked conceptually in some way to the land and sea and identifies a special feature that is characteristic of that location, such as the abundance of a particular species of tree, an animal that makes its home on the land or an event that occurred in the historic past. For example, the hill where one of the two original Cusapín families settled is known as Kikatu ('wild pineapple hill'), owing to several stands of wild pineapple [*kika*] growing near the stream at its base. Another hill farther away (that is identified on provincial maps as Punta Valiente) is called Braitu ('good fortune hill'), owing to

successful hunts in historic times.

Still another source of place names is a location in Cricamola River that is associated with the natal homestead of an ancestor who settled in the Valiente Peninsula. Names like Kankintu ('red hawk hill'), Mülüri ('manatee creek'), Muratu ('patate fruit [tree] hill') and Sirain (meaning unknown) have their counterparts in both Cricamola River and the Valiente Peninsula. The replication of Cricamola River place names is one way that Ngawbere bring a sense of continuity to the migration of families from their homeland to new areas.

Once a place name is chosen, clarifiers are added to the name to designate whether the specific patch of land wherein the site is located is a bluff, at the top of a hill, at the mouth, headwaters or alongside a stream, or, especially in the Valiente Peninsula, on the beach. For example, the top of the hill facing the beach where one of the first Cusapín families settled was called Kikatúbiti ('wild pineapple hill-atop') as a way of distinguishing the top of the hill from the whole hill (known as Kikatu). As another example, one of the two beaches along the northern Valiente Peninsula where turtles are known to beach to lay eggs is known as Kruoinumain ('balsa landing-sand at').

There is a tendency among Ngawbere to select trees and birds more frequently than animals or insects to serve as place names for sites on land, at least in the Valiente Peninsula. The imagery of trees bearing fruit and as a source of material (wood) for the foundations of human settlement is only part of the reason Ngawbere choose trees for place names. More importantly, the trees have the appearance of variability. Each type has a known longevity and a studied utility, much like the

differences between the types of soil, drainage of water and forest resources on the sites that are chosen for cultivation. The imagery of birds reflects the spontaneity and gaiety that they bring to the forest through their songs and movement, much like the sense of personal freedom that Ngawbere feel is instilled in people by working in the forest. Other choices for naming the sites of cultivated land include plants and animals that have utilitarian traits valued by Ngawbere such as strength, stamina, speed, accuracy and beauty (Table 2). Although climate-related phenomena are used for place names in Cricamola River, they are not used along the Valiente Peninsula.

The names of mythic locations are not used by Ngawbere for naming places on the land or sea. In prehistoric times, those areas outside Ngawbere territory were thought to be inhabited by human-like beings. Today Ngawbere designate these locations as "the far reaches of the universe," and associate them with climatic phenomena or the unknown forces of coastal swamps (Termer 1919:53n; cf. Jimenez Miranda 1984:18-23). Identified with the affix ni designating human attributes, these figures were embodied with human motivations and extrahuman powers.

Clashes and contacts with prehistoric populations likewise added to the number of mythic names for faraway places; the names seldom were embodied with extrahuman powers but often referred to motivations akin to animals more than humans. Over time the names given to places outside Ngawbere territory were remembered for the population that aboriginally had once inhabited that locale but were forced to make adjustments to regional prehistoric raiding and other forms of regional population movements by noting where the group next went, or that they no longer

Table 2: PLACE NAMES: SOME EXAMPLES

PLACES IN THE FOREST

Hills/Slopes: Betu ('gourd hill'), Bekriatu ('mahogany hill'), Bientu ('given hill'), Deketu ('mangrove hill'), Gwaritu ('fish creek hill'), Gwarikiáibiti ('little fish creek-above'), Gwaríboto ('fish creek-alongside'), Keberitu ('[fresh water] shrimp creek hill'), Sabotu ('monkey's head fruit hill'), Tabatu ('medlar fruit hill').

Streams: Gwari ('fish creek'), Gwariokwote ('fish creek rapids'), Nukwatarikri ('big swallow creek'), Nukwatarichi ('little swallow creek'), Orieri ('sap creek' [after santa maría tree]), Sabori ('monkey's head fruit creek'), Tukiari ('grey mouse creek'), Tukiarikudete ('grey mouse creek-headwaters').

Trails: Dawbrawrihiere ('bongo [tree] creek trail') and Sinhuhiere ('buttressed water [creek] trail').

CLEARINGS FOR SETTLEMENT

Hills: Badibatu ('fire ant hill'), Chibotu ('goat hill'), Hoboríbiti ('jobo fruit creek-above'), Kikatúbiti ('wild pineapple hill-atop'), Kituya ('enclosure hill-all of it'), Kuoawríboto ('cacao creek-at'), Michitu ('hummingbird hill').

Land Adjacent to Beaches/Streams: ChenMúi ('black man's creek'), Gwianinkote ('pidgeon [cove] creek-mouth of'), Kohuréboto ('swampland-alongside'), Kruoin ('balsa landing'), Kútuawrikote ('fish trap creek-mouth of'), Nútainchikote ('little red water [creek]-mouth of'), Nútainkrikote ('big red water [creek]-mouth of'), Sibilrikote ('coquina shell creek-mouth of'), Saborikote ('monkey's head fruit creek-mouth of').

ISLANDS, OFFSHORE ROCKS, BLUFFS

Ibiatu ('wild cane island'), Kúratu ('ant tree island'), Úbatu ('hornet island'), Krio ('huge-watch out'), Hodokwo ('rock head'), Hamdokwo (rock where Latino named Abraham drowned while trying to free his fishing line from rocks), Mútuhudóboto ('pig's point [bluff]-alongside').

FISHING BANKS

Chánboto ('vulture [island]-alongside'), Hevábiti ('Jehovah-above [bank]'), Hodokwóbiti ('rock head-above [bank]'), Klabúbiti ('pointed yam-above [bank]'), Kriobori ('huge-watch out straits'), Kúratúbiti ('ant tree island-above [bank]'), Kúratubori ('ant tree island straits').

existed. After the arrival of the Spanish, Ngawbere came to identify themselves with the other prehistoric peoples whose historic origins were similar to theirs, that is, they were "indigenous" to the land. They gave names to the European peoples (as outsiders) more on the basis of quaint features than on the basis of any extrahuman powers or qualities. For example, the name for North American refers implicitly to "the flow of the sea" and the name for Latino in ngawbere means "cockroach."

A place name is given whenever a person first "takes from" any location something of the environment or "strikes" it in some fashion. Ngawbere give place names to specific aspects of those areas within which they live and seek their livelihood (forest, cleared land, fishing banks). For example, the community of Cusapín has five beaches, four bluffs, seven major hills, nine streams and six offshore islands. Each one was given a separate place name as Ngawbere cleared, settled or planted the land in the forest and the islands located offshore.

Owing to the omnipotence of the mythic forces, the "far reaches of the universe" cannot be "struck" by anyone since the "heads" of these forces create and destroy rather than exist for the taking. Hence, the naming of areas above the earth represents a process of ethnocosmology rather than human contact. Like the use of place names on land, these mythic places retain the names generated over the centuries by Ngawbere. The names for these figures and their places of origin today appear mostly in the songs sung during some rituals and in the narratives performed by the healers and elders.

For horticultural purposes the first time that a plot of land is cleared the person clearing the land names it to "lay claim" to it for

use by the members of his household and his descendants; the plot can be an entire hill or the hill slopes that cradle a stream. The following generation the slopes of the hill are divided among the "claimant's" children. Where the plot is further divided into smaller parcels, a curve in the stream, boulder or a large tree serves to separate the individual parcels.

The original place name is retained to identify the exclusive rights of the family to cultivate the land. For example, the rolling hills known as Kuntonintu ('squirrel hill') are worked by the members of one of the larger extended families in the northern Valiente Peninsula. A nearby plot of land wherein a spring initiates the creek that runs alongside Kuntonintu is known as Kuntoninkudete ('squirrel stream-headwaters'). Each name corresponds to the land worked by (now) separate families. The specific locale where a family clears the land to establish its homestead likewise receives a name. These locales initially were located in the forest where Ngawbere first settled in the peninsular hills; today they primarily include the land that remains cleared but uncultivated along the beaches.

The fishing banks that are used by Ngawbere men also carry place names. These banks are located at varying distances offshore and carry place names that correspond to a location on the mainland or to one of several islands located near the beaches. The reason that many fishing banks repeat the place names of islands and mainland sites is to identify their locations with respect to specific landmarks (such as island rocks, etc.) that can be seen along the coast to guide the men when they are at sea. Although naming a fishing site with the name of a place on the land

occasionally serves to designate which family first began to use a site for fishing, anyone with a boat can fish the banks located offshore or the straits located between the islands.

As indicated, the plots of land used by Ngawbere retain their first given name even after divisioning the land over several generations. Ngawbere land claims in no way follow the practice of partitioning place-names that is described by Basso (1984) for the western Apache. Ngawbere homesteads that remain small in size exclusively occupied by a single family likewise retain the name first chosen for the site. The site of the dwelling, therefore, carries a single name without any subsequent (re)naming even when sons and daughters have left the main house and are raising families in the adjoining houses on the same plot of land.

A partial exception to place name partitioning occurs in aggregated settlements wherein unrelated Ngawbere families live as neighbors on proximate parcels of land. The place known as Kruoin ('balsa landing'), for example, refers to a wide stretch of beach in the northern Valiente Peninsula that includes the mouths of three streams. Originally settled by a single family several generations ago, a small patch of land within Kruoin was settled by two brothers who were unrelated to the first settlers; the patch occupied by descendants of the two brothers is known as Keklakro ('sea grape strip').

A more complicated example occurs in the community of Cusapín. One of the larger hills in Cusapín was named Kuointu ('high hill'). Since three additional families unrelated to the original family were allowed to construct houses on its slopes several decades after the hill was first cleared, each patch of land came to have a separate name even

though the entire hill technically has but a single name. Kuointu now comprises sites that have names alluding to the uneven outcroppings on the larger hill, including Kuóinboto ('high-alongside'), Utúbiti ('manioc hill-atop'), Nómontu ('mamey [tree] hill') and Siorotu ('oak tree hill').

Designating Outside Locations

Ngawbere are familiar with a number of locales within the Indigenous Reserve that are located outside the Valiente Peninsula. Those who have traveled extensively can recall the names of the settlements they have visited in Cricamola River and elsewhere. Even the settlements that were later established on rivers adjoining Cricamola River receive names from whomever (Ngawbere) settles the area. For example, the homestead that is located at the entrance to the adjoining rivers Río Mananti and Río Guaribiara is called Keiaininkote ('milk plant [river]-mouth of'), although the two rivers themselves as well as the separate streams that feed into these two rivers carry distinct names such as Kiain ('lowlands [river]'), Ño Halí ('own pact river'), Umani ('sand [river]'), etc. As another example, the Ngawbere settlement at Mann Creek is called Yokíbiti ('departure [river]-above'), since it is located several miles upriver from the river's entrance.

Those who have not traveled extensively within the Indigenous Reserve have little command over the names of the various settlements located along the numerous branches of Cricamola River. Nonetheless, peninsular Ngawbere are conversant with the common names that were given long ago for the principal rivers and islands along the Bocas del Toro coast. For example, Cricamola River is known as Ño Kri ('big water'),

Río Mananti as Ukra ('manioc bag [river]'), Cayo de Agua as Ñungutóiboto ('bead imprint-alongside'), Patterson Key as Kútáboto ('lard-alongside') and Escudo de Veraguas as Dekóboto ('east-alongside'). (For a map of these locations, refer to Figure 4, Chapter 3, p. 28)

In recent times, Ngawbere have given place names to some of the more distant locales with which they have contact outside the Indigenous Reserve. Chiriquí Grande originally was called Srikokote ('spinning joining [rivers]-mouth of'), but once the port for the oil pipeline project began to offer wage labor opportunities the name was altered to Sribikote ('work port'). The island on which the site for the provincial capital is located appears to have lost its original name, and today is known simply as Bokase (an adaptation of Bocas del Toro). When Ngawbere families began to homestead several tracts of land inland from the town serving as the provincial capital, these sections of the island soon came to be identifiable to Ngawbere from the place names given to the newly-settled land.

The banana plantations are another locale in Bocas del Toro Province with which Ngawbere have frequent contact. The most common designation for the general area of the camps where Ngawbere are housed and the plantations where they work is the term lineánmiti ("above the railway line"). The individual camps where the wage workers stay are called by their company-assigned Spanish names (for example, Finca Cuatro, Finca 31, California, etc.). No effort is made to distinguish the two company towns that are responsible for administering the plantation operation, and they retain their Spanish names (namely, Changuinola and Almirante). Since they originally did not settle the area of the banana plantations,

Ngawbere have not given (their own) place names to the various locales wherein they work and live while engaged in wage labor.

There is a tendency to refrain from naming large tracts of land and extended areas, particularly if they correspond to the divisioning of places inhabited by outsiders. The main reason for this is that Ngawbere give names for the places with which they are most familiar, which include primarily the small plots of land that correspond to the sites used by families rather than larger groups of people. For example, there is no name for the Atlantic Ocean or Chiriquí Lagoon other than the common term for "sea", and there is no way to designate the provinces of Veraguas, Chiriquí and Bocas del Toro, or the Republic of Panama. One exception is the region of Chiriquí Province that is known as Mikíbiti ('pasture grass-above') in an allusion to the presence of Ngawbere settlements in the mountains above the cattle ranches located on the savannahs. There is no corresponding term for the area inhabited by Ngawbere in Bocas del Toro Province, other than a general distinction between the lands inhabited by Ngawbere [Ngawbere koite] and those inhabited by the non-indigenous population [chiwi koite].

Summary

There are two basic distinctions that underlay the way Ngawbere view their relationship to the environment. First, they distinguish between themselves as indigenous to the land and all others as outsiders who arrive by sea and earn their livelihood from marine resources. Second, they distinguish the lands they clear for settlement and cattle pasture from the forest and the waters where they obtain their livelihood. These

waters once were the rivers of the mountains, but for Ngawbere of the Valiente Peninsula these waters today represent the sea and peninsular streams.

Whereas Ngawbere territory is predominantly hills in the Valiente Peninsula and mountains in Cricamola River, the coastal area inhabited by the non-indigenous population for the most part is swampy lowland. As such, peninsular Ngawbere liken their way of life in the peninsular hills to the dispersed settlement of their brethren in the nearby mountains and associate a non-indigenous way of life with the swamps and sea from which marine resources are secured.

Ngawbere of the Valiente Peninsula recognize that the principal livelihood of their ancestors was dependent on hunting and foraging activities in the tributaries of Cricamola River. They liken their first settlement of the northern Valiente Peninsula near the headwaters of streams to the origins of Ngawbere in the headwaters of Cricamola River tributaries. Furthermore, they recognize that their livelihood has been changed since they migrated to the Valiente Peninsula, that today their lifestyle has become "coastalized."

Horticultural production centers on the cultivation of the yam and other root tubers; the former is planted and harvested roughly from November through March. Bananas, the peach palm and breadfruit are grown as the other main sources of food. Whereas the root tubers produce once during a single season and therefore require replanting, the planting of bananas is staggered in conjunction with the other crops to assure the availability of food throughout the year.

Both men and women participate in the responsibilities of planting

and harvesting, although the men assume the heavy task of using machetes to clear the underbrush in the fields before they are planted. Once a field is planted, the trees which have been left are cut down. Although the preferred period for fallowing ranges from eight to twelve years, or roughly the time it takes for some tree species to grow to a size where they can serve as firewood, the fallow period has been reduced by families that are experiencing a shortage of land.

Ngawbere subsistence practices are based on a system of land use practices which replicate some aspects of the forestation process. Trees are left along the ridges of hills to inhibit the growth of weeds, just as fruit trees are planted along the ridges and on the hillsides once they are cleared for cultivation.

The men procure protein from fishing which is a year-round activity and from turtling which is seasonal. Both men and women participate in sardine catching, however, which is a seasonal activity. Some domestic animals also are kept as supplemental sources of protein. Once they are butchered, the meat from these animals as well as those captured from the sea is distributed among extended family members rather than raised for consumption by a single household.

Faced by land shortages, Ngawbere have availed themselves, whenever possible, of opportunities to claim new lands and/or marry outside the Valiente Peninsula but within the Indigenous Reserve. Most who leave the Indigenous Reserve make use of regional opportunities for wage labor. The most popular form of work is with the banana plantations operated by the Chiriquí Land Company. The next most frequent form of employment is with government agencies. Nearly all of the employment outside the

northern Valiente Peninsula is semi-permanent, since Ngawbere return to live on their family lands or the lands of their spouses a number of years after working outside the Indigenous Reserve.

Although Protestant missions have established local congregations, most of the peninsular population adheres to the teachings of the Mama Tata movement. Resembling Catholicism in some respects, its organization is wholly indigenous. Its teachings advocate that Ngawbere strive toward self-autonomy by earning their livelihood from the land and minimizing their contacts with outsiders, especially with respect to working wage labor.

Place names are given to designate the use of land by Ngawbere families. The composition of place names is derived from natural phenomena. Some preference is shown in the Valiente Peninsula for using trees and birds as place names. The system of naming is limited to small parcels of land that correspond to what is used by a single family. There is no overarching ngawbere terms for the larger divisions of land such as provinces and oceans that are associated with the outside world. Places in the Valiente Peninsula are identified and named in separatistic fashion much like the individuation of Ngawbere society into families and households, as will be discussed in the next chapter.

Notes

1. Falla (1978:45,66) stresses the structural aspects of ladinoización in Panama and indicates that indigenous children undergo a process of panamenización through the government school system. P. Young (1971:31, 32, 50, 52, etc.) uses the terms latino and afuera almost synonymously as a way of contrasting Ngawbere identity and their sense of territoriality. Sieiro de Noriega (1980[1969]:102-103) uses the term latino in contrast to referring to Ngawbere as autoctono, indio and indígena. Sarsanedas (1978:32, 48, 84, etc.) uses the terms latino and mestizo synonymously; he also provides a detailed footnote (1978:89n) on the range of terms used by Ngawbere for identifying themselves and others, as well as the terms Panamanians use to identify Ngawbere. The term for Latino [sulial] may be derived from another isthmanian language, now extinct; compare the two related terms presented in Lehmann (1920:1:158-159, 162-163).

2. Compare the circular dwellings in photographs appearing in P. Young (1971:Plate 7, 8, 9, pp. 110-112, Plate 16, p. 19), Sieiro de Noriega (1980[1969]:37), Comité (1982:82-83, 135), Cheville and Cheville (1977:154), Alphonse (1980:7, 79), Gordon (1982:122-123, 21), with those taken in the 1930s by Johnson (1948a:Plates 37 and 39, pp. 252ff).

3. The two preferred species of palm for roof thatching are huraka (Manicaria saccifera) and huká (Socratea sp), and the preferred wood for house posts is urá (Minguartia guia). One of the two vines that is preferred as cord for tying roof thatch (that is, tindra) is no longer available in the northern Valiente Peninsula.

4. On the commencement and consequences of the Mama Chi movement in Chiriquí Province, see P. Young (esp 1976b, 1978b, also 1971:1-4, 202-232) and Sieiro de Noriega (1980[1969]:51-54, 59-75). On the status of Mama Tata in Bocas del Toro Province, see Cabarrús (1979:46-50).

5. Some rice and corn are grown in the southern portion of the Valiente Peninsula, owing to the lowlands there rather than in the steeper hills to the north.

6. Regarding the effect of fallow procedures on Ngawbere land use in Chiriquí Province, see P. Young (1971:74-81, 1985:359-360).

Chapter 4: NGAWBERE SOCIETY

This chapter emphasizes the structuring of social relations for mutual assistance as the basis of Ngawbere society. Requests for assistance are imbedded in the practice of visiting between households. Since mutual assistance embodies the exchange of tangible and intangible goods, it is the principal manner by which Ngawbere, lacking access to the provincial centers of political economic activity, meet their subsistence needs. The chapter concludes with a discussion of personal names and suggests how word play on names, apart from comic relief, reflects some of the social virtues that are essential to the maintenance of Ngawbere society.

The materials herein are based on fieldwork and in most instances, especially in the first portion of the chapter, repeat the baseline data presented by Philip Young (1971). His study of Ngawbere social structure in Chiriquí Province both supersedes and supplements earlier accounts of Ngawbere, which, based as they were on superficial contacts, chiefly emphasized the isolation of Guaymí in the mountains of western Panama, their dispersed settlement, practice of polygyny and the use of fermented drink (chicha) during some rituals (Graetz and Pérez Ch. 1947; Torres de Iannello 1958; Lombardo Vega 1960; Candanedo M. 1962; Johnson 1948a, 1948b:51-54; Mérida 1963; Lothrop 1948; Pinart 1978[1885]). Since the material on visiting, exchange relations, personal naming and word play extends Young's discussion and represents new ethnographic material, very

little reference is made in the body of the chapter to the earlier work on Ngawbere.

The Structuring of Social Relations

The purpose of kinship in Ngawbere society is: (a) to determine land ownership, which is based on lineal descent, (b) to establish family membership, which is based on ties of consanguineality, and (c) to distinguish non-family from family, for purposes of marriage. Emphasis on the divisioning of Ngawbere society into households and families circumscribes the organization of subsistence-related activities and defines the primary networks within which help seeking occurs.

Kinship

The system of kin reckoning employed by Ngawbere to identify genealogical relationships encompasses nine generations, that is, Ego's generation plus four generations of cognates above Ego and four generations (below Ego) lineally descended from the cognates in Ego's generation. The nine generations include both living and deceased relatives (Table 3). The farther one moves from Ego's generation, the fewer the kin terms for identifying male and female relatives. Beyond two ascending and two descending generations, there is a generic term to designate the generation (listed in Table 3 as the first, second, eighth and ninth generations, respectively). The multiplicity of kin terms for kinfolk in the generations closest to Ego indicates the importance of living relationships in meeting the responsibilities of subsistence activities.

Table 3:
TERMS OF ADDRESS/REFERENCE USED FOR KIN RELATIONS OF EACH SEX

AFFINES ^a		LINEAL		COGNATES		Term for Generation ^b
Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
NT	NT	NT	NT	NT	NT	ngobo (1)
NT	NT	NT	NT	NT	NT	etebaire (2)
kūbūna	kūbūna	roa	bicho	roa	bicho	NT (3)
u/NT	me*/NT	tata/ dun	mama/ meye	gru	bi	NT (4)
nadan*	yawraw*	Ego	Ego	eteba ^c	ngwae ^d	NT (5)
kūbūna	kūbūna	ngobo (bosi)	ngawngaw (dwanane)	nuro (bosi)	nuro (nikri)	NT (6)
kūbūna	kūbūna	braw (bosi)	bun (dwanane)	braw (bosi)	bun (nikri)	NT (7)
NT	NT	NT	NT	NT	NT	etebaire (8)
NT	NT	NT	NT	NT	NT	nuro (9)

a) Specific terms for affines are only given for spouse's lineal relatives and siblings. The term for one's own spouse is muko, and the generic term for one's spouse's cognates, as indicated above, is kūbūna.

b) The numbers to the right of the rows indicate the nine generations for which Ngawbere have kinship terms.

c) Same-sex siblings.

d) Cross-sex siblings.

Note: "NT" indicates that there is no term. The "slash mark" (/) separates terms of address from terms of reference, where appropriate. The term for spouse is placed in parentheses. Unless otherwise indicated by an asterisk (*) which identifies those terms used by males only, all of the terms are used by both males and females.

Ngawbere employ special kin terms when it is necessary to indicate whether one is talking about one's mother's or father's side of the family (i.e., meve kirí and dun kirí, respectively); distinguish close from distant kinsmen by attaching the suffix -reta for distant male and -nenta for distant female relatives; and combinations of kin terms to identify a specific genealogical relationship. For example, the phrase "grandfather's father on my mother's side" [roa dun, meve kirí] can be used rather than the generic term "great grandfather" [etebaire]. The use of compound terms often occurs in land tenure debates, when a visitor wishes to establish entry in a relative's community that is distant from his own natal homestead and, occasionally, during evening conversations when family histories are described.

Household

The basic unit of subsistence in Ngawbere society is the household [hy]. The members of the household constitute the inhabitants of a single dwelling and are responsible to each other for the production of foodstuffs, and share in the preparation and consumption of what is produced. It is the household that assumes the primary responsibility for rearing children in the social virtues and practices of Ngawbere society and, with the family, shares a large part of the responsibility for health caring during illness.

The composition of the household in the northern Valiente Peninsula is variable. Basically, there are two types. The first type is the nuclear family household, comprised of a man, his wife and their unmarried children. The members of this type of household are younger to

middle-age parents whose children range in age from infants to teenagers. The second type is an extended family household. Its nucleus is a man, his wife and their children, among whom are included one or more children with their families. Generally, the married child is a daughter in the initial stages of forming a nuclear family, rather than a married son whose wife typically lives with her parents prior to the later stages of marriage when the couple may live either near or with his parents. In Cusapín, some 54 of 102 households are nuclear family households, and the other 48 households are extended family households.

Acting as joint owners of the household [hu bunkon], the married couple assume the responsibility of subsistence management. Daily the couple select who will go where in order to perform the work that is needed to maintain the household. The husband-wife pair decide when it is time to go to the forest to work subsistence plots or secure food, when it is time to procure protein, and who will feed and care for the household's animals, if they own any. If necessary, subsistence chores are divided. For example, the man and his sons may go fishing while the wife and daughters go to the forest, or one or two sons may go fishing while the rest of the members of the household go to the forest. The heads of household also decide whether they have sufficient food to spare if a family member visits the household in order to ask for food.

If the couple are living on the lands of the man, he decides, when he is requested, whether his household can spare someone to work in the field of another family member. If living on the wife's lands, the female spouse coordinates the household's subsistence activities in conjunction with those of her parents. In either case, the male spouse

assumes responsibility for procuring protein, usually by fishing or turtling. He may go alone, or he may accompany his own or one of his wife's kinsmen. If the household has very young children, the female spouse or one of her older daughters may stay home to care for them, while its other members are performing subsistence work.

Through the household, Ngawbere children are taught how to perform the major activities of subsistence horticulture (planting, harvesting, transporting). Apart from the basics, girls and boys also learn a number of other skills that are essential for living in Ngawbere society. Girls learn about cooking, sewing, washing and child-rearing by helping their mothers and other kinswomen in these tasks. Boys learn about clearing land, cutting and transporting firewood as well as how to procure protein by fishing and butchering domestic animals through participating in these tasks with their fathers and other male kinsmen. While learning these tasks, children are imbued with the social virtues of calmness in the face of tribulation, stamina for completing a task despite obstacles and patience in the knowledge that all things are reciprocating, that hardship can become plenty as much as plenty can turn to hardship.

Besides teaching children the principal activities necessary to make them well-rounded subsistence workers, each child is taught to find the tasks that he or she performs best and develop the skills necessary to perform these tasks well. These tasks may be subsistence-related chores such as fishing, or they may be related to other activities such as tool making, weaving bags, sewing clothes, performing narratives, as well as introduced activities such as forming political parties, repairing motors, or performing well in school.

Family

The Ngawbere "family" [ha mroko] is comprised of all consanguineal kinfolk ascending two generations from one's mother and father, and descending three generations from oneself and one's spouse. All others are "non-family." Non-family include (a) one's affinal relatives, who, as Ngawbere say, comprise "the world one step away" [kobona], and (b) all others who are "in no way related to oneself" [henena] consanguineally or affinally. One's affinal relatives include one's spouse [muko], spouse's family and one's kin's spouses. There are fewer kin terms to identify one's spouse's relatives than for identifying one's family's spouses. Whether one is a man or a woman, one's in-laws are called by the generic term kobona, whereas specific terms refer to the spouses of individual kinsmen/women. This is because Ngawbere emphasize cognatic relationships ("family") above those with non-cognates ("non-family").

The lineal descendants of each couple are assigned land privileges, as well as responsibility for the maintenance of fruit trees. The oldest living male in each lineage segment [monso hie dokwo] assumes the responsibility for distributing land to lineal kinsmen, arbitrates ownership disputes, and assigns times to lineage segments (or households) for cleaning and harvesting the familial fruit trees. Ngawbere define one's family as "[the people] with whom one eats" [ha mroko]. They are alluding that the family are those relatives with whom one works in subsistence production and, regardless of who performs the work of the individual parcels from which the food has been secured, with whom one shares what is grown by means of circulating and giving away foodstuffs.

Since subsistence is so crucial to their livelihood, Ngawbere view

subsistence-related social interaction within their own family group as paramount. They emphasize in their social interactions with one another the primacy of first seeking assistance from consanguineal kinsmen, then affines, before requesting help from someone to whom they are not related. Some tasks such as house construction and boat building are completed in collaboration with cognates as well as affines, before approaching unrelated Ngawbere to ask for their assistance.

Residence

The two predominant patterns of residence in the Valiente Peninsula are virilocality and uxorilocality. In the former, a couple establish their household on the husband's lands, and in the latter on the lands of the wife. Some 46 instances of each (45%, respectively) were recorded among the 102 households in Cusapín. Both types appear rather evenly divided between nuclear and extended family households (Table 4). The virilocal households frequently are those whose families maintain large land holdings, simply because they have sufficient land and there is little need for sons, when they marry, to remain for an extended period with their spouses' family.

Ngawbere call the household in nearest proximity to their own the "encircling bunch [apart from us]" [Ukwatite]. Neighbor households generally are those that are related to the man in cases of virilocal residence, and those that are related to the wife in cases of uxorilocal residence. One's closest neighbors frequently are also one's closest kin.

Table 4:
RESIDENCE IN CUSAPIN, BY TYPE OF HOUSEHOLD (N=102)^a

Type of Household	VIRILOCAL		UXORILocal		OTHER		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Nuclear family	24	23.5	24	23.5	6	5.9	54
Extended family	<u>22</u> 46	21.6	<u>21</u> 45	20.6	<u>5</u> 11	4.9	<u>48</u> 102

a) From October 1982 to April 1985 the number of households in Cusapín increased from 98 to 102.

Other forms of residence are rare. There are a few households which approximate bilocal residence; these are rarely more than temporary arrangements. Neolocal residence is not possible today in the northern Valiente Peninsula, owing to the absence of unclaimed land.

Marriage

Marriage in Ngawbere society creates a relationship between two families which ideally lasts the lifetime of a couple and serves to assure the availability of assistance, when needed, between two otherwise unrelated families.

During the initial stages of forming a marriage, a man passes a period of time with his mate in the household of her parents [dwanane]. He assists her with subsistence on her land and provides fish and meat, as he is able, to her parents. He also provides material goods, or even cash, if he is working as a wage laborer. The young couple are called upon to assist with projects such as clearing land for planting, building a kinsman's house or boat, and assisting with the care of someone who is ill.

The period a man resides with his affines is not set. If there is a shortage of available land, a couple may pass several years in which a wife stays with her parents while her husband works his parents' land or performs wage work ("works out") outside the Indigenous Reserve. Otherwise, a couple establish a household near one set of parents, either on the lands of the wife's family (uxorilocal) or the lands of the man's family (virilocal).

As a rule, Ngawbere marriage cannot occur between anyone who is descended from the same "great grandparent" in the etebaire generation. Since marriage by consent is today the basis for most unions, a few peninsular couples are related to each other closer than four generations.

A less common form of union is the exchange pact [koba] wherein the owners of a house arrange the betrothal of a son or daughter, or a sibling's son or daughter, to someone from another family. The two sets of parents become "co-parents by marriage" [koba] viz-a-viz the married couple [kobai]². The pact marriage guarantees that, should one or the other member of the young couple break off the relationship, his or her family is obligated to offer another partner to replace the spouse who leaves.

The "pact" of partner replacement is further articulated within the practice of the sororate and the levirate. In the former, a man marries the wife of his deceased brother, and in the latter a woman takes for a husband the brother of her deceased husband. The levirate evidently occurs more frequently among Ngawbere according to data presented in P. Young (1971:181-184) and data from the present study (six cases of the

levirate and one of the sororate over three generations in a peninsular community comprising 102 households).

Social Interaction

Ngawbere employ a system of personal naming along with kinship for interacting with one another. The naming system is structured as follows: (a) simplified variant of compound (Ngawbere) name for interaction among members of the family, (b) simple (Ngawbere) name for interaction with non-family, and (c) baptismal name for interaction with non-Ngawbere.³ Personal names are taken from the world in which Ngawbere live and incorporate features of sentient phenomena [ni] such as birds, animals, insects, wild plants and crops, along with parts of the body, human behavior, and physical attributes; Ngawbere also adopt the names of mythic figures for personal names (Table 5). The domains of non-sentient phenomena [ko] and location and movement [no] are not used for personal names. Topographic features cannot be used since they form the basis for⁴ place names. Many names have a meaning, although sometimes clitics are used to form names simply because their sounds are pleasing.

Ngawbere names often comprise synonyms and metonyms from the names of others, especially within the same family but rarely within the same household. The possible range of names, therefore, is unlimited since names can be improvised from the names of others. Whereas such names as Meri Chi ('little woman') and Iachi ('corn penis') are sex-specific, most names can be used to refer to either sex and include such indeterminate epithets as Krochi ('slender'), Ortro ('fatty') and Keso ('send forth vice'). Several persons in the same geographic area occasionally share

Table 5: PERSONAL NAMES: SOME EXAMPLES

SENTIENT PHENOMENA [ni] and related forms:

animals, such as Ñaw ('rabbit'), Kuará ('puma'), Hurin ('monkey'), Kwisó ('tree possum'), Kuntón ('squirrel').

birds, such as Chan ('vulture'), Chacha ('kingfisher'), Bisí ('tucan'), Choli ('sand egret').

fish, such as Chokwata (species with sharp fins), Gwoshan (species with tough skin), etc., but never Trû ('shark').

marine animals, such as Hinchigog (species of shrimp), Nôbo (species of shrimp), Holé (species of sea crab).

insects, such as Chube ('grasshopper'), Tuli ('wasp'), Rini ('species of gnat'), Nin ('earthworm'), but never Sulia ('cockroach'), the term used by Ngawbere for Latinos.

reptiles/amphibians, such as Dû ('iguana') and Tôbu ('carey'), but rarely any derivatives of species of snake.

domestic animals, such as Chochi ('chick'), Nukrochi ('puppy'), but never Minchi ('domestic cat').

principal crops/fruits, such as U ('manioc'), Be ('squash'), Mruchi ('little plantain'), Ichi ('little corn'), but never any type of prepared food except 'bread' (Chanchan).

parts of the body, such as Tutu ('double tooth'), Bola Tain ('red balls'), Klo ('beard'), Brukwô ('heart').

physical characteristics, such as Doboko ('heavy'), Ortro ('fatty'), Dichi ('little strength').

abstract notions, such as Antí ('and me!'), Ike ('burnt crust'), Keso ('send forth vice'), Kwaka ('bitter'), Kolinto ('machete imprint' in an allusion to Collins trademark).

NON-SENTIENT PHENOMENA [ko] and LOCATION AND MOVEMENT [ng]:

There are miscellaneous examples such as Dobro ('earth') and Ho ('stone'); but never climatic phenomena such as "clouds," "rain," "waterspout," "thunder," and never topographic terms such as "hill," "stream," "bluff," "beach," and never terms of location or movement such as "forward," "reverse," "fast," "slow," "up," "down," "in," "out," etc.

the same name. For example, there were two men in the northern Valiente Peninsula called Kiní (either a shortened form of the term for North American or a coined term referring to "continual enclosure"), at least two men called Ochi ('small danger'), two women called Okwo ('eye'), and several persons from different families called Chichaw, a shortened form of Kriawchichaw, the son of one of the first two settlers in the area that is now Cusapín.

There also is a system of compound names that are used in special contexts. These include a man's drinking name, which he chooses himself on the first occasion in which he engages in ritual drinking, and the name bestowed by a senior healer upon a younger novice healer. The compound drinking name indicates the birthplace of a person's mother and father. A double compound name (such as Kisi Gwarie, Kisi Munkoni) indicates that one's mother and father are from separate homesteads, and a single compound name (such as Dote Gwarie) indicates that both mother and father are from the same homestead. For example, the name Dote Gwarie indicates that both a man's father and mother were born near Gwari(kote). The healer's compound name indicates his place of birth and where he is living, but not the place(s) of birth of his parents. For example, the name of the healer Gwa Bla Kika indicates that he was born at Kika(tu), whether or not his parents also were born there.

Ngawbere names may change in response to the changing nature of a person's daily interaction with others, for example, he may assume a new role (such as corregidor) and act in a manner different from his usual demeanor. Or, a person's name may change at any point in his lifetime simply because of something significant he has done. For example, a man

of slow wit was given the non-family name of Ike ('burnt crust'); since he could be sent into tears at a slight provocation, several people in the northern Valiente Peninsula occasionally called him by such names as Chichi Kri ('big baby') and Kunkwon Miro ('shattered chaff'). Since it was known that he wished "to marry" but could not, he sometimes was called Kwaka ('bitter'). Another man was called Kwaka many years ago when he was coerced to marry his deceased brother's wife (who had one child); he returned with medicine for his ill brother, only to learn upon arriving that in the interim of his trip into the mountains of Cricamola River, his brother had died. As he learned to control his youthful frustration over the years, he later was called by his Spanish name as a sign of respect for his assuming the burden of family responsibility with equanimity.

The bestowal of personal names coincides with major social changes, namely, birth, youth, a second marriage and old age, or special qualities of the person, such as healership. It is possible for someone to have several Ngawbere names during his or her lifetime that may change or remain with him throughout certain stages of his life.

At birth, an individual receives a Ngawbere name from his parents, generally under the advice of an older relative such as a grandparent living in the same homestead. Some time may pass before a particular name is agreed upon, which generally occurs by the time a child is able to walk at about two years of age. The name that is finally selected often makes reference to the parents-in-law or is an adaptation of a name that was once bestowed on someone else (deceased) in an earlier generation. For example, the sixth child in FL's family was called

various names as an infant by his mother's kinsmen on whose lands the boy's household was living uxorilocally; his mother called him Titi ('small fry'), his brother called him Piri (has no meaning), his maternal grandmother called him Chi ('infant') and his maternal great-grandmother called him Chilio (a metonym of his grandmother's brother's name which was Chili). Although his father called him Papato ('father's imprint'), relatives from his father's family visited too infrequently to have their own names for the infant.

Since the young infant remains relatively close to home and since the most frequent visitors to interact with the people in his household are members of the same family, the family name is reinforced throughout the formative period of enculturation. The child learns to recognize that those who call him by his family name are the cognatic kin with whom his parents most frequently interact through giving favors, assisting in some way with subsistence and in sharing meals. Those who are not members of the child's family, if they happen to pass by or visit the household, do not use the infant's name, since they infrequently become involved in subsistence activities or give assistance to the household.

Once a child becomes older, he is given a non-family name by the elders in his natal homestead. This is the name that is used by anyone who is not part of his family. The bestowment of the non-family name brings closure to the primary process of socialization that takes place within the household and marks the beginning of increased contact with both kin and non-kin in the natal homestead and even in neighboring homesteads.

The Ngawbere names that are bestowed by family and non-family are

distinct from the baptismal name that is given shortly after birth for the purpose of registering births with the government, which, by law, must be done within two weeks of the child's birth. Baptismal names often are given in Spanish although English and French names also are bestowed; they remain the same from birth until death. The baptismal name is the one that is used in government schools for interaction with schoolteachers and between Ngawbere wage laborers and their employers.

Additional names may be given by a man's second set of affines, if he takes another wife and, as a form of respect, as a person gets older.

At death, the name that was bestowed by the family falls into disuse for that person and a kin term is used to refer to the now deceased individual. In contrast, those who are non-family continue to refer to the (deceased) individual by his or her non-family name.

Whereas kinship reckoning is a permanent system of specific terms for distinguishing people according to genealogical relationships viz-a-viz other people (social classification), the system of personal names reflects the social obligations that people assume in passing from one social role or category to another (social formation).

One never uses a personal name with someone who is older [umbre] than himself, only with those who are his junior [baŋi]. A person uses a kin term when speaking with an elder, that is, ideally, any elder except a parent-in-law. He uses a personal name more often than a kin term when speaking with those who are younger than himself. He uses a family name for family members, and a non-family name if they are unrelated.

The system becomes more flexible when a person is speaking about someone else. He refers to those younger and those older than himself

Table 6: SOCIAL INTERACTION IN NGAWBERE SOCIETY

<u>Speaker</u>	MEANS OF REFERENCE/ADDRESS (Men Only)					
	<u>Kin</u> <u>Ref</u>	<u>Term</u> <u>Addr</u>	<u>Family Name</u>		<u>Non-Family Name</u>	
			<u>Ref</u>	<u>Addr</u>	<u>Ref</u>	<u>Addr</u>
THOSE YOUNGER THAN						
-- One's Family	yes	no	yes	yes	no	no
-- Affines	yes	yes	no	no	yes	yes
-- Non-Kin	no	no	no	no	yes	yes
THOSE OLDER THAN						
-- One's Family	yes	yes	no	no	no	no
-- Affines	yes	no	no	no	no	no
-- Non-Kin	no	no	no	no	yes	no

NOTE: Male and female spouses use non-family names when speaking to each other and when referring to their mate.

with a kin term or a personal name, as he chooses, except, in the case of parents-in-law. His choice of a personal name depends on whether the other person to whom he is referring is family or non-family (Table 6).

The similarity in a number of names within the same family reflects the view held by Ngawbere that members of the same family share expectations of mutual assistance and reinforces the notion that family comes before non-family. Dissimilarity in personal names within the same household on the other hand reflects the distinctiveness which parents seek to inculcate in their children as they train them to find the tasks and perfect the skills they perform best.

Both kinship and personal names identify the extent of familiarity whereupon others can be called upon to help with the obligations of subsistence production. Children are expected to help their parents, and siblings are obligated to help each other as well as parents and parents' siblings, even when they attain adulthood and acquire additional kin

obligations through marriage. Everyone who is married is expected to assist the closest kinsmen of his spouse, especially same-sex siblings, parents and mother's brothers.

Prominent features of the phenomena from which names are chosen are perceived as the most salient characteristics (interpretively, jokingly, wishfully) of the people they name. It is one way that Ngawbere pay heed to the notion of personhood in a society whose maintenance depends on the subjugation of the individual to the group, which expects people to "pull together" for survival. Personal names also reinforce the virtues which are paramount for the maintenance of Ngawbere society and provide material for comic relief from social tensions.

Help Seeking

Requests for assistance in Ngawbere society are imbedded in the custom of visiting between households. Any social interaction in which two persons are conversing can be considered as "visiting" [basare], if one or the other is using the occasion to request help. Depending on the kind of assistance that is needed, visiting is instituted in most cases by the male or female head of household. The practice of visiting proceeds through four stages, as follows:

- a) announcement of desire to hold a visit,
- b) acceptance of invitation to hold a visit,
- c) organization of the visit,
- d) statement of purpose (making the request).

The visitor upon arrival at the house of another gives a simple greeting and identifies the person with whom he wishes to speak by using a personal name or a kin term. He then indicates his desire to hold a

visit by using the expression "I come before you" [ti ki mo konti]; sometimes, he may add the clarifier "[I want to] visit" [basare].

The term basare refers to one's intent to visit another in order to consume food or beverage, with the understanding that the implicit purpose of the visit is to request some kind of assistance. The phrase ti ki mo konti signals that the speaker intends to make a request for assistance to that household or present a problem requiring resolution. It implies that the kinsman, or whomever is being visited, was considered to be the person most able to help out. If the person being petitioned cannot help out, say, for work to be done that day, he may have another household member take his place (like a son) or he can recommend that someone else be approached (like a cousin or an affinal relative).

A principal feature of Ngawbere visiting is the serving of food and/or a beverage to the visitor; most of the time, the beverage is chocolate drink or fruit puree. This holds true if the visit is a first visit; if the visitor arrives at a time when food is being prepared; if the visitor is known to the household and has not been seen in a long time. A visit lasts as long as it takes the household to prepare and serve a meal and/or beverage.

Since food consumption signals closure to a visit, the visitor can estimate roughly how long the visit will take by watching the women of the household prepare a meal, or re-heat the cacao, and judge when to make his request. The departure is undertaken with minimal interaction, and the visitor is not obligated to state when or if he intends to return, but may do so, as a courtesy.

The implicit purpose of holding a visit is to request assistance

from another household [ayudaire]. At some point in the visit, the visitor states his reason for visiting, or, as already indicated, the visitee asks the purpose. The assistance may be required for the same or the following day, or the visitor informs the visitee of his need for help at some time in the future. Information is given by the visitor on what, for whom, and when the assistance is needed. Based on this information, the visitee decides whether or not to honor the request for assistance. He can agree on the spot to honor a request, or give an excuse, or state his intention to think about the request.

Requests for assistance between Ngawbere households resolve into exchanges of foodstuffs, animals, materials, equipment, or labor and services. All exchanges assume reciprocity. Reciprocity is the balance of payment which occurs between two parties in kind or in value as part of an exchange of goods or services.

The two basic types of reciprocity that occur in small-scale society⁵ have been identified as "generalized" and "balanced" reciprocity. The balance of payment can occur as a part of the exchange or it may be given shortly thereafter; it may or may not represent a value equivalent to what was initially exchanged, that is, balanced reciprocity. Otherwise, the balance of payment is left open to the discretion of the receiver in the initial exchange; it simply may be part of an ongoing relationship with each person helping the other when and if possible, that is, generalized reciprocity. As alluded, some exchanges are "paid off" immediately whereas others are left "open" for eventual repayment, whether in kind or by some other means and whether equal in value or not.

The notion of reciprocity is strong in Ngawbere society, both among

members of the same family and between individual households unrelated through blood but through marriage. Ngawbere expect assistance of various kinds from their closest relatives and nearest neighbors, even under a situation of partial hardship for the giver. If and when the petitioner is approached at some future date, he must feel a sense of obligation similar to that which he imposed upon the visatee with his earlier request.

Generalized reciprocity occurs in Ngawbere society in nearly all forms of exchange and assumes "an obligation to assist another" [biandre] if possible when requested or voluntarily, with the expectation of eventual return. The time, amount and conditions of return are left open. The sense of obligation repeats itself when the giver, at some future date, becomes the person petitioning assistance. Balanced reciprocity represents any direct "equivalent exchange" [kuitadre], whether in kind or in value. It occurs less frequently in Ngawbere society than generalized reciprocity.

Exchanging Goods

Kinfolk who reside in close proximity rely on each other for food, if a household has extra available. "Circulating" [buke] and "giving away" [bien ie] foodstuffs occur voluntarily or following a request. Foodstuffs include both staples and fish. Since those who reside in proximity are cognatic or lineal relatives, as already mentioned, they are expected to help out when requested and in times of need.

The example below illustrates the circulation of subsistence foodstuffs.

#3.1 19 Mar (Sat): In the morning, FL, his wife and two children head by boat for his family's lands, some 45 minutes away (they paddle). They return by afternoon, after digging yams and cutting a few bananas. They carry the foodstuffs in woven net bags [kra] from the boat to their house (a 20-minute task); FL and his sons return the boat (and later they'll send some yams to the boat's owner). FL then leaves to talk with [his maternal uncle's son-in-law] about possibly going snorkeling tomorrow, in order to catch some fish. Meanwhile, his wife sends a yam and a hand of bananas to her paternal aunt (living ükwatite). She cleans and peels several more yams for supper. She then places some six to seven medium yams in a net bag, sends it with her oldest son to [her uncle's second wife], where her grandmother is staying temporarily. She places three to four yams and two hands of bananas in another net bag and sends it with her second son to her cousin's household [where her aunt lives]. The son makes a second trip with seven to eight yams to her mother (she intended to re-send her oldest son, who, apparently aware of the second errand, has already disappeared after his first delivery). She then finishes preparing some yams for supper, and arranges seven plates for distributing the cooked yams among members of her household.

In this example, the circulation of foodstuffs from what FL and his household secured in the morning is accomplished by his wife. This is because FL's family is living on the lands of his wife's father's parents (uxorilocally). Each of the households receiving food from FL's wife are her family: her paternal aunt (first household), her paternal uncle and grandmother (second household), her paternal cousin (third household) and her mother (fourth household). The wife proportions out slightly more than usual, since only one or two households among the above four usually receive from FL's household per trip to the forest. This is because two days earlier FL's household made a trip to his wife's parcel (her paternal grandfather's lands) supplying their household with sufficient food for a few days. It is worth noting the inclusion of her children in the process of circulating the extra food.

There is a variation in the circulation of foodstuffs that occurs when someone approaches a household and requests to be allowed to harvest

food from the owner's field [hurite]. It is understood that what one can harvest and carry, one may take, once permission of the owner has been obtained. This commonly entails digging root tubers rather than harvesting the more easily obtained bananas or peach palm. The owner generally accompanies the petitioner to the farm on the day he himself has planned to go. This form of circulating foodstuffs in which one digs his own food from another's parcel more often occurs between close than distant relatives, and nearly never between non-family. The lands on which the petitioner is permitted to go, therefore, are part of "his" family's lands although neither he nor members of his household may have ever worked in that particular parcel.

When food is prepared by cooking and is intended for exchange locally, it is sold for cash among the households in close proximity rather than exchanged for some other food item. This generally includes items such as bread rolls [sa], rather than such staples as root tubers or protein foods such as fish. Sometimes, a woman may prepare a batch of bread, carry it to a neighboring homestead where she has a relative she wishes to visit, then ostensibly sell it to households known to her relative. Otherwise, the more common practice of food exchange in the northern Valiente Peninsula assumes generalized reciprocity which, as indicated, facilitates the circulation and giving away of foodstuffs.

Circulation that involves the exchange of something "alive" in equal proportions (the main form of kuitadre) occurs less frequently than other kinds of exchange. Animals customarily are the objects of exchange more often than food or other items. The limits of what can be exchanged are known: a bull is exchanged for a cow, a chicken for a chicken, a pig for

a pig, a large dog for a pig, a small dog for a cat, or a cat for a chicken. Or, if food, a sack of coconuts can be exchanged for a sack of rice, etc. Animals are exchanged between Ngawbere within the northern Valiente Peninsula, and raw foodstuffs as well as animals are exchanged mainly between Ngawbere of the Valiente Peninsula and those in Cricamola River, especially if the food is grown in one area but not the other. People assume balanced reciprocity in exchanges of this kind, since distant kin and sometimes even those who are unrelated are petitioned. Since exchanges of food between distant kin are infrequent, they are concluded with a "balance of payment" at the time of, or shortly following, the arrangement.

A number of items besides foodstuffs are consumable nonreturnable materials. These include firewood, matches, new or second-hand clothes, nails, nylon twine, fish hooks, soap, kerosine for lamps, leftover medicine, etc. Since these materials for the most part cannot be returned, they are "given away" or "circulated" based on some immediate need following a request for the same by the petitioner. Otherwise, an object or piece of material is "given away" because the owner has observed that someone else has a need for an item which he himself has, whether he has extra items or not. Children frequently are sent from one household to another with requests of this kind, after receiving a set of instructions from a parent or parent's sibling.

Some items that are circulated between households are nonconsumable and returnable. Such equipment as machetes, woven bags, axes, fish line, paddles, boats, motors, social security identification cards, tools, cooking utensils, lamps, etc. are circulated by "loaning" [bretaire],

rather than giving them away. Their ownership, therefore, remains the same. When the item is used to perform some task in which the person increases his supply of something, he returns a share of the secured material to the owner of the borrowed object [ütiodre]. For example, axes can be used to obtain firewood; woven bags to carry foodstuffs or kindling; boats, motors, paddles, fish line or turtle harpoons to go fishing or turtling. Otherwise, when equipment is borrowed, such as tools that are used to repair something, cooking utensils or pots used to prepare food and social security identification cards that are used to obtain medicine, the equipment simply is returned when the borrower is finished using it. Again, children are the ones commonly sent to make requests of this nature, as well as return the borrowed items.

Like the practice of circulating food, the exchange of consumable nonreturnable and nonconsumable returnable items assumes generalized reciprocity.

Exchanging Labor and Services

The exchange of labor and services follows two forms in Ngawbere society. One is that of cooperative labor, and the other is the contract.

Cooperative labor can entail pooling labor, as well as resources, such as gasoline, fish line, boats, paddles, anchor rope or motors, for example, to procure protein by going fishing. It also can entail performing some task, such as two or more individuals constructing a house or making a boat [hu sribiri and du kite, respectively], clearing a field using "festive labor" [huntaire] or assisting another in raising an

animal [bagin]. Ngawbere refer to all cooperative labor as "assisting another in the role of subordinate-emphasis on obligation" [ayudaire sibai]. Hence, generalized reciprocity is assumed in cooperative labor, since the participants who help out the petitioner can, at a later date, request assistance. This can occur, for example, when individuals rotate their labor by participating in each other's festive labor project.

Cooperative labor assumes an equitable distribution of the product of labor which occurs upon completion of the task. Each participant receives an equal share of what was secured (i.e., pooling) if that was the intent or he receives something else in return. This can include one or more fish following a fishing trip or the divisioning of offspring and/or butchered meat after an animal raised in partnership reaches maturity. It also can include a share of prepared food if the intent was subsistence labor given to another, in which case an equivalent amount of food is given to each individual who participates. The arrangement for festive labor, for instance, takes the form of a meal in the morning, another in the afternoon, as well as food to carry home for sharing with the members of one's household (what Ngawbere call ha mroko).

The negotiation of a contract [kontrato] occurs when someone hires another person to perform some task or construct something. It may mean securing firewood in quantity; building a house or boat; weaving a fish net; carving a paddle or axe handle; or performing some portion of the overall task, such as building only the roof of a house, or building the gunwales and refining the hull of a boat. Each of these tasks also can occur as a favor (among close kinsmen primarily), but what distinguishes contract labor from cooperative labor in Ngawbere society is the exchange

of cash. Hence, the payment that occurs upon completion of contract labor bears some resemblance to the idea of balanced reciprocity; first, the person petitioning the services pays the other a sum deemed to be equivalent to the labor used to complete the project, and, second, the two persons may some day reverse roles, with the payee later contracting the payer to perform some project for him.

The "contractee" often invites a companion such as an affinal relative to help him, thereby creating the means for dividing the amount of the contract payment between the two of them. In this way, the contractee is drawing on a sense of generalized reciprocity as a reason for creating the labor partnership which then creates the means to circulate cash. Since cash is a resource of scant supply in Ngawbere society and only obtainable through wage labor or exchanges that assume balanced reciprocity, labor partnerships are becoming more common along the northern Valiente Peninsula as a way of assuring the (re)distribution of cash among kinsmen.

Obligations and Conflict

Conflicts occasionally are associated with the attribution of unwillingness or malfeasance on the part of a person when he is unable to provide assistance to another. Having kinsmen in relative proximity to one's household does not always guarantee cooperation every time that assistance is needed or requested. There is a sense of security in one's social identity with a particular family; and, at the same time, there is tension over how one deals with those who are not always able to provide assistance, whether cognates or not.

Two sources of tension exist within Ngawbere society. One is inherent in the structuring of social relations that emphasize family relations over those with non-family. This primarily occurs over the obligations of mutual assistance a person holds to his own siblings and to same-sex spouse's siblings.⁷ Another source of tension stems from a preference for Ngawbere life over what is offered through wage labor outside the Indigenous Reserve. There is a security in being Ngawbere, having access to land and a series of social ties to turn to in time of need: these aspects of Ngawbere life are visibly different from what Ngawbere verbalize as the plight of the majority of Latinos. At the same time, the ruggedness of the physical environment and the growing scarcity of land creates a tension in efforts to earn a livelihood solely from the forest and sea, and requires that some Ngawbere perform wage labor.

One of the means that Ngawbere articulate their sense of social tension in order to diffuse it is through the use of humor based on word play. Recognizing that the fulfillment of social responsibilities often exists more in intent than in practice and that not everyone will agree that the proper course of action was the one actually taken (as seen through hindsight), word play emphasizes the fumbings of people trying to "pull together" to meet social obligations. Word play represents the (Ngawbere) axiom that virtues are extolled more often in talk than in action. Personal names are one of several sources of material for word play and serve to identify what is most salient in the behavior of people as they go about interacting with each other.

Some of the word play on personal names that occurs among Ngawbere is performed by replacing one name with another in order to refer to the

opposite of what one intends to mean, much like a variety of linguistic play that Conklin (1959) calls "discontinuous (lexemic) inversion" among the Hanunóo of the Philippines. For example, a woman who had been raised in the northern Valiente Peninsula was known as MÔKÛ by the members of her family and as Toile by her affines. At the time she separated from her husband and married another man, she began to complain of pains in her legs that prevented her from participating in subsistence chores. The members of her family (not those in her household) soon were calling her Michi ('flittering'), a name that mocked her lack of involvement in subsistence activities and the unappreciated habit of remaining at home.

A few personal names can be rendered with a Spanish translation. Sometimes the rendition in Spanish produces a name whose sounds have another meaning in ngawbere than either the original name or its Spanish translation. For example, a quiet young man named Tûbu ('green turtle') was called Carey, which, if rendered as Karei in ngawbere, would mean "given to song-emphasis on given." The rendition of the name in Spanish, a reversal of sorts, inverts the young man's normative behavior as someone who is unassuming and too much inclined to engage in interaction with only the members of his own family.

As another example, a man who was named Inkanchi by his mother acquired the name Lucifer in his adulthood for his frequent involvement in fighting and drinking. When he later became a member of the Methodist Church and gave up drinking and fighting, the name was shortened to Lusi which was understood by Ngawbere to be a Spanish name for a woman. By shortening the man's name to one that rightfully belongs to a woman, Ngawbere were employing a term that made light of the man's conversion

from his devilish behavior in the manly activities of fighting and drinking to become a member of an introduced church whose image among Ngawbere was one of serving only (foreign) women.

As another example, the man from Bahía Azul who was elected as "assemblyman" was once called Chochi ('chick') by kinsmen and Kuará ('puma') by other Ngawbere. Shortly after he was elected to the post of assemblyman, people shortened his baptismal name (Hipólito) because of its similarity to the Spanish word for chick (pollito) and began to call him Hipo. The name change was meant to pay respect to the man who was acting as liaison between themselves and outsiders through an indirect reference to his given Spanish name. By using the shortened form, however, reference also was made to the Spanish word for hippopotamus (hipopótamo) which thereby carried an implicit reference to the man's gain of weight after assuming office. Ngawbere were alluding to his government stipend, which was rather excessive by Ngawbere standards, as a way of making light of his interest in self-consumption as much greater than his redistribution and sharing of the stipend among fellow Ngawbere.

Neighbors of the assemblyman later took their name play a step farther to include the assemblyman's brother-in-law who was living in the same household as Hipo's wife's brother. The man's familiar name was Rinki (reference to tiny). Although he was not overweight, neighbors began to call him Elefante. Since the familiar names of the assemblyman and his brother-in-law both refer to something that is small, the alteration to Spanish emphasizes playfully the way that each was living on the largesse of someone else, as follows:

Chochi (tiny) --> Hipo (large): true reference to size
 Rinki (tiny) --> Elefante (large): false reference to size

By so doing, Ngawbere were calling attention to an excessive consumption by each man, one receiving a government stipend large enough to distribute among many Ngawbere and the other living with his married sister (a rarity among Ngawbere) rather than on his own.

There is another form of word play that occurs with personal names that alters their sounds in successive steps, much like the discontinuous substitution ("name chains") described by R. Rosaldo (1984) for Ilognot of the Philippines. Among Ngawbere the transformation of sounds in someone's name follows a sequence in which each change carries a meaning, until the final term results in a humorous twist on the original name. For example, the name of one Cusapín elder was Unsuni ('wise one'); he was called by this name in his later years as a form of respect. That name lent itself to some sound shifts during a festive labor event, when some of the men transformed the name from Unsuni to Unsun to Kunsun. The semantic transition goes from 'wise one' to 'earth butt' to 'Lice's butt,' taking some levity with man's wife's name which was Kun ('lice'). Since Kun already had five children (by another man) at the time she became Unsuni's second wife, the word play referred to Kun's second husband as "the ending" to her life.

Children's names frequently are altered as a means of instruction through teasing by re-arranging sounds, often from ngawbere to Spanish if it suits the adult who is teasing the child. For example, a young girl who was named Dami by her mother had her name repeated then altered to a Spanish sound-alike term (Dami, Dinamita) by a neighbor whenever he visited her parents' household. The basis for his joking was a shortening of the "name chain" of Dami to Damita to Dinamita (the last

term from Spanish). Semantic transtion goes from the name (no meaning) to the name + 'repeats' to 'explosive.' His word play on the girl's name was based on the knowledge that, lacking a sense of responsibility for completing assigned chores around the house, the girl often required rather explosive reprimands from her parents. The transitional term [Damita] specifically refers to her repetitive use of temper tantrums as a way to rebuff her siblings, and implicitly leads to the inclusion of the final term that alludes to not only her explosive nature but her behavior that draws anger from others onto herself.

As another example, the second of a pair of twins named Kiko and Kuki was identified as a future diviner. Several neighbors created an elaborate word play on the name of the boy not designated as a future diviner; and for a number of weeks, the older children called him Cricamola. The playful name assumes the transformation of the second twin's name from Kuki to Kiku to Kika, which gives a semantic transition from 'flown' to a transposition of the same sounds (which lack meaning) to the name of the local diviner.

Transforming the first twin's name from Kiko to Kriko to Krika(mola) carries a semantic transition that goes from 'encloses-he who' to 'cooking leaf' to a name that has meaning in Spanish (the river wherein originated the traditional lore of Ngawbere), but which is nonsensical in ngawbere. When the sounds of the nonsensical name are taken an extra step and transposed to Kakri(malo), the final transition combines meaningful ngawbere and Spanish terms and roughly means 'large (evil) song.' The word play on the names of the twins alludes to the Ngawbere belief that one twin will "perform good works" for others as a diviner

and the other will "create confusion" in others as in a bad song. By using the play name of Cricamola for the second twin, neighbors were implying that he lacked the inherent qualities that would make his brother a future diviner.

Summary

Among Ngawbere social interaction within the family is emphasized above interaction with non-family, primarily with regard to the performance of subsistence activities and when requesting assistance between households. Since family membership is determined by consanguineality, non-family include both affinal relations and other Ngawbere not related by blood or marriage. Affines become important to the family and the household, however, in relation to accomplishing larger tasks.

The family in Ngawbere society is the largest kin group that is concerned with subsistence although a number of households perform the work separately on divisioned parcels. The head of the family assumes responsibility for the distribution of land holdings among lineal kinsmen and the maintenance of familial fruit trees.

The Ngawbere household is the smallest social unit which assumes responsibility for subsistence, both in the form of horticultural production and procurement of protein. The management of the individual household is assumed by the heads of household, that is, a husband-wife pair, just as the household assumes the responsibility of rearing children in the virtues of Ngawbere society.

The major social transition in Ngawbere society occurs through

marriage from primary social interaction with the cognates in one's family to the addition of a new set of affinal relationships. Marriage requires that the husband pass some time in the household of his in-laws for purposes of assisting his wife's parents, although the period of time is not set. Eventually, and ideally, the couple establish a separate household, whether virilocally on the man's or uxorilocally on the woman's family lands.

Help seeking (mutual assistance) is the foundation of Ngawbere society and involves exchange relationships concerned with subsistence, shelter, transportation and illness. Imbedded in the practice of visiting between households, requests for assistance are initiated by the heads of household.

Foodstuffs, consumable materials and nonconsumable equipment generally are circulated on an ongoing voluntary basis between related households, or they are given away upon request. The circulation of consumable nonreturnable materials and nonconsumable returnable equipment assumes generalized reciprocity, and it occurs primarily with close kinsmen (cognatic relatives). The exchange of labor and services entails both generalized and balanced reciprocity. The exchange of cash in Ngawbere society differentiates contract labor from cooperative labor.

Ngawbere employ a system of personal naming which distinguishes family from non-family and the old from the young. Along with kinship, personal naming stands as the primary basis for social interaction. The system of kin terminology serves to delineate those who stand in some special kin relationship viz-a-viz another, such as one's parents, one's spouse's cognates and parents-in-law. Separate baptismal names are used

for interacting with non-Ngawbere. Ngawbere names serve to designate the degree of familiarity between people and to what extent they can rely on each other to "pull together" for assistance.

For Ngawbere, society is more than the structuring of social relations. They view society as a process of social replacement, as new people enter the family through birth or marriage and exit the network of kin relations through death, separation or migration. Since they change as the individual grows older, personal names reflect this process of social formation, all the while serving to mark any behavior that is characteristic or significant.

The variety of possibilities for personal names that draw on the natural as well as the social environment reflects the way that Ngawbere view the nature of human (inter)action. Names sometimes but not always indicate the social virtues of calmness, patience and stamina that are important for survival and having people "pull together" for the maintenance of Ngawbere society. Unlike the selection of natural phenomena with "stable" features for place names, personal names more often reflect the anomalies and vagaries of both the natural and social environments with which Ngawbere are familiar. The Ngawbere naming system, then, allows for a permanent reminder as well as a supplemental commentary through word play on the way Ngawbere society is articulated. As people pass through the stages of life, they may achieve success in some endeavors and perform noteworthy deeds, but they mostly experience themselves as sometimes fumbling, sometimes upright people trying to interact with one another on a day-to-day basis.

The use of word play using personal names is limitless and only

bound by Ngawbere imagination within the context within which Ngawbere live and work. By continually acting to reinforce the ideas that permeate Ngawbere society, and, more importantly, emphasizing the value of cooperation among family and among fellow Ngawbere alike, word play instructs while it brings comic relief to daily interaction.

The permanency of the baptismal name stands in marked contrast to the process of bestowing family and non-family names at different stages in the Ngawbere life cycle. On the one hand, the baptismal name reflects the inalterable position that Ngawbere perceive for themselves as a small group of people in a larger (uninvited) society not of their own choosing (i.e., Panama), and, on the other, the familiar name reflects a process of renewal and replacement of their respective social identities as Ngawbere. The personal naming system is reflective of the tension of identity as Ngawbere with obligations to family held above those with non-family, and those with siblings and same-sex spouse's siblings above others, and as members of an enclave population that often is in conflict with the larger populations surrounding Ngawbere territory, prehistorically, historically, concurrently.

Notes

1. In contrast, P. Young's (1971:41-43, 125-127, 132-140) study shows slightly higher percentages of bilocal and neolocal residence for Chiriquí Province than is found in the northern Valiente Peninsula.
2. One type of common exchange pact is the marriage of a brother and sister to another brother-sister pair. Either the two brothers or their respective parents arrange the marriage.
3. Essays on naming (people, groups, places) are found throughout the social science literature. The most useful for the present discussion were those written by Beidelman (1979a), Sherzer (1985) and the volume of papers edited by Tooker (1984). Writing about the !Kung, Lee (1979:61-72) presents one of the few discussions of naming that contrasts the use of kinship terms with personal names.
4. A clitic is a phoneme which lacks morphemic substance, that is, it has no translatable meaning. See the discussion of ngawbere clitics in Kopesec (1975) and Kopesec and Kopesec (1974); see also Arosemena and Arosemena (1980).
5. The principal discussion of reciprocity is that of Service (1966: 14-21) who bases his ideas on Sahlins (1965), and the subsequent recapitulation by Sahlins (1968:81-83, 1972:93-196, 219-220).
6. Occasionally a contract is arranged with little interest in a later reversal of payer/payee roles. This occurs when Ngawbere find themselves with regular access to income, such as a salaried worker who has spent many years outside the community while the members of his household remain within the Indigenous Reserve.
7. Ngawbere use the expression gwaere to refer to everyone "pulling together." The term implies a blending of cross-sex differences for the common good of the household and, by extension, the family as well as Ngawbere society. It is heard when people assemble for work projects such as pulling hewn logs to the beach where they will be refined into boats.

Chapter 5: HEALTH CARE AMONG NGAWBERE

The chapter considers the system of health care utilized by Ngawbere within the Indigenous Reserve. These practices for the most part rely on indigenous forms of treatment. The first part of the chapter summarizes the kinds of health care that are available to peninsular Ngawbere and includes an overview of their ritual system. The second part briefly describes how Ngawbere define health and sickness, and considers the way that they classify illness and determine illness severity. Attention is paid to the way that Ngawbere emphasize experience with their bodies, and how they view the process of healing.

Availability of Health Care

The health care that is available to Ngawbere in the northern Valiente Peninsula includes a variety of remedies that are either generated within the household or provided by a medical practitioner. There are four types of indigenous practitioner providing medical care within Ngawbere territory. These are:

- | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| (1-2) health assistant (<u>ayudante de salud</u>) and midwife (<u>partera</u>) | = cosmopolitan para-medical training |
| (3) herbalist [<u>kroko dianko</u>] | = folk medicine |
| (4) diviner [<u>dawngin</u>] | = folk medicine |

All four are found in the larger homesteads of the northern Valiente Peninsula (Figure 11). The health assistants are located in communities having health posts.

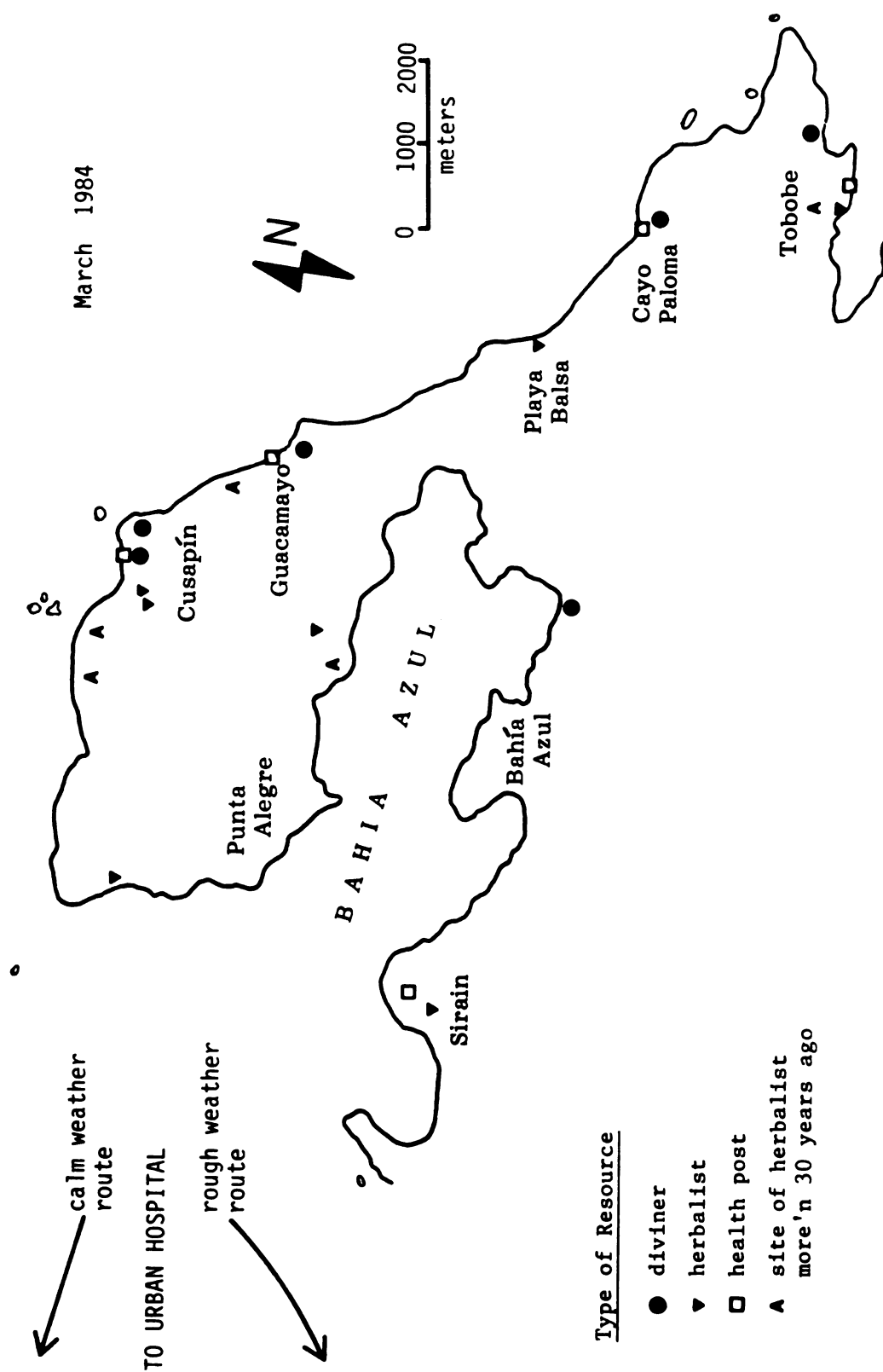


Figure 11. Medical Resources, Northern Valiente Peninsula.

Folk Practitioners

The healership of the herbalist and the diviner is regarded as a "gift" (don)¹ which is inherited. Among Ngawbere, the two folk healers are born to their office. Their knowledge is a kind of wisdom [ni tÚboto], which, it is believed, is acquired through the intervention of divine forces. Ngawbere say that the ability of the herbalist and the diviner "flows with the blood from [the moment of] conception" [dore bare kroko diankoa and dore bare dawngina, respectively].

The herbalist [kroko dianko] is one who fetches, prepares and in some form dispenses herbal medicine. He gives prepared medicine to someone who requests it, or he gives advice on an appropriate plant, indicates where to find it and how to prepare it at home. The knowledge which forms the basis for this service is the integration of a learned body of narrative information that is infused with a familiarity of the local forest environment. The narrative information is acquired by participating in formal oral dialogue [ha ketare] with other healers. Familiarity with the forest resolves into an awareness of the specific areas of the forest where the herbalist, his parents and his wife's family practice subsistence agriculture.

The principal function of the diviner [dawngin] is to sanction familial and communal vigils [gütaw] and the rite of abundance [mötaw]. This he does during client visits to his home, or during his travels. People approach him as in the practice of "visiting" and request his permission to hold the vigils or rites. The diviners who practice in the Valiente Peninsula also dispense botanical medicine, which is given as a single remedy or in combination with some other recommendation. For

example, diviners frequently recommend herbal remedies in conjunction with the familial vigil. The diviner, like the herbalist, learns his craft through participation in formal oral dialogue [ha ketare] and by becoming familiar with the local forest environment. More often than not, it is the diviner rather than the herbalist who assumes the major responsibility for memorizing and performing the elaborate series of narratives and songs that form the basis for the dialogues between healers.

As most Ngawbere expect the folk healer to provide his services within the context of the give-away, many diviners and herbalists do not set fees for their medical services. They provide herbal medicine and advice, as they are able, as a favor. A few folk healers, however, have set "fees" by which clients may compensate them in cash. Those who have set fees for their services generally lack a reliable source of cash (for example, a son performing wage labor). They prefer a certain amount for consultation, and a separate amount for each bottle of medicine or whatever remedial action they may recommend. Clients pay when and if they feel a cure has occurred.

Cosmopolitan Practitioners

Beginning in 1973, the Ministry of Health began to establish health posts (puestos de salud) in areas of difficult access throughout rural Panama. The health post infrastructure was designed to make cosmopolitan medical services available to all sectors of the national society (Engler 1983; La Forgia 1985). People refer to the health post as la clínica, or simply klinikate (ngawbere).

The health assistant provides simple treatments for minor health problems and serves as the initial contact in the referral system between the northern Valiente Peninsula and the cosmopolitan medical centers in Bocas del Toro and Changuinola, where non-Ngawbere physicians, dentists and nurses are available. Several northern Valiente Peninsula residents have received the yearlong training in Changuinola required to become a "health assistant" (ayudante de salud). Five of these assistants staff the health posts located along the northern Valiente Peninsula. They receive supplemental training from time to time through seminars held in Changuinola. The local residents generally refer to the health assistant as dispensarista or, as doktor in an allusion to his preparation in cosmopolitan medicine. In addition, the Ministry of Health provides training for women who are serving as midwives (parteras) within the Indigenous Reserve; the midwife assists with births at the local level. Their training lasts several weeks.

The health assistants in the Valiente Peninsula are responsible for administering vaccinations, attending to requests for medical assistance and organizing the community for such services as potable water or trial vegetable gardens (Dirección de Docencia e Investigaciones 1978:1-5). They open the health posts on an almost daily basis, and make themselves available in the evening and on weekends in cases where someone requests their services. They keep supplies on hand in their homes which they dispense when they receive requests to treat accidents and otherwise minor ailments during hours the health post is closed.

There are two programs through which Ngawbere can avail themselves of health post services: the occupational health program, and the rural

rural health program. Both programs provide primary health care.

Ngawbere men who are working as wage laborers pay a compulsory premium as part of the government's occupational health program (about 1.5% per month, regardless of income level). The rights for medical attention through this program extend to the worker's immediate family, which includes spouse, children under sixteen and the worker's parents (Díaz Mérida 1983). The program does not cover the parents of the spouse. A worker who loses or leaves his employment loses his right to free services through the occupational health program. Instead, those persons who have no visible sources of income have a right to receive medical services through the Ministry's public health program.

The rural health program was initiated in Bocas del Toro Province in 1973 as a part of the public health program. Under this national program, the Ministry uses a sliding scale to determine the fee for its clients. The scale is based on average regional income rather than individual income. For Ngawbere living in the Indigenous Reserve, the fee is 25 cents for each consultation apart from the cost of medications, injections and other treatments.

Remedies

There are seven sources of health care that are available to Ngawbere. These include:

- (1) folk treatments generated by the household.
- (2) commercial remedies secured locally by members of the household.
- (3) folk remedies dispensed by a local herbalist or diviner prepared from forest materials.
- (4) special kinds of ritual sanctioned by a diviner.
- (5) folk remedies dispensed by a distant diviner.
- (6) basic cosmopolitan remedies dispensed at the local health post by the health assistant.

(7) advanced cosmopolitan remedies/referrals provided through the urban-centered hospital.

The first four resources are available locally in the larger peninsular communities; a few of the smaller homesteads have neither folk healers nor health posts. The last three resources require extensive travel either to the provincial capital or Cricamola River.

There are a number of remedial actions prescribed by Ngawbere medicine which are used today in the Valiente Peninsula. Since many of these actions are common knowledge, households can initiate them on their own and do not need to have the permission of the healer to perform them. The principal actions include the following three.

- a) The ill person is restricted in activity [Ma dabadre nowaine]. He or she remains at home for a period of convalescence, usually lasting several days. No work, fishing or traveling during this period is permitted.
- b) The ill person is restricted in diet [Ma dabadre kuete]. Special restrictions on eating beef, turtle, pork, chicken and most kinds of fish, except iqwai or kotain, are put into force for the duration of the illness. Condiments such as sugar and salt may be prohibited. The simplest diet is cooked yams (if in season) or cooked bananas (available year-round). The ill person has his or her meals prepared on a separate fire from that of the other members of the household. Ngawbere say that the ill person "is passing through a period of ill fortune" [taw boine].
- c) Limitations are placed on who may visit the ill person [fraka dabaneme ni bren konti]. Ngawbere claim that several events associated with certain phenomena in nature can make a person dangerous company for someone who is ill. These categories include someone who has been bitten by a snake, suffered a shark attack, a pregnant woman and the man who impregnated her, and someone who has contacted a corpse or attended a funeral without thoroughly washing. Ngawbere say that an illness "can flair up" [dainte] if any of these persons visits the individual during the first five days of illness.

According to Ngawbere healers, the five sources of medicine that are found in the forest include: plants [krire], vines [kuire], water [hore], stones [hore] and living creatures [ngire]. Plants and vines by far are

the most common materials that are used to prepare medicine in the northern Valiente Peninsula. Medicinal plants are not domesticated. Most of the plants and vines are found in fallowing fields, trees or along streams and forest trails, rather than on the lands used for cattle pasture or around the house.

There are certain remedial actions which only a diviner or a herbalist can recommend; these include treatments administered externally to the body, such as the nail point press, leeching and ritual cleansing of the face. Once it is sanctioned, these remedies can be performed only by certain categories of individuals: the firstborn, an orphan, a twin or someone for whom the father is unknown. Others are disallowed from performing them. These persons generally are selected from within the family, if available; otherwise, someone else who is close kin is requested to assist.

Pressure point massage [mánmiti] is a special remedy which only the diviner can perform. It also is the only remedy requiring that a healer come into physical contact with the ill person. For this reason, the diviner receives requests at odd hours during the day or evening to make home visits at the time that someone is experiencing an illness that requires pressure point massage.

Several of the small consumer stores which are located in the northern Valiente Peninsula stock commercial health remedies. The most popular remedies include Mejoral, aspirin, menticol and Alka Seltzer. Access to other commercial stores also is possible. For example, wage laborers are approached by kinsmen with requests for such remedies as witch hazel, protein supplements and tiger balm ointment; they buy these

from merchants in Changuinola, Bocas del Toro, Almirante and, more recently, Chiriquí Grande.

Otherwise, cosmopolitan remedies are available locally from the health assistant. The health assistant is supplied with various medications for colds, diarrhea, vomiting and other gastrointestinal problems; anti-snake serum for some types of snakebite; antibiotics such as ampicillin for minor infections or infected insect bites; and a set of bandages, splints and a transport carrier for the injured. Moreover, each health assistant has been trained to give injections and assumes responsibility for administering the program of vaccinations that is distributed throughout the country as required by law for younger persons, particularly the infant population.

Since the health assistant is indigenous, he readily refers clients to the healers for certain kinds of health problems. If summoned to examine an ill person whom he recognizes as suffering from a problem that does not wholly manifest itself biomedically such as one that involves the report of what Ngawbere consider a significant dream, he may recommend that the family consult a diviner.

The services provided in the urban medical centers are more extensive than what is available through the health post. These services include treatment for major physical trauma, such as broken bones, lacerations, burns, etc. Diagnostic services in the form of X-rays and laboratory screenings also are available. From the urban medical facilities, some clients are referred to medical facilities in Panama City or Chorrera, where special medical units handle such problems as polio, tuberculosis and cancer.

Ritual System

Ngawbere rituals constitute a series of ceremonial gatherings that are arranged either between or within family groups, or require the sanction of a diviner. The symbols and paraphernalia that are used in performing each ritual are credited by Ngawbere with medicinal powers [kroko], even in those rituals not requiring the sanction of a diviner. A summary of the three classes of rituals is given in Table 7.

The patterning of events and actions in any series of four (the quaternity) is strategic to Ngawbere ritual. If a series is completed as planned, the finale of the fourth ritual signals closure to that series. For Ngawbere, completion of the fourth in a series of four as well as any sequence of four objects of one kind or another represents completeness, as well as fullness and maturation.

According to its planning and performance, there are three basic classes of ritual. The main difference between the three classes is that rituals of the first class deal with those aspects of human behavior (competition and cooperation) that can disrupt as well as facilitate the performance of social responsibilities. Rituals of the second class emphasize points of transition in the life cycle, and those of the third class emphasize aspects of nature which in some way affect or are thought to affect the well-being of people living in (Ngawbere) society.

The first class includes the inter-family ceremonies. Of the two principal rituals in this class, the Pole-Throwing Festival [krun kite] has received the most attention in the literature on Ngawbere. Mentioned in the ecclesiastic writings of several Spanish priests, the Pole-Throwing Festival is described as if it were simply a large fiesta in

Table 7: THE FUNDAMENTAL CLASSES OF NGAWBERE RITUAL

<u>Class</u>	<u>Dance</u>	<u>Songs</u>	<u>Chicha</u>	<u>Cacao</u>	<u>Food</u>	<u>Duration-Frequency</u>
INTER-FAMILY:						
<u>krun kite</u>	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	b	4 days/nights--4x
<u>huntaire</u>	No	Yes	Yes	4x	b	1 day/night--4x
INTRA-FAMILY:						
<u>ka kuota</u>	opt	opt	opt	Yes	b	1 day/night--1x
<u>bromon</u>	No	No	No	1x	c	half day--1x
<u>ngawro mike</u>	No	No	No	Yes	a	4 days/nights--1x
FAMILY-DIVINER:						
<u>gütaw</u>	No	No	No	4x	a	4 nights--4x
<u>mötaw</u>	No	No	No	1x	a	half day--1x
<u>ñüi dúi</u>	Yes	Yes	3x	opt	1x	1 day/night--4x

 opt = optional choice.

a) Besides a meal, also includes serving an unfermented fruit mash known as michila or mia.

b) Besides serving a meal and unfermented fruit mash, also includes a "take home" meal (known as ha mroko) to share with kinsmen.

c) Includes serving only an unfermented fruit mash [mia].

Note: krun kite refers to the various types of Pole-Throwing Festival (la balsería). huntaire specifically refers to Festive Labor. ka kuota refers to several types of celebration such as a birthday. bromon indicates the serving of fruit mash to female kinsmen five days after a woman gives birth. ngawro mike refers to 'the instruction of recalcitrant youth' (la claria). gütaw refers to several types of all-night vigil which are held to resolve sociogenic health problems. mötaw refers to the harvest rite for a first planting. ñüi dúi refers specifically to the Thunder Festival (la chichería).

which quantities of fermented fruit mash (chicha) were consumed (Von Uffeldre 1965[1682]:77, 81-83; Rocha 1964 [1682]:97, 127, 130; Franco 1978[1792]:48).² The second inter-family ritual is Festive Labor [huntaire], about which little has been written.

As was indicated in the previous chapter's discussion of the occurrence of obligation and conflict in the social relations of subsistence activities, tensions are often the strongest between siblings and persons of the same-sex in Ngawbere society. By the ritual enactment of activities that emphasize cooperation and competition, the inter-family rituals provide a means for the release of social tensions through the temporary creation of ritual ties [etebali] between unrelated same-sex adults in two or more family groups (P. Young and Bort 1976, 1977).

³ Field materials from the present study indicate that the structuring of ritual preparations for Festive Labor bears some resemblance to those which are described in the literature for the Pole-Throwing Festival (especially P. Young 1971:204-212; Cheville and Cheville 1977:151-163; Jimenez Miranda 1984:17-48; Pinart 1887a:36-37; Vanucchi 1921). The former takes place over a 24-hour night/day period, and the latter is a four-day ceremony. Despite the appearance of symbols that express an oscillation between competition and cooperation in human relations, the main difference between the two rituals is an emphasis on "competitive" activities in the Pole-Throwing Festival and "cooperative" activities in Festive Labor.

Each ceremony is planned and organized jointly by the "ritual siblings" [etebali] through a series of four visits between the unrelated families. The whole ritual for both the Pole-Throwing Festival and

Festive Labor comprises a series of four ceremonies that often are held as annual events. Families alternate sponsoring the ritual, so that one family serves as sponsor during the first and third and the other during the second and fourth ceremonies. To open each ceremony, one family grouping [treweri] approaches the organizing group [triwiri], makes three ritual "stops," before the ritual begins with the fourth "stop."

The central activity in the Pole-Throwing Festival is the pairing of male competitors for the purpose of taking turns to toss balsa poles at each other. Although etebali ritually initiate the competition, any two men may "compete" with each other if they so desire. The "pole tossing" requires skill not only in throwing but also in dodging. Also important is the ritual consumption of food and fruit mash [dŭ] and the singing of special songs, as well as the completion of ritual preparations with a minimum of social animosities among the planners.

Although prestige is gained through one's ability to compete in pole-throwing on a one-to-one basis and one's skills as a singer, greater prestige is accorded to those who assist their cognates in meeting challenges related to the consumption of fermented fruit mash and pole-throwing, as well as cooperation in organizing the ritual (P. Young 1976a, 1978a; Torres de Araúz 1974). The image of one's social self, therefore, is enhanced by the display of patience and social skills in planning the ritual and the exhibition of endurance through participating in the full array of ritual tasks, not just individualistic competition in the pole-throwing.

For Festive Labor, the central activity is the ritual gathering of a number of people to complete a large-scale work project. Lasting but one

day, people gather in the evening preceding the day of work; clearing the land that is used for a cattle pasture seems to be the most popular kind of work for Festive Labor in contemporary times. The men are organized into small groups, and each group is assigned responsibility for completing a particular portion of the overall task. As the men cooperate in performing the assigned task, they also are competing with each other to see which group can finish without mishap, which group can maintain a steady pace (enhanced by their singing), and which men work the best, performing difficult clearing without complaint, working without tiring, etc.

The second class includes the intra-family rituals which, in traditional times, included the rites of passage. Rituals were once performed for boys and girls upon reaching puberty, but have not been performed for several decades.⁴ These rituals emphasize the stress that accompanies puberty as well as the social responsibilities that one assumes in Ngawbere society upon becoming capable of child-bearing (Torres de Araúz 1961, 1980b:254-256; Torres de Iannello 1958:64-68; Guardia 1963). Also included among the intra-family rituals is ka kuota, which today includes any "celebration" that marks a social transition, such as a birthday.

The third class includes three types of ritual which require a diviner's sanction. Most are planned and conducted by the family, but there occur occasions wherein two or more families may hold a joint ritual. One ritual is performed for the harvest of a first planting [mōtaw] and the other, the all-night vigil [qūtaw], is performed for resolving primarily sociogenic health problems. The third ritual, the

Thunder Festival [ŋi dɔi], also can be held as a communal ritual that is performed after lightning strikes a cultivated field.⁵

Symbolism in these three rituals primarily emphasizes that which is greater or comes first in a series; objects, persons and/or actions that appear in pairs; and the balancing of categories that represent deference between male/female and old/young as is required in meeting everyday social obligations. Other actions which take place in rituals of the third class serve to reinforce the importance to Ngawbere of the forest environment and the structuring of Ngawbere society for subsistence purposes (Bletzer 1985a, 1987).

The rite for a first planting generally is performed during the daytime (usually in the morning or afternoon) and is completed in a single day. In contrast, the vigil takes place over four to five nights with some prescriptions for the daylight hours as well, and the Thunder Festival, which once was a four-day ceremony, takes place over a period of one night and the following morning. Both the vigil and the Thunder Festival are prescribed for performance as a series of four successive rituals. Whereas the vigil often takes place with no more than two days between each ritual, the Thunder Festival often requires a year or more of planning and preparation before a single celebration is held.

There are two basic formats for performing the all-night vigil, which is the most varied of the rituals that require a diviner's sanction (Table B). It can occur within a single household or it can occur in congress with several related households. Before its performance, the head of household (if not ill, or, if ill, not too ill to walk) visits the diviner to petition the all-night vigil. Vigils

Table 8: EIGHT VARIETIES OF THE ALL-NIGHT VIGIL

<u>ngawbere Name</u>	<u>Purpose</u>	<u>Duration-Frequency</u>
gütaw húboto	regroup household members	4 nights--4x
gütaw ni bren chakoréboto	exorcise malignant force afflicting a kinswoman	4 nights--4x
gütaw hóbiti	exorcise malignant force in/near stream	4 nights--4x
gütaw icháboto	purify household following appearance of snake in/around it	4 nights--4x
gütaw meritreríboto	prevent birthing problems following an earthquake	4 nights--1x
gütaw mrúboto	purify the seeds of diseased plants	4 nights--4x
gütaw nirúboto	exorcise malignant forces afflicting domestic animals/cattle	4 nights--4x
ni gütawí ni neantéboto	prepare environment for return of someone who has disappeared	8 nights--1x

lasting five nights rather than the prescribed four are held by an agreement between the petitioner and the diviner, who together have decided that a (health) problem is greater in magnitude than it should be. Which ritual is held is chosen by the diviner, however. Two days after petitioning the diviner's sanction, the household holds the vigil. Each vigil takes place over a period of four consecutive nights with one exception, and each is held as a series of four rituals that cover a total period of 16 nights with two exceptions. Forest plants that are

used to prepare medicine for the vigil figure in a number of illness treatments, more so than those from any other ritual.

The Treatment of Illness

Ngawbere medicine recognizes several major substances and fluids which comprise the human body.⁶ The primary substances include fat [kɔ̀] and bone [kro], which, along with blood [dorɪ] and consciousness [lɪ yail], form the basis for the body. The term ngrabare is used by Ngawbere to refer to the human body; it also refers to the main body of a trail, stream or other pathway through which people, water and various substances "move" and in which "wear and tear" occur.

Ngawbere consider the process of conversion basic to all living creatures, including humans. The conversion process in the body exerts heat, which Ngawbere associate with body warmth, work activity and with breathing. The process is likened to that of burning firewood. Most of that which enters the body is consumed [ba]. Although the benefits of conversion through heating are felt and often seen, the source of the heat is not. Like ashes in the fireplace, it is said, most of what remains of the food one eats or the air one breathes, is left as a residue and has no particular use.

Besides the conversion process, Ngawbere recognize other essential processes which serve to maintain the body, or create a new life. These processes are associated with the life-maintaining/-producing fluids that circulate by means of "pulsations." The main pulsation organs are the head [dokwo], the heart [brukwo] and the gonads [kuáw].

To Ngawbere, the body is more than a conduit for the conversion of

physical substances and fluids. As living creatures [ngire], people experience the same processes of birth, growth, maturation and death like the rest of nature. For Ngawbere, the human life cycle is a relatively long one that involves a much studied sense of symbiosis with the environment. For example, they note that after reaching maturity all life forms begin to shrivel; they associate the reduction of body weight in older people with an image of bent posture like an aging tree bends. Some also associate a reduction of body warmth with extreme old age, much like an aging tree can no longer be used for firewood.

Each person is sentient [ni], which means that Ngawbere view sensation or "feeling" as an integral dimension of the human make-up. Ngawbere view their feelings as closely linked to everyday happenings and hold that feelings are an intrinsic part of a collective consciousness [ü yai] that encompasses the primary social units within which one works and lives (household, family, society, but not the nation-state of Panama). Consciousness is comprised of awareness [tü] and dream states [kübre]. Human awareness, according to Ngawbere, is a waking state phenomenon which encompasses thinking processes, desires and memory, as well as one's sensitivity to bodily processes. The dream state is not viewed as a waking state phenomenon but instead as an event which occurs during one's sleep, about which one may or may not be aware.

According to Ngawbere, dreams serve a purpose. They serve as "monitors," as it were, whereby people can become aware of their body's functioning with respect to its interrelationship with the external environment. In the waking state, according to Ngawbere, one is bound in time and space and is limited by the body's potential for activity

according to such vagaries as temperament, state of wellness, fatigue, age and whether a person's social responsibilities at any given point in time obligate one to perform some action. In the dream state, one is unbound, as it were, from the waking world of physical time and space.

The term üi yai (from the root form ü yai) refers to the abreactive process in consciousness which occurs in the dream state. According to the healers, it is this process that warns when one is approaching a conflict [ni düye] that may "release itself" in some manner in the body as illness. Conflicts reflect difficulties in the activities of the daytime world wherein one interacts with kin and non-kin, either in the forest or during social events. Thus, dreaming is perceived by Ngawbere as integral to the human temperament, such that a person can better comprehend a problem in the body's functioning and his "place in the world" if he takes note of his dreams and consults a diviner who has had more experience in the interpretation of dreams and somatic complaints.

Health and Sickness

The term möbe refers to "health." It signifies the absence of a health problem in much the same way Howard and Scott (1966:143-145) describe an organism's equilibrium with the environment, wherein the evidence of some threat to health is absent and a person is able to perform routine tasks. The term is synonymous with "not sick" [ṛaka bren]. A gloss for the root stem mö- is 'the lip of an elliptical shape which circumscribes some life form.' The the phoneme mö-, therefore, implies "life-giving." When combined with the suffix -be ("with"), the term möbe denotes that one is "with the life-force."

The term bren refers to a condition of ill health, whether occurring in people or other living creatures. The literal meaning of the root stem bre- is "push out" or "push away from." The suffix -en signifies any circumstance sustained in time or space whose limits are set but not necessarily known at the onset. When forming words, the initial vowel of the suffix merges with the ending vowel of the root stem; thus, bre- + -en = bren. For Ngawbere, then, illness is a condition whose limits are set but not known at the onset, which "pushes [one] out."

The reference to "pushing out" implies any experience that hinders one from maintaining a general state of health which is necessary for the performance of routine tasks in Ngawbere society. The reference to "pushing out" is made explicit in conversation and facilitates the translation of a health problem into the "sick role" as a person's capacity to perform routine tasks is diminished in relation to such obligations as subsistence production and household management. The return to health is a process that is left implicit; it forms a central (but unseen) part of the healing process which is enacted by means of treatment procedures.

Breathing, according to Ngawbere, is the essential life support process. The breath is that which sustains human life. It is, as it were, the life-force. To Ngawbere, the cessation of breathing is the ultimate manner of being "pushed out," wherein one is unable to participate in social responsibilities. They say that "the breath is finishing" [murie krute] whenever someone is experiencing shortness of breath, or at the moment someone ceases breathing and passes away (in our sense of "expires").

Ngawbere view illness as a personal experience that affects the household and family, in that they view the reasons one falls ill as related to a person's constitution and the circumstances within which he lives and works. More specifically, these circumstances vary according to the person's performance of his social obligations, and include such activities as travel, domestic chores, patterns of sleep, eating habits, etc. Ngawbere consider the occurrence of illness as understandable from the perspective of the person's relationship viz-a-viz the environment within which he lives and works.

Illness Classification

There are three major classes of illness, according to Ngawbere medicine. Each of these classes is associated with one of the pulsation organs, namely, the head, the heart and the gonads. The three classes include: blood illness [doriente], health problems associated with gestation, and dreaming illness [kobúre brein].

Problems with the blood occur in any number of visible forms outside the body [tóin], or they can occur within the body [terí]. Problems with the blood generally are not viewed as serious, but, according to Ngawbere, if they are left untreated, they can become serious. According to a Cusapín diviner, slightly over one-third (36.5%) of the deaths in four generations of Cusapin residents were related to problems with the blood. Some examples of conditions of the blood include: "sweet blood" [dorie mane], "diluted blood" [dorie fure], "bad blood" [dorie blo], "cool blood" [dorie tibo], among others. "Twilight pain" [nidién], asthma [mura dime] and various complications of the common cold are some

examples of blood illnesses.

Ngawbere view the complications of pregnancy and birthing as the main forms of gestation illness. When a man impregnates a woman, both he and the woman herself are labeled with the bren term, although only the woman experiences the state of pregnancy and, if present, the complications of birthing. Ngawbere view the flow of blood [dorie] following the issue of the placenta [krai] as the sign which indicates the termination of gestation illness. The gestation illnesses generally are not life threatening in the view of Ngawbere medicine, but their potential for danger is much greater than in the other two classes of illness. About one-sixth (12.7%) of the deaths among four generations of female residents in Cusapín, according to the diviner mentioned above, were women who died in childbirth; a number of these were accompanied by stillbirths. Some examples of gestation illness include: "abdominal cramps" [mōto brein] during pregnancy, and such problems during birth as "a delayed placenta" [ñaka noin timo] and "stillbirth" [ni monzo dorea noin ngwakara].

According to Ngawbere medicine, all people in their sleep "go a'dreaming" [taw noin kōbōre]. Any inauspicious motifs or changes in the patterns of one's dreams, however, are viewed as the warning signs for an impending illness. Such motifs or changes may appear one or more times prior to an illness; sometimes the illness ends with the dream itself. The kinds of disvalued dream motifs that Ngawbere consider significant include dreams of deceased relatives, travel under arduous conditions, persons persecuted by environmental phenomena, obstacles to physical movements, unusual swallowing sensations, actions in the water, objects

falling on top of oneself, etc.

Ngawbere report that one usually can recall the dream(s) associated with a dreaming illness, but that an inability to recall a dream does not mean that a particular illness is not a dreaming illness. Among Ngawbere dreaming illnesses vary in terms of severity, although the more serious kinds are considered to be life-threatening. The Cusapín diviner, for example, indicated that approximately one-half (50.8%) of the deaths in four generations of residents in that community were, in his opinion, due to dreaming illness. Some examples of dreaming illnesses include: "star illness" [muke brein], "harpoon illness" [dai brein], "false pregnancy" [düboawri brein], among others. Two specific dreaming illnesses (chakore and ha ko botika) will be examined in the next two chapters.

Recognition of Illness

Ngawbere consider the possibility that an individual is ill with the onset of changes in the person's behavior or his inability to function. Whenever this occurs, the person's condition is discussed among those close to him or else the individual himself indicates some problem(s) he encounters in his physical constitution, dreaming or in his ability to perform routine activities.

At the onset of an impending illness, Ngawbere place the bren label by saying the person "is ill" [taw bren] or that he "is [intending to be] ill" [ni bi nikien bren]. According to Ngawbere, any stiffness in the joints, tingling sensations in the limbs, swelling in some extremity, headaches, fever, distention, insatiation, false satiation, gas, a lack of appetite, persistent diarrhea, painful urination and disvalued dream

motifs are some of the common signals among many to identify health problems at their onset. The signs of an impending illness, whatever they might be, are accompanied by a noticeable reduction in one's ability to engage in work activity. A more detailed list of biobehavioral signs used by Ngawbere to determine illness is presented Table 9.

In the beginning stages, the bren condition rarely is defined more specifically and frequently remains nothing more than a statement that the individual "is sick" [taw bren], that is, that the person is "pushed away" and is having difficulty performing routine activities. The illness is not named at its onset. People simply repeat aloud what ails the person and inform others about his complaints, saying, for example, "He's sick because of a fever" [taw bren, drankwan kisete]. Reaching a diagnosis and prognosis for the illness is either tackled some time after the initial symptoms appear, or it is a matter that people leave for the recommendation of a practitioner when they pay a visit for consultation.

An important consideration at the time that an illness appears is its severity. Ngawbere suggest that differences in illness severity from one illness to another are a part of its occurrence, that is, the magnitude of a given illness is perceived to vary from one occurrence to another in different people, just as any given illness can vary in its severity from one occurrence to another in the same person. Ngawbere simply state how serious they perceive the bren condition according to the consensus of those who have seen the ill person. "He's sick because of a fever" [taw bren, drankwan kisete], for example, is a statement indicating lesser severity than the comment "he's gravely sick because of a fever" [taw bren dika rori, drankwan kisete]. In each instance, the

Table 9: SELECTED SIGNS USED BY NGAWBERE TO DETERMINE bren CONDITION

<u>ngawbere Expression</u>	<u>English Translation</u>
ni murá dori murai	one is coughing blood
niara drankwan níboto	one has a fever
niara grie drankwan níboto	one has a fever, with diarrhea
niara yare	one is vomiting
niara noin dorire ñotébiti	one has bloody stools
niara noin dorire kunkénbiti	one's urine is bloody
niara taw noin ñotébiti tain	one's stools are red
niara taw noin ñotébiti sôbrure	one's stools are yellow
niara taw noin ñotébiti kare	one's stools are green
niara taw noin kunkénbiti tain	one's urine is red
niara taw noin kunkénbiti gweire	one's urine is white
niara taw noin kunkénbiti droin	one urinates in pain
niara nekete ñotébiti	one is constipated
niara nekete kunkénbiti	one is unable to urinate
niara tubo muriere brein	one's stools are irregular long strands
niara taw bren drokeko kadate	one belches gas through the mouth
niara bren ni tute ni dorie niteko ni kadate	one is bleeding in the gums
niara kwore bulete droin ie	one feels something in one's stomach
niara bule tare ie	one's stomach hurts
niara ñaka tũ mrui	one lacks appetite
niara kite kro awane ni ñakare	one appears thin, is losing strength
niara dokwo tare ie	one's head hurts
niara tũi neite	one loses consciousness
niara taw drore krubote	one feels very fatigued
niara taw nutiete teri ngrabare	one feels an itch inside the stomach
niara taw nutietéboti ngrabare	one feels an itch outside the body
niara di ñakare	one lacks energy
niara taw noin ngwarabo hu bore	one runs amok outside the house, shouting loudly
niarai haduke ñakare toro	one is unable to sleep
niara ñakare nikwitete hire ngrabare	one is unable to move one's body
niara ngire ngrabare	one's body is feverish
niara tibo ngrabare	one's body is chilly
niara ũlire tũite	one feels depressed
niaráboto ko huro krubote	one feels quite anxious
niara taw hubente ngrabare	one's body changes color
niara murie oto chi	one experiences shortness of breath
niara ko ñaka tũróbiti	one is unable to see

Table 9 (con't.).

niara ñakare blite	one is unable to speak
niara ñakare ngraba noin	one is unable to walk
niara tukwore ngotote	one feels like sharp spike in one's body
niara ñan nanten ngrabare	one's body feels numb
ni okwo tare ie	one's eye hurts
niara muraw bete okwote	one's vision has streaks
ñakare taw hondron grine	one feels fearful about touching objects with sharp pointed edges
diagwanain kisete	one is edgy, ill-tempered
niara brukwo nemen dübun	someone who has passed on feeds one in a dream
ni mru krore kwe bukane kûbûre	
ni honin kiane mrusa konti yete	someone takes one to a party, giving one fermented drink until one vomits in a dream
dû diani ie yadre	
ni dikiaba kûbûre konsenta ko lu	one is walking in the forest and forest and is drenched in a downpour in a dream
kruboteteta	
ni kûbûba tiri dikiaba konsenta	one is walking in the forest under a falling tree in a dream
kûbûre kri drutakoba kûbûre	
nîbiti	
tiri dikiaba konsenta botate dababa	one is walking in heavy boots in the forest in a dream
doboko ni ngotóboto	
ni kûbûbare ni noma huben ño	one is swimming in rough seas and begins to drown in a dream
krite awane ni arabe noma huben	
ño chite	
ni noma huben merente kûbûre	one is swimming in the sea, becomes tangled in nets in a dream
kradete ni dibranteba kûbûre	
ni noma noin dure kûbûre ni hataba	one is traveling in a boat, which is tipped over by someone in the form of a fish in a dream
ni ku kwore ni nire amane gware	
û tare	
ni kuará kwití kûbûre	one is bitten by a tiger in a dream
ni nibí noin nîbiti kûbûre	one is chased by bull in a dream
ni tuli kuete kûbûre	one is bitten by wasps in a dream
ni icha kuete kûbûre	one is bitten by a snake in a dream
ni trû kuete kûbûre	one is bitten by a shark in a dream
ni mesle kuete kûbûre	one is bitten by a crab in a dream

same sign (a fever) has been mentioned, but one episode's severity is perceived as different from the other. In other words, a given illness is not expected to reach the same level of severity each time it occurs.

Healing

The ngawbere expressions that are used to communicate that a person is recuperating from illness use metaphors that express return movement. The beginning point and the end (return) point are the same, that is, health. As already indicated, illness is any condition that "pushes out" and inhibits one's performance of routine activities, whereas health is the absence of a health problem. For this reason, the social translation of illness into sickness allows Ngawbere to identify and evaluate bodily functioning that is inhibitive as well as any social behavior that is unacceptable, in order to decide whether action needs to be taken. Talk about the health problem continues until the actions which people take become linked conceptually to a return of one's behavior and functioning within acceptable limits.

While sick, the condition of the ill person can remain temporarily the same, that is, without improvement [kontebe bren], or a person may be considered on the way to recovery (Table 10). Becoming sick and becoming better are viewed by Ngawbere as a "push-return" movement. Circumstances which "push [one] out" are the main reason to place the bren label, which in turn leads Ngawbere to begin the remedial actions that will "pull [him] back" to a state of health.

Like the designation of illness severity, the path of recovery varies from illness to illness. Every illness receives careful scrutiny

by observers for any changes or fluctuations in behavior and bodily functioning that might indicate the worsening of a condition or signal some kind of improvement. When visiting an ill person, Ngawbere listen quietly and attentively as he describes his illness experience; when they are speaking to him, they use a statement of encouragement, saying that "you will again return to health" [*mo kwainta möbel*].

Ngawbere remedies are intended to treat specific symptoms, rather than aimed at benefitting the whole organism or subduing the overall illness. Thus, as certain signs dissipate and a person's functioning begins to return to acceptable limits, the corresponding portions of the treatment regimen are stopped or reduced. Other remedial actions may be continued and even altered should the practitioner feel it is needed, according to the complaints presented to him.

Table 10:
SELECTED SIGNS FOR DETERMINING RECOVERY FROM SERIOUS ILLNESS

<u>ngawbere Expression</u> ^a	<u>English Translation</u>
ni blite	the person is speaking
ni ñain kia kia	the person is taking fluids bit by bit
ni kroko ñain	the person is taking medicine
ni kuete	the person is eating
ñaka ko teri	the person no longer is confined inside the sleeping quarters
ni nikien ñote	the person is able to use the stream (as a latrine)
ni kòòre koin	the person is dreaming all right
ni okwóbiti	the person is alert

a) Each of the above signs has its counterpart by which Ngawbere recognize serious illness, such as "the person is not speaking," "the person is unable to take fluids," "the person cannot eat," "the person is confined to his sleeping quarters," etc.

Ngawbere healers hold that remedial intervention is instrumental in the process of recovery from illness, especially the more serious health problems that Ngawbere experience. When presented with a list of more than 150 illness terms, the Cusapín diviner (mentioned above) indicated that nearly every one required some kind of treatment, without which, he claimed, a person's recovery could not be assured. He was saying in effect that a lack of remedial intervention in many illnesses can result in incapacitation, death, or, at least, prolong the period of recovery. The bren condition in general, therefore, is viewed by Ngawbere as both temporary, that is, hopefully of short duration, and reversible if remediation is enacted on time on behalf of the ill person.

Summary.

Medical care in the Valiente Peninsula includes the services of folk as well as cosmopolitan practitioners, and their corresponding remedies. Folk practitioners include the herbalist and the diviner, both of whom generally dispense botanical medicine. The diviner assumes primary responsibility for many of the more serious illnesses, since he is the only practitioner permitted to sanction Ngawbere rituals. Cosmopolitan practitioners include the health assistants who staff the government health posts located in rural areas, the midwives who have been trained by the Ministry of Health, and the licensed practitioners such as physicians, nurses and dentists who work for the Ministry of Health in the four urban centers of Bocas del Toro.

Ngawbere recognize fat, bone, blood and consciousness as the primary elements (or substances) comprising the human body. The major activity

of the body is that of conversion, which exerts body warmth. Ngawbere medicine, by analogy, is concerned with converting (cooking) the plants of the forest to prepare botanical medicine, which aids the (ill) body in recuperating.

According to Ngawbere, consciousness is an integral part of the human make-up. Consciousness is comprised of awareness which occurs in the waking state, and dreaming which occurs while one is asleep. To Ngawbere, dreams reflect what is happening to one in relation to bodily processes and one's activities in the waking state. "To go a'dreaming" is something all people do, but to experience dreams that represent negative ("disvalued") social images is one among several signs of illness.

The ngawbere terms bren and möbe are mutually exclusive concepts which refer to sickness and health, respectively. Specifically, bren refers to a condition which "pushes [one] away" from one's obligations and/or away from being "with the life-force" [möbe]. One who is sick, according to Ngawbere medicine, is one who is "pushed out," and one who is healthy is one who is "with the life-force." For this reason, breathing is viewed by Ngawbere as the most essential vital sign, and reductions in breathing (shortness of breath, dying, etc.) are perceived to signal the end of someone's life.

Ngawbere classify illness into three major classes, which roughly correspond to each of the three pulsation organs that circulate life-producing/-maintaining fluids. The three classes are: dreaming illness, blood illness and health problems associated with gestation and birthing. All three classes are perceived with respect to problems in the behavior or functioning of the individual, in relation to his own body and in

relation to the natural and social environment. Hence, the illnesses of all three classes are amenable to remediation utilizing the elements of both the natural and social environments.

Ngawbere rituals are a ceremonial means of accentuating through symbols the principal social processes of Ngawbere society. Rituals arranged between families emphasize cooperation and competition in human society, and those that are performed within a family emphasize social transition. Those that require sanctioning by a diviner are held primarily to resolve sociogenic health problems and emphasize the structuring of social relations and the relationship of Ngawbere to their (natural) environment. All Ngawbere rituals make use of the quaternity in their symbolism and the scheduling of ritual performances.

The signs whereby Ngawbere recognize illness combine behavior, physiological functioning and dream experiences. The perceived severity of an illness is occurrence-specific rather than person- or illness-specific, and it is determined by the extent to which an individual's behavior is impaired. The greater the impairment in behavior and functioning, the more severe an illness is perceived to be. The less serious health problems generally receive little treatment, if any, and frequently require little more than the attention of only the sufferer, without intervention.

Many illnesses require treatment, according to Ngawbere healers, without which, they claim, people may die or become incapacitated. It is as if Ngawbere expect recovery from an illness experience, but only if that experience is socially transformed into sickness and, if necessary, treated. The process is initiated when someone experiences disvalued

biobehavioral functioning, presents complaints (or is seen to have problems) and is given or self-initiates the bren label. The person is "pushed away" by a health problem, and, then, through a process of healing, the individual is "returned" to a state of health.

As a people who have remained rather marginalized to surrounding populations, Ngawbere have had time to develop as well as maintain a fairly elaborate system of indigenous medicine. "Outsider medicine" only recently has been introduced, first through the Methodist Church, but only briefly before a more permanent system was implemented through the Ministry of Health. Since the dreaming illnesses dictate only indigenous remediation, the medical procedures for these folk illnesses negate the validity of cosmopolitan procedures or medications introduced into the Indigenous Reserve through the health post system.

The treatment of folk illness will become clearer in the chapters that follow. Chapter 6 shows how the occurrence of one folk illness elucidates what it means to be a part of Ngawbere society, and Chapter 7 suggests that the occurrence of another folk illness tells a great deal about what it means for Ngawbere to be part of a marginal population among the groups that surround them.

Notes

1. Two practitioners are mentioned in the historical chronicles (Von Uffeldre 1965[1682]:77-78, 83; Franco 1978 [1792]:45). Other accounts (Pinart 1887a:36, 40; Reverte 1963:79-80; Guardia 1963:67-69, 85) mention only the diviner or sukia. A more detailed study of herbalists and diviners in Veraguas and Chiriquí appears in Mendizabel de Cachafeiro and Zentner (1963:64-68). Ngawbere use both the term sukia, which is alleged to be miskito in origin, and the term dawngin when referring to the diviner. The term dawngin roughly means "return flow" in ngawbere.

2. As a Ngawbere legislator active in debates over the boundaries of the Indigenous Reserve, Jimenez Miranda (1984:17-48) describes several types of Pole-Throwing Festival from the perspective of Ngawbere cosmology, giving details not recorded in other publications.

3. Two festive labor rituals (more than one-hundred participants each) were observed during fieldwork; fermented fruit drink along with bottled liquors was served at both of them. Neither one included a line dance, which negates Gordon's (1969:89) suggestion that festive labor includes the line-dance.

4. Torres de Araúz (1961, 1980b:254-256; also Torres de Iannello 1958:64-68) presents the only published description of the Ngawbere puberty ritual for women. Alphonse (1956:120) mentions the puberty ritual for men but provides no description of its performance. Guardia (1963:passim) has collated some unpublished stories associated with the performance of the all-male ritual known as la claría, which Panamanian scholars assume is the male puberty ritual among Ngawbere.

5. Johnson (1948a:249) mentions the rite for a first planting, and Alphonse (1956:119) mentions the all-night vigil. The Thunder Festival as performed in Veraguas and Chiriquí is described briefly by Merida (1963:56-58) and Mendizabel de Cachafeiro and Zentner (1963:72-74, 89-90), and an analysis of two Thunder Festivals held in the Valiente Peninsula in 1983 appears in Bletzer (1987).

6. Compiling lexical lists during the first months of fieldwork, more than 150 illness terms were collected and defined according to symptom attributes, target population, expected outcome and duration. Shortly thereafter, a local diviner was asked to sort the illness terms into groups (September 1982) and, after some revisions and additions, then again into groups some two years later (September 1984).

Chapter 6: chakore

This chapter indicates how Ngawbere identity as members of an indigenous population is manifested through the folk illness known as chakore. There are several syndromes described in the cross-cultural literature for which the chief behavioral manifestation is a hysteria-like attack of one form or another (e.g., Harris 1957; Dennis 1981, 1985; Foulks 1972a, 1972b; Gussow 1985[1960]; Weidman 1979). Although the behavior of those who experience the various syndromes appears dangerous, there are no reported instances of death associated with the syndromes studied. The illness that Ngawbere call chakore resembles the hysteria-like syndromes, all of which manifest one or more of the symptoms that occur in the disorder known as hysteria in the psychiatric literature, especially the convulsive "resistance" and "avoidance" behavior while unconscious (Bletzer 1985b:307-309, also Tables 2, 3, pp. 316-318).

Overview

The term chakore is translated herein as "fleeing hysteria" in consideration of the syndrome's principal feature: sudden flight. The root stem chako¹ [after cha, "surface"] refers to a phenomenon which appears suddenly, then in an instant it's gone. At another level, the term refers to any action that "lacks commitment." A less common but alternative term for the illness is treweri brein [after trewa, "belongs to others"]. The term treweri refers to anyone who is an outsider, and

is used in implicit contrast in daily conversation and explicit contrast in the inter-family rituals with the term triwiri [after triwi, "toward our hearth"], which refers to "we [as a family]." Meaning "outsider sick," treweri brein alludes to the pressures young women, and even men, for that matter, encounter in having to relate to potential or current mates and their affinal kinsmen upon reaching the age of marriage.

Ngawbere report that the victims of chakore attacks once fled into the forest, whereas the victims in recent years head toward the sea. For this reason a chakore attack is considered dangerous and Ngawbere men actively seek to restrain the victim to prevent injury. The task of restraint is strenuous and time-consuming; men describe past cases with both awe and trepidation at the strength of a woman struggling under the influence of a chakore attack. People in the northern Valiente Peninsula readily accept the premise that chakore is an illness that has been with them for some time, that it is something that occurs among them because they are descended from indigenous origins.

Ethnographic Description

Six individuals were observed experiencing chakore attacks among 22 episodes that occurred in the northern Valiente Peninsula between March 1982-March 1984. Several women were observed on more than one occasion having a chakore attack. Two more persons were observed having an attack elsewhere in the Indigenous Reserve. Background data was collected on the eight witnessed chakore attacks along with data on the 16 unwitnessed episodes occurring in the northern Valiente Peninsula.

The data on the 24 episodes was complemented with information on

Table 11: SAMPLE OF chakore VICTIMS

<u>Where</u>	Witnessed <u>pre-1982</u>	Unwitnessed <u>pre-1982</u>	Witnessed <u>1982-85</u>	Unwitnessed <u>1982-85</u>
northern Valiente Peninsula	0	20	6	16
elsewhere	0	$\frac{0}{20}$	$\frac{2}{8}$	$\frac{0}{16}$

some 20 other cases which had occurred in the northern Valiente Peninsula before 1982. The 20 additional episodes include all of the cases that were considered severe enough to require some type of treatment. The diviner who treated each of the 20 cases, as well as the more recent 22 peninsular episodes, was interviewed, and, when possible, the victim's relatives also were interviewed (Table 11).

2

The seven cases summarized below have been selected owing to their manifesting characteristics that appear similar across the other chakore cases. All seven cases were witnessed by the field investigator, often on more one occasion. Each victim was restrained successfully; none of them escaped their restraints and fled into the forest or the sea.

Case One

The first example occurred in the mountains of Rio Jali (upriver from Rio Mananti). A young couple are staying temporarily with the woman's father who is a diviner. After sunset, as the men visit with the healer, the woman experiences a minor attack; she lapses into a state of unconsciousness and produces a low crying-moaning sound.

2 Feb (Thu). As dusk falls, the field investigator sits quietly with two other men and a healer in the open shelter of the healer's house on a visit to the mountains of Río Jalí. The healer's daughter and her young husband sit together to one side, away from the men.... About 19:50, the healer's daughter (who is now lying down) produces a low cry-moan u - u - u, which continues for about six to seven minutes, then it stops. One of the men [from the Valiente Peninsula] with the healer says: "She might flee" [chakojil].... She begins again for five to six minutes, then stops, then begins again for five to six minutes, then finally stops. Meanwhile, the girl's husband exits; his wife remains unattended....

For the remainder of the night she makes no other sounds or movements, apparently having fallen asleep; her husband later returns to spend the night....

3 Feb (Fri). In the morning the woman talks briefly with her mother. It is said that she is unaware of her experience of the previous evening. Before 8:00 (as planned), the couple leave the house to return to her husband's parents' lands, located several hours away....

After dark, the healer's son [the girl's brother] joins the men in the shelter. He comes straight to the point.

CH: Who was crying-moaning?

KR: Over there, last night. They've left already.

CH [to father]: Was that an exchange marriage you arranged?

TT: Certainly not!

3

(author's translation)

Since the incident is mild, the woman does not require restraint.

Although the men who hear the woman's crying-moaning are from a different part of the Indigenous Reserve, they recognize the sounds as those of chakore. The attack lasts but one night.

The evening's conversation the day after the crying-moaning incident (after the woman and her husband have left) includes the question posed by the woman's brother to their father about the circumstances of his sister's exchange pact marriage [koba]. The father rather testily denies having arranged the marriage. The brother's question explicitly suggests that, although he is a diviner, the father has chosen an inappropriate

mate for the young woman, and implicitly associates problems in the marriage relationship with the incident.

Case Two

The first observation of a serious case of chakore took place on a visit to a Chiriquí Lagoon island inhabited by a group of Ngawbere who had moved there from the mountains of Cricamola River two generations earlier. A young man who recently came from the mountains to live with his female cousin suffers an attack of chakore following a festive labor gathering. After arriving home to his cousin's house (after the work is completed), he has a couple of dreams that serve as warning signs, lapses into a chakore attack and is brought to the medicinal hut. Once the young man is brought to the medicinal hut he spends the day quietly, most of the time tied by the wrists to the floor. Since a Valiente Peninsula diviner is visiting the local Mama Tata membership, he is asked to treat the young man; he performs pressure point massage on NS on two occasions during the fourth day of his illness.

During the day, the victim (NS) is conscious (his eyes are open), takes his meals without assistance (prepared over a separate fire), and listens to his radio and uses the stream as a latrine by himself. After sunset, however, NS lapses into unconsciousness and begins producing a crying-moaning sound, first around 19:40 and then later around 22:00; each time, he is approached by the diviner. Within a few minutes of receiving pressure point massage from the diviner, NS lessens his vocalizations and minimizes his struggling behavior. On the second occasion in particular, NS stops the crying-moaning sound almost immediately at the diviner's initial touch with his ritual stick.

The case of NS presents clear evidence of a victim's experiencing an inner conflict over the possibility of his becoming part of an arrangement for exchange marriage. Although a male, NS apparently feels some apprehension about marrying someone among the Ngawbere who live on the islands. The case also suggests a major difficulty (no employment, primarily) that NS faces after arriving to the coast from the mountains.

Cases Three and Four

Chakore occasionally manifests itself in a manner of "contagion," much like the occurrence of grisi siknis among Miskito (Dennis (1981:464, 1985:294) or multiple hysteria among Malaysian schoolgirls (Teoh and Tan 1976). This example is that of two sisters who experience the first of several chakore attacks simultaneously in the same house. Subsequent attacks occur on the next two evenings, at the same time as that of two other women in neighboring households (namely, Mec and Til).

Following supper one evening, the two sisters evidently lapse into unconsciousness while lying on the floor. It is the older sister who succumbs first; the younger sister follows a few minutes thereafter. The eyes of both girls are closed before and during the chakore attack. The arms of each "flail" in an irregular circular motion in front of the chest, and their legs kick downward and their heels bang the floor. Kneeling by her head, Alg's mother's brother (CH) restrains her, and their father restrains the younger of the two women; each is held by the shoulders. Neither woman produces vocalizations, but each continues to wail-sing persistently. Those who are present converse very little. In the morning, neither sister remembers the events of the previous evening.

The older sister (Alg) is married to a Ngawbere schoolteacher who frequently is absent due to his teaching responsibilities in another part of the Indigenous Reserve. The younger of the two (Mri) is not married; she has won a scholarship to continue her secondary schooling in the provincial capital, but, as subsequent events reveal, she remains at home and does not go. For the older of the two sisters (Alg), the chakore attack that she experiences is part of a recurring illness; the attack experienced by her sister (Mri) is her first. The older sister had her first episode several years earlier. The diviner performed a rite "to relieve the pressure" in her head at that time by using a blood-letting technique for each of the five days of the all-night vigil that he prescribed for her.

The two sisters are close in age and, since growing up, they have shared in their home responsibilities as assigned by their mother. As the older sister's husband often is absent, Alg (although married) again becomes a companion of her younger sister (Mri). By Ngawbere standards her husband is considered handsome, and she worries about losing him to another woman. Very little is said about which of the two sisters first experiences dreams in which "a man" is seen. People consider how close the two sisters are and the absence of the older sister's husband, and the woman's subsequent worrying, as factors in the renewal of her chakore illness and its occurrence in her sister.

Case Five

The next case is that of a young woman who has formed a union with a young man working as a washer on the banana plantations. The couple have no children. Staying with her husband on his father's land (virilocally,

not uxorilocally in her mother's household), the young woman (Let) experiences an attack of chakore that requires restraint.

Jan 14 (Sat). GM and his wife, Let, bed down on the porch of the "isolation hut," where they are caring for GM's ill parents... Suddenly, GM calls: "Hurry!, her eyes are tearing" [okwo ngintrante]. Shortly, Let begins to cry-moan. From inside the hut, GM's nephew (UR), a firstborn, exits to the porch. He uses some medicine in a can to wash Let's face. Meanwhile, lying on his side next to Let, GM holds her two arms over her head....

GM exclaims: "She turned rocky on me this morning!" ... Let continues to hum, repeating some of the phrases, jumbling their order as she does so. By this time GM has relaxed his hold on his wife's arms, and his younger sister (who arrived from the main house shortly after the attack began) relaxes her grip on Let's ankles. Her eyes have remained closed the whole time....

About 21:20, Let becomes quiet, eventually falling asleep....

Let begins the chakore attack on the first night by "lashing out" at those around her and producing a "humming" sound before she vocalizes a few phrases. For three consecutive nights Let has an attack.

On the second evening a cousin of her husband helps to restrain Let. The cousin asks if chakore is something that occurs in her family and is told that this is Let's first episode. The two men further discuss some of the beliefs about what to do with a woman experiencing chakore. The comments they make suggest that some Ngawbere men consider that actions that "shock" or "confront" the chakore victim are the best treatment.

On the final evening of Let's episode with chakore, she experiences an attack in her husband's parents' house.

16 Jan (Mon). [The family members are eating supper] Sitting on a bench next to her husband, Let rests her head on his lap.... About 19:40, Let begins to bang her legs on the bench. GM calls: "Hurry!" BL approaches the bench and assists GM in moving Let to the floor, her head to the southeast. She is producing a deep crying-moaning u - u - u sound....

As GM's grandmother retrieves a cloth rag, GM covers Let's legs with a bedsheet; holding each wrist separately, BL restrains Let's arms over her head. Handed the cloth rag, GM wraps it twice around Let's ankles. Mostly Let thrashes her arms and legs. Her legs are bent slightly as she bangs them downward on the floor, and her arms make a circle-like "boxing" motion over her chest. She loosens her arms from BL's grip three different times, and each time hits his legs with her closed hands. GM's sister (Pau) comments on Let's "boxing" motion.... [Let is moved sideways against the interior wall of the house] GM sits against the wall, his arms crossed in front of his chest (he appears "displeased"). As BL holds her arms, UR wraps a second cloth rag around her wrists.... From the moment she was moved from the bench, Let's eyes remain closed and her expression appears "firm," although her facial muscles are barely taut.... Shortly, Let begins to vocalize some words:

Ooh, ooh, ooh, ooh, ooh, ooh.
 [There's] a man, ooh, ooh, ooh, ooh, ooh, ooh.
 "I am hopping mad" [he says], ooh, ooh, ooh.
 "Heh, getaway, watch out for me" [his attitude], ooh, ooh, ooh, ooh, ooh, ooh.
 "Now watch out for me" [I say], ooh, ooh, ooh, ooh, ooh, ooh.
 [Reciprocating] turnabout's the name [of the game], ooh, ooh, ooh, ooh, ooh, ooh.
 [Power arising from] Deko, ooh, ooh, ooh, ooh, ooh, ooh.
 [The Minister of Languages], ooh, ooh, ooh.
 [There's] a man, [he's] soiled, ooh, ooh, ooh.
 [End the vices through] Mama Tata, ooh, ooh, ooh.

4

(author's translation)

From time to time UR rinses Let's face with medicinal water from the can he is carrying.... The others occasionally mention past cases of chakore. BL tells the fieldworker that chakore has been known to occur in the afternoon on the banana plantations [where he spent a number of years when younger]. [To a question] He says that several women sometimes succumb at the same time, adding that "[The problem of] chakore cannot be cured by modern medicine, [it's something] we have to contend with." ...

[Later] Let is taken into the sleeping quarters, where she spends the night....

By 21:00, everyone has bedded down for the night....

Let's eyes remain closed throughout the attack. Her wrists are tied on the third evening, but not during either of the first two occurrences. Those present converse from time to time, making several comments about

past cases of chakore with which they have been acquainted. GM's cousin (to a question) repeats a comment often heard by the fieldworker; he says that chakore is something Ngawbere "have to contend with," that it is something that has been and still is "existent" in the community.

Her husband, as Let's spouse and as the firstborn son of his ill parents, has made the decision and requested sanctioning by the diviner to hold an all-night family vigil, which begins the evening following Let's last attack. In the morning after her last attack, he mentions his intent to secure the necessary materials from the forest. Let attends each night of the vigil with GM's family, without experiencing any recurring chakore attack.

There is more emphasis in Let's "attack talk" of the third evening of a repressive anger both in the "man" motif she mentions and in some indirect references to herself. Exacerbated by GM's behavior upon his return from the banana plantations, the manifest content contrasts Mama Tata expectations with her husband's behavior, which is at variance with her participation in the Mama Tata movement. Specifically, Let complains to him about his use of a radio purchased on the banana plantations and his minimal sleeping attire. Since Let's problems involve her husband, GM does not report the specifics of her "attack talk" when he visits and presents her complaints to the diviner. He simply says that she has seen a "man" in her dreams.

Case Six

The sixth case is that of a middle-age woman whose husband is working on the banana plantations. The couple have nine children

together, and each has had a child with another partner. While her husband is away, she has been staying in her mother's house.

The chakore attacks suffered by Mec are the most severe of any of the attacks observed by the field investigator or described by Ngawbere. Mec's size and strength add to the difficulties of restraint when she has an attack; struggling fiercely against her mother's two brothers, she strikes them when able to free one of her arms. She also resists the efforts to rinse her face with liquid medicine. Her eyes remain closed throughout the attacks of the first two evenings. One of the primary treatments for chakore, pressure point massage, is performed on Mec by the diviner using a ritual stick. It is the only form of treatment used by the diviner in which he comes into direct contact with the patient.

For a time, Mec appears to have recovered from chakore. Some weeks after the initial bout, she accompanies members of her family to collect firewood some distance away from the community. But the illness recurs within two months of her earlier attacks.

Each time she has an attack, Mec produces a crying-moaning sound before she begins to vocalize any words. The most prominent feature of her "attack talk" is her comments about "a man," along with some references to his interest in money and, later, his persistence in pursuing her through the forest, along the beach, etc. People comment the next day on her fears that her husband will leave her, now that he has access to a source of income working on the banana plantations.

During the attack talk of her final evening, Mec draws a parallel between Ngawbere men when drinking and the women who have chakore attacks, explicitly acknowledging that a similarity exists between the

two phenomena. She further states that other women will fall victim to chakore, which she indicates by enumerating the days by which time they will become ill (implicitly aware that several young women in neighboring households have been experiencing "man" dreams), and alludes to the difficulties that the local diviner will have in trying to curb these disturbances (implicitly aware that for all but one of the young women in nearby households, the attacks represent recurring episodes).

Although two women younger than Mec are present when she has her attack, neither one has an attack of her own. One of the two experienced chakore when she was younger and living at home, but this happened only once without any recurring episode. The other had not experienced chakore at the time she witnessed Mec's attack.

Case Seven

Another treatment for chakore is a ritual enclosure [kite] within which the ill person remains while the other members of the household hold an all-night family vigil [gutaw] for five consecutive nights. Made of wild cane [libia: Gynerium sagittatum], most if not all enclosures are constructed inside the sleeping quarters. Such is the case in the final example; a young woman experiences a recurrent episode of chakore and is confined to the sleeping quarters of her house. She lives with her husband, her brother and her daughter on the lands of her husband's mother's parents.

The woman (Fel) for whom an all-night vigil is being held has experienced episodes of chakore on two previous occasions. Her current illness occurs about the same time as that of three other women who are

living in a homestead a short distance from Cusapín. Although unrelated by blood, all four are neighbors. The ill woman (Fel) has been a member of the Mama Tata religion for some time. Although the other women are not regular in their attendance at church services, Fel has participated on many occasions in the trance-singing performed at the conclusion of the Church services. For this reason, the cadence of her wail-singing appears less like that of the other chakore attacks and more like that of the Mama Tata trance-singing.

It is the Mama Tata philosophy that her husband is describing when he tells the field investigator about his current circumstances and his plans to earn a little money from home projects, rather than perform wage labor outside the Valiente Peninsula. His comments represent one of the teachings of the Mama Tata movement which speaks out against men leaving their wives for long periods to work outside the Indigenous Reserve.

Since Fel has been known to be inclined to have chakore attacks, she became an active member of the Mama Tata congregation which allowed her some outlet for her tendency toward chakore. On the final night of the all-night vigil being held for her, a semi-conscious Fel mentions another woman (now deceased) previously associated with Mama Tata. She also comments on the shortage of food that is facing Ngawbere throughout the Indigenous Reserve. The two men who are present begin to discuss their dislike of non-indigenous people elsewhere in the province who do not practice sharing when someone is short of food. Fel also refers to the special rituals that will be held to resolve the food crisis. The comments of Fel's brother during the day following the vigil suggest rather graphically some of the hardships over food even Ngawbere youth

must endure in their marginalized existence.

There is evidence that JS and his wife (Fel) are experiencing some domestic conflict; this especially is evident during the day when Fel is "trance-singing." Although JS tries to participate in the rearing of her child (by another man), at one point in the morning Fel replies that the child is not his. He changes the subject to talk with the fieldworker about some of the experiences and carefree years he had when younger. He also indicates some of the difficulties he has had with women, most of which have resulted in periods of separation from his spouse and, eventually, children of his own to support.

Similar comments from JS's brother-in-law who himself at one time experienced chakore attest to the problems in male-female relationships that face Ngawbere youth during adolescence. The potential for strife between men and women is evident in the descriptions of both men. They each provide evidence that Ngawbere males have more freedom during their adolescence than women, particularly in having an opportunity to work outside the Indigenous Reserve for short periods. Whereas the one (JS) has never had chakore, the other man while younger experienced a brief episode.

Description of the Illness

An attack of chakore invariably includes a loss of consciousness and an accelerated expenditure of energy which manifests itself in a crying-moaning sound and some kind of strenuous "fight" or "flight" behavior. Victims of chakore frequently beat the walls or floors of houses with their fists and feet, strike at those nearby and, generally, try running

away. Following an attack, they are amnesic about their attack behavior.

Each of the eight witnessed chakore victims expresses herself (or himself in one case) with a crying-moaning sound; several produce a loud wailing-singing sound that is heard in neighboring households. Similar reports were given that the other 36 chakore cases also produced crying-moaning sounds. Only two of the eight witnessed cases "sing" with words, which, when examined for their content, suggest some of the personal pressures faced by the victim.

The motif of male figure [ni brare] appears in the vocalizations of the two women who "sing" and in the dreams each reports to relatives. The other 38 cases of chakore among women for which there are data include the victim's report of an unknown "man" in the dreams that are described to the healer and/or relative (or a "woman" for the four males among the 44 victims). For those among the 38 who vocalized words, the "man" motif similarly appeared when the victim was wail-singing. Since Ngawbere associate treweri brein [chakore] with the stress of relating to affines, that is, people who are "outside" one's own family, it is not surprising that the "man" frequently is an unknown male, whether Ngawbere or foreigner. For this reason, it often happens that the "attack talk" is glossed to include only the comment that a victim is "seeing a man" (if she is a woman) or "seeing a woman" (if he is a man) when a kinsman or spouse presents the victim's complaints to the diviner.

It is the arm movements [kude] of the victim which catch the attention of Ngawbere observers, as much as the actions aimed at trying to flee [chako]. Ngawbere do not interpret the contraction of muscles in the arms and hands as a sign of anger when the victim clenches the fists

or draws the forearms toward the chest. Instead, they perceive the arm and hand movements as evidence that the victim is fighting "someone" whom only they can see while unconscious. It is for this reason that the victim's male kin focus their efforts at restraint on the arms and legs [deketébotó], in order to prevent that "someone" from harming the victim and/or "carrying" her away. Particularly evident is the participation of the victim's brothers, mother's brothers, the spouse (if married/if he is present) and even the father. Some Ngawbere use pieces of cloth to tie the wrists of the victim, although this is no longer a procedure of restraint that is recommended by the folk healers. Men recall feeling exhausted and occasionally bruised the day following their efforts to restrain someone having an attack (cf. Dennis 1985:291-292). The women victims also complain of muscular pain in the arms and chest the day after having experienced a chakore attack.

Another aspect of the chakore attack is that the victims were noted to keep their eyes closed [okwo kwain] throughout the entire period of the attack. The folk healers, more than the lay observers, identify the victim's unconscious state by noting the closed eyes. The healers also mention the victims' inability to recall their actions after an attack has occurred, indicating that they "lack awareness" [neite]. The term for not recalling a dream [nan türo] is not used in this context of "non-remembering." The healers indicate that the amnesic nature of chakore is something that "comes along" with the difficult struggle embodied in the victim's ü yai and that what the victim actually is experiencing is of lesser consequence than the possibility of injury.

Stages

The chakore syndrome occurs in two stages. The first, and certainly the most dramatic, is the (acute) "crest" stage in which the victim experiences headaches, anxiety, dizziness, irritability, lethargy, loss of appetite, nausea and ominous dreams of being persecuted, "tempted" in some fashion or fighting. Ngawbere recognize the "crest" as the period in which the ill person is most susceptible to attacks. Referring to the inevitability of an attack, they often say that the person is "alongside fleeing hysteria" [chakorébotó]. The crest of the illness is the period of risk and generally lasts from one to five days. The second and less conspicuous stage is the "recess" in which the person suffers fewer symptoms at a level which does not impair her (his) daily participation in subsistence activities. Ngawbere say that the person in this stage "is ill" [taw bren], since the behavioral manifestations by which they recognize the chakore attack do not appear. The symptoms are considered less severe during the recess than during the crest of the illness.

If the victim experiences a loss of motor control during flight or engages in aggressive behavior toward another during an attack, she (he) runs the risk of bodily injury from falls, poisonous snakes (if fleeing to the forest) or drowning (if fleeing to the sea). It is for this reason that household members maintain vigilance over potential victims when the warning signs for chakore appear. No reports were heard during fieldwork, however, that any chakore deaths or even serious injuries had ever occurred.

The period of recess is less dangerous, since the person rarely loses consciousness for extended periods of time and experiences general

control over body movements. The recess lasts for several weeks and even months before the person either faces another crest of attacks [ni brenta] or is considered to have been cured [ni nointa]. During the recess members of the household are watchful for signs which indicate a recurrence of the crest of the illness. Since the headaches, anxiety, irritability, etc. that occur in chakore also occur in other illnesses, Ngawbere use the generic expression for stating that the person "is ill" [taw bren] without further elaboration. This is because those who are keeping an eye on the person do not know whether the mild symptoms will become more severe and manifest as a chakore attack, or whether the symptoms represent only a minor health problem that will subside with the household's administration of folk remedies.

Parameters

The chakore syndrome occurs at a prevalence rate of about 44.4 per 1000 Ngawbere women between the ages of 15 to 45 along the northern Valiente Peninsula.⁵ The duration of the entire syndrome, which includes the whole period during which the individual is ill and not just the brief period of attacks, that is, the "fleeing" behavior, varies from one month to more than a year in some cases. The mean length of the chakore episode among the 42 chakore victims of the northern Valiente Peninsula was 5.58 months.

Chakore is not related to either birth order or parity. Young girls who were firstborn experienced chakore in no greater frequency than others, and both women with and without children were among the 42 peninsular cases of chakore examined (Table 12). Chakore is more likely

Table 12: BIRTH ORDER AND PARITY AMONG chakore VICTIMS^a

<u>Order of Birth</u>	Have Children ^b		Fell Ill Alone		Total Ill
	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	
firstborn	5	8	4	9	13
second	1	4	1 ^c	5	5
third	1	4	2	3	5
other	<u>10</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>2^c</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>12</u>
	17	18	9	26	35

a) Includes comparative information on only 35 of the 42 cases that were treated by the peninsular diviner.

b) Includes available data on female victims only (N=33).

c) Includes one male youth.

to occur among young women, however, than among any other age group.

Victims of attacks often live in either the same or neighboring households, and often are cognatic kin such as sisters or cousins. The mean age of the 42 chakore victims at first onset was 17.7 years; the victims ranged in age from 9 to 38 years.

There is some variation between individuals with respect to the duration of the chakore attack. The attack can last several minutes, if not too severe (an extreme example of this is Case One), or it can last from two to four hours in severe cases as in the other cases presented earlier. The majority of the 44 cases for which there is adequate data lasted from one to two hours. Most attacks took place during twilight hours, generally between 6:00 to 9:00 in the evening, and ran their course to conclusion before midnight. The physical exertion, and subsequent fatigue, which accompany the crest stage of chakore is probably the main reason that the cycle of attacks is limited in most cases to no more than a few days. The duration of an attack appears to be related to the capacity of a person to withstand distress and physical

exertion, and varies from individual to individual.

There is little variation between individuals with respect to the phases of the chakore attack. The time between onset when the victim loses consciousness to the first vocal emissions when the person produces sounds, whether by crying-moaning or wailing-singing, is less than 30 minutes (Table 13). During the remaining period of the attack, the victim continues to produce sound until exhaustion sets in. At this point most victims fall asleep. Although some awake with no recall of their actions during the period of the attack, they too soon fall asleep. Hence, the structuring of the attack appears similar across individuals, more so than the duration of the attack. Moreover, chakore attacks often occur multiply or sequentially with the crest stage of one episode overlapping that of another person's episode.

Local Perspective

The main feature of chakore recognized by Ngawbere is the imagery of an unknown man in the vocalizations or dreams of the women who experience the illness, which indicate the likelihood of a chakore attack in the early evening. For them, the appearance of "a man" in a woman's dreams represents the lack of an appropriate marriage partner.

The term ko huro is used by Ngawbere to describe the "thought rushes" that accompany a state of anxiety in a person who is conscious. The term denotes a phenomenon which "speeds up" and implicitly indicates [through the use of the term ko] that the source of the frenetic movement is an aspect of nature generally not associated with human (Ngawbere) behavior. Ngawbere use the term to contrast any seemingly impulsive

Table 13: SUMMARY OF chakore ATTACK DURING "Crest" STAGE

<u>Case</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Hour</u> ^a	<u>Sounds</u> ^b	<u>Duration</u> ^c
Mul	21 Aug	none	none	no attack
	22 Aug	?	?	**
	23 Aug	19:00	wordless ^d	1hr 15min
	24 Aug	?	?	**
	25 Aug	none	none	no attack
Let (#5)	13 Jan	none	none	no attack
	14 Jan	19:45	25min	1hr 35min ^e
	15 Jan	19:25	25min	1hr 5min
	16 Jan	19:40	14min 20s	1hr 20min
	17 Jan	none	none	no attack
Mec (#6)	5 Feb	none	none	no attack
	6 Feb	19:38	15min 35s	3hr 2min
	7 Feb	19:44	10-15min	1hr 4min ^f
	8 Feb	?	mild attack ^g	mild attack ^g
	9 Feb	19:11	mild attack ^g	mild attack ^g
	10 Feb	none	none	no attack
	29 Mar	none	none	no attack
	30 Mar	20:30	?	1hr 5min
	31 Mar	none	none	no attack
Mri (#3)	26 Mar	none	none	no attack
	27 Mar	20:48	?	1hr 40min
	28 Mar	?	?	**
	29 Mar	?	?	?
	30 Mar	20:10	?	**
	31 Mar	none	none	no attack
Til	30 Mar	none	none	no attack
	31 Mar	?	?	2 - 3 hours ^h
	1 Apr	21:50	?	2hr 30min
	2 Apr	?	?	mild attack ^g
	3 Apr	none	none	no attack

a) The hour the attack began (using a 24-hour watch).

b) From loss of consciousness to onset of whine-crying or wail-singing (timed with a wrist chronometer).

c) From loss of consciousness to the victim's falling asleep, completely calmed down (timed with a wrist chronometer).

d) The victim was whine-crying without intelligible words.

e) Only time in which the victim struggled and required restraint. The victim continued humming for another 1.25 hours, requiring no restraint.

f) Includes the use of pressure point massage [mánmiti] by diviner.

g) Mild attack with no need to restrain the victim.

h) The time was estimated by the brother of the chakore victim.

** The field investigator was not present in the same room as the victim.

rapid movement (especially speech) with a more normative calmness that permeates the activities of daily subsistence chores.

The term ni dūye is used specifically to refer to a disvalued dream experience that condenses a lot of action in the dream process and awakens the dreamer. The term means "the warring force" and refers to a conflict that someone is facing in relation to personal health, family squabbles, land tenure problems, etc. The "warring force" that manifests itself through the chakore attack is known as deko, at least along the Valiente Peninsula. For chakore victims in the mountains of Cricamola River the "warring force" is called muoin, and along the Bocas del Toro coast it is called hotri.

Since Ngawbere credit the same process within a person's ū yai as the source of dreaming when asleep [kob0] and any visual/auditory imagery when awake [boko], the "warring force" known as deko can manifest itself either in the dream state or at some point prior to or simultaneous with a chakore attack. Whenever it appears, deko is viewed as the source of energy embodied in the image [bo] of an unknown "man" who is approaching, chasing, courting and offering valued objects, participating in the Pole-Throwing Festival, drinking or in some way harrassing the victim. Chakore victims rarely verbalize (even when unconscious) actions depicting sexual license between the "man" figure and themselves.

The term Deko refers to a mythical population that once inhabited the coast of Panama, and the term Muoin to a much larger population that inhabited the mountains. The term Hotri also refers to a population that once inhabited western Panama, although its meaning is more obscure than either that of Deko or Muoin. Ngawbere narratives tell of a time when

the leaders of Deko became extremely rebellious and bellicose toward other indigenous populations on the isthmus. Pursued by four mythical figures, the leaders of Deko eventually were "banished" to Escudo de Veraguas, an island known as Dekóboto located off the Atlantic coast. When peninsular Ngawbere use the term deko to refer to the inner turmoil of the chakore victim, they are referring to the appearance of aggressive impulses that are disruptive to the harmonious relationships between men and women that are necessary for the maintenance of Ngawbere society.

Cyclicity

Ngawbere recognize a periodicity in the occurrence of chakore. They compare the timing of a chakore attack to the arrival home of an elderly man as the sun sets. It is said that "chakore, like an old man, arrives at day's end." The comment refers to a similarity between elderly men and young women who each lack companionship, particularly in the early evening. Elderly men are said to return to their homes (often their children's household) early in the evening, owing to their having passed the time of active (evening) comradeship with other men. Too old to play with younger siblings, young women are not allowed any extensive visiting in the evening. They are too young on the other hand to be with a male, until they are courted, consume their union, have him move into their household [dwanane] or they move into an affinal household. The phrase compares chakore to an old man's evening arrival in an allusion to the difficulty facing a young women who must remain alone before marriage, like an old man without evening companionship.

Some descriptions of chakore also refer indirectly to the cycling of

human activities in relation to waking and sleeping. For Ngawbere, the period of unification in the day/night cycle is the evening, for it is a time of family gathering. The moment of separating one day from another is the morning when one awakens. Just as the evening is a time to plan for the next day's labors, the early morning is a time for disrupting or altering plans if someone in the family has had a bad dream during the night or if the morning weather is stormy. Implicit in the statement of the elderly man who arrives home early in the evening is the belief that the habit of awakening too early in the morning in fits of sleeplessness is due to an unfulfilled waking state the day before. Hence, the phrase juxtaposes by way of a contrast the period before sunrise as a time of restful slumber, but only if the time before sunset was fulfilling. Whereas the "warring forces" afflict some before sunrise, they can afflict the young (unfulfilled) woman at sunset.

Ngawbere report that chakore victims first "cry," before they "sing." Their comments refer to the trajectory of a single attack as well as that of an entire episode. First, the chakore attack may begin with a crying-moaning sound [ngwonenko] without words, then shift to vocalizing words [kuke] several minutes later. Second, some victims simply cry each evening over a period of several days or even weeks before they begin to vocalize words. Family members report to the diviner the general theme of the victim's "attack talk" [kuke]. Others who are present (in most cases they are limited to family members) repeat the gist of particular phrases in the open network of social gossip that occurs among friends and relatives. Comments about a woman experiencing chakore are disseminated throughout the northern Valient Peninsula.

Marital Imbalance

One of the major tenets of chakore is the belief that the chakore victim experiences the illness because she (or he) lacks a companion of the opposite sex or is having troublesome relations with an existing partner (see comparative remarks in Dennis 1981:479-481, 1985:303-304, and compare suggestion that food anxiety is precipitous to pibloktoq, according to Gussow 1985[1960]:280-281, 283-284).

The pairing of men and women in Ngawbere society is said to be fraught with travail as well as enjoyment. The most frequent expression associated with sexual pairing is mo tare tie; the phrase can mean either "I long for you" or "you hurt me," or some combination of the two. Articulate Ngawbere explain that mo tare tie can best be translated into Spanish as: amandote, tu me dueles ("it hurts to love you"). The phrase reflects the blending of opposites that Ngawbere feel is inherent in a single phenomenon, such as a marriage or any other social relationship, as well as the notion of reciprocal exchange that Ngawbere expect to find at the basis of human interaction. For male-female pairing, opposition is represented in the Ngawbere axiom that one gives love despite one's hurt or, as its converse, one hurts in spite of one's loving another. The illness of chakore is viewed by Ngawbere as an outcome ("outcry") of the real as well as potential "hurt" and "longing" (both rendered by the term tare) that inevitably accompany an affectionate relationship, but particularly one that pairs members of the opposite sex.

The term ngwonenko in everyday discourse refers to the yelping of a dog and the braying of cattle. It connotes both the "serenade" of the

male to the female of the species and the "calling" of the young to its mother. Ngawbere use the term in an alternative sense to refer to the singing of a man who is trying to impress a woman, primarily when he is working alone or with other men in the forest. The same term is used less frequently to describe a young child who is calling for one or the other of his parents.

The production of the crying-moaning and wailing-singing sounds by a woman who is experiencing a chakore attack also are referred to as ngwonenko and are said to represent an inversion of women's expected presentation of self in Ngawbere society as child-bearers and caretakers. Women are not expected to "cry" except when in severe physical pain, and they are not allowed to "call" or "serenade" in any context (both are rendered as ngwonenko). They are in effect disallowed from any speech or sounds that are characteristically identified with children and men. The one context in which women can produce such sounds as a form of release is chakore and, although their behavior is "permitted," it is monitored since it is perceived as a sign of illness.

Precipitation

The stress that is created by a troublesome family or marital situation is evident in many of the 42 cases that occurred in the northern Valiente Peninsula. Circumstances of social stress appear primarily in the domestic relations with affinal kin and, in several instances, with cognatic kin regarding a woman's relations with affines.

Kinswomen enjoy close relationships with their kinsmen, particularly in the years of growing up. When a young woman reaches maturity, she

becomes party to the teasing of her brothers, whatever their age, and her same-age, chiefly cross-sex male cousins regarding potential mates.

Adolescence often is described by Ngawbere rather graphically as a period of difficulty both for young women and their male kinsmen. It is a time in which kinsmen assume extra vigilance over their kinswomen for possible misbehavior and watch for an overinterest in daughters and sisters by young men from other families. Likewise it is a time in which the older female kinswomen in a family or household monitor whatever diagnostic signs might appear to indicate the possibility of chakore (primarily headaches, dreams and dizziness).

Considering the relative frequency of social contact with unrelated males their own age, the potential is great among young women for generating, even exacerbating the tension that surrounds the period of adolescence. Today this process occurs primarily at school, it occurred traditionally through the inter-familial rituals.

For the young women and young men who experience chakore, its occurrence represents a major focal point of tension precipitated by the efforts to create inter-familial linkages. Since the basis for continuity in Ngawbere society is "the intertwining of family lines," as perceived by Ngawbere themselves, the adolescent is placed in a position of conflict and uncertainty when she (he) reaches the age of marriage; the resulting tension is compounded by her experience of the fluctuations that follow the period of biological puberty.

In sum, there is outlet among males for the release of adolescent tension through their social teasing of young kinswomen, spending time away from home and, as alluded to by one of the chakore victims, by

participating in ritual drinking among the men. All too frequently, however, there is less opportunity for release of tension among women and the greater likelihood of its release through manifestation as chakore.

Summary

Headaches, anxiety, lethargy, irritability, loss of appetite and ominous dreams are the diagnostic signs by which Ngawbere identify the potential for "fleeing hysteria" [chakore] in young women. Ngawbere distinguish two stages in the chakore illness. First, there is a short-lived "crest," and, second, there is a period of susceptibility during a "recess" of the illness. The recess begins a period of vigilance over the person experiencing the incipient stages of chakore.

The crest of the illness is the period of risk, when an attack is imminent. The attack manifests itself as a loss of consciousness, which generally is accompanied by acting-out (or "lashing out") behavior in the form of "resistance" and/or "avoidance" reactions, which are followed within 30 minutes by the emission of either crying-moaning or wailing-singing sounds. In contrast, an attack is less likely during the recess stage. Male kinsmen, for both the crest and recess stages, keep watch or make their whereabouts known to members of a young woman's household should their presence be needed to restrain a chakore victim.

Daily conversation frequently includes information on the motif of a "man" who has appeared in a young woman's dreams or, subsequently, in her vocalizations should she succumb to a chakore attack. Of all the signs of chakore, the motif of the male figure receives the most attention from Ngawbere. Its appearance reflects a period of tension for young women

(as well as a few young men) which is associated with a transition from the family of birth ("insiders") to an alignment with affinal kin ("outsiders") through marriage. It is a time in which close family ties are loosened but not severed; the security of membership in a family is exchanged for the uncertainty of beginning a relationship with a new set of affinal kinsmen, with the inherent social obligations and potential for conflict.

Ngawbere accept the occurrence of chakore as an inevitable aspect of indigenous life that manifests itself from time to time. They blame no one and least of all themselves for the appearance of chakore. When it appears imminent, kinsmen simply "pull together" with household members to maintain vigilance over susceptible women. Ngawbere have a rather elaborate system for recognizing the diagnostic signs of an impending chakore attack, treating it when it occurs and explaining its occurrence in terms of an intrusion by forces carrying the names of bygone indigenous peoples. The illness chakore is not associated with forces external to indigenous life in the Americas, therefore, as is the folk illness ha ko botika described in the next chapter. As an illness and reflection of the stressful maneuvers that accompany the intertwining of family lines which assure societal continuity, Ngawbere accept chakore as a part of their way of life.

Notes

1. Ngawbere explain the term in Spanish as se ve, se va ("you see it, it's gone").

2. The materials for Cases Five (#51 in fieldnotes), One (#121), Three and Four (#201 and #202 combined), and Six (#223), were presented in Bletzer (1985b:300-302) in abridged form as Cases No. 2, No. 7, No. 4 (two cases were combined), No. 3, respectively. The materials from field notes (#208) describing the unwitnessed case of Til appeared in Bletzer (1985b:301) as Case No. 5. Neither a description of the cases of either NS or Fel has appeared elsewhere in print.

3. The ngawbere transcription from fieldnotes is as follows:

CT: ?niré ngwonenko.
 KR: sete [indicates side of shelter]. deu. kirá.
 CT: ?mo kobai.
 TT: !haka.

4. The ngawbere transcription from fieldnotes is as follows:

u - u - u - u - u - u.
ni brare. u - u - u - u - u - u.
ti ni dübun. u - u - u - u - u - u.
he ye, o, hon. u - u - u - u - u - u.
a, ti, o. u - u - u - u - u - u.
[unintelligible sound] kuita. u - u - u - u - u - u.
[unintelligible sound] deko, u - u - u - u - u - u.
Eka [unintelligible sound]..., u - u - u - u - u - u.
ni brare, ngaw, u - u - u - u - u - u.
Kruso [unintelligible phrase], u - u - u - u - u - u.

5. The prevalence rate was calculated from cases that were known to have received treatment in fifteen homesteads located along the northern Valiente Peninsula (field investigator's census). Among the 15, five were larger communities comprising between 25 to 100 households. Most of the 42 cases of chakore occurred in seven of the 15 homesteads. Only the 20 cases that occurred among women between 1982-84 were used to compute the prevalence rate. Compare a slightly lower prevalence rate for grisi siknis as calculated by Dennis (1981).

Chapter 6: ha ko botika

This chapter examines how the folk illness known as ha ko botika is perceived by Ngawbere as a manifestation of their domination by external forces outside their control. A small number of syndromes described in the cross-cultural literature include some form of sleeping aberration (e.g., Hufford 1982; Ness 1985; Bloom and Gelardin 1967; Hart 1985[1960]: 387-389; Munger 1987; Marshall 1981) or, less commonly, a convulsive lapse into unconsciousness (e.g., Jilek-Aall 1976). Among some of the groups (particularly from southeast Asia), there are reports that death can occur when a person who is asleep experiences whatever it is that constitutes the local variety of such a syndrome. Death is attributed to the folk illness that is examined in this chapter.

Overview

The term ha ko botika is a compound word whose roots are used by Ngawbere to report their experience with bad dreams, through such terms as botiri ("image-seduced"), ha ko ("self-ousted"), botike ("image-beguiled") and ko bo ("image-filled"); ha ko botika can be roughly translated as "immerse oneself in self-deception" and refers to any significant dream. The root term bo, means 'image' and tike means 'deceive/inveigle' [tika = passive form]; combined, they refer to the illusory imagery of dreams as Ngawbere perceive them and their disclosure of personal predicaments.

Ngawbere consider any illness that is accompanied by a significant dream as one that centers in the individual's consciousness [ü yai]. When the problem produces irregular breathing and renders the person unconscious and unable to eat, drink, speak or use the stream as a latrine, Ngawbere consider the manifestation of these symptoms as the classic form of ha ko botika. People perceive the unconsciousness and irregular breathing of ha ko botika as dangerous in the sense that their occurrence is "a brush with death."

The treatment for ha ko botika is a regimen that lasts four, sometimes five days, and emphasizes some form of tactile stimulation preferably administered by a diviner, along with botanical medicine and vigilance over the ill person. Ngawbere indicate that the four-day ha ko botika episode (especially the unconsciousness) is an inversion of the (conscious) all-night vigil and, hence, the illness is viewed as an affront from forces outside their own society.

Ethnographic Description

At least a dozen health problems were observed in which the term ha ko botika was used by Ngawbere. Although the context varied from case to case, most of the time the person who was said to have experienced ha ko botika was affected only minimally. These twelve or more ha ko botika cases (each varying in severity) were among a few of the 60 kinds of "dreaming illness" for which Ngawbere have illness terms and among which they include the "classic" form of ha ko botika.

Five cases of illness that were identified as ha ko botika, however, were much more serious. Each of the five cases occurred in the northern

Valiente Peninsula, and each was observed from the time of onset to the conclusion of the illness. All five episodes lasted four to five days, and, as the "classic" form of ha ko botika, each case generated a series of remedial actions as the case unfolded. Relatives were interviewed where and when possible during and after each episode. Several medical practitioners also were interviewed. These five cases are summarized at the beginning of the chapter, from the time of onset to recovery.¹

Case One

The first case was one of two cases of classic ha ko botika that occurred during the December holiday period known as la pascua (a combined Christmas and New Year, Panamanian-style) that has been introduced through the rural school system into some areas of the Indigenous Reserve. Both cases occurred in men of advanced years who were participating in one of several drinking festivals. Only the two ha ko botika cases are described below.

The first victim was a man (CR) who has two wives, by whom he has two children by the first wife only; the older son is a diviner.

28 Dec (Tue): CR's second wife's (Chi) house.

CR had a dream in which he was drinking with his deceased brother as they were traveling in a boat [FL, T3 report]. After the two of them arrived, he went snorkling by himself. He then awoke, reported the dream to his second wife (Chi), went to the stream to bathe, but returned to Chi's house feeling that he would fall along the way if he tried to go to his first wife's house [T3 reports]. [By 7:00 a.m.] News of his illness has spread to several households.... His first wife's brother (SA), a herbalist, is the first to fetch medicine, since CR's son (T3), the diviner, went early in the morning to work in the forest....

[Around 8:00] CR's first wife (Flo) and eldest daughter (Sil) enter the sleeping quarters of the second wife's house without speaking.

Later his son's wife and her mother arrive; they both enter the house, but not the sleeping quarters....

CR lies still on the bare mattress wrapped to his neck in a sheet. Lying without movement the entire morning, he appears to be in a "semi-coma." As Chi's siblings and CR's kin enter the sleeping quarters to observe CR, they remain silent. Inside the sleeping quarters no one talks about CR's lack of movement, but those who discuss his condition elsewhere in the community invariably mention his "motionlessness" [kwékebe]....

Several aspects of CR's illness which are perceived by those who are present as signs of a very serious problem. First, CR reports to his second wife a dream in which he was traveling in a boat and drinking with his deceased brother, followed by his swimming alone. Boat travel and swimming are new innovations among Ngawbere who migrated to the Atlantic coast only within the past 160 years, whereas the practice of remembering deceased relatives is uncommon except for persons having social contacts with them when they were living. All three motifs are inauspicious to Ngawbere and indicate the possibility of serious illness. Second, the ill man lies unconscious without moving most of the first two days and nights. His lack of movement is worrisome to observers for with it is a decrease in his rate of respiration. To Ngawbere, shortness of breath is a sign of approaching death.

While he is lying on the floor, CR's eyes remain closed and he appears unresponsive to either visual or auditory stimuli in the room. He appears responsive to tactile stimulation from the diviner's ritual stick; he moves from side to side more often when the diviner performs pressure point massage than when he is left alone on the floor. He reports that he felt something like "an electric current" which was followed by the sensation of "floating in the air" at the moment the

diviner began pressure point massage on the palm of his right hand.

CR is unable to sit up by himself, but, once he is helped up, he is able to sit unsupported by his wife or daughter. He is unable to speak when lying unconscious on the mattress; when sitting he answers the questions posed to him by his first wife and daughter, acknowledging that he recognizes them. His two wives and daughter assist CR in sipping medicine from a cup while he is sitting, although he is barely able to swallow. Indicating when he wishes to urinate, he is not incontinent. For two days, CR's condition is said to be serious [bren krubote] and unchanging [kóntebe].

The remedial actions for CR's treatment include pressure point massage performed by the diviner three times the first and second day, ritual cleansing of the face the second day, botanical medicine, some fluids but no solids and round the clock vigilance by members of his immediate family. Each of these actions is thought to counter some aspect of the problem manifesting itself as ha ko botika. For example, the ritual cleansing of the face is intended to improve the environment wherein Ngawbere say that dreams occur, namely, behind the eyes.

CR experiences periods of motionlessness through the third day. He continues to require assistance in sitting up, but is able to do so more frequently than the first two days of his illness. While sitting, he recounts to those who visit him what he has seen while asleep. The motifs in his dreams shift from images of darkness and turmoil to those of heavenly figures and light. His intake of fluid mostly includes cups of botanical medicine and juice, and by the third day he is able to eat a little solid food, such as cooked oatmeal. He still requires support to

urinate, while standing.

By the fourth day, CR's illness is viewed as less serious; he spends less time lying motionless on the floor and, while unconscious, he turns more frequently from side to side. He is able to recount to visitors his dream experience; he provides more details to some than to others, at his own discretion. By this time, he is consuming more fluids and solids, but he continues to require assistance in performing elimination. Since he does not eat solid food until the third day, CR not too surprisingly has no bowel movement the first two days and evidently no bowel movement until the final portion of his illness.

Over the four days of his illness, the configuration of symptoms which CR experiences give rise to several remedial actions. The diviner spends less time in performing pressure point massage as time passes, and no one ritually washes CR's face on the third and fourth days. Actions are reduced little by little as the members of his household observe signs of improvement in his condition. The door and window to CR's sleeping quarters have remained closed the first four days of his illness, but each is opened on the morning of the fifth day. The medicine which has lain at his side for the first four days also is removed on the fifth day. These two actions signify that people who have observed CR perceive in his behavior and functioning the signs that he is on his way to recovery. Throughout the community, and even elsewhere in the northern Valiente Peninsula, people are saying that CR is "alert and well" [okwóbiti]. Two to three days after the fifth day of his illness which coincides with a cessation of work for the First of January celebration, CR returns to his daily routine of providing for the

households of his first and second wives, respectively.

Always known as a man willing to discuss his views in public, CR on several occasions speaks out strongly against the local residents who bring liquor into the community during introduced Panamanian holidays. He suggests that drinking in excess is a poor view of life for those on the outside, but, even worse, that drinking liquor as Ngawbere consumes time and cash and keeps one from meeting subsistence obligations. Much later in the same year of his illness, after many seasons of turtling (May through July), CR declines to set his turtle nets and arranges to have two younger kinsmen set the nets and check them daily. At this time people begin again to discuss CR's illness; several suggest that it has caused him to relinquish his participation in an activity that he learned from people outside the Indigenous Reserve. He has not relinquished an opportunity to drink with the men, however, for the following year he participates rather moderately in drinking with the men at the school's annual festival.

CR's recovery from illness is viewed as a realignment with Ngawbere values and a modification of practices he has acquired both during the period of his youth when he spent several years in the provincial capital and several years of young adulthood while working with Afro-Antillian fishermen. Before the implementation of rural schools in Ngawbere territory, Ngawbere children often were sent to live with non-indigenous families in Bocas del Toro for purposes of schooling. A number of elders, among them CR, remember their experience when younger while living in the town of Bocas del Toro. Extending this network of friendships after his early youth, CR returned as a young man to learn

new subsistence techniques (turtling) from his non-indigenous contacts. To other Ngawbere, the experience suggests that the non-Ngawbere values CR absorbed while younger have weakened him, later subjecting him to ha ko botika when he became older. The blurring of Ngawbere values with those inculcated in CR as a youth in the provincial capital, and an excessive push to meet his social obligations to two families within the Indigenous Reserve, are what local people consider precipitous to his illness.

Case Two

The next case also occurred in connection with the Christmas/New Year's drinking bout and involves an older man (UL) who lives with his wife and two grown children; four more children are married and live elsewhere.

Awakening in the morning, UL reports a dream to his wife in which he was traveling in a red boat with a deceased brother, who, allegedly, died earlier from ha ko botika. Shortly thereafter, he loses consciousness. He is motionless for the first two days of illness in the sleeping quarters of his house, but occasionally moves from side to side from the position on his back or makes a weak effort to draw his knees toward his body.

UL demonstrates some response to tactile stimulation from the diviner by making minimal motor movements, but he does not regain consciousness (as did CR) after the diviner performs pressure point massage with his ritual stick. Like CR, he also appears unresponsive to both visual and auditory stimuli in the room and, when questioned

three days later, is amnesiac about the diviner's first visit. The first day after onset, UL shows a minimal swallow reflex; he takes very little liquid medicine, and no solid food.

On the the third and fourth days, UL is able to take some solid food and continues to take small amounts of liquid medicine. He is not incontinent since he has been wearing the same clothes for four days. Although he is willing to converse with visitors, UL is less talkative than CR about his sleeping experience.

By the fifth day, the sleeping quarters are left open, medicinal paraphernalia are removed and UL is able to eat solid food prepared over the main cooking fire. Unlike CR, UL reports that he still experiences headaches, but that they are not as strong as those which he initially experienced with the illness. One to two days after his recovery on the fifth day of illness, UL returns to his subsistence chores and his practice of visiting relatives in a nearby homestead.

When people discuss the two cases of ha ko botika, the field investigator hears only the dream of onset that UL reported to his wife. No other dreams are reported either by UL or by others in the community who have been visiting the ill man. People mention the dreams as well as the irregular breathing and motionlessness CR and UL experienced. The two cases are considered quite ominous for having occurred at the same time, and during a "festival" that represents an introduced Panamanian holiday. The drinking is associated with onset, not as a precipitating factor (see Greshan, Webb and Williams 1963; Jefferson and Marshall 1981:341-364), but more for its relation to the bottled liquor which represents how wage laborers on the outside

"withdraw" by consuming themselves through drinking, instead of contributing to the "mutual assistance" of others.

Some twenty months after his recovery, UL refuses to consider the possibility that one of his grandchildren could be a future diviner. For this, and the recollection of his reticence to report his ha ko botika² dreams, he is re-named by the people Obstinate Head ("coconut head"). The people's epithet implicitly suggests that UL had not learned from his illness experience as a Ngawbere should, and that he was "separating himself" from what is essential to a Ngawbere way of life.

Case Three

Two months after the cases of CR and UL another occurs, this time to a middle-age woman (Car) living in another homestead, several hours away on foot. Although her husband passed away some years earlier, she and her children are still living with her mother-in-law (Eli). Like the other cases, her illness begins with a bad dream.

The ill woman (Car) shows evidence of having experienced most of the same symptoms as CR and UL. She evidently has a dream to which she responds by shouting in her sleep. Unlike the two men, however, she is reported to have exited the sleeping quarters while asleep, then return, whereupon she placed a coconut in the sheet at her feet. Since she does not regain consciousness on the morning of onset (unlike CR or UL), she is unable to report her dream. The coconut in the sheet is discussed little by the members of her household, but others in her homestead speculate she is "seeing her own dissatisfaction" with her current circumstances.

Car lies on the floor of her sleeping quarters without movement on the first day of her illness; she appears unresponsive to visual and auditory stimuli in the room. She also appears unresponsive to the tactile stimulation that is administered to her face and upper torso by family members. Except for a few drops of medicine, Car takes no liquid nourishment. Her forehead appears discolored, as if it had been bruised.

Those who are present remain quiet in Car's presence and appear attentive to the occurrence of the illness they are witnessing. A major part of Car's treatment includes the ritual rinsing of her face, upper torso and legs. Several people administer a massage treatment to Car, including the firstborn son of one of her daughters. The choice of treatment is made by the woman's mother-in-law with whom Car has been living since marriage to the woman's son.

By the third day of her illness, Car spends less time lying unconscious on the floor, and appears more responsive to visual and auditory stimuli than the first two days. She performs some (motor) actions on her own from a reclining position, eats some solid food along with the liquid medicine she is taking, but she speaks only when she is spoken to. She evidently is not incontinent since she is wearing the same slip; there is a bedpan among the medicinal pots near the wall. The "atmosphere" inside the sleeping quarters has become more relaxed (the women are conversing, etc.); nevertheless, those who are present are cognizant that the children playing outside the house might disturb Car.

The treatment for this case differs slightly from the previous two, however. The main difference is that, although her face and upper

torso are massaged with medicinal water, no one applies pressure point massage. Visiting elsewhere, neither of the two peninsular diviners is at home. Like the previous two cases (CR and UL), news of her illness has reached other homesteads in the Valiente Peninsula, and people ask for details from those who have visited the ill woman.

On the fifth day, Car is eating and drinking well; confined to her sleeping quarters, she has a plate of cooked bananas, fish and chocolate drink. She spends most of the day awake and appears responsive to noises in the room and outside the house. She converses briefly with the field investigator and her mother-in-law as required by their questions, and even directs a few questions toward the former. She spends part of the day reading religious materials. When questioned, Car reports that she was unaware of who had visited her in the initial phases of her illness.

The removal of medicine from the sleeping quarters on the fifth day signifies that those who are caring for her perceive in her behavior the signs of recovery. The elder Eli tells her that she has some errands to perform the next day, implying that Car will be the main adult at home to watch the children. Some two to three days later Car resumes her participation in subsistence activities with other household members.

The significance of the illness for Car centers on her situation with her in-laws as less-than-adequate without her husband. By placing a single coconut (symbolizing anything that is "messed up") at her feet (generally symbolizing the coupling of husband-wife), Car "acts out" a dream recognition of her current circumstances. Women whose wage worker husbands have passed away often continue to live with their affines despite the absence of husband's brothers to re-marry (the levirate)

owing to a desire to keep any children with the husband's family. When eligible, the wife of a deceased worker receives a compensation payment for the children's support from the Chiriquí Land Company. In the case of Car, she is not receiving payment.

The question of guilt on Car's part is absolved, since "the hand that strikes her" in dream is not her own. People say that she has seen that the lack of a stipend from the banana plantations is not her fault. Nonetheless, the continuation of Car's living in a household with her in-laws is seen as a consequence of her husband's untimely death while he was working outside the Indigenous Reserve. Car has few opportunities to visit kin in her natal homestead; more than this, she is not receiving a compensatory stipend to share with kinsmen were they to visit. Either way, she feels isolated among the in-laws with whom she is living.

Following the bout with ha ko botika, Car continues to live with her in-laws. Her life with them might not be this way, it is said, if her husband had not been forced to work outside the Indigenous Reserve (where he was killed) and were she to be a recipient of monetary compensation for his death.

Case Four

The penultimate case appears similar to the previous three in the essential features of a classic ha ko botika episode, although the onset occurs in the afternoon, rather than the morning.

On the final night of a trip to an island homestead with her husband who is a diviner, a woman (Ser) dreams that the local health assistant (TI) gives her an injection in the center of her forehead, whereupon she

faints in her dream. At the time of her dream around midnight which occurs when she is sleeping alone, her husband is visiting with the residents of the island community. She complains of a headache on the return trip via boat through the Chiriquí Lagoon, and her husband buys her some Bufferin on the way home; her mother visits her that afternoon and she prepares the evening meal for her family. Later in the afternoon she goes downhill to the stream to wash clothes; while washing, she falls unconscious onto some rocks in the water. A passerby summons help, and several men carry her to her home. Her husband reports that she was experiencing shortness of breath when she was brought to the house.

Like the others, the onset of Ser's illness is linked to a bad dream she has during the night. Unlike the others, the onset of her illness occurs on the afternoon of the day she inauspiciously dreamed rather than that morning. She has headaches before and after onset, appears sensitive to light even though the sleeping quarters in which she is lying is unlit (receiving little sunlight through the slats in the wall), and remains unconscious most of the time during the first two days of her illness. Her fluid intake is very low and consists mostly of botanical medicine.

On the third day of her illness, Ser continues to increase her intake of liquid medicine and solid food, and is able to feed herself unaided. Over the final two days she gradually regains her strength. Ser is not incontinent, since she wears the same dress on all four days of her illness; she tells her husband when she wishes to urinate.

Much like the others, Ser recovers from her bout with ha ko botika some four days after its onset. On the fifth day, she leaves the

sleeping quarters and is able to perform domestic chores. Within a couple of days, she is again performing subsistence work in the forest.

Having occurred to the wife of a diviner, people are less than willing to speculate on the meaning of Ser's illness. Among other things, the dream image of the health assistant that precedes the onset of illness involves the counterpart to her husband's profession as a folk healer. Since the name of the diviner is a (planned) metonym on the name of his mentor and the name of the health assistant is an unintentional metonym on both names, the dream is viewed as illuminating a "different side" of Ser's husband, his medicinal practice as a Ngawbere diviner and his marriage to her. Although her husband's trips to other homesteads in the Indigneous Reserve are viewed as an obligation he holds to assist other Ngawbere as a diviner, his work takes time from their relationship.

Those in Ser's family come to view her experience as evidence that were they not forced to inhabit such areas as the islands of Chiriquí Lagoon rather than more fertile land elsewhere in the province, Ngawbere might not be having the kinds of health problems that they do and they might not require the services of a diviner quite so often. New places where Ngawbere are homesteading seem to require frequent invitations to diviners to visit and resolve health problems, and, as indicated above, the time away from home can take its toll on the spouse of the diviner.

Case Five

The final case is that of a young man (US) who, at 32 years of age, is the youngest of four men who are serving as preachers for the Mama Tata congregation. Since the young man, his wife and three sons

alternate from virilocal to uxorilocal residence, at the time of the illness they are residing in his brother's-in-law empty house, which is located on his parents' land. Up to the time of onset (unlike CR and UL who were drinking), US has been actively engaged in meeting his social obligations; he has been securing firewood, digging yams, visiting his parents who live nearby, etc.

During the first day and second day after the onset of illness, US's condition resembles in many ways the two cases of ha ko botika that occurred to the two men during pascua. He has a significant dream which he reports to his wife upon awakening in the morning. Shortly thereafter he apparently lapses into unconsciousness. Like CR and UL who remained immobile throughout the day, US lies without movement on the floor while he's unconscious; his eyes are closed. He is barely able to swallow the liquid medicine that is offered to him by the two women who are caring for him, and he is not offered solid food. He is not incontinent, since he is wearing the same clothes. Unlike CR or UL or the two women, US is heard "cry-whining" [ngwonenko] occasionally while lying on the floor.

US receives pressure point massage, but, unlike the two men, he receives it from his brother, a noviate diviner, since the principal diviner is visiting outside the Valiente Peninsula. Since US has indicated that his right arm hurts him, the two women who are caring for him massage the arm at various times during the day.

US remains unconscious through the fourth day of illness, and continues to spend some time cry-whining and wail-singing while he is "asleep." His intake of liquid remains low even though it is increased slightly over the third, fourth and fifth days of his illness. As he is

dressed in the same clothes until the fifth day, he does not experience incontinence. He himself reports that he lacks strength, feels feverish, experiences varying body temperatures, eats very little and can speak but cannot hear. US stays "in touch" with his surroundings. He reports what he experiences; how he remembers his treatment while ill agree with what the author observes and what other people tell him about US's illness.

The experience of US differs slightly from that of the previous four cases of classic ha ko botika on two points. First, US remains "asleep" like the others for the first two days of his illness, but, unlike the others, he spends a large amount of time in a state of motionlessness through the fourth day. His illness is considered "in excess" of what is expected for ha ko botika. For this reason, the period of treatment lasts five rather than four days. He consumes medicine only by sipping during the first three days, and takes a few spoonfuls of oatmeal on the fourth and fifth days. Second, US openly admits that he is "ill" and uses his period of confinement to examine his dreams very carefully in order to re-think his ideas on the place of the Mama Tata religion in Ngawbere society. He is willing to provide details from his dreams, more so than any other ha ko botika victim except CR.

US's experience is viewed as an "advancement in understanding." Some of what he later preaches in the Mama Tata chapel is based on what he has "learned" from his experience. Preaching in the Mama Tata chapel from what he has learned through his experience, his views are taken by Ngawbere as "more authoritative" than those of the other preachers.

The new teachings that US proposes make suggestions that would in effect further minimize Ngawbere involvement with the outside world. US

mainly espouses traditional ways of forest living that emphasize a simple approach to living and working as Ngawbere and lesser involvement with wage labor as one of the precepts for his teachings. He further suggests that the concept of poverty in Christian teachings is similar to the marginal Ngawbere life they experience as subsistence cultivators and fishermen. During one sermon, for example, he tells a story of two men, one a poor and generous fisherman (representing Ngawbere), the other also poor but deceitful (representing a non-indigenous way of life).

By his attitude and the use of the ha ko botika dreams, US acknowledges his support of Ngawbere in their struggle to survive. He advocates that they deal with the problem of outside encroachment (and, by implication, proletarianization) through retrenchment as Ngawbere. As a key figure in the local Mama Tata movement, US is preaching separatism from the outside forces that insulate Ngawbere while encouraging a reinforcement of Ngawbere virtues.

Description of the Illness

The ha ko botika syndrome manifests itself over a four-to-five-day period that oscillates between consciousness and unconsciousness. The period of unconsciousness predominates in the initial stages after onset, but it eventually gives way to recovery and a return to consciousness by the fourth day (Table 14). The biobehavioral characteristics of the illness differ from those reported for seemingly related syndromes. In cases of the Ol' Hag phenomenon, for example, few victims experience "night terror" on successive nights, and none of its victims experience unconsciousness during the day (cf. Hufford 1982:39-40, 64-65, 52-53).

Table 14: SUMMARY OF ha ko botika EPISODES

		While Unconscious				While Conscious					
		<u>A</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>C</u>	<u>D</u>	<u>AA</u>	<u>BB</u>	<u>CC</u>	<u>DD</u>	<u>EE</u>	<u>FF</u>
<u>CR #118</u>											
*	28 Dec	No	No	No	Yes	vm	No	No	No	No	No
	29 Dec	No	No	Yes	Yes	vm	No	No	No	No	No
	30 Dec	min	No	Yes	Yes	min	min	No	No	No	No
	31 Dec	min	No	Yes	Yes	min	min	?	Yes	No	No
**	1 Jan	NA	NA	NA	NA	max	min	?	Yes	Yes	No
	3 Jan	NA	NA	NA	NA	max	max	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<u>UL #119</u>											
*	27 Dec	vm	No	No	Yes	vm	No	No	No	No	No
	28 Dec	vm	No	No	Yes	vm	No	No	No	No	No
	29 Dec	min	No	No	Yes	min	min	?	No	No	No
	30 Dec	min	No	No	Yes	min	min	?	Yes	No	No
**	31 Dec	NA	NA	NA	NA	max?	min?	?	Yes	Yes	No
	1 Jan	NA	NA	NA	NA	max	max	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<u>Car #120</u>											
*	1 Mar	No	No	No	Yes	vm	No	No	No	No	No
	2 Mar	No	No	No	Yes	vm?	vm?	?	No	No	No
	3 Mar	min	No	No	Yes	min	min	?	Yes	No	No
	4 Mar	min	No	No	Yes	?	?	?	Yes	No	No
**	5 Mar	NA	NA	NA	NA	max	max	?	Yes	Yes	No

Ser #123

* 31 Jul aft	No	No	No	Yes	vm	No	No	No	No	No
1 Aug	No	No	No	Yes	min	No	No	No	No	No
2 Aug	No	No	No	Yes	min	min	No	No	No	No
3 Aug	No	No	No	Yes	min	min	?	Yes	No	No
** 4 Aug	NA	NA	NA	NA	max	max	?	Yes	Yes	min
6 Aug	NA	NA	NA	NA	max	max	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

US #122

* 10 Mar	No	Yes	No	Yes	vm	No	No	No	No	No
11 Mar	vm	Yes	No	Yes	vm	No	No	No	No	No
12 Mar	vm	Yes	No	Yes	vm	No	No	No	No	No
13 Mar	vm	Yes	Yes	Yes	min	vm	No	No	No	No
14 Mar	min	Yes	Yes	Yes	min	vm	?	Yes	No	No
** 15 Mar	NA	NA	NA	NA	min	min	?	Yes	Yes	No
18 Mar	NA	NA	NA	NA	max	max	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

A) Body movement (turning to side, moving legs, etc.).

B) Cry-whining [ngwonenko].

C) Vocalized words [kuke].

D) Silence without body movement [kwékebe].

AA) Liquid intake generally of botanical medicine [rain].

BB) Solid food [mru kueté].

CC) Bowel movement generally inside the sleeping quarters.

DD) Sitting unaided.

EE) Standing unaided, generally inside the house.

FF) Subsistence work in the forest.

Abbreviations used:

NA = Not Applicable.

vm = very minimal (e.g., less than a cup of liquid per day, slight body movements).

min = minimal (much less than usual capacity or activity).

max = maximum (near or at full capacity when well).

* = onset of the illness

** = end of the episode (recovery).

3

The prevalence rate for the classic form of ha ko botika in the northern Valiente Peninsula was approximately 5.91 per 1000 persons for the two-year period 1982-84. Significant dreams that are labeled by Ngawbere as ha ko botika occur at a much higher rate. However, very few of these dream incidents become cases in which the person suffers the classic form of "dreaming illness." The mean age of the five ha ko botika victims was 43.6 years; all were over 30 years of age.

The onset of ha ko botika is sudden and occurs without any warning signs, except the ominous dream during the night before the first day of the illness. For example, two of the five victims were involved in heavy drinking before onset; each of the other three were not, nor were they involved in similar activities (other than household subsistence) that might have served either as a precipitating or contributing factor. The duration of ha ko botika appears limited to roughly four, sometimes five days in which the ill person is confined to the sleeping quarters. The illness is followed by a one to two day period of quiet activity and then a return to subsistence work. All five victims of classic ha ko botika resumed their daily routines within a week of the day of onset. None of the five cases were recurrent during an additional 18 months of fieldwork, and none of the victims were reported to have suffered from ha ko botika previously (compare with Old Hag phenomenon, reported by Ness 1985:128-129, Hufford 1982:23-25).

Although ha ko botika victims do not seem to be aware of their breathing or (lack of) body movements, the people who are caring for them often comment on their shortness of breath and motionlessness. These are the signs by which Ngawbere diagnose classic ha ko botika.

The combination of physical immobility and the inability to eat or drink or use the latrine are perceived as extreme signs of illness, which are strongly reflective of a person's inability to participate in social obligations. Shortness of breath and irregular breathing are especially portentous, as these are signs that are known to occur prior to death.

The ha ko botika victim is unresponsive to either visual or auditory stimuli, at least initially within the first 24 to 36 hours. For most victims, there is a very minimal response to certain kinds of tactile stimulation. Pressure point massage by the diviner more than the ritual rinsing of the face and upper torso by family members appears to have an effect, at least its use often compels "abrupt" extensor motor movements and coincides with discrete dream images or sensations during the period of unconsciousness. Extreme measures such as physically shaking the victim and shouting loudly in the ear are discouraged.

The person who is ill has difficulty in swallowing liquids during the first 48 hours, but his ability to take liquid increases over the final 48 hours of the illness. Unable to take food during the first portion of the illness, he is able to take small amounts of soft food during the final 24 to 48 hours. The ill person is not force-fed, and no victim was ever observed choking while taking or receiving his medicine. Victims do not experience incontinence; none of the five witnessed cases required a change of clothes. Although a negligible intake of liquid during the whole episode may limit the need to relieve oneself, by the second day victims were indicating to relatives when they wished to urinate. Data on the victims' bowel movements are scanty; ha ko botika victims evidently do not defecate until the latter part of the illness.

The people who experience ha ko botika report that they have headaches after onset, feel fatigued and remember very little if anything of the first and sometimes the second day of the illness. Victims mention fluctuations in their body temperature, but, if not, those who are watching them notice and report this aspect of the illness. Some victims also experience a loss of hearing (such as US) or sensitivity to light (such as Ser) when conscious, but not the faculty of speech. One of the female victims (Car) experienced "sleep-walking," which is unusual among Ngawbere. The skin blotches she had on the morning of onset, however, is a common symptom in other kinds of dreaming illness, some of which occur among youth.

Some victims report intense visual and auditory dreams during the ha ko botika episode, whereas for a few the dream of onset seems to be the most inauspicious and the most personally threatening. The available data on the witnessed cases along with descriptions by several Ngawbere indicate that the series of dreams which occur during an episode of ha ko botika run their course from disvalued images in the initial stages (e.g., boat travel, deceased kinsmen, people performing acts of bodily harm, etc.) to those that indicate to observers recovery from the illness two to three days later (e.g., objects that emit light, people offering assistance, figures dressed in religious attire or religious objects such as the Holy Book, theonomous voices, the quaternity, etc.). Since dreams with related motifs accompany a number of other illnesses, none of the dream motifs are particularly unique to ha ko botika, however. More than anything, the unconsciousness and the irregular breathing are the primary diagnostic signs used by Ngawbere when a case of ha ko botika occurs.

A lack of preliminary symptoms inhibits any kind of preparation for ha ko botika. Since there are no warning signs prior to its onset and little probability of its recurrence, treatment for ha ko botika does not include any kind of vigilance over the potential victim either before or after its occurrence. Relatives show their concern for the ha ko botika victim mostly by crying in a manner softer than the practice of munyaire wailing over the deceased, and providing the remedial actions which they believe will return their loved one to them.

Not only do the mild and severe cases occur among both sexes, as seen by the cases presented above, Ngawbere report that ha ko botika can occur to anyone, men and women, young and old. For example, significant dreams that occur among the elderly are called by the term ha ko botika; they often are associated with impending death or, more commonly, the onset of dying. Several examples were given by a local diviner of people whose death was associated with ha ko botika. Although details are sketchy, often present was the theme of an unexpected and often abrupt interference with the process of aging through the occurrence of ha ko botika to someone advanced in years.

The "classic" form of ha ko botika also is considered as capable of afflicting infants and children, although cases in which this occurs appear to be rare. Since a significant dream can accompany a child's illness and go unreported, the potential for ha ko botika exists and, according to Ngawbere, is confirmed more through the observation of an ill child by adult relatives than persuading the child to describe his illness experience. Examples of children's illness that were reported and/or observed during fieldwork, however, invariably were labeled with

terms that specifically named a condition rarely associated with the "classic" form of ha ko botika. More narrowly, there were no instances of unconsciousness in the few serious episodes of illness that were observed among children.

Local Perspective

How Ngawbere view the states of (un)consciousness in the human make-up is important to an understanding of ha ko botika. The illness is viewed as an unconscious withdrawal from, and a conquest by, influences generated by external forces; to an action of physical withdrawal by a perpetrator, ha ko botika is an inward (mirror) response by the victim.

From birth to death, Ngawbere view three states as the basis of the human make-up: waking, dreaming, non-awareness. None of the three states is considered dissociated or separated from body functions, and all three are inherent aspects in all (Ngawbere) people through which everyone passes in a 24-hour cycle. Any given state varies with respect to a person's awareness of his corporeal body. Some people are said to be more aware of the three states than others; this especially is held to be true for diviners, herbalists and Mama Tata preachers and prophets.

The waking state [tü] is the primary dimension of human awareness. By this, Ngawbere mean that when one is awake, one is considering those activities that are necessary to sustain life, such as work, eating, etc. The term tü is used to refer specifically to the immediacy of human awareness and to thinking and ideas in general, and it also is used to refer to a person's thought processes prior to performing social action. Intention [tü or thinking], for Ngawbere, is precipitous to social

action, unless one's course of action is thwarted by something in one's environment, such as a better plan proposed by someone who is senior.

Although one's awareness is bounded in time and space in daily life, one transcends the waking state, according to Ngawbere, in the dream state [kObure, after kObu, 'promise']⁴. Through dreaming one can come to know other worlds and even go beyond the known world of Ngawbere experience. Ngawbere generally attribute increased awareness in the waking state to an ability to recall and benefit from one's dreams⁵, which, it is said, occur in relation to the way one chooses to meet social obligations and the way one seeks to fulfill personal desires which may or may not fall in line with one's obligations. As such, dreams are not viewed as merely personal; instead, they are microcosmic reflections of "public consciousness" [roughly ü yai], within which are imbedded one's personal inclinations. Dreams illuminate otherwise hidden aspects of that public consciousness, and reflect an individual's bodily condition as well as his relationship to the socionatural environment in which he lives. The term ü yai denotes a "still unreleased" aspect of consciousness and refers to one's total experience as a human being, as well as the totality of Ngawbere experience as a people.

The phrase ni tūiboto translates as "awareness-alongside-emphasis on awareness." Since tū refers to ideas, desires, thoughts, etc., as they are experienced by an individual, a "really aware" person among Ngawbere is someone who is "in touch" both with himself, that is, his body and consciousness as an integrated whole, as well as his social surroundings wherein he lives and works. He is in effect someone whose existence is contributory to the Ngawbere way of life.

The state of non-awareness [neite, after neye-, 'void'] is viewed by Ngawbere as a lack of consciousness and the inability to remember that "lack" following unconsciousness. For Ngawbere a state of non-awareness is not synonymous with death. Instead, when it occurs in ha ko botika, it is viewed as a precursor to the arrival of death and extinction as a member of Ngawbere society. A person exists because he participates in Ngawbere society; someone who is (physically) absent and not seen for a long period of time, for whatever reason, is treated "as if" he were dead. For ha ko botika, however, the victim is believed heading toward death, but, as it often turns out, he is gone only momentarily, as his family is present to bear witness and "negotiate" his return.

Whereas the body oscillates between daytime activity and nighttime rest, human consciousness oscillates between tü (thought, desires, etc.) and neite (nothingness) most markedly at night while a person sleeps. This is the way the world is viewed by Ngawbere, as each person shifts from activity to rest and his consciousness oscillates between "being" to "non-being." At the center of their conceptualization is a distinction between sentient beings and forces [ni] and anything else that exists but is non-sentient [ko]. By the same token, a person (the individual) exists only in relation to other sentient beings, primarily but not exclusively those which form his household, family and Ngawbere society. For Ngawbere, the primary tension of life is that which exists between one household and another, one family and another, or, as a permanent reminder of their identity as Ngawbere, between indigenous and non-indigenous peoples. In each instance, a sense of self as a person becomes imbedded in a larger constellation of social relations and

obligations of which each (Ngawbere) person feels himself a part.

Medicine and ritual (primarily the all-night vigil) are given when "contradictions and distortions" appear in the constituent parts of the body and in the dreaming process, which, as indicated earlier, reflect (microcosmically) sociogenic problems within social units broader than a single person (household, family, society). Thus, health problems such as chakore and ha ko botika are more than physical ailments; they also incorporate behavioral problems associated with difficulties occurring between households, families, and, as will become clearer farther along in the discussion, between Ngawbere and the outside world. Health care seeking is any effort to make amends for physical and extraphysical disharmony, which, as Beck (1978), Sontag (1977), Turner (1967, 1969), and others suggest, is played out in metaphors that communicate through concrete imagery the existence of bodily as well as societal imbalances. Ngawbere metaphors for body and society refer to pathways in which "wear and tear" occur, suggesting that they place an emphasis on the corporeal aspects of living and working, and stress the use of each person's body for meeting social obligations.

By way of contrast, medicine is that which "(re)places" in place that which was "pushed out," by "(re)turning" the person to his point of origin, which, for Ngawbere, is a state of health. For ha ko botika this means accompanying the victim during his time of need.

Intervention

Cooking the victim's food on a separate fire and enclosing the sleeping quarters signify that the family is treating a case of ha ko

botika as one of the several kinds of serious illness experienced by Ngawbere; "covering" the victim or the area of confinement is a common practice when someone becomes seriously ill. Members of the family and household disengage themselves from responsibilities for the duration of the illness. As might be expected, maintaining vigilance lessens their personal interest in preparing and consuming large meals for themselves. Devoting their efforts to caring for the ill member, close cognates (all those living in the same household) refrain from subsistence obligations, for the absence of one person through sickness is "the sorrow of all."

The most common treatment for ha ko botika is a regimen that lasts four, sometimes five days emphasizing some form of tactile stimulation, preferably administered by a diviner, along with botanical medicine and vigilance over the ill person. Postponing their own chores, immediate family, which includes the victim's household, are attentive to any changes in the victim's condition or any requests he may direct their way. They also monitor the flow of visitors, since a few of these may arrive with medicine from an errand or, impulsively, they may bring what they feel will help the victim. The four day period of vigilance for the ha ko botika victim is marked by long periods of silence that are interspersed by quiet talk centering on impressions of the victim's condition and, invariably, an evaluation of the effectiveness of the treatment.

Response to the biobehavioral functioning of the victim mostly occurs by (visual) observation, as the visitors watch the person lying on the floor and then later discuss with others what the victim is experiencing. If a diviner is available, the principal remedial action

is massage with a ritual stick [mánmiti]. Other actions are provided as the need arises, such as having a member of the family cover the victim if he appears chilly or rub his arms and forehead. Whereas raising the victim to give him his medicine, assisting him to urinate or use the bedpan for defecation is one of the few times the victim gives a verbal request to which the people can respond. The victim reports his dream experience at his own discretion, much like family members discuss their dreams in the morning at breakfast or, occasionally in the evening, after an event occurs in the daytime similar to something dreamed the night before. The difference is that people listen to the ha ko botika victim with quiet respect, but they do not comment on his dreams.

There is very little if any effort to interpret the victim's dream experience in his presence or even the adjoining rooms of the household wherein he is resting. Discussion of the manifest content of the ha ko botika dreams generally takes place away from the victim in places where people gather for informal discussion such as one of the boat landings on the beach or the consumer store, as well as within the privacy of the household, especially at mealtime. The gravity of ha ko botika concerns Ngawbere, just as bits and pieces of news about any serious illness are disseminated over a rather wide area. Reports of the dreams often are condensed, however, to nothing more than an appraisal of how the victim is "dreaming poorly" or "dreaming very poorly," and that piece of information is imbedded within a more general assessment of the victim's condition, with special attention to his breathing and lack of body movement. Over time, the diagnostic details are forgotten as the victim recovers and experiences a return to social-corporeal functioning. What

is remembered later is the primary dream motif the victim experiences at onset and the main healer(s) who provided medicine for the case. The lack of mobility, irregular breathing and confinement indoors for four days become implicit, since people are aware that spoken reference is being made to a case of ha ko botika. Those who paid a visit to see the victim, on the other hand, are able to narrate some other memorable aspect of the overall event to which they bore witness.

Interpretation

First, the naming of the ha ko botika episode varies from one person to another. Following its onset, observers use the term ha ko botika consistently and assess its severity by reviewing the victim's experience. The illness is nearly always viewed as serious if the victim experiences unconsciousness and irregular breathing. Having a bad dream is not an experience that always ends in a four day period of confinement and unconsciousness, however, but, when it does, the term ha ko botika invariably is used.

As the case progresses, the victim provides the details on what he is experiencing, and from this information people obtain a clearer idea of what sorts of problems he is facing. Once the ha ko botika episode is over, another term is used to identify an individual case. How the episode is labeled takes into consideration the dream motif occurring at onset and, to a lesser extent, the level of severity that is reflected by the amount of time spent in an unconscious state.

The basis by which Ngawbere assess their dreams, as described in Chapter 5, is the ongoing participation of people in social relationships

concerned with meeting subsistence obligations. Since they note that a person's bo (roughly "shadow essence") changes from day to day, as it is reflected in one's dreams from night to night, Ngawbere rarely go beyond simply mentioning the manifest content of a dream (cf. Devereux 1980 [1966]:284-285). The incorporation of dream reporting in daily life, therefore, provides material for public scrutiny on how a person "sees" himself or herself. Acting as a kind of "subjective identity" (De Vos 1975:16-17, 1983:135-136), the dream reflects a basis for Ngawbere identity in the material conditions of earning a livelihood and participating in social obligations.

Names for past cases of ha ko botika likewise consider phenomena that have been introduced into Ngawbere society (boats, rifles, dogs, cattle, etc.) or reflect aspects of nature (the weather or the sea, predatory animals, etc.) not associated with hunting or cultivation in the forest. For example, "puma illness" generally is foreshadowed by dreams of being persecuted by someone with a rifle, or a yelping dog or angry bull that is chasing one, or the feeling of being enclosed. The symbolism of these (dream) motifs emphasizes that which is unessential to subsistence cultivation or that which is bothersome and inhibits the fulfillment of social obligations within Ngawbere society.

More so than chakore, Ngawbere often associate specific events or behaviors with the occurrence of ha ko botika. The withdrawal of social support [ha botoni] is said to be the basic behavior that can precipitate ha ko botika. Since Ngawbere society discourages withholding assistance and withdrawing support from kin and fellow Ngawbere alike, a denial of mutual assistance is perceived as antithetical to the Ngawbere way of

life. It is an extreme action that is associated with outsiders, much like "withholding" from Ngawbere use provincial lands outside the Reserve and, from time to time, the government's "withdrawing" programs and promises of assistance.

Ngawbere dreams mirror each person's place within the primary social units to which he belongs, namely, the household, family, and, more broadly, Ngawbere society, while ignoring any association with the nation-state of Panama. Dreams act as a kind of reflective consciousness of one's daytime world through which people "catch a glimpse" of their personal identity in relation to these social units. Ngawbere dream motifs, therefore, tell the dreamer about his interrelatedness to the surroundings of which he is a part and reflect the world in which he lives, peopled as it is by cognatic and affinal kinsmen and relegated to settings where one's expected behavior is either known or unknown.⁶ For example, motifs that reflect things of subsistence such as a stalk of ripe bananas [nūribo] or a woven net bag [kra] serve as omens of good fortune; the net bags are used to transport food to the house. Such motifs indicate that a person's involvement in society is above reproach, so to speak, since either his intentions or the "residue" of his waking moments have been focused appropriately on subsistence. Day by day, the passing of dreams tell one (just as one tells the manifest content to others) if there is something which one feels is lacking, or if one's own intentions toward a kinsman are less than honorable, or if one is facing some kind of danger. Thus, for Ngawbere dream imagery serves as a kind of alter ego that changes each day rather than remain a constant self-image (cf. Luckman 1983). They allow the dreamer, if he chooses, to

monitor involvement with his surroundings as he seeks to meet his social obligations.

Ngawbere are more cautious toward dream motifs that do not reflect subsistence, some of which are considered portentous if they represent non-indigenous phenomena. Like the five cases reviewed above, the dream motifs of past cases of ha ko botika represent phenomena that have been introduced into Ngawbere society (boats, rifles, dogs, cattle, etc.) or reflect aspects of non-sentient phenomena (like the sea) and sentient beings (like climatic forces, predatory animals) that are not directly associated with hunting and forest horticulture. The appearance of these dream motifs emphasizes for Ngawbere that which is bothersome to forest cultivation or that which inhibits the fulfillment of obligations in Ngawbere society. Although these same motifs may appear in other, less severe illnesses associated with dreaming, they are rather common in the initial dreams of ha ko botika.

Second, more so than with the other folk illnesses, Ngawbere often associate ha ko botika with specific events or behaviors. Withdrawal of social support [ha botoni] is said to be the basic behavior that can precipitate ha ko botika. Ngawbere rely heavily on mutual assistance between household and family for the completion of subsistence chores. This principle of mutual assistance stands in opposition to the focus on self-centered, profit-motivated, impersonal industry which Comaroff (1985:6-13), Taussig (1980:114-122, 1987:5-10, 60-66, 93-95, 121-123) and others assert permeates the productive forces of modern society. Any form of withholding assistance or withdrawing support is disapproved, therefore, among kin and fellow Ngawbere alike, since a denial of mutual

assistance is antithetic to the maintenance of Ngawbere society. When Ngawbere discuss ha ko botika, they contrast the practice of mutual assistance to the behavior of the government which has withheld from use a large amount of provincial land outside the Indigenous Reserve and, occasionally, withdrawn programs and promises of assistance.

Since outsiders have been associated with the usurpation of resources at various times in their prehistoric and historic past, Ngawbere hold that their current inability to use provincial resources to their fullest extent is a denial of their birthright. They complain that more than in the past, outsiders have encircled their lands, leaving them insulated within Ngawbere territory. For this reason, they perceive an occurrence of ha ko botika as an unconscious ("self-deceived") withdrawal from, and a conquest by, external forces outside the Indigenous Reserve. While its effect on the victim is "microcosmic," its occurrence reflects the "macrocosmic" predicaments that have been faced by Ngawbere
7
throughout their history.

Most importantly, it is not just those who have contact with these outsiders who are in danger. The notion of "social contagion" prevails as an aspect of how Ngawbere perceive their existence in relation to "oppositional others." Ngawbere indicate that anyone who is Ngawbere can absorb a "residue" from the unreleased forces which they associate with outsider life. These forces can contaminate the "natural inclinations" of Ngawbere, until they eventually "push" a person to an extreme state such as that which occurs when someone "withdraws" [ha botonj] from another's presence, which in turn forces that person to "withdraw" through the non-awareness [ni neite] of ha ko botika.

The family's efforts to treat the ha ko botika victim are designed to limit the period of non-awareness ("inner darkness") by increasing the period in which the person is awake or, at the least, dreaming. Those who are responsible for health caring mostly seek to facilitate in the ill person a return to the waking state, since this state is viewed as necessary to carry out one's social obligations to household, family and society. This is done by maintaining a state of "non-withdrawal" in the presence of the victim, as a kind of counter response to the withdrawal [ha botoni] that precipitated the illness.

Third, Ngawbere indicate that the four-day ha ko botika episode (especially the period of unconsciousness) is an inversion of the all-night family vigil. The family vigil is held as a means of strengthening the ties of family and household, particularly if an ominous dream has been experienced by one or more members. Those who participate in the vigil remain awake for four consecutive nights to prevent the further occurrence of bad dreams. If not the whole night, they at least remain awake until the early hours of morning. The ritual acts to reverse the periodicity of activity and rest, and, as such, is viewed as a form of ritual work whose intent is medicinal.

While awake, household members discuss problems they are having with subsistence, other persons, etc. as well as any significant events that happened to kinsmen in the past. As indicated earlier 5 (in Table 9,
8
Chapter 4, pp. 145-146), a chocolate drink is prepared by the women and served three times during the night to the ritual participants. Ritual arches [ibiako] are constructed near each pathway to the house. These paraphernalia as well as actions pull together a configuration of symbols

which represent the origins of Ngawbere as a people who prehistorically hunted and foraged in the forest, and highlights their continuing synergistic relationship to the environment.

An episode of ha ko botika manifests itself differently. The victim remains unconscious for four days and nights; he is unable to converse with family members or partake of food and drink; and he continues to dream disvalued images for at least one to two days after onset. The juxtaposition of the biobehavioral signs of ha ko botika with the structuring of the all-night family vigil is viewed with alarm by Ngawbere (Table 15). This contrast between ritual performance and an

Table 15:
CONTRAST BETWEEN ha ko botika AND THE ALL-NIGHT FAMILY VIGIL

<u>ha ko botika</u>	<u>The All-Night Vigil</u>
4 days of unconsciousness for the victim	4 nights awake (conscious) for the ritual participants
2 days of rest <u>after</u> the victim recovers	2 days anticipation <u>before</u> the ritual begins
unexpected onset, occurs as an <u>unplanned response</u> to (an unwanted) force viewed as emanating from the outside	sanctioned by the diviner as a <u>planned response</u> to prevent the worsening of (an unwanted) health problem
little conversation, respect for the ill person	continuous conversation, respect for the ill person
no food, little liquid for the ill person	some food, adequate liquid for ritual participants
dreaming allowed, reported by the victim (as desired) but not discussed with dreamer	dreaming reduced, reported by the ritual participants and discussed with dreamer

occurrence of illness indicates to them that life outside the Reserve is potentially disruptive to the practice of mutual assistance that forms the basis for meeting the obligations of family and household, which are at the heart of their life within the Indigenous Reserve.

Reconstitution

The theme of an interrupted continuity in their way of life, as Ngawbere, often appears in the discussions that occur after a rare and unexpected event like ha ko botika. Ngawbere perceive the result of the victim's struggles with dreaming and the lapses, while dreaming, into dark abodes as dangerous but ultimately as a learning experience, if the person receives the proper social and indigenous medical support, and if he survives. The case of US is a good example of this (almost representing an ideal case) since he was able to "catch a glimpse" of himself through the dream experience which leads, eventually, to an "advancement in understanding" that went beyond the manifest content of the dream symbols at the time of onset. He then incorporated his (new) personal philosophy into his work as a Mama Tata preacher.

Apart from its personal import for the individual, ha ko botika gives a number of people an event about which to reflect on what it means to be Ngawbere. Little interest by the victim in the experience of the illness does not keep people from discussing its implications and, after its conclusion, offering their interpretations as a part of ongoing community discourse. Even a diminished experience can be made meaningful. Such was the case of UL, for example, who became known for his refusal to report his dreams. This action on his part served to

reinforce community consensus about the kind of person he was to the point that he was given a new name (Obstinate Head). His experience was contrary to an expectation held by Ngawbere that people should learn from ha ko botika, just as they should learn from any other life experience.

Discussions that generate the ideas for resisting the external forces that impinge upon Ngawbere follow a case of ha ko botika, as much as its occurrence presents evidence that they should not become "self-deceived" by a tranquil way of life within the Reserve. Aware of their marginality, Ngawbere have been at the mercy of the more powerful groups which historically surrounded them from the prehistoric to the present (P. Young and Bort 1979). At one time, the forces of ha ko botika were mythic figures believed to exist outside Ngawbere territory, as well as the larger indigenous groups that populated the mountains of western Panama. Today, ha ko botika forces are viewed as any and all of the circumstances created by non-indigenous peoples who encapsulate the Reserve and inhibit their use of resources within the province. They view these outside groups as more powerful as well as bothersome. As Scott (1977, 1985) and Comaroff (1985) have noted, this view acts to form and maintain an ideological barrier which prevents any possibility of articulating common concerns that may exist between Ngawbere and their non-indigenous neighbors, which in turn inhibits integration into the regional society. Contrary to the examples given by Scott and Comaroff, however, Ngawbere prefer to resist intrusion by outsiders by remaining insulated within Ngawbere territory, as was once done by their ancestors, and through very minimal contact with the programs and enticements of the contemporary world. In so doing, they are reformulating their sense of

identity as a marginal people, enclaved in a much larger nation-state, but they are not mobilizing to protest outside the Indigenous Reserve (cf. Scott 1977:29-33).

Social Construction of Recovery

Some time following the five cases, public discussion among the elders, the Mama Tata preachers and the healers came to some general agreement that recent cases of ha ko botika were warnings about the precariousness of their future. Since the beginnings of Mama Tata, Ngawbere have felt that their way of life was threatened by Latinos who were seen as encroaching on Ngawbere lands and too great an involvement in outside life, like working on the plantations. For this reason, the Mama Tata movement has advocated internal entrenchment. The changes they have prescribed over the past 20 years emphasize a reduction in rituals, particularly those that use fermented fruit drink, and elimination of polygyny; the prohibition against polygyny has been implemented more in prescription than practice as evidenced by P. Young's (1976b, 1978b) work in Chiriquí, as well as the present study. The recent cases of ha ko botika confirmed for Mama Tata leaders and Ngawbere elders the strategic importance of subsistence practices wherein exchange relations based on the principle of mutual assistance form the core. Ngawbere elders felt that they had received a sign that their way of life would require change if it was to endure.

As had happened to them in the past, strategies were discussed for (re)adapting Ngawbere life to adjust to the increasing trend toward excessive involvement with life outside the Indigenous Reserve. Local

discussions centered on a form of retrenchment that would strengthen subsistence practices within the Indigenous Reserve and dissuade younger Ngawbere from too great an involvement in outside life while working as wage laborers on the plantations. Mama Tata preachers specifically encouraged securing food from the forest and sea, rather than purchasing it from the local consumer stores, which invariably derive their stock from outside distributors. Furthermore, they encouraged a reduction in the production of cattle and hogs as potential sources of protein, noting that such animals were unclean, and, more strategically, consume too much of a household's own food supply, instead of "eating wild" in the forest as the animals their ancestors once hunted.

Centered in the forest, Ngawbere subsistence is viewed as an "outlay [of work]" [sribiri] wherein there will be an eventual return. Since generalized and balanced reciprocity articulate the exchange relationships that occur within society, the return from subsistence is perceived as a matter that occurs between Ngawbere living in society and an investment of labor in forest horticulture. Thus, there is a strong bond based on reciprocity among the people living in (Ngawbere) society and a related sense of symbiosis (reciprocity) between Ngawbere and their environment, which, for so long, has given them materials for food and shelter.

Ngawbere protest is much less than a subversive bricolage that incorporates and reinterprets symbols from the dominant society (Comaroff 1985:194-199, 212-219). Instead it emphasizes less dependence on wage labor and more investment in forest living. The Ngawbere way of protest for resisting the threat of proletarianization makes use of what they

know about where they live. Ngawbere have chosen to "co-exist" with the "others" not by leaving their homelands to live within regional society, but by separating themselves as much as possible territorially and economically from the larger society.

Summary

The illness that Ngawbere call ha ko botika manifests itself in a "classic" form in which the victim experiences irregular breathing and loses consciousness. While the ill person is unconscious, he is unable to eat, drink, move or use the latrine, but he is able to remember some of his experience while "asleep." The period of illness lasts no more than four to five days, and within a week the victim is able to rejoin his family in performing routine activities. Ngawbere consider ha ko botika dangerous, as they claim it can cause death when someone is sleeping.

The primary treatment for ha ko botika emphasizes attentive vigilance over the victim, some form of tactile stimulation performed primarily as ritual massage, a reduction in external stimuli during the four to five day period of the illness and a gradual increase in the intake of liquids and solid food until the person has recovered. It is one of the few illnesses in which the diviner comes into body contact with the ill person by performing pressure point massage, if he is available locally and if he has been contacted by the victim's family.

Members of the ill person's household and family assume the major responsibility for health caring during the period of illness. Their participation in subsistence activities is suspended, and nearly all of

their time is spent with the ha ko botika victim. There is a tendency to limit those who may visit the victim to only adults, although children in the victim's immediate family inevitably spend time with the ill person during the day.

Social activities among family members are curtailed greatly during an episode of ha ko botika. The members of the household, and even those of the immediate family, postpone their subsistence chores until the victim has shown signs of recovery, which usually occurs by the fifth day. Relatives in neighboring households whose members are cognates of the victim help out with food and other matters related to the care of their kinsman/woman.

A complicated situation that involved two simultaneous incidents of ha ko botika, and two other health problems, occurred during fieldwork. Their occurrence, as a "cluster" of related events, accentuated the most salient features of how Ngawbere view outside society. Like other cases of ha ko botika, the incidents reflected a (mirror) response to an action that represented withholding resources and withdrawing assistance.

An act of withdrawal by an outsider is considered detrimental to their way of life, as Ngawbere. When perpetrated by Ngawbere, the blame remains indeterminate, but, since it inevitably is linked with illness, the way of life on the outside is implicated. For this reason Ngawbere make every effort to avoid any act of sudden withdrawal [ha botoni], for they believe that such an action can precipitate ha ko botika.

The naming of a case at the time it occurs makes use of the term ha ko botika, which simply acknowledges that the victim is experiencing unconsciousness and shortness of breath, lacks body movement and cannot

eat, drink or have a bowel movement. Once the episode is over, however, an individualized name is give to a case. While reflecting the personal dream experience of the victim, the subsequent illness label emphasizes a primary dream motif that has occurred at onset. Since the motif makes no reference to phenomena associated with Ngawbere subsistence practices, the ha ko botika experience considers phenomena troublesome to Ngawbere existence or outside the sphere of their life and work as subsistence cultivators.

Associated with the naming of a ha ko botika case are conversations about things disliked about outsiders. The configuration of talk that surrounds an occurrence of ha ko botika gives further confirmation to the Ngawbere view that this folk illness more than any other stems from external, not internal indigenous, influences. Since they view ha ko botika as an inversion of the format used for their primary ritual, the all-night vigil, Ngawbere hold that such problems as ha ko botika reinforce a need to be concerned over the encroachment of outsiders, as they seek to find alternative ways to insulate themselves from those outside forces that they deem are dangerous and unsavory.

Notes

1. Excerpts from fieldnotes are presented only with the first case (CR). Cases One through Five have not appeared elsewhere.
2. To protect the identity of the man who fell ill, only the translation of his name is given.
3. Calculations for the prevalence rate are based on the four cases that occurred in the study community and one other in a neighboring peninsular homestead for the period March 1982 through March 1984.
4. Ngawbere invariably refer to this state in Spanish as "in dream" (en sueño). The term kóbo is rendered as köbo by Alphonse (1956:91) which he translates as "promise" or "sleep." A man once told the fieldworker that the term was translated as mundo ("world") by which he meant rather uniquely that each person's dreams are his own world. Compare the discussion of hypnagogic hallucinations in (Hufford 1982:150-151).
5. Ngawbere use the verb "see" [toin] to refer to dream recall.
6. McGrath (1986) presents a "deconstructed" view of Freud's dreams and their relation to Viennese society in the late 1800s, indicating how political undercurrents of the social environment "triggered" many of the personal dreams that Freud analyzed in his writings.
7. See Jimenez Miranda (1984) and Pinnock (1981) on the often acerbic debate over proposed boundaries for the Indigenous Reserve and Bourgeois (1984a, 1985, 1986) on the struggles of Ngawbere as wage laborers. See also research reports by Cabarrús (1979:esp 105-106) and Falla (1979:esp 48-53) on related matters of rightful domain, and the short chapter by P. Young (1985) concerning the effect of land shortages on Ngawbere within the Indigenous Reserve.
8. Today the drink is called toba; it formerly was called kuáw.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

For millenia prior to Spanish contact, the prehistoric peoples of Panama inhabited the river valleys of the isthmus and maintained networks of exchange with each other. As these peoples diverged into separate languages, a few groups evolved into chiefdoms and came to dominate the smaller, less powerful groups. The majority of isthmanian peoples were neither organized to any great extent nor even dominated by the other groups. Among these marginal groups in prehistoric Panama were Ngawbere.

For two centuries following the exploration and settlement of the Spanish on the isthmus, the indigenous population underwent extreme dislocation and decimation. Whole areas were ridded of population through the Spanish program of conquest and pacification, especially in central and eastern Panama. A few people who avoided annihilation were assimilated into the dominant colonial society, especially at the peripheries of Spanish settlements along the Pacific coast. Others left their homelands to take refuge in the mountains of western Panama. From the mountains, those groups that persisted in retaliating against the Spanish soon too were annihilated. Ngawbere had fewer of their members lost through assimilation and, since they already were living in the mountains less frequently penetrated by the Spanish, they did not need to take refuge.

From the prehistoric into the historic period, Ngawbere never took the opportunity to settle closer to the people with whom they exchanged

goods, work on a regular basis for them or wage war on them, preferring instead to maintain their homes in the mountains away from the centers of political-economic activity. The formidable mountainous environment to which Ngawbere already were accustomed and the avoidance of continued contacts with outsiders allowed Ngawbere, but not the other populations, to survive the program of population extermination and colonial labor forced upon them primarily by the Spanish. Dependent on hunting/foraging activities in the tributaries of Cricamola River, Ngawbere traveled to the coast during the historic period in quest of protein, primarily from marine resources. At the time that English-speaking settlements were established on the islands and along the coast of Bocas del Toro in the 1800s, Ngawbere began to establish settlements in the Valiente Peninsula. Ngawbere liken their initial settlement of the northern Valiente Peninsula near the headwaters of streams to Ngawbere origins in the headwaters of the tributaries of Cricamola River. Recognizing that their livelihood has changed since they first migrated, they describe their lifestyle today as one that is "coastalized."

For the people who live in the Valiente Peninsula and Cricamola River, self-identification as Ngawbere represents a sense of continuity in their marginality to the other populations who sought to dominate them in both the prehistoric and the historic past. Since they act on this sense of corporate identity as Ngawbere, and they remember the difficulties that history forced upon them, they fall into Castile and Kushner's (1981) category of "persistent peoples." That they continue to reside on their native homelands is not so necessary in defining them as such, although it is crucial to their contemporary struggle to survive as

a people, or, as they tell it, as "a nation of people" much like the Russians, English, Americans, Panamanians, etc. form their own separate nations.

Ngawbere distinguish between themselves as indigenous to the land and all others as outsiders who arrive by sea. They associate their way of life in the hills of the Valiente Peninsula with the dispersed settlement of their brethren in the mountains of Cricamola River, and consider the swamps and the sea as the source of livelihood for non-indigenous peoples. Peninsular Ngawbere further distinguish two aspects of their natural environment by differentiating between the lands they clear for settlement and the forest from which they obtain a livelihood. At one time the forest included its rivers as sources of protein, but today it also includes the sea. Their sense of distinction between the ruffled quality of the forest (wilderness) and the coordinated activities of social life (settlement) sets them apart from those who live in cities, but ultimately it consigns them to a livelihood not too much different from non-indigenous subsistence cultivators. What is important to consider is that Ngawbere perceive their way of life as different from both those who live in the urban centers as well as the coastal fishing-cum-cultivating rural dwellers who self-identify as bocatoreños (called chiwi by Ngawbere). Most of these non-indigenous persons, it is assumed by Ngawbere, rely on the sea for their livelihood, if not through fishing, then at least by using the sea to transport the foodstuffs they purchase to eat.

Relying almost entirely on the environment to earn their livelihood, Ngawbere subsistence practices replicate some aspects of the forestation

process. Trees are left along the ridges of hills to inhibit the growth of weeds, for instance, just as fruit trees are planted along the ridges and on the hillsides once they are cleared for cultivation. Both men and women participate in the responsibilities of planting and harvesting. Men assume the heavy task of using machetes to clear the underbrush in the fields before they are planted; cut and transport firewood; and take responsibility for procuring protein from fishing and turtling or, along with the women, sardining. Staple crops such as the yam and peach palm are harvested once and twice a year, respectively. Bananas on the other hand are planted at different times of the year to assure that food is available year-round. Their synergistic intent to live in harmony with the surrounding environment is in opposition to the "leveling" of land for establishing cities and plantations, the principal phenomena which Ngawbere associate with outsiders.

A shortage of peninsular land has precipitated some Ngawbere to look for new land to claim, marry outside the Valiente Peninsula and, over varying periods of time, work as wage laborers in the western portion of the province. The most popular form of employment is with the banana plantations operated by the Chiriquí Land Company. Although a number of Ngawbere men at some time in their lives work wage labor outside the Indigenous Reserve, nearly all of those who "work out" eventually return to live within the Indigenous Reserve. Despite a land shortage that is particularly serious in the northern Valiente Peninsula, they return to take up residence as Ngawbere. To the present, Ngawbere have been able to resist the threat of proletarianization which could bring about a disruption (or "atomization") of their society, since very few men follow

the lure of wage labor never to be seen again. The majority prefer living within the Indigenous Reserve, much like their ancestors resisted domination in the prehistoric and historic past by insulating themselves from the surrounding populations.

The way that Ngawbere make the environment their own is a reflection of the way that they organize themselves for subsistence purposes. Their system of place naming is limited to small parcels of land corresponding to what is used by a single family. Since there are no overarching terms for the larger divisions of land and water associated with the outside world such as provinces and oceans, the identification of places occurs in separatistic fashion much like the individuation of Ngawbere society into households, the smallest units of subsistence production-consumption-distribution, and families, the largest social unit concerned with food production as well as land tenure. How Ngawbere sense themselves as a collective society is based on principles of territorial rights that allow families to earn their livelihood and the ideal of reciprocity in help seeking among fellow Ngawbere, particularly between family members.

Imbedded in the practice of visiting between households, help seeking (mutual assistance) is the foundation of Ngawbere society. Requests for assistance are concerned with subsistence, shelter, transportation and illness; they are initiated by the heads of household, first seeking out cognates, then affines, before approaching Ngawbere who are unrelated to onself. Exchange relationships, therefore, are focused primarily within the family. Affines are important to the household and family, however, for help in completing larger tasks. Although the majority of exchange relations in Ngawbere society assume generalized

reciprocity, those that require an exchange of cash or objects of equal value assume balanced reciprocity. The practice of help seeking more than anything else is noted by Ngawbere as that which most distinguishes them from the surrounding populations. For this reason, a number of Ngawbere, mostly those who adhere to the teachings of the Mama Tata movement, actively seek to lessen their dependence on wage labor and reinforce their reliance on mutual assistance.

Ngawbere society is more than the structuring of social relations. It is a process of social renewal and replacement, as new people enter the family through birth or marriage and exit the immediate system of kin relations through death or separation. Bestowed at points of social transition as an individual grows older, personal names reflect the major aspects of this process of formation. Along with kinship, personal naming stands as the primary basis for social interaction. Whereas the system of kinship serves to delineate those who stand in some special genealogical relationship viz-a-viz another, such as one's parents, siblings, parents' siblings, parents-in-law and close spouse's cognates, the system of personal naming distinguishes family from non-family and the old from the young. Ngawbere names, therefore, serve to designate the degree of familiarity between people and to what extent they can rely on each other to "pull together" for mutual assistance.

The permanency of the baptismal name stands in marked contrast to the process of bestowing family and non-family names at different stages in the Ngawbere life cycle. The inalterable position that Ngawbere perceive for themselves as a small group of people in a society not of their own choosing, that is, the province and the nation, differs from

the local indigenous society in which they prefer to live. They give greater importance to personalizing social relationships with each other than establishing the kind of long-term patron-client relationships described by researchers working in Guatemala, Ecuador, Perú and other countries of Latin America.

The major social transition in Ngawbere society occurs through marriage. Marriage requires that the husband pass some time in the household of his in-laws for purposes of assisting his wife's parents. Eventually, and ideally, the couple establish a separate household, whether virilocally on the man's or uxorilocally on the woman's family lands. The transition from youth to the responsibilities of a nuclear family, and, later, that of household management, occurs soon after adolescence. The already stressful period of youth, therefore, is exacerbated by the transition from primary social interaction with cognates to the tension of a new social identity among affines. Recognition of adolescence as stressful is noted by Ngawbere, who invariably accept it for what it is. They continue to emphasize intra-familial relationships to an extent that almost guarantees a stressful transition for some, but, rather than try to change it, they provide the necessary social support for kinswomen and kinsmen through the period of transition.

Principal aspects of Ngawbere society are highlighted through the performance of ritual which accentuates through symbols some of the primary concerns of Ngawbere survival. All Ngawbere rituals make use of the quaternity in terms of symbols and for scheduling ritual ceremonies, and place an emphasis on imagery which represents the balancing of old

and young, and men and women. Rituals that are arranged between families emphasize cooperation and competition in human society; those that are performed within a family emphasize social transition; and those that require sanctioning by a diviner are held primarily to resolve sociogenic health problems. The Ngawbere ritual system, therefore, strives to strengthen linkages within local rather than regional society, regardless whether an illness is related to intra-societal tension (as in chakore) or inter-societal tension (as in ha ko botika).

The ngawbere terms bren and möbe are mutually exclusive concepts which refer to sickness and health, respectively. Specifically, bren refers to a condition which "pushes [one] away" from social obligations and/or away from being "with the life-force" [möbe]. One who is sick, therefore, is one who is "pushed out," and one who is healthy is one who is "with the life-force" and able to fulfill social obligations. Whereas "pushing away" is a phenomenon of the individual falling ill and finding himself unable to participate in social obligations, "pulling together" is a phenomenon of many people and represents the maintenance of Ngawbere society through mutual assistance. The system of illness discourse discloses an emphasis on social union within the local society rather than a resolution of inter-group antagonisms with populations elsewhere in the province.

Only the bren label is applied initially to someone who is ill. The process of recognizing sickness is initiated when a person experiences disvalued biobehavioral functioning, presents complaints (or is seen to have problems) and is given or self-initiates the bren label. Ngawbere then concern themselves with the severity of a health problem, before

they begin to decide what, if any, is the appropriate remedial action or what the ailment is called. The non-serious health problems with less impairment in behavior and functioning receive little treatment, if any, and frequently require little more than the attention of the sufferer, without intervention. More serious illness requires treatment, without which, the healers claim, people may die or become incapacitated.

Two of the more serious health problems experienced by Ngawbere are chakore and ha ko botika. They recognize chakore as an illness that befalls primarily (Ngawbere) women. They have a rather elaborate system for recognizing the diagnostic signs of an impending chakore attack, for treating chakore when it appears, and for mobilizing social relations to keep a watchful eye on young women who appear susceptible to an attack. The appearance of chakore reflects a period of tension as a young woman upon marriage (or through "courting") makes a transition from her family of birth ("insiders") to an alignment with affinal kin ("outsiders"). On the other hand, the illness that Ngawbere call ha ko botika manifests itself (in its classic form) when the victim experiences irregular breathing, a loss of consciousness and, invariably at the onset, a significant dream. Ngawbere hold that the major symptoms of ha ko botika can occur among all ages and both sexes more so than those of chakore, and claim it can cause death while one is sleeping. As such, they are concerned with ha ko botika as a potentially catastrophic ailment that may befall anyone in Ngawbere society. Unlike chakore which sometimes gives warning of its onset, ha ko botika occurs rather unexpectedly and represents the intrusion of unwanted forces ("a residue") that Ngawbere associate with "withdrawal" behavior, which, for them, characterizes non-

indigenous society.

Ngawbere blame no one -- neither outsiders nor, least of all, themselves -- for chakore. They accept the occurrence of chakore as something that is innate in their indigenous origins, but they perceive in ha ko botika a sign of the efforts by outside forces to dominate fellow members of Ngawbere society. This is reflected in their naming chakore forces after prehistoric indigenous peoples, and in their naming particular cases of ha ko botika with motifs from the onset dreams of the illness which invariably contain imagery unrelated to tropical forest farming, the means by which Ngawbere earn their livelihood.

The syndrome known as chakore represents a flight from the responsibilities of the (Ngawbere) house toward the forest and sea, that is, from (human) "settlement" to "wilderness." It is a "fleeing" response of a young woman to the pressures she faces upon reaching the age of marriage. For some young women, chakore behavior is expected as a prelude to marriage and, to a lesser extent for others, after marriage, when faced with the pressures of household management and the social responsibilities of relating to spouses and affines. Through chakore, its victims resist their responsibility to the intertwining of Ngawbere families, only to return through the support of their kinsmen who maintain vigil and restrain them when they fall ill.

The syndrome known as ha ko botika represents a kind of unexpected life-crisis that removes the individual from the living world of Ngawbere and takes him through dreams toward the abodes of darkness and death, that is, from (human) "life" to "extinction." The occurrence of ha ko botika is perceived as a reciprocal (mirror) response to an action of

withdrawal. The victim of ha ko botika withdraws through illness from the responsibility of being a member of Ngawbere society, only to return, hopefully renewed, or, occasionally, removed permanently from the world of living kinsmen.

Although it inadvertently is performed by Ngawbere, an action of behavioral withdrawal is associated with the customs of outsiders and is frowned upon within Ngawbere society. As a kind of social behavior that can extinguish the person, by analogy withdrawal from mutual assistance would disrupt exchange relationships based on reciprocity and, thereby, extinguish society if Ngawbere were to assimilate such a practice.

As an inversion of the family vigil, the illness represents what is worrisome to Ngawbere about outside behavior; ha ko botika represents all that is contrary to the expectation of mutual assistance and the circulation of resources within Ngawbere society. Whereas the illness known as chakore reflects the inherent tension of membership in(side) a family before moving out(side) to join a spouse and his (her) kinsmen, the folk illness known as ha ko botika represents for Ngawbere an undesired response to the encroachment of outsiders. Less tolerant of ha ko botika, Ngawbere recognize that they have always been faced with forces outside their control that have sought to dominate them. Thus, the two folk illnesses are juxtaposed with a Ngawbere concern for their survival as a separate society within another group's nation.

The basis of health caring for these two folk illnesses emphasizes attentive vigilance over the victim. It is one of several contexts in which people are expected to "pull together." Neighboring households whose members are cognates of the victim help out with food and other

matters related to the care of their kinsman/woman. Whereas there is a need to restrain the chakore victim, there is no need to restrain the person who experiences ha ko botika. Both illnesses emphasize indigenous treatment over cosmopolitan medicine, thereby reinforcing a Ngawbere concern for entrenchment and survival as a collective group.

Clearly an image of separatism has been generated among Ngawbere by a regional system which relies heavily on a portion of the local population for wage labor on the plantations. Conceptual oppositions exist between Ngawbere and the provincial peoples in at least two areas. They are strongest for concerns of livelihood (perceptions of the forest and sea) and their ties to the land as well as fellow kinsmen (fluid, separatistic versus more permanent naming systems). Regarding the occurrence of the folk illness ha ko botika, its principal characteristics are an inversion of the basis of Ngawbere society in the practice of mutual assistance that is personal, kin-centered and sharing-oriented.

By perceiving themselves first and foremost as forest cultivators, and by "pulling together" through mutual assistance, Ngawbere have survived for centuries "inside" their own territory. For them, the way of life on the outside is an accepted given only if it remains attentive to their own interests to survive as a society of people, separated from the regional society to which they remain marginal economically and politically.

Although the Panamanian government has sought to provide for Ngawbere as a population living in an area of difficult access by providing rural schools and a health care infrastructure, Ngawbere in many ways continue to remain marginal to Panamanian society. By Aguirre

Beltrán's standards, Panama's development efforts through this literacy program and a sanitary structure represent the full impact of a program designed to integrate Ngawbere, as well as the whole rural sector of the Bocas del Toro population. As willing as Ngawbere are to participate in these programs, however, they continue to perceive themselves as a people and a society separated by birthright from the rest of Panama, forged, as it were, as a nation-state around them, but not for them.

APPENDIX

Note about the Maps

The baseline for the maps of Panama that appear as Figures 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 is from Rand and Company (1974). Instituto Geográfico Nacional (1974, 1965) is the source for the map of Chiriquí Lagoon (Bocas del Toro) appearing as Figure 6 and for the maps of the northern Valiente Peninsula appearing as Figures 7, 8, 9 and 11. For the map of the residential layout of Cusapín (Figure 10), the baseline is a series of aerial photographs taken in 1981 that were provided by the Instituto Geográfico Nacional. Upon request, this agency kindly enlarged the original (1:30,000) to 1:6000. The author's field data was incorporated with that of the Institute to prepare Figures 8, 9, 10 and 11.

The limits of the Indigenous Reserve (Figure 1), as well as one of the proposals advocated by Ngawbere for its enlargement, are given by Jimenez Miranda (1984:Maps 1 and 2). Information on the dispersion of Ngawbere in modern times is often variant; among those providing data are P. Young (1971:Map 3, p. 22), Pinnock (1981:Map 2, p. 13), Gordon (1982: 6-7, 150-151), Torres de Araúz (1980b:216), Laurencich de Minelli (1983) and Barrantes and Mata (1981).

Historical information on the dispersion of isthmanian populations (among them Guaymí) around the time of contact (Figure 3) can be found in P. Young (1971:Map 2, p. 9, Map 3, p. 22, also pp. 20-23), Sauer (1966: Fig. 17, p. 127, Fig. 27, p. 234), Helms (1979), Pinnock (1981:Map 1, p. 13). An interpretation of historic accounts that provide data on the

dispersion of Guaymí during the colonial era is given by P. Young (1971: Map 2, p. 9). Most of the data used by P. Young can be found in Peralta (1883) and Pinart (1887a:33-38, 1892:1-3, 1978[1885]). Additional data can be found in ANP (1873), García (1837) and Fernandez (1886:V:VI and 1892:X).

Information on economic enterprises during the colonial era when the isthmus of Panama was part of Nueva Granada (Figure 4) is given by Carles (1959) and Castellero Calvo (1970). Economic activities during a later period when the isthmus of Panama was under Gran Colombia and Bocas del Toro was a part of Costa Rica (Figure 5) are described by Aizpurua (1960), Reid (1980), Ellis (1983) and Boyd (1904). Data on boundary adjustments between Panama and Costa Rica can be found in Ireland (1971 [1941]:24-41), Sauer (1966), Floyd (1967), Fernandez (1886-1892) and Peralta (1883).

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