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The Sociocultural Impact of the El Cerrejon Coal Mine on the Wayúu of the Southern Guajira, Colombia.

by

Marla Dawn Zapach

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

Department of Anthropology

Edmonton, Alberta

Fall 1997

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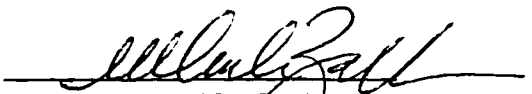

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The undersigned certify that they have read and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled *The Sociocultural Impact of the El-Cerrejon Coal Mine on the Wayuu of the Southern Guajira, Colombia* submitted by Marla Zapach in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Masters of Arts.

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"To my mother and father, Iris and John
who instilled in me a sense of justice and compassion."

ABSTRACT

The Wayúu of Colombia are suffering the impacts of the world's largest coal mine that is operating in their traditional land use area. El Cerrejón opened without any environmental or social assessments as to its possible impacts on the indigenous population of the area. These impacts have been most noticeable in the areas of increasing health problems, environmental degradation, and changes to their political/social organization. The Wayúu, now relegated to small reservations of land insufficient to sustain them, are struggling to survive the enormous upheavals to their social/cultural systems.

Five months were spent accompanying the Wayúu to understand the impacts and to make recommendations for their capacitation under these difficult circumstances. The Wayúu are at a crucial crossroads. If they are to survive; cognitive political participation must occur. The communities must organize politically to combat the negative effects of massive development projects like El Cerrejón.

Acknowledgments

First and foremost I must acknowledge the Wayúu community of San Francisco. They included me in all their daily activities from washing clothes and weeding the garden, to babysitting the children and dancing in yonnas. They put up with unending questions and the clumsy actions of a woman who didn't even know how to make chicha. We shared chinchorros and we shared food. They even set my bride price for a future husband. I hope that my words will aid them in their struggle for empowerment and survival.

I want to thank everyone who believed in me without hesitation and supported this endeavour from the beginning: my family who always encouraged my projects, shared many travel experiences with me, and who have been a constant source of support: Dr. Robert Dover who included me in this project and often pushed me to defend my positions, and challenged me to think of others; my supervisors Dr. Ruth Gruhn and Dr. Rod Wilson who patiently polished this work in progress; Dr. David Johnson who shares my love of Colombia and who is always willing to dance a cumbia; the Louise Imrie Scholarship Fund; FSIDA and CIDA; OZIWASUG; my supporters in Colombia; and my friends here who never tired of stories of the Wayúu.

Por el hombre que cree en la princesa Wayúu

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

IA) "The Wayúu have many paths" - Rafael Alfonso Epieyu

I was walking between the resguardos of Ballena and Los Palmitos searching for the rancheria of a Wayúu woman whom I had met briefly a week before. I thought that after four months of living in the area, I would easily be able to find her rancheria without the assistance of a Wayúu guide. The day was hot, almost 40 degrees; and as I wandered along the dusty, cactus- lined footpaths, I soon realized that nothing looked familiar, or maybe more precisely, everything looked familiar. Stubbornly, I continued walking, searching for the path that would lead me to her home. I hoped that eventually I would be able to recognize the trail that I was led down only a week before. Frustration began to set in; and soon every cactus, trupillo, and rock began to look the same. As I followed the paths, watching them crisscross and intersect, meld and merge into two or three and then back into one, I realized that I had forgotten to bring water with me. As the hours of continual walking passed by, I became more and more desperate.
By chance, I stumbled upon a small rancheria whose occupants were barely able to restrain their half-starved dogs asI approached. Almost in hysterics, I explained that I was lost and that I didn't know how to get to Maria Pusaina's rancheria. The family offered me watermelon and the services of their seven year old son to guide me through the uniform desert landscape to her hut. As it so happened, I was only ten minutes away.
Days later, I recounted this tale to a Wayúu friend. He smiled at me and said quietly: "Yes, the Wayúu have many paths."

The Wayúu[1] have many paths both literally and figuratively. To appreciate fully the perseverance of the Wayúu, one must understand the harsh conditions in which they live, and how the diverse geography of the peninsula has shaped their lives. The ground is baked hard by the unyielding sun and winds that buffet the peninsula, and there is little water to alleviate the incredible heat of the desert. The ground covering is almost nonexistent, the majority of vegetation being cactus or spiny bushes; and few trees exist under which to find shade. The land is suitable for only the most hardy of people and animals.

The Wayúu have flourished in this difficult climate for over 500 years, and are at present the largest indigenous group in Colombia. Their rancherias[2] or piichipala

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[1]The word 'Wayúu' signifies "land of the people, or people" (Jahn 1973:143-144). In the literature these people are also referred to as Guajiras or Goajiros. The Wayúu say that they were given this land by their culture hero and deity, Mareiwa. They want to continue living in the way they have survived for centuries: free and independent, using the earth as Mareiwa dictated, with respect and honour.

[2]Rancherias are necessarily simple and easy to construct, as the desert environment provides little building material. A rancheria consists of a roof made of the split woody core of the cardón cactus, supported by numerous poles. To these poles the family will string their hammocks. The ranchos are open, taking advantage of the little ventilation in this hot dry climate. Pens in which to put goats or sheep are also constructed in the same manner, although without a roof. The rancheria is the centre of the family's activities. Cooking, sleeping, visiting, and eating all take place in this area.

(Wayuunaiki for 'place of houses') appear as they did hundreds of years ago. They are connected to one another through trails that are barely perceptible unless you are Wayúu. These paths link the homes, guide the goats back to their pens, and provide different avenues of escape should an enemy attack. Traditional settlement patterns are still followed in the south of the Guajira, and most families still cling fiercely to their culture of living off the land.

The Wayúu also have many paths of selective integration open to them. The Wayúu, never fully assimilated since the time of Spanish conquest, have, until recently, been able to choose their level of participation within the dominant society. The paths they have chosen include participation within the contraband economy, seasonal migration for work in Venezuela, and traditional practices of herding and planting. The Wayúu have always been relatively independent from Colombian society, inhabiting an area that did not appear to have any value for the national culture. Until recently they had been left to maintain their traditions without outside influence or pressure from the national society, and the government took little interest in this remote area of Colombia. However, with the advent of the world's largest open pit coal mine functioning in their traditional land use area, they are no longer able to choose the extent of their integration into the national culture.

Now all is changing. The mines built roads that have obliterated the fine paths that had, for centuries, been smoothed by guaireñas[3] and the hooves of goats. These new paths, paved with asphalt, are a permanent fixture used by vehicles from the mine to transport coal to the ports. No longer do the paths of the Wayúu lead off into the desert, connecting rancheria with rancheria. Their paths now lead to the mines and the large urban centres that are developing where before there had been only open land and pasture. Their paths are slowly becoming obliterated, and the Wayúu culture in the south of the Guajira faces the same danger. Changes in their economy, health, and subsistence patterns are rapidly occurring as the national culture overruns traditional Wayúu territory. The Wayúu are experiencing what John Bodley (1988: 61) calls the "shock phase" of development. This first phase of development is characterized by the surrender of political autonomy and the loss of territory. The impact of this phase is made apparent in increased mortality, subsistence disruption, kin group dispersion, and the breakdown of the social support system.

With the opening of the mine and the sudden influx of new people into Wayúu traditional territory, health problems have arisen that were previously negligible. There

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[3] Homemade sandals made from old tires and woven cotton tops.

have been marked increases in respiratory illnesses and intestinal diseases. The lack of adequate health care in the area is contributing to the persistence of these problems.

The lack of arable land in the area also limits the Wayuu's ability to provide for themselves. The mine and municipality have consumed vast tracts of what once was indigenous land, and the Wayúu no longer have the space or access to water sources to herd their goats effectively and plant their gardens to remain self-sufficient. Not only have climatological changes and the dust from the mine impacted the health of the Wayúu, they have also had adverse affects on the traditional practices of herding and planting in the area.

With the massive influx of people into the area, the political structure of the Wayúu clans is now in a state of flux. Once matrilineally organized, with a clan-based political system, the Wayúu are now in the process of having to convert to a centralized political system to ensure their participation within the bureaucracy of national life. This system is foreign to their traditional concepts of political organization, and a change in the perception of authority is causing confusion within the communities.

Correa (1994: 104) states that the mine has "destructured the Wayúu land to enable the construction of an abstract and ahistorical space where the ecosystems are assumed to be mere objects and the population as urban conglomerates of individuals confronted by free competition. This idea, leaving to the side the concrete factors of deculturization, results in extremely high social costs in the mining region. Their modern exploits are, by definition, of high technology and low employment and they require exorbitant investments to sustain the necessary infrastructure and the necessary concentration of people (for the exploitation of the mine) in an semi-desert ecosystem without major sources of water."

Who the Wayúu are and the situation that they are facing is summed up eloquently in this story by an elder in San Francisco:

> "The Wayúu were created together. Wayúu does not only signify "us." Wayúu is something indigenous. All indigenous people. All indigenous people were created by Mareiwa[4] but every group has something different. And these differences were created by Mareiwa. He wanted it this way. In the case of the Putumayo, Arahuaco, they were each placed in their own area with a clear idea or way of thinking and being, but they are all Wayúu. I will explain. Mareiwa had a table and on this table there was a spoon, fork, pan, all *alijuna* things for cooking. The indigenous people had to give to the table, part of what they had. The Wayúu took a totuma[5], something from the earth, *mma*, and brought this to the table to share with everyone. They say this is why the Wayúu and all the indigenous people have the totuma. Mareiwa showed these things to the

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[4] Mareiwa is the cultural spirit, or demiurge that the Wayúu believe created all indigenous people. A story related to me by one of the elders in the community discussed the origins of the Wayúu in almost the exact same biblical reference to the creation of Adam and Eve, only placing Mareiwa in the part of God (interview 1996).

[5] A totuma is a gourd hollowed out and used as a pot, cup, or strainer.

alijuna[6] who greedily stole everything that was on the table. The *alijuna* does not know how to share, he only knows how to take" (interview 1996).

The Wayúu have inhabited the south of the Guajira peninsula for well over 100 years. In this territory, the Wayúu have constructed concrete relations conforming to their ancestral conceptions of ecosystems that adapt with the changing way that they view their lives. To be able to speak of the environmental impact that the Wayúu are living with, their relations with territory, economy, politics, and their relations to their own bodies must be taken into account: in other words, the relation between man and nature, man and man, and man and body (Dover et al. 1997: 24).

Today, what paths are open for the Wayúu? Which paths can they follow in order to remain a viably functioning society amidst all the pressures and problems of change and assimilation surrounding them? They have survived 500 years of colonization only now to be faced with their biggest challenge yet: survival in the face of the multinational coal mining companies. The needs of the Wayúu living in the community of San Francisco are simple. They want land and water to be able to seed and to harvest- land that was theirs from the beginning (interviews 1996).

IB) Methodology

My research occurred over a period of four months from May to September, 1996. It was part of a larger project funded by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and a grant from the University of Alberta Fund for the Support of International Development Activities (FSIDA); and was aligned with the Colombian Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) Centro Nacional de Salud Ambiente y Trabajo (CENSAT). CENSAT has extensive experience working with health and environmental problems associated with the mining and flower-producing industries in Colombia. Their part in this project took the form of organizing conferences within the communities of Barrancas, Guajira, and La Jagua, Cesár, to create awareness of the conflicts of interest between groups in the area. The conferences involved the mining companies, unions, governmental agencies, municipal governments, and the indigenous groups affected by the mines. My participation within the larger project consisted of working with the Wayúu to assess the social, cultural, and physical impacts of open-pit mining on their communities.

My proposed research sought to address previously unanswered questions, and formulate a base of knowledge that the Wayúu of the community of San Francisco may

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[6] Alijuna or Arijuna is the term given to anyone not of Wayúu or indigenous descent.

participate in and have access to for legal recourse and land reclamation: and to provide a partial written history. The overall objectives of this research were: 1) to examine and document the effects of the open-pit coal mine on the Wayúu traditional way of life, 2) to assess the changes that have occurred in regard to their subsistence and economic activities and socio-political structures, and 3) to provide documentation of their traditional jurisdiction over the area.

To achieve the above stated goals, I :

1) conducted a review of the relevant literature of the area, including archival material in Colombia;

2) employed standard ethnographic techniques of participant observation:

3) interviewed key informants and participants within the Wayúu community of Barrancas, Colombia, and officials within the mines and government departments:

4) analyzed the data to provide documentation showing evidence of Wayúu traditional jurisdiction over the area and environmentalchanges since the opening of the mines;

5) provided a base of information that will be made accessible to indigenous groups and concerned NGOs that hopefully will assist in providing strategies for their empowerment;

6) provided a base of information that could be useful in the implementation of educational programs for the awareness of health risks and responsible regionally-based economic strategies.

The problem that the Wayúu are facing in the Guajira was first identified by Deborah Pacini Hernandez in 1984, before the coal mines had entered the full stage of production. In a visit to Colombia undertaken by Dr. Robert Dover in 1995, a member of the Organización Nacional de Indígenas de Colombia (ONIC), also a Wayúu, identified the problem faced by the Wayúu in the southern Guajira and the negative impact the mines were having on their communities. The Wayúu leaders and members of OZIWASUG[7] invited Dr. Dover into the community to study the impacts and the problems the Wayúu face as a result of the mining in the area.

The Wayúu community of Resguardo San Francisco was chosen as the base for the research, as it was part of the geographical area most impacted by the mine, and a community which OZIWASUG identified as remaining the most 'traditional' as compared

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[7]OZIWASUG stands for Organizacion Zonal Indigena Wayúu del Sur de la Guajira or the Zonal Indigenous Organization of the south of the Guajira. It is an organization developed and run by Wayúu to ensure proper representation of their needs before the mines and the municipal government.

to other larger Wayúu communities. The community accepted us and provided us with a hut and complete access to their daily lives. While the majority of my interviews took place in San Francisco, visits to other Wayúu communities were also undertaken as part of the study. The Wayúu eagerly cooperated, and even offered us protection from the fighting factions in the area[8].

Many of the interviews were conducted with the elders of the community to discuss the changes in customs and environment that had occurred within the area since the beginning of the El Cerrejón mining project. Research was also conducted within the domain of health by interviewing doctors and obtaining medical records from the hospital. government department of health, and health outpost in the area. The managers of the mines were also interviewed.

The vast majority of the community in San Francisco were unable to communicate fully in Spanish, and I was not able to speak Wayuunaiki. As my informants were most comfortable speaking in their native tongue, my interviews were conducted with a translator. While I acknowledge the difficulties and inherent dangers in third-party translation, I feel confident that the interviews and material gathered were true to what my informants were saying, as enough material was also gathered in Spanish to substantiate my informants' statements. As well, the two other anthropologists working on the project had come to similar conclusions within their own interviews.

This is not a complete ethnographic study. Four months is simply not enough time to attempt an in-depth study of a culture and problems that are so complex. This study is an attempt to provide a starting point, a base of knowledge from which to extend the limited knowledge of the southern Guajira; and to outline the necessity of further research.

1C) Concepts of Development

Development, according to John Bodley (1975: 125), is most often seen as a process of natural evolution or growth. He states that "development" is an inherently ethnocentric term that rests on the assumed positive benefits of of progress and its inevitability. However, the term "development" holds different connotations for the many participants involved. Is it possible to define a universal concept of development? If not, in what sense do peoples' views of development differ?

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[8]One night members of the FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) entered the resguardo to find out why we were present. They were told by an elder of the community that we were visiting from far away and that we were family. After that, no more questions were asked. See Chap. 4 for more information on the current army/guerrilla violence in the area.

The desire to bring tribal peoples up to national and international economic standards has increased since the World Wars, due to a global desire for rapid economic growth. This economic development, or what is often termed "progress," has almost always been viewed as unquestionably beneficial and universally good (Bodley 1975: 125,150). Progress and development have often been forced upon unwilling peoples due to western ethnocentrism: the belief in the superiority of western technology, economy, and culture. For centuries, development has justified policies of assimilation and exploitation.

National governments, national societies, and commercial interests all have notions of development. More often than not, they all correspond to the same theme of progress and a linear change from backward to advanced. They also have similar ways of constructing reality. Development and reality for national governments and societies revolves around the need to control nature for material and economic gain. The government's and multinational companies' power is aimed at conquering and mastering nature, and there is little inclination to perceive nature in ways other than those of practical and instrumental reason (Rivera 1986: 158). Development is viewed as organic, immanent, unidirectional, cumulative, and irreversible, with an economically beneficial end-purpose or goal. It implies structural differentiation and increasing complexity. There is an inherent "goodness" seen in the process of development that Rivera states as similar to an "evolutionist's faith in progress" (Rivera 1986: 154-155). Some of these advances brought by development are increased incomes, higher standards of living, greater security, and better health. These are thought to be positive universal goods (Bodley 1975: 150). However, generally these advances are enjoyed only by the dominant society and active consumers. The tribal people living on the fringe of national society rarely benefit from increased development.

According to Rivera (1986: 167-168), the notion of development is not a universal category, nor is it an objective indicator applicable to any or all societies. Within western constructs, it is often assumed that every society has a concept of development. "Consequently to the extent that development is a social construct, and a local one at that, the issue of development policies is one of power" (Rivera 1986: 167). When a society is perceived as underdeveloped or uncivilized, notions of development come into play that are often culturally inappropriate and destructive. These ideas are officially enforced through national political and economic structures. Thus development can also be perceived as a process of destruction.

Believing that they know what is best for all perceived to be less developed than themselves, the governments and multi-national corporations have forced upon unwilling participants destructive constructs and values, and their participation within alien cultural

and economic systems. Governments have seen the necessity of incorporating marginal peoples into the national economic system in order to increase their own participation within global markets. As a result, governments and companies see the benefits of development as including the uniting of nations and peoples. and increasing their position and ability to grow within the world markets. The hunger for development has spurred the desire for raw materials, many of which are located within indigenous territories: and thus the need for integrating tribal peoples into the national economy is even more pressing.

However, development is creating another scenario for the world environment and the people who inhabit it. Many repercussions from development are being felt: one of the most serious is ecocide. Economic development places strains on the natural ecosystems that prevents indigenous peoples from managing the valuable natural resources needed for survival. According to Bodley (1975:152), economic development will increase the disease rate of people in four ways: the tribal population will be more vulnerable to diseases of the developed population: the traditional environmental balances will be disturbed: bacterial and parasitic diseases may dramatically increase: and the tribal populations will suffer from poverty diseases such as malnutrition and protein deficiency.

Indigenous perceptions of nature in general are directly opposed to those of the governments and national societies. An indigenous perspective sees nature as an integral part of life that is necessary to create, justify, and sustain the existence of the community. Nature is to be revered, as all comes from the earth and life can not continue if the earth is not respected. Tribal peoples have carefully managed their resources: and therefore "development," for them. is more a question of continuity and survival rather than of improvement and growth (Johnson 1992).

As there is no universal concept of development among indigenous peoples. and all groups have their own ways of constructing reality, other means must be sought to describe what development means to tribal peoples. Their needs, which they have most often identified as land. health, water, and education, clearly stand in contrast to ideas held by those who are designated to model developmental projects for them. Decisions for change are not made locally, and there is little cognitive participation at the core of developmental politics (Rivera 1986: 168). In the case of the Wayúu, a few well-meaning bilingual Wayúu with formal education have been pushed into defining development for their people. There is no consensus among the Wayúu as to notions of development :and many communities throughout the peninsula have different ideas as to the form development should take. Therefore, decisions for development must be made locally, and they must be made specific to the community involved (Rivera 1986: 168-169).

The term 'development' has many connotations, and most recently has taken on a negative association with environmental and indigenous groups. John Bodley (1975: 125) states that perhaps a more appropriate and less ethnocentric term for development may be "transformation." Transformation is unescapable: and though environmentalists and indigenous groups have had limited success in halting multinational corporations' development projects, the resource needs of the consumer global markets and the internal necessities of our own society will not support any diminishment in production. The need to extract resources and continue the "development process" is even more pressing for many nations in Latin America, Africa, and Asia; where pressure from international monetary structures to eliminate debt, coupled with a wealth of natural resources, forces the environment and the indigenous peoples who inhabit it into a position of submission.

Most development projects have not taken into account the needs of the peoples who traditionally have existed apart from national cultures. Both unconsciously and on purpose, projects have repeatedly failed to take into account the basic needs of the people who have been on the receiving end. Not all projects have bad intentions. However, as history shows, even the best intentions have sometimes had devastating results. Much of the negative impact results from an ethnocentric view of development. The people in the area of the projects are rarely consulted, and frustration often results from a lack of cultural sensitivity[9]. There is generally a lack of consultation with tribal peoples, and a lack of desire to understand their needs and cosmovision. This was made readily apparent in my fieldwork with the Wayúu. Neither the mines nor the government have attempted to understand the needs of the Wayúu so that a viable plan for survival could be employed to ensure both the existence of the Wayúu and their cultural systems as the Guajira is developed. The El Cerrejón mines are not going to be stopped; and it is more than likely that even further expansion is going to result. What is essential now is an understanding of the present situation, and the granting of cultural and environmental space to the Wayúu. There needs to be communication with the Wayúu to determine the impacts and direction of the transformations that are taking place so rapidly around them. Rivera (1986: 155) states

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[9] I give an example from the Wayúu community of San Francisco. During my stay, the municipal government was given money and materials from the national government to improve the housing structures in the resguardo. They proceeded to build brick houses with one door, few windows,and a tin roof. The temperature in the Guajira is usually more than 35 degrees; and to survive the heat in the desert, the Wayúu constructed their rancherias from the inner cores of cardón cactus with roofs of palm fronds to allow the circulation of air. As well, Wayúu dwellings always have two entrances to their rancherias no matter how small. They say that this feature allows another avenue of escape should an enemy attack. These brick houses with one door and a hot tin roof were constructed without any consultation with the Wayúu. When I asked one elder what he was going to use the new structure for, he replied that he was going to use it as a corral for his goats (interview 1996).

that "it might be best to deconstruct the prevailing notion of development and attempt a new definition based, not on growth, but on local cognitive participation through effective political participation of the population at large."

There are many views of development, and many conflicting ideas on the best way to undertake development projects. I have no illusions that development projects are suddenly going to be halted, and that land full of resources will be left it its pristine state. What we should have learned from past failed development projects, from the rapid deterioration of the environment, and from the extinction of tribal peoples is that responsible development must be attempted. As there are no universal ideas of development, cognitive participation of all involved, not just the governments and multinationals, is essential to the survival of the land and the people who inhabit it. Development cannot simply focus on the extraction of resources and the linear 'progress' of the dominant society. It cannot be globally focussed without taking into account the internal functionings of society and the people affected. Development must coexist with the people who first inhabited the land and their traditional cultural systems. Political [and cognitive[10]] participation by all involved on a local and national level would go a long way to ensuring that future development projects take into consideration their effects on the people in the area.

1D) Impacts of Development

The Global 2000 report (cited in Gedicks 1994: 39) projects that the total land area that will be affected by the mining industry by the last quarter of this century will be approximately 60 million acres or 94,000 square miles. Gedicks states that this figure is deceptively small, as it does not take into account the additional area that will be affected by air and water pollution, destruction of fish and wildlife habitats, erosion, and toxic and radioactive contamination. It also does not address the fact that the infrastructure for these mines and processing facilities also contributes to environmental destruction. Due to stricter environmental regulations in first world countries, the large mining companies are now looking to developing nations for the source for their raw materials, as laws in other lands tend to be more lenient (Gedicks 1994: 40).

Gedicks (1994: 42) states that " the penetration of Indian lands by multinational mining corporations seeking to extract valuable mineral and energy resources has resulted

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[10] I use the term cognitive to describe the participation of a group who are aware of their political rights and who are organized in a collective manner to petition the state agencies for acknowledgement of their constitutional rights.

in what one Native American sociologist has described as the transformation of Indian tribes 'from captive nations into internal colonies'." Original adaptive systems become impossible to maintain once the state assumes control over indigenous territory. Bodley (1988: 2) lists demographic upheavals, resource depletion, internal inequality and conflict, along with increased social pathologies as the results of the state's intervention and control of native lands. The end results of development in tribal areas, as with the Wayúu, is inevitable insecurity and poverty.

The United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development published the report Our Common Future in 1987. The report addressed the concept of "sustainable development" which it identified as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." The report also discusses the integral role that culture plays as the mechanism for adapting to development. However, it also acknowledges the "terrible irony" that "it tends to destroy the only cultures that have proven able to thrive in these environments." As a preventative measure, the report advises the "recognition and protection of native cultures' traditional rights to land and the other resources that sustain their way of life- rights they may define in terms that do not fit into standard legal systems" (quoted in Gedicks 1994: 198).

Native views and uses of land are rarely taken into consideration by developers or governments. Western cultures have difficulty understanding the knowledge and values indigenous cultures possess that lead them to favour certain environmental and economic circumstances which appear alien to western ways of thinking (Gedicks 1994: 202). The Guajira desert is a case in point. Social Impact Assessments (SIAs) that were undertaken prior to the opening of the mine describes the area as vacant, the vegetation as sparse, the Wayúus" social organization as not well developed, and their population as isolated and small (Pacini Hernandez 1984:38). "The overall impression is of a wasteland inhabited by a few unorganized and insignificant indigenous groups in which the construction of road, railroad, port, and workers' camps can proceed without problem" (Pacini Hernandez 1984: 38). The fifteen investigators hired by the mine, not one an anthropologist[11], made no attempt to identify Wayúu land use patterns, nor their cultural associations that have enabled them to function and survive in the face of conquest and a harsh natural environment .

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[11] Pacini Hernandez (1984: 36-37) states that the coordinator of the team was a sociologist with no previous experience in the Guajira. Her investigation team consisted of six architects, five economists, three sociologists, and one geographer.

Article 17 of the United Nations' Universal Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples states that the indigenous groups have "the right to require that states consult with indigenous peoples and with both domestic and transnational corporations prior to the commencement of any large-scale projects, particularly natural resource projects or exploitation of mineral and other subsoil resources in order to enhance the projects' benefits and to mitigate any adverse economic, social, environmental, and cultural effect" and that "just and fair compensation shall be provided for any activity or adverse consequence undertaken" (cited in Gedicks 1994: 204). However, as Christian Bay (1988: 262) states, "most first world and many third world governments routinely sacrifice human rights to corporate legal rights and interests." The possible impacts of the worlds' largest open pit coal mine on the indigenous people of the Guajira were not considered: nor were provisions made for the Wayúu to function and to survive the inevitable negative impacts of pollution, increased population pressures in the area, depletion of their subsistence base, shortages of land, and changes in their social systems.

Some of the impacts of development include a weakening of subsistence base due to resource depletion and/or breakdowns in the social organization of subsistence activities: pressures on natural resources increase while the territorial base is drastically reduced. There is also the possibility of an increase in population coupled with a rising per capita demand for resources. All of this places indigenous populations faced with large scale development into a subjugated position of poverty, conflict, malnourishment, and increased vulnerability to disease, especially if their traditional subsistence systems are not replaced with adequate alternative resources (Bodley 1988: 209). The loss of autonomy means that they can no longer expel outsiders from their traditional territory; and are faced with mandatory formal schooling (often in the national language), culturally inappropriate judicial systems, and appointments of state-sanctioned political leaders who replace the traditional means of political and judicial authority (Bodley 1988: 31).

The Wayúu in the Guajira are experiencing the first "shock" stage of development as the mines and municipalities once again attempt to colonize their territory. Their political, subsistence, and health systems are in a state of flux as the Wayúu attempt to survive the massive development that is taking place all around them. Like the never-ceasing noise of the coal trucks, the demands of the first worlds' energy needs are at the doors of their rancherias. The Wayúu can no longer move to an empty area of the Guajira: warfare and bellicosity no longer suffice to keep outsiders at bay:and political organization needs time, money, and empowered leaders. It is urgent that processes for self-determination be developed immediately to ensure the cultural survival of the Wayúu.

IE) Habitat (Figure one)

The Guajira peninsula is the northernmost extension of mainland South America. It falls between 11.5 and 12.3 degrees north latitude and between 71 and 73 degrees west longitude (Gonzalez 1987: 27). It has an average temperature of 27 degrees Celsius. The area is characterized by a dry semi-desert landscape with an annual average seasonal rainfall of 231 mm, with the primary rainy season falling between the months of October through December (Kline 1987: 49). The semi-arid peninsula is crossed by three small sierras, the Sierra de Macuira (800 m), Cerros de Parashi (670 m), and the Sierra de Cojoro (700 m), each separated by plains that run from coast to coast (Jahn 1973: 133).

As described by several scholars (Pacini Hernandez 1984: 4; Crist 1957: 341: Chaves 1953: 137), the peninsula is divided into *alta* (north or upper) and *baja* (south or lower) Guajira. The upper portion is extremely dry, and does not receive more than 200 mm of rainfall per year. The rain cycle consists of three months of varied rainfall. During September, October, and November the amount of rainfall will fluctuate. The Alta Guajira also receives an intense amount of sun, almost 2500 hrs/yr. The aridity of the Alta Guajira is further characterized by evaporation which is greater than the precipitation, due to the intense sun and strong equatorial winds that blow from the Caribbean. These winds prevent the little moisture within the air from falling due to the lack of elevation to initiate condensation[12] .

There are no rivers at all in the Alta Guajira, and only the Sierra de Macuira is capable of sustaining minimal and occasional agriculture. The vegetation is mostly xerophytic; and the wildlife that was once so abundant has now been decimated by many factors, namely overhunting, climatological changes, and pastoralism (Pacini Hernandez 1984: 4). The landscape of the Alta Guajira is characterized by large sand dunes and areas covered in rocks, spiny divi-divi trees,[13] and cacti (Chaves 1953: 135; Saler 1988: 39). Cacti and spiny trees are also very common throughout the Guajira. The most important plant found in the Guajira, especially in the lower part, is the tree *Prosopis juliflora* which is also called *"trupillo."* or *divi-divi* in Wayuunaiki. Its popular name is *cuji* . The fibre from this plant is woven into a type of yarn which the women use in weaving hammocks and bags. As well, the goats, burros, and sheep of the peninsula consume the leaves and

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[12]These same winds also pick up the carbon particles from the open pit mines and distribute them over long distances. This dust not only affects the humans who are forced to inhale it, but also the animals, vegetation, water holes, and the oceans (CENSAT 1995: 115).

[13] The divi-divi (*Prosopis juliflora*) tree is extremely important to the Wayúu. Women and children will collect the pods of the tree to sell to intermediaries who will, in turn, sell to manufacturers. It is an important means by which to make extra money (Saler 1988: 40). As well, the fruit of the divi-divi is an important part of the Wayúu diet.

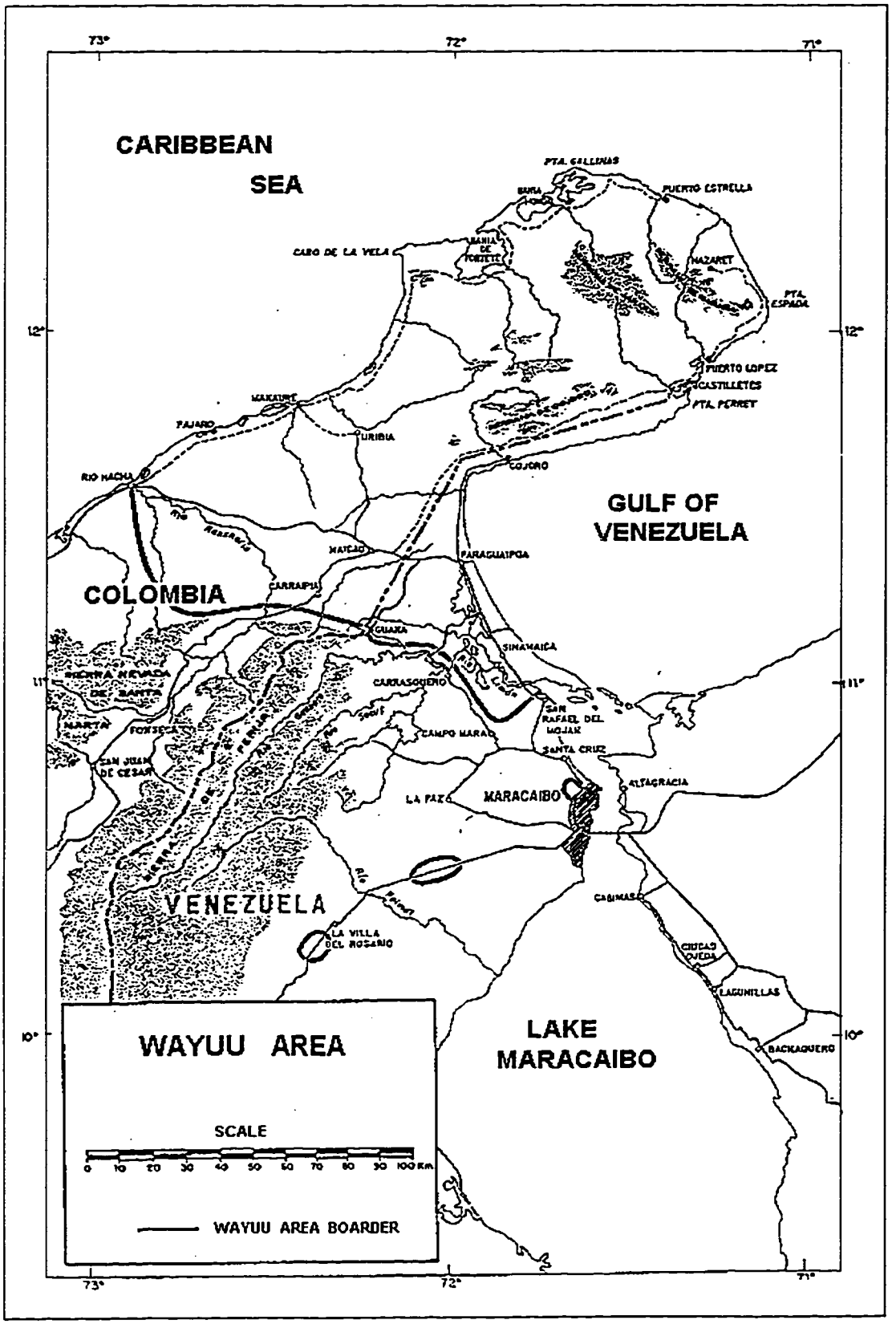

Figure 1: Wayúu Area. Adapted from Saler (1988:32).

the husks of this plant to obtain part of the water that they need to survive[14](Saler 1988: 39).

The Baja Guajira, described as *desértica tropical*, experiences more rainfall than the upper portion; and the land is better suited for limited agriculture. The area also benefits from the Rancheria River that runs down from the mountains of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta. This river serves to irrigate the occasional crops in the surrounding plains (Pacini Hernandez 1984: 4). The Rio Limón is also important for agriculture in the eastern part of the peninsula, and it flows from the Montes de Oca to the Gulf of Venezuela.

The southern Guajira experiences all types of climate from the cold and humid temperatures of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta to the hot and dry temperatures that characterize most of the department. The distribution of rain is bi-annual, with periods of rain between August and December and between March and June. In these periods the rainfall averages around 200 mm/month. The months in between are very dry, with rainfall often not reaching more than 50 mm/month, making cultivation without irrigation impossible (Corpoguajira 1987). The temperature in the municipality of Barrancas varies between 26.7 and 32.6 degrees Celsius, with the relative humidity falling between 41% and 80% during the dry and rainy seasons respectively (CENSAT 1995: 84).

There are striking contrasts during the dry, desert months preceding the annual rains of September, October, and November. During the dry spells, the Wayúu will obtain water for their animals and themselves by collecting limited rainwater, using the water from the Rancheria river, or opening existing waterholes (Saler 1988: 41).[15] The lack of water in the peninsula is overcome by the use of naturally occurring *casimbas*, or *jagüeyes*. *Jagüeyes* are natural or man-made dugouts which catch and hold rain water. *Casimbas* are dug in the river beds into which underground water slowly seeps. However, during severe droughts these water sources may dry up, becoming thick and salty. Bolinder (1957: 44) indicates that droughts recurred periodically, on an average of four times every century. Constant movement of the Wayúu throughout the peninsula prevented the sole

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[14] The animals, for the most part, are left to forage for themselves. The Wayúu only occasionally supplement their feed from available plants, if there is difficulty in finding forage. The number of animals the Wayúu will have in their herds is directly related to the quality and quantity of vegetation available (Saler 1980: 39).

[15] Geologist Raymond Crist, writing in 1957, makes note of the the familiar lament of the people that remember the old days when rain was more abundant. He mentions that certain areas in which crops that were grown twenty years previously are no longer able to be cultivated (Crist 1957: 342). The changes experienced today, in 1996, must be even more severe. In my interviews, the elders of the communities remember and discuss how not too long ago the rains used to come in abundance, and they were able to seed and harvest enough food to provide for their families (interviews 1996).

dependence on one water source, and ensured better use of available resources by utilizing all areas of the peninsula. In recent times, the Colombian government has dug wells within the Alta Guajira in the attempt to provide a stable source of water for the Wayúu and their herds (Chaves 1953: 151).[16]

The landscape of the Wayúu is distinct, and their concept of their territory must be contextualized. According to Bender (1993: 2), "the way in which people understand and engage with their worlds will depend upon the specific time and place and historical conditions...even in the most scientific of western worlds, past and future will be mythologised. Sometimes the engagement will be very conscious- a way of laying claims. of justifying and legitimating a particular place in the world,- sometimes almost unconscious-part of the routine of everyday existence." Up until recently, this distinctive and difficult environment has allowed the Wayúu to maintain a social and cultural barrier between themselves and the rest of the world (Purdy 1987: 135). The dry desert environment offered little economic opportunity for the dominant society. This feature of the region has effectively served to preserve many traditional aspects of Wayúu culture, such as herding, language, curing practices, and migration patterns. However, with the advent of the El Cerrejón coal mine, and massive migration and rapid deforestation of the area, separation from the national culture is no longer possible.

IF) Historical Antecedents

> "Mareiwa made a Wayúu man and woman and placed them in an area full of trees. In this area there was also a mysterious tree whose fruit they could not eat. One day the woman wanted to eat the fruit but the man said that they couldn't. The next day Mareiwa arrived. The man was hiding behind a tree and the woman too. He wondered what had happened and called them twice. Mareiwa found them hidden behind the tree and they knew that Mareiwa knew that they had eaten the fruit. Mareiwa asked them why they had eaten the fruit. They claimed that they were embarrassed to be walking naked and they had to find clothes. Mareiwa was angry. As punishment, Mareiwa then made the genital parts of the woman and he created many. You could find them floating in the rivers; they were like animals in the water. They were made of many teeth. and when this part did not want to have sex with the man it could cause him great pain. Mareiwa was looking at his c reation and realized that maybe he had made them badly. He also thought that the man and woman had been punished enough. So with an arrow he went to hunt this part with all the teeth. He caught one and put an arrow through it. The water turned red with the blood and the birds arrived and began bathing in the water. The cardinal bathed in the water and that is how he got his colour. The parrot also bathed and that's why he has red parts too. Many other birds bathed there. With these arrows he made all the teeth disappear from the female parts and the numbers of Wayúu grew" (interview 1996).

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[16] Saler (1988: 42) states that the natural resources of an area are under the control of the groups who maintain and defend them. Access to the resources by other groups is controlled by the norms of traditional protocol. Visiting clans must ask permission to use the resources from the clans that own them.

The recorded history of the Wayúu, both past and present, is one of independence and pride, of a combination of isolation and consumerism. There has been over 500 years of contact with Europeans and the national cultures of Colombia and Venezuela. Through different adaptive strategies, and restricted European settlement, due in part to the harsh environment of the peninsula, the Wayúu have been able to maintain many aspects of their traditional way of life despite the strong outside influence of the dominant culture. The Wayúu are one of the few indigenous groups that have been successful in maintaining their sense of identity and tradition throughout commercial and social exchanges with the world outside the peninsula.

The Wayúu are one of the largest indigenous groups in lowland South America (Jahn 1973: 70). A recent census lists the population of the Guajira department at 350,895, with 143,663 (or 42.43%) being classified as indigenous . While there are other indigenous groups living in the Guajira, specifically Kogi and Wiwa, the Wayúu are the most numerous (96%) (ECOPETROL 1996). Until very recently, the Wayúu were the visible majority in the peninsula. However, the influx of mestizo workers from other parts of the country, drawn to the area by the coal bonanza, is now changing the face of the Guajira.

There is little published accessible archeological research on the prehistory of the Wayúu, a situation which has allowed much speculation among anthropologists as to their origins. While it is difficult to determine the exact origin of the present day Wayúu, it is widely assumed that they are a group who migrated into the area, intermarried with a previous population, and have become what are known today as the Wayúu. Prior to the Spanish invasion that began in 1499, the peninsula was apparently inhabited by several different indigenous groups, namely the Guanebucanos, Caquetios, Cocinas, and Macuiras (Pacini Hernandez 1984: 4). Picon (1983: 13) suggests that the Cocinas, who lived in the central part of the peninsula, were mostly hunters and gatherers, while the other groups practiced horticulture as a means of subsistence. Over hundreds of years after the Spanish conquest, the different groups acquired a single identity and became a pastoralist society.

Perrin (1986: 2) states that it is generally presumed that the present day Wayúu originally migrated from the upper Amazon. This theory is based on linguists' claims that the Arawakan language that is spoken by the Wayúu has its distant origin in the Amazon basin. As well, observable social habits and cranial measurements are believed to indicate similarities to the people who inhabited the Amazon area[17] (also see Jahn 1973: 145).

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[17] Kidder (1944: 152) suggests that the evidence of secondary urn burials within the archaeological record, as well as in present day practice, indicate that the Wayúu may be closely related to lower Amazon tribes from whence this trait is to have dispersed.

However, other anthropologists have speculated that the group came from the north of Brazil or the Guayanas, and were the first to colonize the area around Lake Maracaibo. This thesis is supported by the similarities in warfare and bellicose nature between Wayúu and the Carib peoples, who were annihilated at the time of conquest by the Spanish (Jahn 1973: 70, 146; Kidder 1944: 8, 17). Saler (1988: 36) suggests the the ancestors of the present day Wayúu were warriors who, upon arriving in the peninsula, killed or forced the majority of the inhabitants out of the area. He also suggests that genetic mixing may have taken place, reducing the numbers of people and assimilating them into the population now characterized as the Wayúu. Others have claimed that the pottery forms and manner of incision used for decoration present certain similarities with previous cultures in Guatemala, Chiapas, Peru, and early archeological phases of the upper Amazon (Izard 1986: 18).

The Wayúu themselves say that they are from "far away," from the ancient pueblos of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta. It is notable that *tumas* [18] were used as a form of currency and as a status-procuring object by the Wayúu throughout the Guajira. They are identical to the ones found in tombs in the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, and they are constructed of material that is not found in the Guajira peninsula (Jahn 1973: 147; Simons 1885: 781).

As anthropologists attempt to reconstruct the culture prior to Spanish contact in 1499, they suggest that the people of the Guajira participated in a mixed economy that provided fish, game, fresh water molluscs, land snails, and agricultural products such as yuca and corn. They also participated in extended trade networks throughout the mainland through the exchanges of salt, fish, and pearls for grain, coca, and gold (Izard 1986: 18: Perrin 1986: 2: Layrisse and Wilbert 1966: 125-130; Pacini Hernandez 1984: 4).

Prior to contact, subsistence was based on fishing, hunting, and gathering; and a semi-nomadic lifestyle continued to the time of the Spanish arrival in 1499. Their bellicosity and independent nomadic nature made it impossible for the Spanish colonizers to assimilate the population or evangelize them, as had happened with most other tribes in the Americas[19]. As well, the Guajira peninsula offered little to the Spaniards. They had no

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[18] Tumas are tiny perforated and decorated semi-precious stones, usually found in ancient gravesites, that are highly valued in trading relations between the Wayúu. Rivera records a possible origin myth of the tumas in his dissertation (Rivera 1986: 92). He states that Mareiwa married a Wayúu woman and with her, he had a child. When he returned after one of his frequent absences, he found the child dirty and neglected. Enraged, he told his wife that he was going to leave her; but not before he made the child disappear. He then grabbed a machete and split the child in two. He threw the lower half to the Alta Guajira where it turned into walas (gold figurines); and the other half he tossed in the lower Guajira, where it became the tumas that the Wayúu used in trade.

[19] FR Antonio de Alcazar records the impressions of an archbishop visiting the Guajira in the mid 1700s. The archbishop declared " se quedo´´muy impresionada por una parte de la insolencia de los indios y por otra

desire to fight so desperately over land, apart from the area of the coast, that had little apparent value.

The arrival of the Spanish and the increased presence of Europeans created distinct changes in Wayúu culture and subsistence patterns. When Dutch, German, and English merchants arrived in the peninsula, they discovered that kidnapping the local population to sell as slaves in the Antilles was an extremely profitable venture (Pacini Hernandez 1984: 4). While kidnapping was actively practiced, the resistance of the indigenous population was so strong and successful that their reputation as fierce and belligerent fighters still remains to this day[20] (Salas 1971: 141; Izard 1986: 26).

By 1550, the majority of the Wayúu living in the peninsula had acquired livestock from the Europeans trading in the area. They quickly learned herding and animal product processing techniques from the Europeans and the few Capuchin mission outposts that survived along the coast. They realized that this mobile and ready available food source would greatly facilitate their avoidance of slavers, and their guerrilla style wars of self-defense (Izard 1986: 26; Pacini Hernandez 1984: 4; Salas 1971: 141; Saler 1988: 36).

Perrin (1986: 2) speculates that the reason the Wayúu adopted livestock raising so readily is threefold: 1) to relieve chronic starvation; 2) to provide a reliable food source with strong demographic pressure developing in the area; and 3) to facilitate food gathering in a harsh territory to which they had recently arrived[21]. This early adoption and domestication of cattle inevitably restructured their socio-economic system and value orientation. With this new structuring, the Wayúu adapted to a new way of life: "nomadic cattle pastoralism." Layrisse and Wilbert (1966: 130) claim that this type of lifestyle had no

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de la escasez de Misioneros" (de Alcacer 1959: 137 "The archbishop was surprised on one hand by the insolence of the Indians and on the other by the scarcity of missionaries" -my translation).

[20] An interesting story is recounted by Salas from archival material. The story was related by Juan de Gamez who was under the military order of conquistador Lozada. Lozada was fighting to subjugate the people of the area for the Spanish crown.

"After a battle in San Pedro against the Indians, the Spaniards found a little indigenous boy of eight or nine years of age. They were attempting to save the boy and place him under their care, when he turned furiously against the Spaniards who had seized his sister. He intended to save her with force. While they were holding him, he took out his little bow and arrow and injured two conquistadors. They finally succeeded in bringing him to camp and told Captain Lozada the story. The Captain tried to attract the affection of the boy with generous gifts and kind words. The boy, however, would have none of it. He only wanted to save his sister and bring her back to the village. His ferocity ended up starting a miniature war, the end result being the freeing of the cacique Chacao and many prisoners" (translated from Spanish-Salas 1971: 141-142).

[21] I do not believe that Perrin is suggesting that the Wayúu were pushed into a refuge area with the arrival of the Spanish. I believe that the Wayúu eagerly accepted herding of livestock, as it was a food source that could be transported and easily adapted to their lifestyle. The Spanish were unable to claim territory in the peninsula (and therefore force the Wayúu into a defensive position) during colonial times, due to the ferocity of the native population, and because they were well armed.

precedent or parallel anywhere else in the New World[22] (see also Watson 1968: 23 : Jahn 1971: 149).

The Wayúu actively traded animals, pearls, and salt for arms, ammunition, and grain from the English, Dutch, and French who were trying to break the Spanish trade monopoly in the New World. It was the adaptation of the use of arms that also enabled the Wayúu to defend themselves from Spanish domination; a struggle in which few indigenous groups have been successful (Pacini Hernandez 1984: 5).

An amazing tribute to the Wayúu is the fact that they were never conquered or assimilated. This anomaly may be attributed to many aspects of Wayúu life. Firstly, the Wayúu were isolated in the northernmost tip of the continent in a hostile environment. They also took part in an alliance and arms trade with the English and Dutch that allowed them to exploit conflicts between imperial powers for their own survival. As well, they had an excellent knowledge of the terrain and environment of the area (Purdy 1987: 138; de Alcacer 1959: 201). They were relentless in their attacks on Spanish pueblos and missions, and prevented the Spanish from settling extensively in the area for almost 500 years. It was only the Capuchin missionaries that endeavoured to set up missions in the Guajira, only to be defeated repeatedly in their attempts at evangelization (Grahn 1995: 130). Until recently, the peninsula was viewed as a lawless area that had little to offer the dominant culture; a vast wasteland of sun, sand, and contraband.

By the end of the 19th century, most of the Wayúu had become pastoralists. Hunting declined in importance, as wild game was becoming more scarce and a domestic food supply was readily available. At this point in history, the numerous border disputes between Colombia and Venezuela forced the Wayúu into closer contact with the national societies. Borders, military posts, roads, and Catholic missions slowly began to change the face of the Guajira (Perrin 1986: 2; Saler 1988: 37).

Despite 500 years of contact with Spaniards and Europeans, the Wayúu have managed to retain their language and essential elements of economic and social structure. Decisive changes have begun to occur only within the last thirty years, due to massive urban migration to Venezuelan cities, and large multinational projects opening up within their traditional land use area. Previous to this, suitable and desirable traits and objects from the dominant culture, such as cattle herding and trading, were borrowed to facilitate their independent ways of living. Until recently, the Wayúu have successfully resisted

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[22]Rivera claims that the Wayúu were not so much nomads but wanderers,or andariego as they had seasonal residences near water and exhibited longstanding claims over these water sources (Rivera 1986: 113; see also Saler 1988: 43).

attempts by the dominant culture to change the structure of their society (Watson-Franke 1979: 95; Purdy 1987: 134-136).

CHAPTER TWO

GENERAL PATTERNS OF WAYUU CULTURE

II A) Subsistence Patterns

A desert creates distinctive subsistence patterns for many groups who inhabit it. The Wayúu are no exception. With great success, the Wayúu have managed this delicate environment and have maintained their cultural identity for many centuries. Due to the sensitive nature of the environment, continuous agriculture is impossible. With the adoption of cattle and goats, the Wayúu became migratory by necessity, as constant movement was needed to secure water and grazing land for their livestock (Jahn 1973: 136: Gonzalez 1987: 30). Their nomadism, or as some anthropologists prefer to term 'wanderings'[23], allows the vegetation to regenerate, thus keeping the fragile balance of the desert environment intact. The Wayúu say: *" La Guajira no se cultiva, pero se cuida"* or 'One does not cultivate the Guajira, one takes care of it.' (Pacini Hernandez 1984: 7). Today many Wayúu subsist on livestock herding, occasional agriculture, limited foraging, seasonal salt exploitation in the mines of Manaure near the coast, talc mines, textile and leather craftsmanship, commercial activity, and wage labour (Pacini Hernandez 1984: 7: Purdy 1987: 142-144).

Livestock

As described by Pacini Hernandez (1984: 4), the introduction of stockbreeding of cattle and goats at the time of the European contact contributed to economic upheaval and changes within the social structure of the Wayúu. For the Wayúu, the raising of livestock, along with providing the principal source of animal protein, became the base of the economy and prestige system. The Wayúu state that for a person to have prestige, not only must he/she have "buenas costumbres" (or good manners) but they must also have land and animals (Saler 1988: 53). For the Wayúu, possession of land does not yield prestige; however, having the space to breed and support many animals successfully is considered essential to increasing herd size, feeding the animals and the family, and thus enabling one to participate in exchanges which mark one as wealthy.

Pacini Hernandez (1984: 7) believes that Colombian colonization has resulted in the loss of much of Wayúu territory in the southern and western parts of the peninsula, and

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[23] See Saler 1988: 43

only the northern areas continue to be used in the traditional manner. The principal animals that are now herded by the Wayúu are goats and sheep. Epidemics and dry conditions now make it difficult for cattle and horses to survive. According to Saler (1988: 45), the number of cattle in the peninsula has decreased throughout the last thirty years due to disease, deforestation, and increasing desertification. They are still considered to be animals of prestige; but are consumed only on special occasions such as termination of a puberty enclosure, shamanic rituals, or for compensatory distributions (Saler 1988: 45). Nowadays celebrations for weddings and funerals use the giving and sacrifice of goats as a display of prestige and power. Although goats can survive on the small amount of vegetation in the peninsula, many of the herds must be driven south to areas in which there is more precipitation and better pasturage. The loss of land in the south to the El Cerrejón coal mine has dealt a severe blow to the Wayúu and their search for available pasturing land.

To this day, animals are used in the negotiation of bride price. A man will present a specified number of animals to either the father, mother, or maternal uncle of his bride, depending on the position of the daughter in the family. The oldest daughter's bride price is usually given to the father, and the subsequent daughters' animals are presented to the uncle (Crist 1957: 351). Watson-Franke (1976: 23) suggests that the entire clan benefits from the bride price exchanged, not only the father, uncle, or mother, as these animals will be exchanged within the family. The bride will receive gifts of livestock from her kinsmen that will be transferred to the care of her husband, who will merge the animals with his own herd; however, these animals will retain the woman's brand, and remain her property. He does not have the right to sell the animals or give them away without her permission (Watson 1968: 6; Watson-Franke 1987: 239). It is extremely important in Wayúu culture to determine the value and societal position of a woman by her bride price[24].

As described by Watson (1981: 5-7), there are certain rules that are followed regarding livestock inheritance within the Wayúu community. Inheritance is passed down from parental or grandparental generation to ego's generation, with women and men possessing equal rights to the inheritance. Inheritance will also pass in equal proportion from man to man, man to woman, woman to woman, and woman to man across generations. The Wayúu boys also receive a formal inheritance from their maternal aunts and uncles when they reach adulthood. The animals become the boy's responsibility, and his care and concern for the animals is monitored closely by his family to gage his future character.

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[24] In my interviews many Wayúu women would proudly tell me the number of goats, cows, and necklaces they received as their bride price (interviews 1996).

Care of livestock is apportioned by both gender and sex. Usually the eldest male child is responsible for the day to day care of the animals. He must provide them with water, and take care of them in the pastures. His most important function is to watch that no animals are stolen or become lost as they move from pasture to pasture. The older males will help and supervise the children if the herds are very large. From a young age, the children are taught that they must take care of the family's herds, for one day they will inherit these animals, and they must appear competent to do so. Male adults are responsible for the branding, castrating, and treating of the animals. However, men nowadays are employed away from the family in wage labour positions, so maintenance of herding and animal husbandry is difficult when the family is deprived of their elder male members (Saler 1988: 96; Watson-Franke 1979: 96; interview 1996).

Agriculture

Most anthropologists have focussed on the importance of animal herding as the basis of Wayúu subsistence, and therefore there is little in the literature that discusses in detail the importance of agriculture for the Wayúu. This could also be due to the insistence of the Wayúu that gardening, while important, is less prestigious than herding and therefore less emphasized within their culture (Rivera 1986: 129).

The difficult climate of the peninsula places limitations on the Wayuu's ability to cultivate their food. Due to the constant fluctuations in rainfall, the Wayúu do not use gardening as a sole source of subsistence. When the harvest is abundant, it is a time for celebration and the produce is generously offered to visitors. Garden products are generally exchanged between households, and little is actually sold. The Wayúu will, however, sell surplus wild fruits, such as mango, that have been collected.

Most agricultural work falls into the male domain. Men do most of the heavy work in clearing and fencing the land with cactus to keep out foraging goats and people who would steal from the garden. Women usually participate during planting, the selection and storage of seeds, and also during harvesting. Rivera (1986: 132, 136) states that there is usually no use of plows, and that the Wayuu's main tool for clearing the land is a polu, or wooden stick. Machetes are also used for clearing weeds and digging holes to plant seeds. As well, traditional technologies such as controlled fires are also used for clearing the land (ibid: 133).

Corn in the form of an unfermented drink called chicha is the base of the Wayúu diet. If corn can not be grown due to poor environmental conditions, it will be purchased. Rice and plantains are also an important part of the Wayúu diet; and other vegetables such as beans, yucca, watermelon, and millet are also grown in the south (Saler 1988: 45).

Rivera (1986: 133) states that recent economic changes and a reduction in the labour force has affected the productive activities in the gardens. Labour migrations along with climatological changes in the case of the southern Guajira has diminished the role of agriculture in many Wayúu communities. However, in the south, the Wayúu still cling to the practice of gardening, especially within more traditional communities where wage labour has yet to remove the majority of men from the community.

The Wayúu make use of more than one geographical area; and usually plant more than one garden, if territory permits, in different zones (ibid: 135). Often one garden is planted close to the house and another, larger one farther away and closer to a water source such as a river or waterhole. Lands along riverbeds is highly valued, and has been used as part of blood and death payments. According to Rivera (1986: 147), the land is often inherited within the apushi or uterine-related clan members.

Collective work sessions or yanama are also organized to cement human relations through the exchange of labour for food. "Food is the foundation of the claims an individual makes on the fruits of others' labour" (Rivera 1986: 137). Work groups are often constructed following either patrifiliation or matrifiliation (ibid:139). Rivera (ibid: 150) states that "access to gardens, the organization of work groups, and the exchange and consumption of garden products all point to the series of uterine kin and their network of social ties. Gardening in this sense is an intra-apushi activity, in contrast to herding which is a productive activity that creates conditions for inter-apushi exchanges."

Hunting and Collecting

Hunting and collecting, while playing an important role within Wayúu culture, is no longer an important part of Wayúu subsistence. The elders remark how the once abundant game no longer exists; and point to their often empty snares, that can no longer even catch rabbits. The once-feared jaguars no longer roam the area, and wild game is no longer a threat nor a source of subsistence (interviews 1996).

Traditionally the Wayúu hunted deer, rabbit, fox, nutria, mountain cats, armadillo, land turtle, iguana, and various species of birds (Saler 1988: 46). Saler also states that bows and arrows as well as wire traps are still used for hunting, as they are more cost-efficient than firearms. The game gathered from hunting actually adds little to the daily diet of the Wayúu, and is more for adding variety to the meal and as a diversion for men and boys (ibid). However, hunting does occupy an important place within Wayúu culture, as many myths make reference to hunting and the rituals associated with it[25] (Saler 1988: 46).

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[25] See Perrin 1976 and Goulet 1978b .

As well, the animals associated with the hunt, especially jaguars, mountain cats, and other dangerous species, all have a special place within the dream world of the Wayúu: and many elders explain day to day occurrances through the encounters they have with these beasts in their dreams (interviews 1996).

Anthropologists have identified forty-five different species of wild fruits and plants that are consumed by the Wayúu. They are still collected during season, usually by the women in the community; and are used to supplement the diet during times of little food (Saler 1988: 96-97). Surpluses of fruit are often taken into town to be sold for corn, bananas, or other staples that the family might need.

Wage labour

Another means of subsistence in which many Wayúu actively participate on a semi-permanent basis is wage labour across the border in Venezuela and, to a lesser extent, in Colombia. As traditionally nomadic people, travelling from one area to another in search of work for sustenance is readily accepted. Although Colombia and Venezuela have constantly had territorial disputes over the area, the Wayúu consider the territory to be combined; and move freely across the border[26] (Jahn 1973: 137). Traditionally the Wayúu have been able to move with great freedom across the borders because their employers did not require documentation[27] (Pacini Hernandez 1984: 9).

With the boom of the oil industry of the 1920s and 1930s, many Venezuelan peasants migrated to the Maracaibo area, resulting in a severe labour shortage in the rural areas. As a result, many indigenous people from the peninsula were recruited, sometimes forcibly, to work as farm laborers in the Venezuelan countryside (Pacini Hernandez 1984: 8; Purdy 1987: 141). According to Pacini Hernandez (1984: 8), labour migration of the 1920s and 1930s persisted due to a number of factors. Several animal diseases wiped out the cattle that used to be so prominent in the area. As well, salaries paid in Venezuelan bolivars received a better rate of exchange when converted into Colombian pesos.

Many positive and negative ramifications came with this increased migration. As people moved out of the Guajira, the demands upon the environment were reduced. While

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[26]Pacini Hernandez claims that the migration of Wayúu began in the early 16th century. This was not, however, of their own choice; but due to forced slave labour trading by the colonists (Pacini Hernandez 1984: 8).

[27]This freedom of migration no longer exists, as the Venezuelan government now requires documentation for anyone wishing to cross the border, including the Wayúu. However, the majority do not have identification cards. This new requirement is in response to increased insecurity and guerrilla violence in the border areas between Venezuela and Colombia (personal communication- Segundo Martinez Epieyu, OZIWASUG 1996)

this depopulation is a potential benefit for an environment as delicate as a desert. it also results in the loss of traditional practices of gathering traditional plants for medicinal uses and manufacturing of items such as saddles and lassos (Pacini Hernandez 1984: 8; Perrin 1982). Migration also provides the Wayúu with cash and alternative lifestyle choices as well as other values, ideas, and beliefs. This available cash serves to break down the hierarchical social system, and allow more economic independence and freedom. As a result, some important cultural institutions have flourished, such as bridewealth and funerals (Pacini Hernandez 1984: 9). However, De'ath and Michalenko (1988: 179) state that wage labour in the market economy poses a subtly invidious threat to the traditional economy and the social structures around it by creating classes of rich and poor, and by undermining the value and esteem for traditional labour.

Crafts

Traditionally, the Wayúu wove their bags (mochilas) and hammocks or chinchorros from cotton or other natural fibres such as maguey or trupillo. Nowadays, they use commercially purchased cotton, wool, or synthetic materials available in the bright colours they appreciate. The women use looms of various sizes depending on what they are weaving. The Wayúu identify two different types of what we would call hammocks. Traditional hammocks tend to be densely woven; whereas chinchorros are looser, and appear more net-like. Both may be made on a loom or woven by hand, depending on the style being produced.

Mochilas are an essential feature in Wayúu life, and both men and women utilize the bags. As the Wayúu are constantly moving across the peninsula, the strong mochilas serve to hold all their material goods. The loosely hand-woven mesh bags are called kattowi or piula, and are usually used for transporting fruits and holding cookware. They tend to be woven from maguey, trupillo, or other strong but rough materials. The finer needle-crocheted mochilas , called susu ainiakajatü, originated during the first half of this century. The ability to produce delicate patterns by using a crochet needle led to an explosion of designs. These mochilas and belts are woven by hand; and finely detailed designs such as names, caste symbols, or words are woven into the bags. These bags hold clothing in the house or while moving throughout the peninsula (Villegas and Rivera 1982: 64-81, also Watson-Franke 1974). The yarn from worn-out mochilas is recycled again and again, and made into new bags to transport or hold items. Traditionally men also weave, and are usually involved in making guaireñas or mesh bags for carrying household goods. Fewer

men are now involved in this activity, as wage labour and influences from the national culture have diminished the value of this work[28].

The mochilas and chinchorros made by the Wayúu are exceptionally beautiful, and fetch a high price in the city markets. It is not uncommon for a large hammock to cost more than $200 Can. Weaving and selling these goods is an important source of income for Wayúu women, and it is work that can be done at any time during the day or evening while watching the children and completing other household chores[29].

The Wayúu also make and use various types of musical instruments. Maracas of gourds, drums of wood and skins, and flutes of wood are made and used during curing ceremonies; and drums are specifically used to accompany a dance (Saler 1988: 54). A form of Jew's harp is also a popular instrument, and young boys collect the hard fruits of trees which they hollow out to make whistles.

Contraband Economy

According to Pacini Hernandez (1984: 9), the Wayúu have engaged in commerce in contraband for centuries. Beginning in the 16th century, the indigenous population of the peninsula traded in products produced and harvested by themselves, such as pearls and salt, for ammunition, guns, livestock, and other European items. Drawing on many years of commercial experience, the Wayúu have recently played an important and unique role in the national consumer economy. Through trade networks from the Caribbean, they received manufactured goods into the continent tax- free. Venezuelans and Colombians travelled to the black market towns to buy these tax-free items to re-sell in their own cities. These goods included everything from cigarettes, perfume, and liquor to refrigerators, stereos, and cars. While this trade was not financed or controlled by the Wayúu, they participate in the unloading, transporting, and protecting of the merchandise.

Pacini Hernandez states that this role of facilitators of the contraband trade very much suited the perceived personalities of the Wayúu. She states:

> " They find a livelihood in it (the contraband trade) and have easy access to prestige-conferring consumer goods without forfeiting their autonomy or traditional lifestyle. Colombian authorities, ever wary of the fierce Guajiros, have been content to accept a cut of the profits for looking the other way" (Pacini Hernandez 1984: 10).

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[28] In San Francisco, I saw only one elderly man weaving bags. The younger men do not have the knowledge of these crafts, and it is being lost with each successive generation (interview 1996).

[29] The women of Resguardo San Francisco were very excited about the possibility of electricity being brought into the Resguardo, as they would be able to continue weaving after the sun had set. The women also indicated the importance of weaving within Wayúu culture not only for the obvious economic benefits but also because it passes on to their daughters the tradition and designs of the mochila . One woman who hadn't knit since she was a little girl recently started making mochilas and chinchorros again as a way to bring in income and to teach her nieces their cultural heritage (interviews 1996)

However, the current economic crisis in Venezuela has affected Wayúu participation in this form of economy. Venezuelans no longer come to the Guajira to buy goods, as wages paid in Venezuelan bolivars have dropped considerably since the oil boom. The Wayúu, once again, have found themselves in need of adapting their subsistence patterns (Pacini Hernandez 1984: 12).

Marijuana Bonanza

As described by Pacini Hernandez (1984: 10) the marijuana boom of the 1970s provided the Wayúu with another form of subsistence. The southern area of the Guajira around the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta received quick fame for the high quality of marijuana that was being produced. The profits from this crop were enormous: often more than those of Colombia's national cash crop, coffee. With their longstanding history of illegal trading networks, the Wayúu quickly adapted to another form of trade. While the mestizos controlled and financed the operations, the Wayúu participated in the transportation and protection aspects of the trade, much as with the contraband economy. This bonanza lasted from 1972-1979, and the money received through this trade was phenomenal. Pacini Hernandez (1984: 11) states that even now in the Guajira, there are more luxury and four-wheel drive American vehicles than in any other part of the country. Due to their type of participation, the Wayúu are also considered to be one of the few fully armed indigenous groups in this hemisphere.

According to Pacini Hernandez (1984: 11) and Purdy (1987: 149), the decline of the marijuana boom had a severe impact on the Wayúu of the area. Many social structures were changed with the readily available supply of work and money. It was the younger men of the area that participated in the marijuana bonanza. For their part, they received money, arms, and cars. This new-found wealth served to undermine the traditional authority of the elder uncle and father. The younger men were able to redistribute this wealth throughout the family, enabling them to obtain statuses of prestige and power, positions which they traditionally would not have had access to until much later in life. This power that they enjoyed caused intense disruptions within Wayúu society.

The marijuana boom also had a profound impact on the way that the Wayúu were to be perceived by the rest of the nation. In 1980, with the help of the United States, the Colombian government trained and equipped anti-narcotics squads to try and stop the illegal commerce in the peninsula. According to Pacini Hernandez (1984: 11) and Purdy (1987: 149), the Wayúu were often singled out for punishment by this force. Many were tortured, raped, and killed; and had their personal sacred possessions (i.e., tumas) stolen. As these squads were not part of the regular police force, the Wayúu could not report their

actions to the authorities for any legal recourse. The government and the national press were quick to blame the narcotics trade and its associated violence on the bellicose Wayúu. The blame was based historically in the fact that the Wayúu had always been fierce and remained outside of the national culture, therefore deserving of the treatment they received.

IIB) Settlement Patterns and Land Tenure

Before the introduction of livestock raising after the Spanish contact, the land was divided between clan groups; and between them existed a communal agreement concerning collecting, agriculture, and other subsistence activities. Traditionally during the winter, the Wayúu followed the rains and the growing grass across the peninsula from pasture to pasture and waterhole to waterhole, generally travelling south to take advantage of more vegetation and available water sources (Saler 1988: 41). Their dwellings, given their particular economic activities, were mobile and easily moved. To take advantage of the pastures in certain regions, they constructed waterholes which anyone who helped in the construction or had legal access to the territory, usually family members, had permission to use (Gutierrez de Pineda 1950: 213).

The Wayúu have traditionally freely travelled the length of the peninsula, using traditional territory owned by family and clan. Associations of uterine families exercised their rights to certain lands and waterholes. These rights to land and water sources are recognized and respected by other clan groups. Those who control the land and water rights of an area will grant permission to others to use these resources; these are generally affines with ties to the controlling clan (Saler 1988: 103-105: Gutierrez de Pineda 1950: 213). While the people in settlements in the resguardos still tend to follow familial patterns, access to water and herding lands has become more and more difficult as the climate becomes drier and more people are relegated to less and less land. The southern part of the peninsula enjoys the only access to permanent water.

According to Gutierrez de Pineda (1950: 211, Figure two), the Wayúu understand that territory occupied by family groups is determined by an oral tradition that indicates that location where their ancestors were placed by Mareiwa. However, the territory of each clan is not circumscribed to a particular region, but consists of more or less extensive properties dispersed in various locations throughout the peninsula. One clan may have possession of land in both the Alta and Baja portions of the peninsula, a situation which facilitates the dispersion of the clan. With clan members spread throughout the peninsula, Wayúu families maintain a link with all different types of land necessary for survival. The geophysical conditions of the peninsula limit the possibility of agriculture, and farming

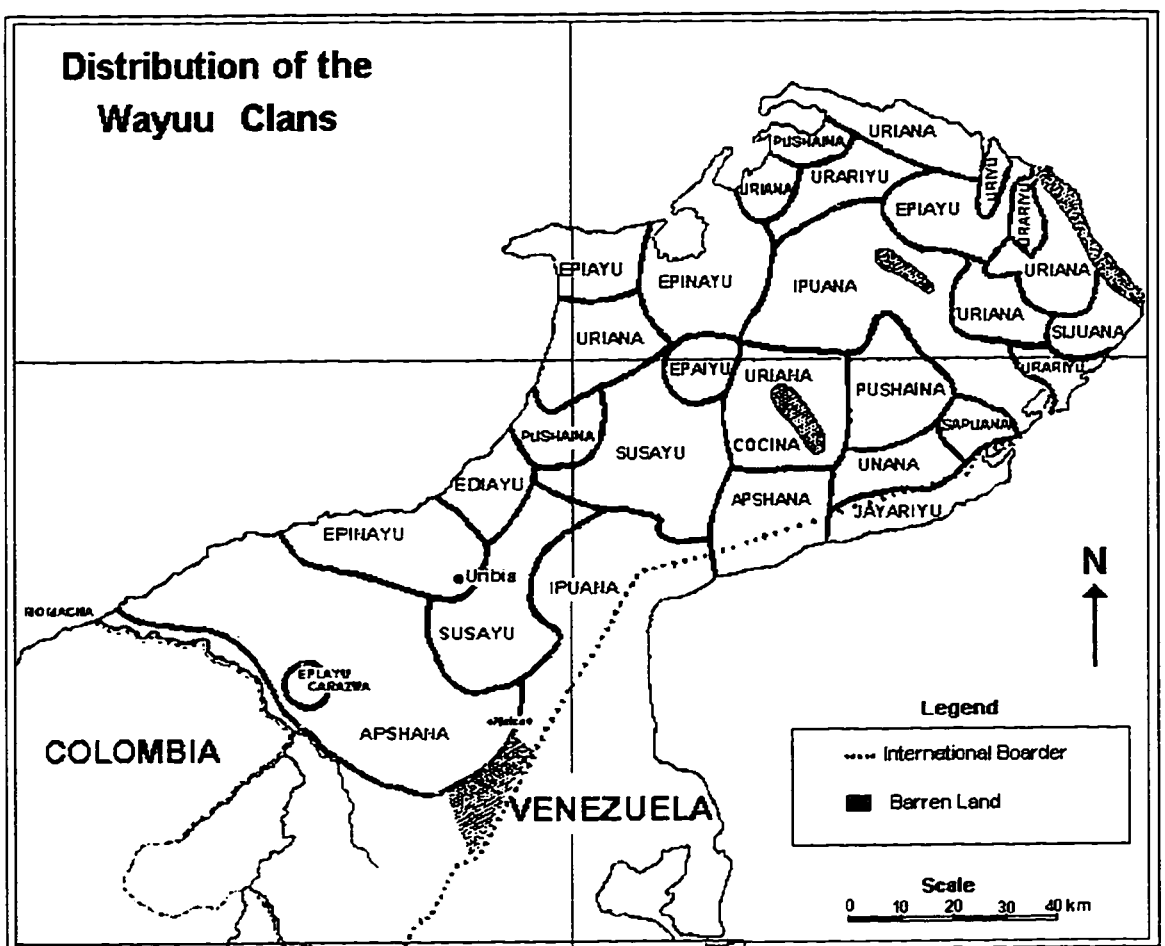

Figure 2: The distribution of the Wayúu clans. Adapted from Gutierrez de Pineda (1950:xvi).

areas are often reduced to small parcels that often are incapable of producing much. This physical limitation would mean that an entire clan could never be located on one small portion of land. It is the clan-based use of agricultural land and not privately owned parcels that enables the Wayúu to utilize land and survive the varying climate conditions. Every portion of land owned by a particular clan is subdivided into land appropriate for agriculture, grazing animals, and woodland.

Small parcels of land close to the rancherias are also claimed by individual families to use and sustain the immediate family. However, this land remains in the possession of the family only as long as the father is alive. When he dies, the ownership of the parcel passes onto his sister's sons, the legitimate inheritors (Gutierrez de Pineda 1950: 212).

Agricultural land in small parcels can be marcated as having an owner. However, the land may not be sold, nor given to another group, nor to a non-Wayúu. The only things which may be sold are the harvests from the land, as they are products of the work of the individual. Traditional agricultural land can only be disposed of within the immediate family. The property itself is not actually given: only the rights to use the land (Gutierrez de Pineda 1950: 213). Powerful families have been known to usurp land belonging to lesser clans in attempts to extend their territories. When there is a danger of this occurring, more permanent dwellings are constructed and members of the clan become more sedentary to guard the land against other invading clans (ibid : 214)

Matrimonial alliances concede rights to land use in all geographical areas not only to the husband, but to his entire family, as they all contributed to finance the bride price of his wife. He also maintains territorial rights to the land of each woman on his mother's side. The children of a marriage will traditionally stay in the land of their mother, but they also have access to the lands of their father (Gutierrez de Pineda 1950: 215).

The permanent loss of land in the south and the resulting environmental degradation from the mines has undermined the ability of Wayúu clans throughout the peninsula to survive the droughts endemic to the area. As well, it must be acknowledged that the low carrying capacity of the desert landscape means that more land is needed to feed a smaller number of people. The Wayúu are one of the few indigenous groups who are actually increasing in number. The population increases of the Wayúu, coupled with the massive migration of people from outside the area brought in to work within the mines, is placing a severe strain on the already over-taxed ecosystem of the area.

IIC) Social and Political Organization

> "Mareiwa has his own places. He had a place where they dance the yonna. a big place. The *kasha* (drum)was given by Mareiwa. All musical instruments were given by Mareiwa. There was a fiesta of animals, because all people nowadays were previously animals. The fiesta, yonna. was moved from one place to another. The *morocón* (land turtle) was the conductor and he played the kasha very well. The *carpintero* (woodpecker) also played the kasha but he didn't play so well. He would play but the couples didn't want to dance because he really didn't know how to play well. The morocón was the best. Mareiwa gave everything to the morocón so that he could play well. Everyone was going to the dance. The morocón was the player of the drum but he walked so slowly. He had to be one of the first to arrive because he would organize the yonna. It would take him two days to arrive at his pace; everyone else would take 15 minutes or a half an hour. So he asked the gallinazo (buzzard) to take with him some clothing for the yonna as he knew that the gallinazo would arrive first. The gallinazo asked why and he said that he wanted to send the clothing first. He then asked a woman to put him (morocón) in a mochila (woven bag) with the clothes and she did. She put him in a mochila so that when gallinazo passed, he asked what was the clothing that the morocón wanted sent. "I have come to get it because I'm first." The woman gave him the mochila and with the clothing was morocón. This would be the fastest way to the yonna. They arrived together The mochila was hung up high in the rafters of the enramada where the dance was taking place. The woodpecker was playing the kasha but the couples weren't very animated and didn't want to dance because he didn't know how to play. They hoped morocón would arrive quickly. Morocón was there but he was hung up high in a mochila. Suddenly the bag fell down and out came the morocón and everyone embraced him and greeted him and asked why it took him so long to arrive. Then he began to play the kasha and everyone wanted to dance. When the yonna finished almost every one left the dance pregnant because of the drumming of morocón. This dance converted everyone into people and that's how the animals grew into people and created the world. Mareiwa converted all the animals into people through the drumming of morocón (interview 1996).

The Wayúu unite their vast territory, material forms, and their social practices through reciprocity, borrowing, and exchanges between the living and the dead, natural and supernatural, humans and non-humans, whose historical design defines for the family their location close to a source of water and the cemetery where they afirm and register their history and identity (Correa 1994: 98). The Wayúu are a decentralized group who traditionally settle and utilize territory on the basis of uterine families or "castes." Traditionally, a Wayúu rural settlement consists of a conglomeration of ranchos whose inhabitants are related through blood or affinity. As we have seen, the rancherias vary in size, location, and number of inhabitants, as well as in the duration of occupation. The social networks associated with the rancherias differ from group to group. Some groups enjoy a large exchange network between themselves and other rancherias, whereas other settlements prefer isolation and frequent moves, thus appearing more nomadic. The number of people inhabiting a settlement will depend upon the availability of pasture land and water. Settlements are usually created with matrilineal kinsmen and individuals in matrimonial alliances (Saler 1988: 55-56).

The Wayúu notion of kinship can be broken down into ideas of kinship by blood (ashaa-sangre) and kinship by flesh (eiruku-carne). Only women will transmit their eiruku,

consisting of flesh and flesh name, to their children. Relatives that share the same flesh are said to be apushi; but not all people who share the same flesh name (i.e., clan name) are apushi. To be apushi, one must share the flesh and the flesh name (Rivera 1986: 48: Saler 1988: 75; Goulet 1978a). Thus it is the mother that passes on both the flesh and the flesh name to her children.

Apushi of the same eiruku have a special relationship amongst themselves. There are certain obligations regarding the distribution of goods and dispute settlement amongst apushi. According to Rivera (1986: 49), "this powerful metaphor of "shared flesh" sets apart those who have the same "flesh" from those who don't." Close ties and obligations will be expected and reciprocated amongst apushi. Generally apushi live in a distinct residential group where cemeteries, land, and water resources are shared amongst the group. "It is also the locale for the network of support and cooperation among kin" (Rivera 1986: 50). The use and ownership of land is traditionally structured around the apushi, and this familial land is known as womainpa. However, nuclear families from other apushi may live in this area, provided that there is an ancestral connection (Simmonds 1995: 179). There also exists poli-residentiality in which Wayúu may establish a residence without the land being the only womainpa of their eiruku (ibid:182).[30]

Rivera (1986: 57) states that: " The non-kin or individual without kin is a nonperson. It is no accident that the term Wayúu applies primarily to persons who have an apushi and designates a person, in opposition to yolujas or other nonhuman beings." The term Wayúu is also used only for people who are recognizably indigenous. As explained to me by a member of the community of San Francisco, to be considered Wayúu or 'human', you must have a visible tie to a family and take part in all of the important reciprocal relations that it entails[31]. In the flux of change occurring all around the Wayúu, it is their fundamental orientation and loyalty to their apushi and the importance of their kin networks that continues to mark their social horizion and enable them to continue functioning in today's world (Rivera 1986: 153).

Political structure today is based on a system of familial reciprocity and redistribution. The Wayúu political system obeys a logic of segmentary alliances based in criteria of territoriality, reciprocity, and economic and geopolitical interests. It is a dynamic system that functions within the Wayúu cultural matrices (Simmonds 1995:174-175).

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[30]The Wayúu economy is still based on the exchanges between uterine kin and affines, which makes it at odds with typical western land use patterns and economic system (Rivera 1986: 41).

[31]While I was in the field, I was asked time and time again if I didn't miss my family and if I wasn't lonely without my mother, father, and brothers. An elder in the community attempted to compensate for what she felt was my loneliness by explaining to me that I would be like her granddaughter so that I would not have to feel alone and separated from the world.

Political organization revolves around the settlement of rancherias. which contains groupings of uterine families. The eldest male usually has the most power in the rancheria. and he will generally be the head of the community[32]. He will organize work groups. smooth over frictions, and represent the family before other clans and before outsiders. He may or may not be called cacique. These small grouping of uterine families, or apushi, are the nucleus of the community: and they will participate as a community through funerals. herding, weddings, and conflict resolutions (Saler 1988: 109-112). As well, the Wayúu judicial system states that the entire family, or apushi, is responsible for problems between their members and members of other families. In the case of homicide, the apushi is responsible for the deaths incurred. Familial responsibility may take the form of payment in money or animals; or in the case of homicide in which it is not possible to pay for many deaths, revenge in the same form is acknowledged retribution[33] (Simmonds 1995: 210).

According to Saler (1988: 113: also Simmonds 1995: 174), literature about the Wayúu contains numerous references to 'caciques' or chiefs, even though it is improbable that before contact with Europeans there had been extensive chiefdoms similar to those existing in other parts of the Caribbean. The economy of the peninsula was based upon hunting and collecting, fishing, and a little agriculture. The inhabitants of the peninsula were very mobile and lived in small groups, and the economic reality and demography of the area prevented the existence of powerful chiefs that could control large populations. In 1739, Nicolas de la Rosa (cited in Saler 1988: 113) stated that there were no elected caciques; what existed were men who had great wealth, in this time viewed as the result of access to water sources, in comparison to others. Over one hundred years later in 1885, Simons, an English engineer, also stated that the Wayúu did not have true governors: but each community acknowledged a leader, usually the richest of their members, to whom they looked for protection.

It was the interaction between the Wayúu and non-Wayúu that served to change their political system. Livestock herding enabled large sections of the peninsula to be used. often where hunting and agriculture were not possible. The introduction of livestock, arms, and other articles from the Europeans augmented the economic opportunities and the increase in population. In due course these factors contributed to the existence of powerful leaders (Saler 1988: 13). The frequent armed encounters between the Wayúu and the

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[32] In one rancheria in San Francisco the eldest male was away for numerous months visiting another wife. As there were no other adult males living in the rancheria, the eldest female assumed the role of family representative.

[33] It is important to note that Saler (1988: 119-120) has cast doubt on the report of the entire lineage of the family being embroiled in dispute and offence settlements. Goulet claims that Saler was the first anthropologist to employ the concept of networks of kinship and marriages to understand social groups and the actions of retribution that take place within them (see Goulet 1981: 13).

military state, not to mention an increase in commercial trade in the 1800s, quickly brought about the necessity for the Wayúu to organize and seek political leaders.

Saler (1988: 116) claims that the historical reality is that the advent of powerful caciques was due to the political and economic opportunities created by contact between Wayúu and alijuna[34]. In effect, many times historians and governmental officials alike explicitly sought to prove that there were grand Wayúu leaders that had great influence over their people. This assertion supported the concept of great chiefdoms; and made it easier to deal with the local populations by approaching one person who had control over many. Some Wayúu also took advantage of this perception to improve their prestige and economic situation. Simmonds (1995: 225) states that there does not exist a permanent communal authority in the Wayúu tradition that exercises continual jurisdiction over political matters. There are, however, traditional authorities (usually the elders of the settlement) that perform daily civil actions within and for the community. Permanent organizations that have been formed in the last few years, such as indigenous councils, associations of traditional authorities, and indigenous organizations, were formed at the demand of the state, to enable transfer payments and governmental and non-governmental agencies to function with greater ease within a system with which the dominant culture is not familiar. However, the creation of these organizations has not given the indigenous communities any tangible powers (Simmonds 1995: 225).

To this day, the dominant society, including government agencies, municipal governments, NGOs, and many anthropologists, still prefer to connect themselves with "powerful indigenous leaders." Saler (1988: 116) states that: "public functionaries, commercial agents, missionaries, journalists and politicians are all searching for the caciques... and they find them!" The national political system requires the indigenous community to be represented by a single leader. As each family within the community has a head or leader, there are many leaders within each community. A hierarchical system of power is now being set up within the communities, as one single person must be identified and chosen to represent many families. The political system of the Wayúu is in a state of flux as they attempt to organize and change their beliefs to fit the expectations of the dominant society. The dominant society, not accustomed to working with dispersed and semi-autonomous groups, is constantly seeking a leader, a cacique of a group to approach. For this reason, many projects by the government and municipal planning departments as well as by NGOs, have failed to function as expected within the Wayúu community.

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[34] As well, Saler (1988: 115) indicates that many alijuna men married Wayúu women, and many famous caciques in the literature were mestizos from these unions.

II D) Cosmovision, Spiritual Beliefs, and Religious Practices

The Wayúu conceptions of illness are intricately entwined within their cosmovision and their respect for the land that they inhabit. Illnesses are often manifestations of malevolent spirits, or poor interpersonal relations between man and man or man and nature. The body is the playing field where spirits battle for possession, relations between land and soul are manifest, or poor interpersonal relations are revealed and resolved. Today the Wayúu are battling another spirit. It is the foreign presence of the coal mine and the never-ending noise of the land devourer which is a constant reminder of what the Wayúu have lost and the illnesses that have arrived in its wake.

The Wayúu spiritual universe revolves around the telling of myths about the culture hero/demiurge Mareiwa. Mareiwa created and transformed the first Wayúu from animals into humans. It was Mareiwa that gave the Wayúu their methods of subsistence and established their basic social organization and customs. Mareiwa was born from a woman, but his conception was by no means usual. Myth states that his mother was impregnated by thunder, a lightning bolt, or some other extraordinary act. For western cultures, Mareiwa is identified as occupying a place along the same plane as God. Saler states that the Wayúu have accepted this association, and often refer to Mareiwa and God as being one and the same (Saler 1988: 121).

Other important mythical figures are the hypermasculine Juya and his partner the hyperfeminine Pulowi. The word Juya also signifies rain; and Juya is believed to live far above the sun, where rain is created. He is also a wanderer, and symbolizes movement for the Wayúu. The freedom to wander is considered a masculine trait among the Wayúu, as most men spend much of their lives visiting between households throughout the peninsula. Juya is also a hunter, warrior, seducer, and progenitor. He is considered to be mobile and solitary (Saler 1988: 121).

Pulowi, on the other hand, is considered to be the opposite of Juya. She is fixed and multiple, and acts as Juya's wife. She has multiple associations and geographical manifestations. The places that Pulowi inhabits are considered to be dangerous by the Wayúu, and should be avoided to limit contact with illnesses. Pulowi may take on any form, and she lives below the earth. She is associated with the dry season, hunger, hostility, death, and also procreation; whereas Juya is seen to be the bringer of rain, life, and abundance. They are not the objects of worship or cult activity, and they are not offered sacrifices. They are, however, significant for explaining geophysical conditions, rôles, and Wayúu lifeways (Saler 1988: 121-123).

In death, the souls of the Wayúu travel to Jepirra, which is often described as an island in the sea. The souls are transformed into yolujas or shadows. Yolujas may appear in dreams to communicate with the Wayúu; or appear in person, often times to children and animals. They can also cause illness; and are feared, as they can be transformed into rain or harmful spirits called Wanuluu. The feminine form of the word wanuluu signifies illness, whereas the masculine form is used to describe the spirit (Saler 1988: 123-125).

The spiritual/mythological universe of the Wayúu establishes a continuity between the land of the humans and the world of the spirits. The intermediaries (yolujas) bring news in the form of Pulowi or Juya, rain or drought. Pulowi and Juya bring life and death, rain and dessication, abundance and famine. They perpetuate the eternal cycle of existence for the Wayúu, and serve to explain social and physical changes within Wayúu culture (Saler 1988: 126).

To understand the Wayúu concept of health and healing, one must understand their ideas of illness: the causes and the cures. The Wayúu contextually define their concepts of illness. They have a wealth of knowledge of traditional plants and herbs for curing both physical and mental illness. They have a large lexicon of terms and descriptions for their illnesses[35]; and they have a distinct knowledge of what may or may not be cured through traditional, non-western means. The Wayúu readily cross the well-defined borders between traditional and western medicine, utilizing both according to their knowledge of what may be cured and the means for doing so. They rely on western doctors and also on traditional healers or piache[36].

When a person becomes ill, a piache may be consulted: or another member of the community may diagnose the illness through a dream. The dream will not only dictate the type of illness, but it will also identify the cure. These dreams are controlled by spirits who guide the piache to cure the infirm. At times, the spirit will tell the piache that the person may only be cured through western medical means. The spirit may say that the person may only be cured by a western doctor, or perhaps that there is no cure at all and the person will die. In these types of illnesses the spirit is in complete control. The ill person, the community, and the piache must follow the directions of the spirit to cure the illness (interview 1996).

Perrin (1982) suggests that all illnesses will fall into two categories as identified by the Wayúu. The first is called *ayuulee* ; and it is characterized by a gradual onset of symptoms that are seen as commonplace and not life- threatening, although they may

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[35]For an excellent description and Western medical interpretation of Wayúu illness, see Perrin 1982.

[36]A piache or outs is a traditional healer, or shaman who diagnoses and heals the infirm through the medium of dreams and through his/her contacts with the supernatural world.

develop into a more serious form of illness if not addressed. This illness may be cured by medicinal plants, massages, the application of heated wires, enemas, or western medicine. There is a strong belief in the need to clean, to extricate and eliminate the cause of the illness (Perrin 1982: 8). The illnesses are cured by popular medicine, and a piache is not consulted although a visit to a western doctor may be part of the diagnosis .

There are other illnesses that are passed on by supernatural means that may be cured within the community and without the aid of a piache. For example, anyone who touches someone who has been murdered is in danger of passing the spirit of the dead person into a child through his/her touch. The person does not have to touch the child directly, but may pass on the spirit by touching the food or the clothing of the child. Therefore, if a child becomes sick due to a malevolent spirit passed in this manner, only the person who passed the spirit can cure the child. Anyone in the community can dream the cause and the cure of the illness; however, it is the person that touched the body and then the child who must administer the cure, as it is he/she who passed on the illness (interview 1996).

The Wayúu have a definite idea of what diseases may or may not be cured through western means. The Wayúu also identify degrees of illnesses. While headaches and diarrhea may be an indication of a more serious illness, more often than not they are thought to be common illnesses not caused by spirits or bad intentions. For these afflictions western medicine is often sought[37] (interview 1996). They also tend to seek traditional cures for common illnesses when western medicine is not available. In one interview, it was reported that a woman was seeking a cure for a headache which she had suffered for days. She approached another woman in the community to help her with the pain using traditional methods, as she could not afford to buy the medicine that she knew would alleviate the pain. When the hot wires applied to her neck did not stop the headache, she approached me for aspirin to help her situation (interview 1996).

The second type of illness that Perrin identifies, more serious than ayuulee, is called wanuluu. When it is realized that the illness is more severe and cannot be cured through normal means, a specialist or piache is consulted[38]. This illness will often implicate the entire community, and an explanation is sought in the symbolic universe of the society (Perrin 1982: 8). Wanuluu can result from an encounter with an animal, in a place which is thought to be inhabited by spirits (Pulowi); or through the possession of spirits through

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[37] In February of 1996, the community experienced a bout of cholera. When questioned as to the cause of this illness, they attributed it to unclean water and not to spirits passing through the community (interview 1996). This example illustrates how the Wayúu distinguish between traditional and non-traditional illnesses.

[38] According to Perrin (1982: 9) 80% of piaches are women. In Resguardo San Francisco, the piache is an unmarried man.

contamination, physical contact with the bones of someone who died a violent death, or violation of taboos (ibid: 9; also Saler 1988: 128). All wanuluu are considered serious illnesses that, without treatment, may result in the death of the afflicted person .

The piache is the intermediary between the natural and supernatural worlds. The piache will be part of the diagnosis and also the healer of the infirmity. He or she will ask the spirits what is needed to cure the person: and then relay this message to the family, which must find the required objects. The objects are often animals, a specific type of food, necklaces, and tumas. They are often specified as to colour or sex, in the case of the animals. The curing ceremony often takes place within the setting of a yonna, or dance (also known as the chicha-maya) in which the entire community is expected to participate.

During my fieldwork in 1996, a child became ill with a sickness that had previously passed through the community, killing four children. The illness was made manifest by a high fever, severe cold, diarrhea, and an infection in the mouth and genitals. This illness was seen as the result of wanuluu infecting the child because of negative actions of adults within the community. There had been disagreements between families within the community, and the harmony between families had been disrupted. This particular wanuluu was brought by a bird that, while flying overhead, dropped a malevolent spirit into the mouth of the sleeping child[39]. A member of the community dreamed that the child could only be cured through a traditional ceremony involving a yonna. The parents had consulted a western doctor, and had received a prescription for medicine, but decided against western treatment as the piache reminded them that previously two of their children died because a yonna was not performed as requested by the spirits.

In this case, a yonna was held in which the piache performed a curing ritual with the child and the mother. The three were separated from the rest of the community; and enclosed inside a rancheria while the piache chanted, sang, prayed, and consulted the spirits. Chirrinchi, or rum and tobacco was consumed by the piache, masticated and sprayed over the child. The ceremony lasted a total of 19 hours, during which the drum was played constantly. The community was involved in the ceremony, following the spirit's request of dancing and drinking coffee at a prescribed time and place. The piache also requested that the women have their faces painted with the traditional circular designs of the Wayúu. The community also had the responsibility of dancing throughout the night, and the kasha (drum) never stopped beating. The next day, the women who danced throughout the nineteen-hour ceremony were given portions of a slaughtered goat. The spirit also requested that a red goat and hen be penned up throughout the duration of the

[39] According to Perrin (1982: 54), this type of illness may be brought by a variety of animals, with the cure depending on the type of animal.

yonna: and that at the end, a red flag be shot through with a gun. After the nineteen hours, the piache emerged with the mother and the child, bathed them, and declared the child cured. The ceremony was successful, and the child recovered a few days later[40]. This is an example of a wanuluu illness that could have been cured only by a piachi.

To an extent, there is an acceptance of western medicine and western knowledge by the Wayúu. The Wayúu acknowledge that certain illnesses are curable by western medicine, whereas others may be cured only by traditional means. They accept the consultation of the doctor, and appear with their children to meet him in his monthly resguardo visits. They also accept and use western medication, provided that it does not conflict with the cultural associations of the illness[41]. At times, even illnesses obtained through spiritual means may be cured with the help of western medicine[42]. There appears to be a continuum within the Wayúu perceptions of illness. Non-lifethreatening illnesses may be cured through medicinal plants and traditional healing practices without the intervention of a piache. If the illness progresses and becomes more serious; a piache may become involved to diagnose and cure the infirm or the Wayúu may seek western medical attention. At any point in the continuum, dreams may be used to diagnose and cure

The Wayúu use western medicine and they use medicine prescribed by western doctors. The problem that they face is that they cannot afford to have the prescriptions filled now that the pharmacy outpost in Papayal is closed. Prescriptions were filled there free of charge, according to indigenous legislation (Law 100 of 1991). The Wayúu do not have the ability to pay the cost of medicine that is not government-subsidized. As a result, the health of the community is poor.

An important part of the curing process is the act of dreaming. It is through dreams that the cause and cure of an illness is determined. Everyone has access to dreams, and all perceptions and remembrances are taken seriously and considered valid by the community. In the case of the above child, a member of the community dreamed that the child could be cured only through a yonna and piache. For that reason, the yonna and not western medicine was performed (interviews 1996).

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[40] All was followed through except for the shooting through of the flag. The man who owned the gun was afraid to lend his gun, as he thought that it might bring the unwanted attention of the ever-present military in the area. Because this ritual was not followed through, the piachi became ill a few days later. The spirit that had infected the child had now passed into him. A ceremony of drinking chicha had to be performed a few days later to cure him.

[41] Only once did I see western medication refused when a child became ill, because a dream stated that the child could be cured only by a ceremony held by the piache.

[42] I was told that the spirit of the dead accidentally passed into a child may be removed and the child cured by Milk of Magnesia.

Dreams are also used to explain occurrences that have no apparent base in everyday life. They are also used to predict the future. Goulet (1981: 345) states that a basic key to the Wayuu's dreams consists of the association of animals and persons in the sense that animals represent humans and humans animals. As each clan is associated with a particular animal, dreaming about an animal symbolizes the possibility of a conflict or meeting between clans. It is also said that when a Wayúu dreams of a bull being killed, the dream is announcing the death of a Wayúu; a sacrificed goat tells of the death of a friend; and if one dreams of a burro dying, a poor Wayúu will also soon die (Goulet 1981: 345). Goulet gives an example from one Wayúu community that believes that if one dreams of the death of a man, the dream is announcing that livestock will soon die (ibid: 346).

In San Francisco, an elder related a dream to me to answer a question I had asked him about the future of the community. Warraya told me that he dreamed that he met his grandfather on a path while hunting, and his grandfather asked him to accompany him to another land far away. He said that this land was rich with food, livestock, and trees; and that all his family was there waiting for him to come. He travelled with his grandfather to look at the land, and he saw many animals and trees heavy with fruit. The family had gardens and many goats, and everyone was satisfied and happy. All his family was there, and they offered him everything. They told him that he suffered too much where he was, and they begged him to stay with them. Warraya told them that he couldn't stay, and that he didn't want to take his wife far away from her family. They begged and pleaded; but he stood firm, and said that his home was far away and that he could not stay.

Warraya explained to me that he didn't accept the land or the food or coffee offered to him in his dream because he still had much life ahead of him to live. He said that "his thoughts were flying everywhere and his dreams were searching for the dead." He explained that "while we are alive, we are human. and we dream about good land and food but it isn't real. When someone is offered these things by the dead and accepts, it means that he will die. When you have much life to come. you can not accept these things." His family wanted to *llevarme hasta la siempre* , to take him with them because they missed him. He used this example to explain to me that he was not yet ready to give up his life or his land despite the difficult struggle to survive that the community faces, and the increasing pressures from the surrounding mine. Life may be hard, but he wants to remain on his land with his apushi (interview 1996). Dreams are the medium that link the Wayúu to the supernatural. They are their ties to the netherworld, and the land of their ancestors. They explain and guide the Wayúu and their decisions. Dreams enable the Wayúu to cure, and they enable them to survive.

For the Wayúu, development must be connected to their cosmovision, spiritual beliefs, and practices. As illustrated, the Wayúu have a flexible framework that contains mechanisms to account for changes and intrusions to their cultural systems. Their framework is not static; their culture is living and able to incorporate new ideas and coping mechanisms as they prove relevant and necessary. Development projects need to take into account the Wayuu's specific belief system that have enabled them to survive the cultural and environmental impacts that they have faced for over 500 years. Health programs and development projects need to understand how they may best fit into the norms that have been delineated by the Wayúu; and how through cognitive participation of all involved, the Wayúu may survive the rapidly-occurring changes that they now face.

CHAPTER THREE

THE STUDY AREA

III A) Description of the Lower Guajira

The land in the south of the peninsula is known by the Wayúu as Wopumüin, which means 'towards the paths,' from wopu (path) and müin (towards) (Rivera 1986: 72). It is aptly named, as the many paths and trails extending through this area underscore a network of associations and alliances for the Wayúu.

Many scholars have limited the extent of Wayúu territory by dividing the peninsula into north and south. The upper or Alta Guajira is usually delineated by an imaginary line that crosses the peninsula from Dibulla on the Caribbean coast to the border of Venezuela. The land south of that line is considered to be in the lower or baja part of the peninsula. Scholars have indicated that south of this imaginary line there exist few 'traditional' Wayúu, and that only the upper portion of the Guajira contains 'true' Wayúu settlements (see map one; Saler 1988: 32; and Perrin 1976: xi).

According to anthropologist Alberto Rivera (1986: 10) and the members of the community with whom I spoke, the Wayúu themselves do not recognize the division of their territory into north and south. These delineations imposed by western academics have created a line, attempting to limit the territorial extent of the Wayúu and divide the culture into two: a culture which is 'traditional', as in the upper Alta Guajira;and a culture south of their self-imposed line, which no longer shares any similarity with the past. As indicated by interviews within the resguardos in the south, the Wayúu freely travel between the two zones; and consider the entire peninsula part of their traditional territory. They declare that they utilize the entire peninsula from the Caribbean ocean to the boundaries of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta.

Eliseo Reclus, in his famous book on the area, Mis Exploraciones en America, stated that the settlements of the Wayúu traditionally extended as far south as the foothills of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta (Reclus 1861:151). Documented oral histories of the Wayúu also indicate that the area has been populated by them for many generations, and that they are not a recently-arrived group as is often assumed (interview 1996). Accounts from the elders in San Francisco describe the area in the south of the peninsula as containing many Wayúu settlements[43]. This land had been used by the Wayúu for

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[43]One elder describes visiting the area as a young child when Barrancas had a very small population. He describes how there were Wayúu settled in the areas of Zaino, La Gloria, and Barrancas. He also explains

pasturing animals and growing food for many years before settlers from outside the peninsula arrived. It is noted by Rivera, among others, that their fierce territoriality prevented the settlement of non-Wayúu from outside the peninsula. thus preserving the area for many years as Wayúu territory (Rivera 1986: 17-18, Reclus 1861:222). Rivera states that it is only within the present century that Wayúu herders have lost access to traditional territory in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, due to the area progressively being fenced off, limiting access to pasture and watering areas (Rivera 1986: 31). More recently, the Wayúu have been removed from their lands in the south, due to the large amounts of land bought to facilitate the El Cerrejón mining project[44].

The problem that arises when speaking of the southern Guajira is that it is assumed by the dominant society that the Wayúu who inhabit the area have been assimilated (interview, Segundo Martínez Epieyu 1996). It is the perception that the Wayúu living in the Baja Guajira are recent arrivals; and that they no longer participate in cultural activities that would identify them as Wayúu, such as speaking Wayuunaiki, wearing traditional dress, participating in cultural events, and following traditional healing practices.

Because of the distinct geographical differences and the increasing pressures of the mines operating on their doorstep, it is important that the south also become an area of focus to create a more detailed picture of Wayúu lifeways. While much has been written on the Wayúu, the specific history of the Wayúu and their traditional use of land and water resources in the southern Guajira has largely remained undocumented. The area in the south has been used by the Wayúu for hundreds of years. They are not recent arrivals, nor are they assimilated Wayúu who have lost all contact and exchange with family to the north and who have abandoned their cultural identifying markers. My field work of 1996 documented accounts from the Wayúu themselves that stressed their proud identity as Wayúu, distinct and separate from the alijunas. As the amount of academic research regarding the Wayúu of the Baja Guajira is sparse, the majority of our historical reconstruction necessarily relies upon the oral historical accounts of the elders from the area.

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how his previous knowledge of this area encouraged him and his extended family to settle here when an inter-familial feud erupted years ago in the Alta Guajira (interview 1996).

[44]The Wayúu in the Alta Guajira have also been adversely affected by the El Cerrejón north mining project. railway, and road that bisected the desert, linking the mine to the coast. It has disrupted traditional herding patterns. and has increased the level of noise and dust within the area (Pacini Hernandez 1984: 22-24).

III B) Description of Resguardo San Francisco

> "Ah the smell of goat. Strangely comforting and vaguely welcoming. Not so hot today. There is a breeze that gently rocks the chinchorro where I lie. The sun makes me sleepy as it bakes everything around me. Everything is slow, running at half speed except for the flies. The flies walking across my body are driving me mad, as I can only think of them coming from the rotting carcasses at the *matadero* next door. As always, a child is crying somewhere, accompanied in harmony by a goat or two. Dogs fight for authority or a scrap of food. Amazing that in their starvation they have the energy. Maybe it's due to their starvation. Someone's whistling. *Wawai*. Awaiting a response. From me? Of course. All this and the undertone of the mine. Never silent, never ending, always present. Welcome to the 21st century". (My diary July 30, 1996)

The Wayúu in the south are now relegated to five reserves: El Zaino (1.175 ha; population 390 in 1995); Trupio Gacho (2.308 ha; population 561 in 1995); Lomamato (2.267 ha; population 680 in 1995); Provincial (447 ha; population 160 in 1995); and San Francisco (56 ha; population 112 in 1996).

San Francisco is the smallest of the five resguardos in the lower Guajira. It is located in the municipality of Barrancas, one km from the town of Papayal and two km from the mine of Carbones del Caribe. It is composed of 56 ha of land close, but not adjacent, to the Rancheria river. It shares its borders with the national highway that links Barrancas to Riohacha, the municipal slaughterhouse, and privately owned parcels of land. Bisecting the resguardo is a dirt road which links the mine to the national highway.

Night and day the sounds from the mine never cease. Dust raised by the mine and the enormous trucks that use this road wash over the resguardo, covering rancherias and people alike in its fine powder. Even at night the sounds from the mine never cease, and even the stars in the sky are dimmed by the glow from the mine.

There are twenty rancherias in San Francisco, and the population in 1996 was just over one hundred[45]. There is a large population of children in the resguardo, nearly one half being under the age of twelve. The families tend to have many children, ranging from two to ten per family. They believe that children make the apushi stronger for dispute settlements, and provide a readily available source of labour (Rivera 1986: 22).

Traditional residential patterns were followed by the Wayúu of San Francisco when they left the Alta Guajira just over ten years ago. They are apushi sharing the same residential locale. Resguardo San Francisco is comprised of people all related to one another through marriage and matrilineal ties. Their migration began in 1987 when the first family came to this area to avoid a bloody interfamilial conflict in the north of the peninsula.

More or less ten years ago, the apushi of San Francisco experienced problems of marital violence between a member of their family and her spouse who lived in the same

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[45]The population of the resguardo fluctuates with the visits of family from the Alta Guajira. Some visits can last months or even years.

community in the Alta Guajira. The situation was so severe that the woman attempted to commit suicide. The family, according to Wayúu law, approached her husband, explaining that he would have to pay for the damages done to this member of their apushi. He refused, and the fight escalated to the point where shots were fired. The man was able to escape, but the family of the woman returned to look for him the following week. The family attempted to negotiate with his family for his cows, goats, and guns as accepted retribution for the damages done to their family member. His family denied responsibility for the attempted suicide, and the argument became so severe that guns were drawn. A battle ensued between sixty members from the man's family and four from their own. During the battle, five were killed from the other family; and the apushi of San Francisco suffered the loss of one member. The family had no choice but to abandon their homes to escape the other clan's vengeance with nothing more than the clothes on their backs. They first fled to Maicao; and then made their way south to the municipality of Barrancas, an area that one member had known from previous migrations (interviews 1996).
While not all migrations to the south are as dramatic as this tale, it does indicate the close familial ties of the apushi and the interconnectedness of the family, not only in regards to water and subsistence resource sharing, but also in land ownership and familial responsibilities that extend far beyond everyday activities[46].

The majority of the people in San Francisco understand and can communicate to a very limited extent in Spanish. Their knowledge of Spanish is sufficient for them to communicate in exchanges with shopkeepers and other tradespeople that they deal with on a daily basis. However, communication within the resguardo and amongst other Wayúu communities is always in Wayuunaiki. Even those that can speak Spanish prefer to use their traditional tongue. For the Wayúu, the proper use of their language is an essential marker that indicates one's affiliation and tie to the community.

There is a one-room school house within the resguardo, built by Carbones del Caribe. This was part of an agreement reached between the mine and the community for the road that was constructed through their resguardo to link the mine with the highway. A teacher was also supposed to be provided for the resguardo as part of a contract with the municipal government. However, there is no teacher, no books, and no learning material. One Wayúu woman from the resguardo, who has the equivalent of a grade six education, dictates classes to the children in the mornings.

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[46]Family feuds can continue over many generations. The apushi of San Francisco still can not return to the land that they own in the north of the Guajira. For this reason an elder of San Francisco is thinking of selling his land up north to buy land in the south (interview 1996).

This resguardo is suffering from a lack of water and arable land. Access to the river has recently been fenced off by a private land owner, preventing the people from easily reaching the river to wash clothes and water their goats. The water reservoir, that is supposed to be full of clean water pumped from the nearby town of Papayal, is almost always empty[47]. As a result the Wayúu in San Francisco must search the underground pipes that carry water from Papayal to the slaughterhouse and the private farms that surround the resguardo, in the hopes that they may contain water. These pipes need to be opened up by the community in their attempts to secure enough water for daily survival, and many disagreements have arisen between the private landowners and the inhabitants of San Francisco as to the ownership of the water in these pipes[48].

In San Francisco the day begins very early in the morning. The community rises at 5:00 a.m., and people begin their day by searching for water. By 7:00 a.m. the temperature is almost 30 degrees, so the difficult task of obtaining water is undertaken as early as possible. It is usually the female children who are relegated to this job, and it is not uncommon to see children as young as four carrying a bucket of water. They will often walk the entire resguardo, searching the areas where the pipes have been exposed for enough water to start the day. Those fortunate enough to own burros will use them to carry the water, making this endless task a little easier. Those who do not have these beasts of burden will make countless trips throughout the day, filling and refilling the numerous pop bottles and empty gas containers from the trickles of water that may or may not come out of the pipes. Often one stops and stares in amazement to see that only two km down the road there are trucks carrying tanks of water from Papayal to the mine. This water is not used for human consumption. It is used to spray down the roads in an attempt to control the clouds of dust that come off the mine.

Most families have at least a few goats. The children are in charge of the care and watering of the goats. They will start out early morning; and return early evening to enclose the goats, after having counted them all to ensure that each has returned home. Should a goat go missing, the entire family will assist in the search. These goats are the only means that the Wayúu in San Francisco have for bartering, trading for food, and for use in curing ceremonies, and in their prestige systems.

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[47]In the four months that I lived in San Fransisco, there was water in the *alberca* for two days.

[48]In June of 1996, seven goats belonging to a member of San Francisco were purposely killed by poisoned corn delivered to the resguardo. A complaint was filed with the police, but it is unlikely that anything will be done or the culprit discovered. The loss of seven breeding age goats will have a profound impact upon his small herd.

There is little pasture land in the area of the resguardo. This problem is exacerbated even further, as colonos[49] from the neighbouring communities are also ranging their goats on resguardo land. They pay the Wayúu in money or in animals to herd their goats with the goats of the Wayúu. Thus the little pasture land available for the hundred-odd goats of San Francisco is made even more scarce as the Wayúu attempt to earn some much-needed money. The colonos also benefit from the state-sponsored (PNR) veterinary projects, specifically designed for the Wayúu resguardos, that provide free vaccinations, vitamins, and breeding services.

The majority of the Wayúu are not employed outside of the resguardo. Two women from San Francisco work regularly in neighbouring Papayal, washing clothes and cleaning houses. Some of the women in San Francisco augment their income through the weaving and selling of chinchorros and mochilas, and there seems to be a resurgence in this craft within the community. Three of the men also work outside of the resguardo on private farms, or freelance to clean yards or watch animals. A few of the men also travel to other ends of the Guajira and into Venezuela searching for work, and visiting their other wives and extended family.

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[49]Colonos are what the Wayúu call the mestizos that live in houses in the town close to the resguardo.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE EL CERREJON PROJECT

IV A) Description of the Mining Operation (Figure three)

> "I remember there was a man who was visiting from the sierra who came across an old man living in a rancheria far removed from here. The old man heard the giant machines from the mines and saw the planes flying overhead at night, and thought that they were coming for him. He went running to try and find a cave in which to hide himself. He fell into an *arroyo* (ravine) and was killed. He thought that for sure the world had come to an end" (interview 1996).

The life of the Wayúu in the upper Guajira was forever changed by the appropriation of land to facilitate the development of the world's largest open pit coal mine, known as El Cerrejón. Roads, train tracks, the entire infrastructure necessary to support the exploitation of almost 16 million tonnes of coal a year is now located in the Guajira. It is run by the state and various Colombian and multinational companies, the largest ones being Exxon of the United States and the London-based company, Rio Tinto Zinc (RTZ[50]). It is considered to be economically one of the worst negotiated contracts with a foreign multinational for the state of Colombia (Kline 1982: 24). Colombia stands to lose vast amounts of money due to a poorly-negotiated transfer pricing agreement with Exxon, "special" exemptions in the contract, "low" level of royalties to be paid, and the "miswritten" excess profits tax (Kline 1982:24) .

Today the zone of coal being exploited extends into what is known as Cerrejón Central. Due to a lack of planning by the state and the companies in the area, a severe problem with the contamination of the principal sources of subsistence (air, water, and land) has been generated. The Wayúu of the lower Guajira, in whose territories the mines are located, are suffering from these impacts (Dover et al. 1997: 4).

Coal was discovered in the Guajira peninsula as early as 1872; however, no further explorations were undertaken until 1946, due to the fact that the area was isolated from major population centres and thus difficult to access[51]. At this time, Colombia was also self-sufficient in petroleum; and the political instability inherent within Colombia during the period of *La Violencia* did nothing to encourage the investment of foreign multinational

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[50] In September 1992, Survival International listed RTZ as one of the top ten companies which was doing serious damage to tribal peoples' lands in the Americas, and has one of the worst track records in response to environmental and indigenous concerns (Gedicks 1994: 160).

[51] In 1973 the population was only 214,000; and the area had little infrastructure, roads, or major population centres (Kline 1982: 6). The population in the Guajira in 1995 was 350,895 (ECOPETROL 1995).

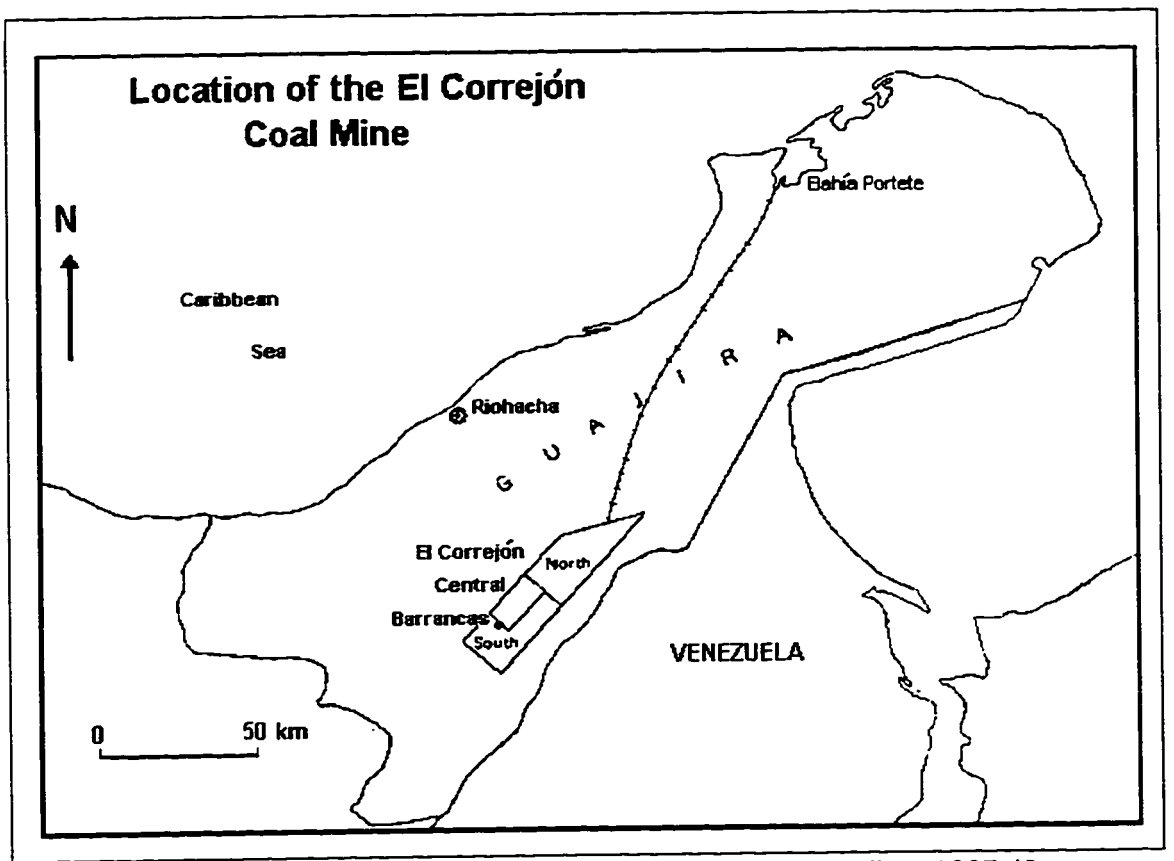

Figure 3: Location of the El Correjón Cole Mine. Adapted from Kline (1987:49).

companies (Kline 1982: 6). Between 1946 and 1977 various feasibility studies were carried out by Colombian subsidiaries of an American company. In 1973 the Colombian government declared the El Cerrejón region a *reserva especial*, reserving the rights to exploit coal for the national government. In 1975 the rights were conceded to Ecopetrol, a Colombian company which in 1976 signed a contract with Intercor (an Exxon subsidiary) to mine the coal from the region (Kline 1987: 15). However, real penetration into the Guajira did not begin until 1980. The first coal was produced from El Cerrejón North in 1982.

According to ECOCARBON, Colombia has 60% of proven coal reserves in Latin America. During 1995 Colombia exported to European markets 65% of its total production, 6.94% to the Mediterranean, 24.56% to American markets, and 2.86% to Asia (ECOCARBON 1995). The largest coal project in Colombia exists in the department of the Guajira. The vein of coal being exploited is 14 km wide and 60 km long (Kline 1982: 8). The Guajira exported a total of 15,382,000 tonnes of coal in 1995 (ECOCARBON 1995).

There are three foreign/Colombian multinational companies involved in the El Cerrejón north, central, and south projects. These are Intercor-Exxon, Prodeco, and Carbones del Caribe-RTZ respectively. At this point in time Intercor is by far the largest of the three mines, shipping 45,000 tonnes a day to its port in Bahia Portete (Jorge Robledo, Intercor- personal communication). The north zone encompasses 38,000 ha, and has proven reserves of 2 billion metric tonnes to a depth of 200 m. The company is mining to a depth of 200 m. or 609.6 feet, which will leave a sizable hole for future generations of Colombians[52] (Kline 1982: 37). The central zone encompasses 10,000 ha; and has probable reserves of 2 billion tonnes and proven reserves of 442 million tonnes in a 600 ha area[53]. The coal in the central zone is close to the surface, which means that it can be effectively mined in an open pit method which requires less infrastructure than a below-the-surface mine. It is of high quality; and has a low sulfur content, which makes it suitable for markets in the United States and Europe (Kline 1982: 7).

With the exception of El Cerrejón North (Intercor), the rest of the coal exploitations, almost 32,000 ha[54], are located in the south of the Guajira in territory located next to the Rancheria river and the indigenous resguardos of Lomamato, Provincial, and San Francisco. The mine closest to the resguardo of San Francisco is operated by

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[52]It is interesting to note that most open pit coal mines in the United States are limited to mining to a depth of 100 m. as the environmental degradation from mining any deeper is too severe.

[53] At the time when Harvey Kline was writing his study, the outputs from El Cerrejón South were not known.

[54]Harvey Kline estimated in 1982 that the land area of El Cerrejón South was 22.000 ha and that the central zone encompassed 10.000 ha (Kline 1982: 7).

Carbones del Caribe/RTZ. The mine has a thirty year plan that states that by the year 2022, one of its large operating pits will be ten times larger than it is now. Another pit will increase in size four times by the 21st century, and a map of the area illustrating future growth depicts one of the botaderos (waste dumps) to be placed right next to the Rancheria river. At the moment, Carbones del Caribe at Oreganal mines 500,000 tonnes per year. By the year 2004, the mine plans to be exporting 2 million tonnes of coal a year. The company has projected that this amount will increase to three million tonnes per year during its thirty year projected plan of operation. The mine has in place a plan to increase six times in size in the next few years (personal communication - José Barreto, Director of the mine).

According to Carbones del Caribe, the mine at Oreganal, closest to San Francisco, has reserves of approximately 213 million tonnes of coal to a depth of 150 m. The areas being exploited exclusively for mining are: Pit1= 2,565,395 m2 ; Pit 2 north= 793,745 m2 ; Pit 2 south= 252,873 m2 : and Pit 3= 1,406,457 m2. The land used for other purposes in the area is broken down as follows: area of exploitation= 511 ha ; surface material deposit (botadero)= 519 ha ; workshop, store, and office area= 7.2 ha; supply centre (acopio)= 11.1 ha ; and area of vegetation cap deposit= 160 ha (personal communication, Barreto). This large consumption of land right next to the indigenous resguardos of San Francisco and La Provincial has increased the level of noise and pollution, and has exacerbated the land crises in the area.

IV B) Impact of the mine

> "The landscape is never inert, people engage with it, re-work it, appropriate and contest it. It is part of the way in which identities are created and disputed, whether as individual, group, or nation-state" (Bender 1993: 3).

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, 2.7 million U.S. dollars was spent on a Social Impact Assessment (SIA) the aim of which was to reduce the negative effects of the Intercor mining project on the indigenous and mestizo communities. The SIA was completed and presented to the Colombian government one month after the 150 km mine-port road was completed. In the SIA, the Wayúu representing 40% of the population of the entire peninsula were effectively invisible. The SIA assessed the impact of the local population on the mining operation, and not the other way around. The Wayúu were barely mentioned, and in no way did the report seek to understand the impact of the mining project on the traditional way of life of the Wayúu (Rivera 1986: 175; Kline 1982: 34-37). This is not only the case for the mine run by Intercor. In its report on the area, Oreganal also neglected to mention the effects of the mine on the indigenous population surrounding

the mine in the south of the peninsula. However, the mine was eager to discuss the positive activities they have initiated for the communities nearby. These included Supertienda Najapuu-Mareygua (an indigenous-run cooperative); Aceforma Integrales Wayúu: odontological and medical programs in coordination with the Colombian Institute of Wellbeing (Instituto Colombiano de Bienestar); and the construction of school cafeterias in all indigenous communities, that are said to benefit 650 Wayúu children. San Francisco does not yet have a nutrition program or cafeteria. The National Rehabilitation plan is claimed to be providing water as well as remodelling the health outpost and the park in Papayal (personal communication, Oscar Flores). The degree to which the above stated has been accomplished is negligible.

The mine has exhaustive expansion plans for the area. The environmental and social impact of the growth of the mine upon the surrounding area will be substantial. The location of the surface material deposit (botadero) alongside the river and with it the potential for contamination will seriously affect the communities, indigenous and mestizo, that rely on this source of water for daily living activities. The resguardos of San Francisco and La Provincial, located closest to the mine, will feel the impact of this expansion most severely. Inevitably, an increase in dust, noise, and pollution of the river will be the most obvious impacts upon the communities. There will also be the more subtle impact of the influx of workers into the area, putting an additional strain on the already severely taxed water resources[55].

The first impact felt by the Wayúu in the south of the Guajira is through large scale development in which the Wayúu are placed in a submissive position and forced to view material accumulation as the new acceptable cultural force invading their traditional territory. They are losing their distinctiveness in the face of the dominant culture, a culture of consumption and accumulation, as it slowly invades.

a) Impact on the Land

> If you don't have land you will be hungry. It is not viewed well to not have land by others either. He that has land has much family, animals; and can feed them all. When an elder dies and is buried on the land, the land belongs more to them, the family. You become part of the land. When you have land you are rich. If you have good land, land you can sow, you will always be rich" (interview -Oscar Peña Epieyu 1996).

It is impossible to separate the identity of the Wayúu from the land they inhabit. Their respect for the land and the animals that live within it is essential in creating and

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[55]Even now within the city of Barrancas (population 352,706 in 1995, an increase of 97,396 since 1985. CENSAT 1995: 45), there is often no water pumped to the houses between the hours of 6:00 a.m and 7:00 p.m.

maintaining life's reciprocal relations and the existence of the Wayúu themselves. They are intricately tied in flesh and spirit to the land that provides them with all they need. The Wayúu have an extremely close association to the land on which they live. Everything comes from this land given to them by Mareiwa. As with the aboriginals in Australia, a landscape and geographically-based cosmology has been one of the main ways for the Wayúu to maintain identity in a post-colonial context. Howard Morphy (1993: 206) states that "a change in land use and a break with the previous history of the land, amounts almost to a denial that the land had a previous history." In effect, the opening of the mines and the complete destruction of the earth in the traditional land use area of the Wayúu negates the past history of the area and the cultural importance of land for the Wayúu.

According to Rivera (1986: 91), the idea of a 'motherland' exists amongst the Wayúu. Those who have migrated south still have the concept of their 'motherland,' land that their family owns to the north. "Both male and female retain through their lives certain claims on the resource of their 'motherlands'; and their cemeteries and gardens marcate the existence of this land, and illustrate their permanent presence" (ibid). They will often migrate between the areas they presently inhabit and their motherland, depending upon the climatological situation. This flexible migration system allows the Wayúu to make better use of the difficult desert landscape by accessing land in all areas. This access to land is essential for Wayúu survival. However, in the case of the community of San Francisco, flexible migration between the south and their motherland is now impossible. They cannot return to the fertile area in the north, due to a vicious blood feud that exists to this day between clans. Therefore they are doubly stigmatized, as they cannot return home, nor can they survive on the land granted to them in reserve status. They, like many other Wayúu communities in the south, now are desperately searching for ways to create a new "motherland."

The Wayúu are losing their land and with this loss of space they are also losing the ability to feed and grow as a community, independent of the fluctuations in the national economy around them. A group once so fiercely independent and solitary is now relegated to resguardos where there is insufficient land to provide for them and their families. Their lives revolve around the land: and to feed oneself and one's family, one must have land on which to sow and to graze one's animals. To participate in the cultural activities that mark one as Wayúu, such as prestige exchanges, large families, many goats, and participation within bridewealth and funeral exchanges, one must have land as the basis to provide for all of this. The land binds the Wayúu to it, for it is the land from whence they came. Land and Wayúu identity are inseparable. The wealth of the El Cerrejón mining project is bringing huge monetary rewards for the multinational companies that are mining the land.

The mining enterprises see the value of land in terms of economic potential, creating tensions with the Wayúu who see the land as essential to their identity and survival as Wayúu.

One of the principal means for displacing and assimilating a society is to remove the people from their land. For the Wayúu, land is not only the source of subsistence activities, but it is also the base for the cosmovision of the community. The land is the foundation, the motherland, the space for creating and maintaining the Wayuu's identity. Their ancestors are buried and their children are born within this space. The land becomes more than an area in which to grow food. It becomes a cultural map, a living history to remember the past and in which to create a future. When a group is displaced from their land, their forms of social organization and traditional economy disappear. As this happens the community itself also starts to wither, as members move, or are obligated to search for other forms of work such as wage labour jobs within the dominant society. This new form of subsistence attempts to assimilate them into the dominant society but on the lowest of levels, in the lowest of social classes. This situation is effectively ethnocide[56], an outcome of development.

Possession of Land

The lands in the upper and middle Guajira have always been in the hands of the Wayúu. The Spanish crown "recognized the occupation by the Indians of their lands as a 'title of ownership'. " The Spanish crown acknowledged the extinction of this right to the land only if the Wayúu definitely abandoned the territory in question (Instituto Geográfico Augustín Codazzi 1971: 27).

Contrary to the Wayúu in the Alta and Media Guajira, the Wayúu in the south have had problems with the legal acknowledgement of their entitlement to the strip of land that extends from Barrancas to Fonseca. It took many years to create the resguardos that exist today (Corpoguajira 1986: 42). Whereas the Wayúu in the Alta Guajira were relocated to new areas, the Wayúu of the south were simply dislocated from their lands (Pacini Hernandez 1984: 27). The lack of acknowledgement on behalf of the government and the mine of the indigenous ownership of the land effectively removed any obligation to provide the Wayúu of the south with any compensation for their lands that were usurped.

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[56]Gerald Weiss (1988: 128) defines ethnocide as occurring "when one cultural system destroys another through either genocide or cultural assimilation." Christian Bay (1988: 262) states that ethnocide " destroys the cultural dignity and identity of all members of a people, as it destroys their mutual and physical health as well, as well as their unique world views and traditional knowledge and it often terminates their ability or motivation to reproduce their own kind."

Rivera (1986: 116-117. (Figure four) suggests that the Wayúu were relatively easy to displace from their lands, as it appeared that they occupied them only during times of drought. The military presence in the area after the 1000 Day War in the early 1900s encouraged the permanent settlement of criollos, and these parcels were the first lands taken from the Wayúu. Progressively the land was fenced off by the land holders; and by the early 1900s, the Wayúu had lost nearly 1/5 of their previous territory. Colonization is a common occurrence in Colombia. There are no laws protecting the rights of people who may not have title to the land but have worked and occupied it for over twenty years. Much of the land in the lower Guajira was untitled; and when rumours of the El Cerrejón project started circulating in the mid 1970s, some large landholders petitioned and received huge tracts of land, some of which they had not occupied legitimately for over twenty years[57] (Pacini Hernandez 1984: 18).

Pacini Hernandez (1984: 19) states that some of these land titles granted were illegal for two reasons: 1) "The law allowing entitlement to land occupied for over twenty years refers to privately owned land, not untitled Baldíos, which are considered government land. According to one lawyer, entitlement was illegally carried out by a municipal court in the Guajira which had no authority over Baldíos (the government agency of INCORA is the only office which has the authority to grant titles to Baldíos); 2) Much of the land was ancestral Guajiro territory. Colombian Law 31 of 1967 recognized that "indigenous ancestral land, even if untitled, legally belongs to the indigenous group which has occupied it." The Wayúu, not knowing the inner workings of the Colombian legal system, made no claims or challenges for their land during this time. Colombian law states that a legal decision cannot be challenged after five years, and it appears as if the Wayúu have no further legal recourse for the moment (Pacini Hernandez 1984: 19).

The Case of Palmaritos

An afternoon spent walking through the former community of Palmaritos illustrated the sense of insecurity felt by the community after effectively being displaced and having their lands taken by the mine. The community of Palmaritos is now scattered; all members now live away from each other, following the selling of their lands to the mine Oreganal. Today many parts of what once was the community have been covered by the botaderos of the mine. Both the Wayúu and the mine operators can see the land before them. However,

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[57] Pacini Hernandez (1986: 19) states that a lawyer representing the Wayúu claims that Intercor actually encouraged and assisted some of the colonists to gain titles to the land, as they thought that land acquisition would be cheaper and easier for the mine if it was granted as private property and not as reserves.

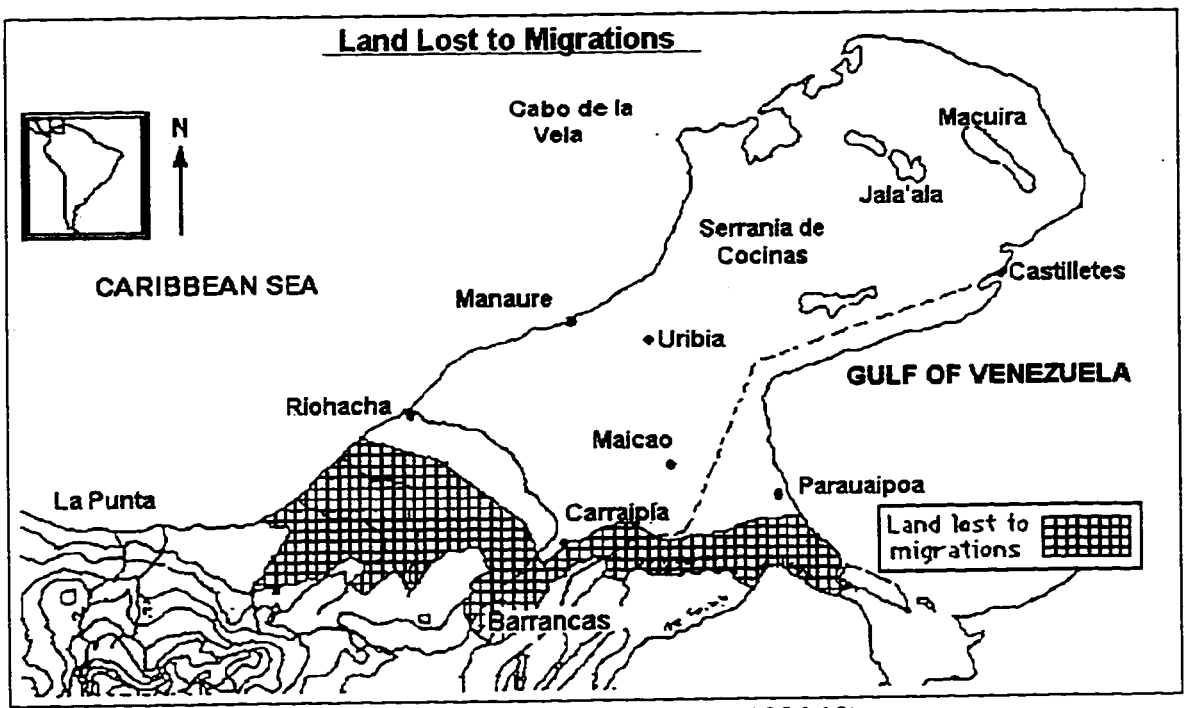

Figure 4: Land lost to Migration. Adapted from rivera (1986:12)

they both have different perceptions of what the land contains; and what its significance may be within their two very different economic and social realities.

To visit what remains of the community of Palmaritos, we had to pass a security check point managed by the mine along with the previous community members. We had to wait an hour until the mine officials granted us entrance; and even then, we were accompanied by security guards from the mine. Every time the Palmariteños wish to visit their cemetery for their ceremonies and burials, they too must wait for access to be granted to them by the mine.

What exists of Palmaritos is a small section of land in which the cemetery holding the remains of family and ex-community members. Walking farther, one still can see the troughs where the goats would be watered and the *lavaderos* , where the women would gather to talk and wash their clothes. As we walked through the paths that were slowly being overtaken by cactus and weeds, we could still see evidence of a community that had been vibrant and active, a community in which people were born and in which people died. where life began and ended. Our guides told us of the yonnas that were performed, and showed us the very places where their rancherias once stood. We could also see the encroachment of the botadero that would very soon cover the last remaining vestiges of Palmaritos with the dust and earth scraped up by the machines of the mine.

At present the mine is attempting to buy the remaining land of the cemetery from the community of Palmaritos. If they are successful, the Wayúu will have to disenterr their dead and remove them from their "motherland" that had been established through their cemetery[58]. They told us that four years ago the mining company convinced them to sell their land for $30,000 and $40,000 pesos/ha. The real value of the land is $2.000.000 pesos/ha. Many of them sold the land without knowing how it was going to be used. One member explained that he was told that it was going to be seeded into pasture to provide the animals in the area with a ready supply of food (oral testimony). We were also told that land that had not yet been sold to the mine has been clearcut and all vegetation removed in anticipation for the day that the mine will own the land (Dover et al. 1997: 23). One community member said in testimony:

> They told me that the company was going to buy this. When I came, everyone was selling their land: more exactly they gave away their land because they were selling it at 30,000 pesos/ha. This was a gift. And like this, the company took all the community from here, buying from everyone what they owned...and like this everyone was gone and now they say that it was badly sold. So everyone sold their land and all that remained was the cemetery. Now the company, now where the

[58]The violation of cemeteries is considered a very serious offence within the Wayúu cultural norms,punishable by death. A violation this severe transcends the *apushi* to involve the entire *eirruku*. Simmonds states that to date there has been not one report of Wayúu violating cemeteries; however there are many recorded offences of violations by mestizos (Simmonds 1995: 216).

> cemetery is located, wants to buy the cemetery. We say we are not going to sell. We were talking with them and we don't want to sell it.... they want that we sell the cemetery and relocate it in another part, that we buy other land in another place. We say that no...there is a hectare and a bit that one person from the community did not sell. The cemetery is part of it...it was the last piece remaining. They (the mine) hasn't bought it. I spoke to a lawyer and the lawyer went to the mine and they (the mine) offered 200,000 pesos for the hectare. All it has is coal. (Incredulously) $200,000 pesos for that little hectare and a bit... (interview 1996).

The Palmariteños have been relocated to the outskirts of Barrancas, where they are socially marginalized and located in the slums, at the lowest end of the social strata. With the possibility of having to remove their dead from the cemetery, a sense of disintegration settles upon the scattered members of the community. The last remaining and most important link to their "motherland" may be taken from them, and their tie to the land removed once and for all.

INCORA, the Colombian Institute for Agrarian Reform, noted that: "The large infrastructure and development of the industry for the exploitation of coal in the mines of El Cerrejón, jurisdiction of the Municipality of Barrancas, and the employment of a large number of people in the business are causing great worries among the indigenous people of the communities that see in it, naturally, a threat against their territory and culture. In this part the creation of indigenous reservations serve as a legal tool for the protection and defense of their lands" (Translated from Spanish - INCORA 1988:2). In the resolution, INCORA called the land baldío. By Colombian law, baldíos are the property of the nation: and untitled land holders have rights of possession which allow them the same value as if legal title was held. However, the word baldío also has the connotation of vacant and unused, which Pacini Hernandez claims "makes it a loaded term when applied to indigenous territory" (Pacini Hernandez 1984: 17). It is easy for the mines and the municipal governments to view the land as unused, and thus assume the land would be more productively used if it were developed using a western concept of advancement.

INCORA describes the land granted to the community of San Francisco as: "one of the most desert-like sectors in all of the Guajira, where the flora and fauna, though not abundant, exists only thanks to the existence of a few wooded areas (mostly trupillo and cactus) that protect it. Due to the Rio Rancheria and the precipitation the area receives, some crops can be grown, providing irrigation is possible." While the area is not the best for growing food crops, the area around Barrancas provides crops such as corn, rice, sorghum, tobacco, avocado, yuca, plantains, beans, and cotton (Corpoguajira 1987). The temperature averages between 27-29 degrees centigrade with little variation throughout the year" (INCORA 1988 : 2).

The resolution continues to state that "the Wayúu have populated this area for centuries, and are being dispossessed of their land by the colonization brought by the economic possibilities of today offered by the Municipality of Barrancas due to the exploitation of coal. It has reduced their land to a fraction of what they once possessed. The education and health programs available to them do not respond to the necessities of the community" (ibid: 2).

This land was legally and officially given to the Wayúu in 1988 after being declared baldío or vacant. The government acknowledged that the Wayúu have traditionally used this land for centuries, and that this land is part of their traditional territory. It also acknowledged that there is not much arable land, and that water is nonexistent in this area. In effect, INCORA created a resguardo on a parcel of land that no one wanted, and was of little use to anyone. The agency settled the Wayúu in this 56 ha area, and left them to attempt to sustain themselves using traditional herding and planting methods on land completely unsuitable for the tasks. Since the INCORA resolution in 1988, the population on this portion of land has increased from 53 to more than 100. If the land was unsuitable for the sustenance of 53 people, it is even more difficult now that the population has more than doubled.

Pacini Hernandez (1984: 29) suggests that the best protection for indigenous communities is the creation of the resguardo. The resguardo grants actual title of the land to the community, whereas reserva status grants only the use of the land. With the best intentions, article 94 of Law 135 of 1961 paved the way for the creation of resguardos for indigenous communities, intending to protect their cultures and guard against the altering of the social and political organization of the community, acknowledging, however, that the resguardo entitlement does not prevent development on resguardo land. The government owns the rights to all minerals: and can require the owner, regardless of the form of land tenure, to sell or lease .

From a different perspective it may be said that the creation of the resguardo is a strategy of the state to marginalize the indigenous population within their own traditional territory, because in this form they will not be able to grow any more than the impoverished land can support. The resguardo does not constitute a real solution to the problems of land for sustaining the Wayúu. Also it cannot negate the pressure of the landowners and mines in the area that have their own plans to appropriate the land surrounding the resguardos.

A study by INCORA (1988:10) to examine the impact of the political acquisition of land by the mines and the colonization of the region, spoke of a necessity to look for cultural solutions for the Wayúu community, who are confronted by a group "completely distinct from theirs." The Wayúu are experiencing pressure due to the mines gradually

buying the land next to the resguardos. This process has steadily intensified in recent years: and the invasion of national and international mining companies within their traditional area has resulted in a progressive loss of land, cultural identifications, and subsistence activities within the community (Dover et al. 1997: 15-16).

b) Impact on the Environment

As noted in lengthy interviews with the elders of the communities, there have been extensive changes within the environment. The Wayúu attribute changes in herding to lack of rainfall and the increased presence of the alijuna. In interviews, the elders of San Francisco noted that there have been changes in the frequency of rain and wild game, and the prevalence of illness since the arrival of the mine. The elders note that wild game no longer exists in the area. Rabbits, foxes, iguana, deer, and jaguars no longer pose a threat, neither a source of food, for the Wayúu who inhabit the area. This land that cannot support the herding of goats, for lack of resources, is also no longer able to sustain a wild population of game. Many stories are told of the wild game that used to live in the area. Their extinction is due to the encroachment of man and climatological changes within the past few years (interviews 1996).

Molano Campuzano (1964: 73) claims that important ecological changes have taken place. Edible plants have been replaced by cactus and prickly plants. Erosion and overgrazing have also taken their toll. Within the last two generations the grassy plains in the lower Guajira have been invaded by dry thorny tropical bush, directly related to the local economic changes of this century. The elders also comment that the rain, which used to come with frequency, now appears to hesitate in its arrival.

According to Rivera, there is indirect evidence that supports the Wayúu claim that it no longer rains like it used to in the lower Guajira. It has been documented that there has been a 0-10% decrease in rainfall from 1931-1970 from the north coast of Colombia to the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta in the south (Rivera 1986:108). This lack of rain leaves the land parched and dry, preventing the planting of gardens; and limiting the Wayuu's ability to grow their own food. According to one elder, the rain not only produces food, it is also responsible for producing dreams. These dreams identify sickness and cures, foretell the future, and explain the present. However, this elder says that now he no longer dreams. The rain no longer comes, and neither do his dreams. The perceived effects of the inability to dream will have a staggering impact upon the community that seeks to explain their existence and foretell the future through the medium of the subconscious (interview 1996).

Rain (Juya) is seen as a wandering male who joins up periodically with one of his many wives (Pulowi). Pulowi are associated with specific locations, usually wooded areas, in the Guajira. When Juya and Pulowi come together, it rains; and the earth is regenerated until the two part. When the rains are sporadic, the Wayúu say it is because Juya is a true Wayúu male who has many wives all over the peninsula and is at present visiting someone else (Rivera 1986: 160). This mythical analogy of the rain has a strong basis in Wayúu social reality. Wayúu men are polygamous, and tend to have wives distributed throughout the peninsula. They are often away from home visiting one of their many wives. Rivera (1986: 67, 161) states that the Wayúu see nature as male-female relation; and the social-moral order is projected onto these relations, therefore ensuring that the natural world validates their social universe. Extended droughts signal improper social situations, as rain and the abundance of pasture point to better societal conditions and the appropriate use of resources.

The Wayúu have noticed a decrease in rainfall and the effects that this has upon their ability to survive. Rivera (1986: 162) records a Wayúu elder explaining that it was the noise and the stench from the road and the railway construction for the mine that kept Juya away. He states: "If the alijuna were powerful enough to tear apart the land and fill the air with noise and stench, why were they not capable of bringing rain?"

c) Impact on Water

The lack of water has been one of the most critical problems in the Guajira, affecting not only the indigenous communities but the entire population in the area. The struggle for control and use of this resource has created many conflicts between the mine, the municipality, and the various communities. The Wayúu have limited access to waterholes and the increasingly contaminated Rancheria river that runs through the area. Access to water is jealously guarded by the land owners and slaughter house in the area. This control functions contrary to Wayúu cultural norms, and the Wayúu of San Francisco find their inability to access water sources very frustrating. Wayúu laws state that all neighbours have the right to use water sources, and its use is regulated by familial clans. Migrants can also use these sources of water, provided there are not existing feuds between families (Simmonds 1995: 189). The women expressed to me their distress one day after returning from the tiny stream near Papayal. After going days without water, they had walked, carrying their buckets to the stream, only to be turned away by the colonos who too were suffering from a lack of water. They were told that the water belonged to the

people of Papayal, and the Wayúu had no business looking for water outside of their resguardo (interview 1996).

The most important water supply in the area is the Rio Rancheria, perhaps the richest and only fresh water source in the Guajira peninsula. About 223 km in length, it originates in the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta at 3,875 m above sea level; passes through the municipalities of San Juan de Cesar, Fonseca, Barrancas, Riohacha, Maicao, and Manaure; and finally flows into the Caribbean Sea. The river hosts a wide variety of fish, 52 species from 24 families including bocachico (Prochiludos reticulatos), dorado (Salminus affinis), and beton (Leporinus muyscorum)(Corpoguajira 1987).

This important source of water is also essential to the functioning of the coal mines in the area. The mines in the area have licences to use water from the river in the following manner: Oreganal S.A-10 litres x sec.; Intercor-98 litres x sec.; and Prodeco-15 litres x sec. (personal communication-Corpoguajira). The Rio Rancheria often runs dry, and the overuse of this important resource by the mines and the municipality is causing severe problems. The danger of contamination of this source by the coal mining industry is great. Environmentalists agree that changes in the quality of water have already been noticed (Corpoguajira 1987).

The Wayúu are suffering from a lack of water, a situation which has been acknowledged in a report by the National Planning Department of Corpoguajira (Corpoguajira 1986). The planners realize the necessity of providing the Wayúu with a stable water source. They also acknowledge that they are unsure of how to provide this water, as they realize that the Wayúu often live close to, but not next to, their water supplies. They suggest that there are socio-cultural reasons why the Wayúu do not rely on one sole fount of water, yet have not asked the community why this is so (Corpoguajira 1987). Including the migratory patterns that the Wayúu held until they were settled on resguardos, and given the frequent occurrances of droughts in the Guajira, the Wayúu rarely relied on one source of water. By not depending solely on one source, they increased their mobility and lessened the chances of starvation due to drought (interviews 1996).

d) Impact on Health

> "Today Delfina had to sell her chickens. She had six chickens from which she used the eggs to feed her family of one son and five nieces. She also used the chicks to trade to buy corn to make the staple chicha . Her son is sick with an unending cough and the inevitable diarrhea. To obtain the money to buy the medicine that she knows will cure her son, she had to sell her chickens. Now how will she feed her family? The pharmacy outpost in Papayal is closed. Ironic. It is the only place which gives free medicine, as required by Colombian law, to indigenous people. What a vicious circle and it is the children who suffer most" (my diary July, 1996).

As I have shown, the Wayúu seek and accept non-traditional medicine for illnesses that they themselves have identified as having a western cure: they seek out the opinion of western doctors at the health outposts and hospitals, and also participate in non-western diagnoses such as x-rays and tests for tuberculosis. The Wayúu are well informed, and directly attribute some of their headaches and respiratory ailments to the mine beside the resguardo. The colds and intestinal problems that the children and adults suffer from are attributed to the contamination of the air resulting from increased mining and population pressures in the area. The Wayúu have clearly indicated that many of their problems within the last few years have coincided with the mining operations (interview 1996).

For the month of July,1996, the hospital in Barrancas noted in its statistics that 60% of the patients admitted suffered from bronchial-pneumonial problems, and 90% of these patients were children (personal communication- Dr. Guerra). The majority of the patients were mestizo, not Wayúu; the local townspeople who frequented the hospital. If the mestizo population is suffering the effects of the mine, the Wayúu are inevitably experiencing the same debilitating conditions. The three main reasons for hospital admittance for the past five years in the municipality of Barrancas have been abortion, bronchio-pneumonial problems, and intestinal infections (DESALUD-Government Department of Health). Directly and indirectly these problems can be linked to the mines.

The Wayúu are clearly suffering from the environmental effects of the coal mine. Headaches, respiratory infections, asthma, diarrhea, parasites, and malnutrition are the main causes of illness in the resguardos (personal communication- Dr. Guerra). The majority of doctors in the area are hesitant to state that the illnesses that the Wayúu face are due to the mine; instead they attribute the high frequency of illness to poor hygiene, diet, poverty, and even laziness, while ignoring the fact that the Wayúu now live without the basic necessities of food, water, and electricity (personal communication- Dr. Guerra).

The monthly resguardo visitations of the doctor from the health outpost in Papayal were implemented in June of 1996. The doctor visits a different resguardo every week to identify and prescribe medical treatment for the illnesses he diagnoses. The illnesses that are brought before him are ones that the Wayúu identify as curable by western means. These include headaches, bronchial-pneumonial problems, parasites, diarrhea, and skin diseases. The doctor prescribes the medicine; and if the money is available, the medicine is bought. More often than not, the Wayúu do not have the financial resources to buy the medicine needed. According to the records for resguardos, out of 71 people attended to during the monthly visit, 32 suffered from respiratory illness, 20 suffered from intestinal problems, and 19 people suffered from illness due to unhygienic living conditions. Doctor

Guerra, who works in the health post next to the mine in Papayal, believes that the contamination from the mine is negatively affecting the population in general and the Wayúu specifically. He directly attributed the respiratory and intestinal problems identified by the Wayúu to the effects of the El Cerrejón mine.

From San Francisco one is able to see the dense black clouds of coal particles being swept off the mine pit and into the breeze. These particles, suspended in the air, are transported for kilometres; and are breathed in by the people and animals surrounding the mine. Lungs retain the coal dust, producing, among other illnesses, the disease *neumoconiosis del carbonero* or Black Lung Disease (CENSAT 1995: 115).

The annual quality of air report published by the Department of Health (1995-1996) states that the area surrounding El Cerrejón Central is suffering from concentrations of coal particles that are above the levels established as safe by the Minister of Health. It has noted that the populations surrounding the mines are being negatively impacted, and that there is an increased possibility that the respirable particles will cause more illness. It also states that the mining companies have not been vigilant in controlling the dust that is coming off the mines. In this report, the department of health made suggestions that the mines be monitored more closely, and that pulmonary and skin examinations be undertaken within the population at large to avoid the dangers of illness and death as a result of the open pit mining activities in the area. The air monitoring station closest to Resguardo San Francisco (Papayal) had a total of 117 micrograms per cubic metre for a total of ten months, and the air monitoring station closest to Resguardo La Provincial registered 136.7 micrograms per cubic metre [59] (Ministerio de Salud-Informe Anual de Aire 1996). The government states that 100 micrograms/cubic metre annually is the accepted standard. All monitoring stations reported readings that exceeded the acceptable norm established by the government, some by as much as 36 micrograms per cubic metre.

Tests undertaken by CENSAT of individuals within the mining population in 1995 indicate that 87% of the miners in the Central region of El Cerrejón are suffering from excesses of coal dust, far above the permissible level, within their lungs (CENSAT 1995: 127). Out of the 203 workers examined, 24.6% suffer from respiratory illnesses and 37.5 % suffer from *pterigio* , an eye disease caused by coal dust from the mines (ibid: 130, 136). In x-rays of the lungs conducted on 57 miners from the area, 64.2% resulted in negative results for neumoconiosis, while 9.4% produced suspicions of the disease and 19.9% had confirmed results (ibid: 143). These statistics are taken from miners working

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[59] Readings for the months of March and August were missing, as the functionary in charge was on vacation.

within the mine, and not the population living on the outskirts. No examinations of the Wayúu community or the population of the area have been undertaken as of yet.

CENSAT (ibid: 133-134) also identifies areas closest to the mines as suffering from increased health risks due to the controlled explosions within the mines, and the resulting dust thrown into the air and also due to the movement of earth; and the deterioration of water sources. Areas in which the coal is loaded and transported are in danger of contamination, once again due to the particles of dust being released into the air, and high levels of noise that disrupt animal and human activities .

The Wayúu themselves complain of the changes in their health since the start-up of the mine. They say that before, everyone was healthy. The goats also did not suffer from the illnesses that they do now. They say that before the children suffered from colds once a year, whereas now they are permanently afflicted by runny noses, coughs, and diarrhea (interviews 1996).

The Wayúu are extremely conscious of the environmental impact upon the health of the members of the community, and the origin of the contamination from the mines and municipalities is obvious to them. Their worries for their health are at the forefront of their minds, as they note the alarming increases in illness within their community. Due to problems with funding and a lack of personnel, medical attention within the communities has not been systematic nor constant. There does not exist an evaluation of the health of the Wayúu within the zone under the influence of the coal mines. A study of this sort is essential to determine the gravity and solutions to the problems that the Wayúu face (Dover et al. 1997: 43).

e) Impact on Subsistence

> "It is apparent that indigenous people themselves do not find their way of life materially inadequate when they are still in control of their undepleted natural resources. Poverty is a product of the state, created by class systems that impose relative deprivation and cause resource depletion" (Bodley 1988: 3)

As we have seen, an essential aspect of Wayúu subsistence is the raising and herding of goats and the growing of gardens. Livestock plays an important role in the livelihood and the legal, political, kinship, and prestige systems of Wayúu society. The wealth of a family is partially determined by the number of goats that they own. Up until recently, livestock ownership was also the basis for local political power. Political power was not only determined by genealogical status and seniority, but also by one's wealth in herd animals (Saler 1988: 123). Livestock is used in dispute settlement, funerals, yonnas, and bride price. A family that does not own any livestock will not be able to participate in

any of the social functions which require the consumption or giving of livestock. There is equal inheritance of livestock, and thus the wealth passes from generation to generation within the family.

Livestock is especially important for the Wayúu, then, as it is used as the measurement of value for people. Both in bridewealth gifts and compensatory damage, livestock, especially cattle, are used to indicate the value of a person. Money is used to measure goods and all objects traded at the marketplace, whereas livestock is used to measure people. Money is rarely used in bridewealth payments, as that would be tantamount to purchasing the bride "like an animal" (Rivera 1986: 81, 88).

Since the 1800s there has been a diminishment in the herd sizes in the Baja Guajira, due to disease, climatological changes, lack of water, and a switch to wage labour. The livestock in the southern Guajira are suffering from climatological changes and parasites which have severely decreased the number of animals within the resguardos. The veterinarian that works in the government-sponsored livestock development program (PNR) states that the animals not only suffer from severe malnutrition, but parasites and toxicosis are also common. The birth rate of goats in the area is a mere 42%, whereas the mortality rate is 65% in the first year. The goats and sheep do not produce enough milk for their young any more. He attributes much of this livestock mortality to the massive deforestation[60] that has taken place in Wayúu territory to accommodate the mine, and the influx of people from outside the Guajira. He says that among the four resguardos in the area of Barrancas where approximately 3,500 Wayúu live, 74% of the Wayúu do not have any animals. This loss contributes to malnutrition, and stigmatization of non-livestock owning Wayúu within their social system. More and more, as the Wayúu watch their animals succumb to droughts and starvation, they are pushed in the direction of wage labour in the towns nearby.

The PNR program is attempting to work with the Wayúu to improve the health and the breeding of the livestock. They are attempting to work within the cultural norms of the communities to educate them on improved feeding practices, immunization, parasite baths, and breeding practices (interview with Dario Tovar, veterinarian, 1996). However,

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[60]There formally existed vast wooded area in the lower Guajira that the Wayúu have traditionally conserved. Much of these wooded zones was considered communal, and the access to this resource was considered to be a communal basis of subsistence. The woods were used for the making of charcoal that the Wayúu would sell to others, as it was the only source of energy in the area. The family would collect the wood, burn it until it was reduced to charcoal, and then sell it. To a small extent this practice still occurs. The Wayúu traditionally conserved this resource, and used it as a way to supplement their subsistence practices (Simmonds 1995: 188). Now the wooded areas are few and far between, a casualty of the massive deforestation for the mine and the marijuana boom that occurred before.

according to the Wayúu, the PNR program hasn't brought what it promised. The Wayúu believed it would bring them goats to augment their herds. While INCORA and the PNR program have brought goats to the communities in the past, they have not created the internal structure to start a successful breeding program within the community. INCORA gave five goats to a family in the belief that they would give the young to another family in the following year. But the goats disappeared. It was explained to me that because the family didn't buy or trade for the goats themselves, they didn't value the goats as their own. A member of the community explained it to me as such: "If we don't sweat and bleed over our work, we don't value it; and the goats have no value if they are just given to us. They (the people in the community) think 'I can kill and eat whatever I want because they will just bring me more' " (interview 1996).

Changing climatological situations, along with little land, as in the case of San Francisco, are preventing the cultivation of many basic staples. Geographer F.A.A. Simons notes that plantains, maguey, onions, coca, and sugar cane were the crops that were being grown during his visit in the late 1800s (Simons 1885: 783). This occasional and seasonal agriculture still continues to this day within the area of the lower Guajira. Beans, corn, watermelon, squash, melons, and millet are some of the foods planted within the resguardos. The elders tell many stories of the rich land that was here before: how many fruits, vegetables, and tubers were grown and harvested; how this was a land of plenty. They talk of how the families would come and visit from the north of the peninsula, bringing other foodstuffs in exchange for the mangoes, squash, and corn that grew so abundantly before (interview 1996).

Food from gardens has a cultural significance for the Wayúu. Rivera (1986: 98) states that agricultural products are prime ekirawa (or sharing) food. This food is used as interhousehold gifts; the sharing of food follows strict rules of reciprocity, and tabs are kept. The sharing of food serves to strengthen interfamilial bonds, and provide assurances of food for the future. There is a daily exchange of food between families; and through watching the exchange of produce and store-bought goods, one is able to understand the forms of familial organization and reciprocity[61]. Rivera (1986: 137) states that "an individual without food who becomes dependent on others for food turns into their piuna (or dependent of low standing). Such individuals lose the right to voice their opinions or demand respect." The OZIWASUG assessor to San Francisco, Segundo Martínez Epieyu, suggests that each family should have access to a parcel of arable land to sow for

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[61] Even though I was not associated with any Wayúu family, I was also included in these forms of exchange. When I would give sugar to one family, inevitably the next day chicha would arrive at my rancheria as a form of repayment to balance out obligations.

themselves. "It should be 'junto pero no revuelto'- together but not mixed up. When you don't feel as if you are the owner of something, you feel like nothing; and you don't value what you have" (Segundo Martínez Epieyu 1996).

In sum, the economic degradation in the Guajira is creating a situation of dependence upon the government and the mines. The Wayúu, once fiercely independent, are being slowly reduced to peons and dependents, as they can no longer provide for themselves and partake in the exchanges that mark them as Wayúu.

The Wayúu typically migrated from the Alta Guajira to the middle or lower Guajira during the summer, following well-known paths. They moved south during this time to take advantage of the pasture and water in the south that was controlled by familial groups with a clear system of cooperation and reciprocity (Correa 1994: 100). Today, the families still visit from the Alta Guajira; however, there is little exchange. It appears to be one-sided, with family from the north bringing produce to the south. This change seems slightly ironic, as the south was previously seen as the area of water and abundant harvests.

A member from the community explained:

> "...there is no possibility to cultivate and this is a desert zone and very warm, it's very hot and it can't be sown and there is little vegetation...maybe it isn't fertile enough to allow cultivation...so the people sustain themselves by selling crafts and the kids from their goats . They go and sell and that's how they live by selling chinchorros, mochilas, and goats. The people sell their products and they no longer live by planting (Dover et al. 1997: 9).

IV f) Impact on the Socio/political system

Rivera (1986:41) states:

> "Loss of labour force to the market economy and growing loss of a self-sufficient technology have created a crisis in themselves. The young and most productive portion of the population is absent. Both their contribution to the herding economy and continuity in social life is severely curtailed. Nevertheless, Wayúu notions of what it is they are doing when they herd or plant their gardens, how resources are understood, what are the forces at play that sustain life, these notions are still alive in ethnic territory. Furthermore the local subsistence economy is based on forms of cooperation and organization of production not compatible with the values and motivations found in the market economy. The economic behaviour of Wayúu in the ethnic territory is still modelled after non-western constructs: at the heart of exchanges and retribution is the series of uterine kin and affines, wealth comes from the rains and the rains are constituted as a paradigmatic Wayúu male. But when these notions are replaced by those that are common currency in the market place, the subsistence economy and its legitimating ideology will collapse. Integration of the Wayúu into the criollo society has accelerated since 1981 when the El Cerrejón coal mining project initiated its operations in the ethnic territory. It is unlikely that the Wayúu will extricate themselves from the process of socio cultural disintegrations brought about by such projects.

The national economic necessity to extract fossil resources contributes to a situation in which the Wayúu are not consulted; or if they are, they are considered an impediment

that obstructs and does not advance the economy of the region. This attitude has its origin in the idea that the indigenous use of land is not economically appropriate: or in other words, they do not use it (Dover et al. 1997: 14). The Wayúu also did not have an openly identifiable political system, one which the dominant culture could understand. Thus the people in power have often made the comments that the Wayúu are 'unorganized', or 'politically immature'; and thus have difficulty functioning in today's world.

Up until recently, the Wayúu have been a semi-autonomous group which identified leaders within their family-based communities to help organize and make decisions regarding the family. There was not one overriding political organization or leader for the Wayúu, as families settled disputes internally and had little contact with the national and municipal governments. However, with the influx of alijunas from other parts of Colombia, foreign multinationals, and the resulting increase in governmental structure in their traditional area, the Wayúu have had to adapt to a new political system, a system foreign to their ways of thinking.

Since 1991, the government has required that each community or resguardo elect a representative or *cabildo gobernador* to represent the community before the municipal governments and before other entities such as the mines. As I have shown in Chapter 2, the Wayúu rarely had a strict formal leader who held absolute power to make all decisions regarding the community. The communities functioned with a network of leaders, usually the head of each family; and together important decisions were made. Now the government and the representatives from the mine request that there be one elected leader, one person to represent the community and make decisions regarding its fate. The networks of family leaders, usually elders, have assumed a position of less importance; and the traditional political patterns, however loosely structured they may be, are falling by the wayside.

Legislation has been developed for indigenous communities in the attempt to preserve and provide a space for them in the national political sphere. The new Colombian constitution of 1991 demands indigenous representation in state administration (Law 24 of 1992; decree 1088 of 1993), the acknowledgement of traditional customs (Resolution 005078 of 1992), the transfer of resources (Law 60 of 1993; decree 1809 of 1993; decree 2680 of 1993), and the acknowledgement of indigenous groups that travel across national borders (Law 43 of 1993). However, what the constitution says and actually accomplishes for the Wayúu- and other people in Colombia- are often two different matters.

Like other indigenous communities in Colombia, the communities in the south of the Guajira have experienced the dislocation of their traditional political organization. The constitutional acknowledgement on behalf of the state of indigenous intermediaries (through the state development of authority de jure -or by law- of cabildo gobernadores, as

opposed to the de facto authority of the elders has developed a crisis of authority within the Wayúu communities (Dover et al. 1997: 11). The de jure authority (cabildo gobernador) is required by Wayúu culture to submit to the authority of the de facto leaders (traditional authorities or heads of the families). The cabildo gobernador (head of the community) is now elected in San Francisco through the suggestion of the elders, on the basis of how the community at large perceives his skills as a representative. The political condition in the resguardos is such that the traditional authorities now must elect a cabildo gobernador with political attitudes and skills that show he/she to have a cultural and traditional identification with the community; and to be able to work well with assessors or indigenous organizations, the interlocutors before the state and national society (Dover et al. 1997: 13).

Based in tradition, the primordial power relation lies not with the state or the dominant society; the Wayúu apushi allot more power to the elders or traditional authorities than to the legal representatives. An elder explained:

> "The traditional authority gives orders to the cacique. Here there is a law that gives the traditional authority the right to manage and administer resources. The traditional authority gives the order to the cacique. The cacique is only the representative before the government. He is a messenger. Then he goes to the mayor and speaks. He takes the message, the word that they say here. Or it could be a commission of five, four, or three and the cacique goes with them. The traditional authorities don't know how to speak Spanish well so they go to speak in their own language and the cacique acts as an interpreter" (oral testimony 1996).

The cabildo gobernador represents the community, and his status as a legal representative is recognized by the state as per Article 246 of the new Colombian constitution of 1991[62]. For example, the community of San Francisco was worried when the cabildo gobernador left for a few weeks; and there was no legal representative during various meetings with the mayor of Barrancas and Carbones del Caribe for a project to bring water directly to the community from the treatment plant in Papayal. In spite of the assessors from the indigenous organization OZIWASUG assisting in the meetings, where they spoke as legal interlocutors, they could not represent the community.

Simmonds (1995: 175) states that within the Wayúu culture there exists an integration between the political, the cosmovision, and the practiced history, materialized in a permanent reinvention of formulas to solve conflicts. Simmonds (1995: 174) believes that traditional Wayúu political organization comes from a pre-colombian society of collectors without a cacique; in which the feelings of the group limited their social reality

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[62]This article states that the authorities of the indigenous communities can exercise jurisdictional functions in their own territory, provided that they conform to their own cultural norms, and that they do not function contrary to the constitution and laws of the Republic (Simmonds 1995: 13).

through the delineation of the matrilineage and their particular territory. The Wayúu traditionally did not choose leaders within the communities. They never had to elect a cabildo gobernador; as it was the apushi that was autonomous, an open society without centralized entities. The concept of authority and leadership in the Wayúu community is now undergoing change. The exegencies of the politics of the state and the political circumstances of the coal mining operation has created a new authority discourse: one in which a single person is given authority to speak for the entire community.

Other factors are now beginning to penetrate into the Guajira. No longer do the Wayúu have only the worry of the coal mines; they are now caught in the middle as the Guajira is thrown into armed conflict. The area of the Guajira is quickly becoming one of the most dangerous zones in Colombia. Leftist guerrilla groups (specifically the FARC - Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia, and ELN-Ejército de Liberación Nacional), the army, and now right-wing paramilitary groups (also known as 'civilian self-defense patrols') appear to be a permanent fixture. During my five month stay, the guerrillas attacked the mine at Oreganal, and the army retaliated by killing eight members of the FARC beside a nearby indigenous resguardo. Foreigners are a target, and Americans hired by the mines have been sequestered and killed by insurgent factions. As well, foreigners and Colombians alike working with NGOs and indigenous organizations are also targets of the military and paramilitary[63].

The Guajira is now known to contain one of the richest and largest coal deposits in the world; and the desire for economic gain and control of the desert has become a matter of contention for many groups, with military violence involved. The government and multinationals want the profits from the coal mines, and leftist guerrillas want to assert their power and reap financial benefits from the kidnapping of mine officials. The Wayúu are now caught in the middle of the struggle for power in their traditional area. The mine assumes that the Wayúu are part of the guerrilla forces, and the guerrillas believe that the Wayúu are pawns of the mine. Often I was asked by officials of the mine if the Wayúu were not collaborating with the guerrillas. As far as I am aware, no one in Resguardo San Francisco or any other resguardo in the area participated with either the guerrillas, paramilitary, or army. In this manner, they still remain outside the conflicts of the national society. However, the stress placed on them by the warring factions is beginning to take its toll. It is only a matter of time until the Wayúu are forced into a position of coerced cooperation or a position of defending their lives from one or another of the groups

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[63]One evening as I was walking home from the nearby town. I was stopped by an army patrol behind the resguardo. I had no identification on me, and they assumed that I was working with the guerrillas. I was fortunate that one of the commanders happened to recognize me before I was taken out to be 'interrogated.'

struggling for control of the area. The Wayúu are placed in the position of pawns as each faction struggles to gain control of land and resources in the area. This area is seen as a land of opportunity not only for the coal multinationals but also for the guerrillas and paramilitaries that stand to make a fortune through kidnappings and ransoms. The land of the Wayúu stands between both groups, and it will be difficult for them to remain outside of the ever increasing violence that surrounds them. It might not only be the contamination and lack of resources that forces them from their traditional lands. They may also join the increasing numbers of internal refugees within Colombia who are migrating to other areas to escape the violence.

IV C) THE WAYUU RESPONSE

a) Political Response

By necessity, some Wayúu are beginning to organize into political groups in an attempt to combat the bureaucracy of the national system on a level that the national government recognizes. There has been a growing number of indigenous organizations springing up in the last decade. The organization of the southern Guajira is the Organización Zonal Indígena Wayúu del Sur de la Guajira (OZIWASUG), and it serves to represent the Wayúu of the south. There are four men, elected by the indigenous communities within the organization, that function as the executive, and also as assessors to the indigenous communities in the area. They are present at the meetings that take place within the resguardos and also with the municipal governments and the mines. They serve to advise the communities: and make suggestions as to courses of action they might take in the face of land, education, and health concerns. They also function as interpreters for the cabildo gobernadors who speak only Wayuunaiki or understand very little Spanish.

As the Wayúu traditionally have not functioned in this form of organization with representation outside the community, there does exist some suspicion on the part of the local communities. The communities are supposed to pay for the services of OZIWASUG, and many *cabildos* do not believe that they should have to pay for such representation. As this is a new form of political organization, the local Wayúu do not see the immediate benefits of paying for another Wayúu to assist them with the internal workings of their communities. The assessors would constantly complain to me that the cabildos were 'selfish' and *muy tacaño* '(stingy). They would explain that they would organize strategy planning sessions for the communities, only to have half of the cabildos show up and arrive hours late when they did. The cabildos would hesitate to initiate programs or put too

much faith in the OZIWASUG assessors, as they were not apushi, and from outside their community (interview with Segundo Martínez Epieyu 1996).

This is a good example of the negotiation of a new political space that is taking place. Some Wayúu have embraced the national political system wholeheartedly, and see that the only way to enact change would be to organize and compete alongside of the national culture. These Wayúu have had more extensive education than most on the resguardos, and have been exposed to the benefits and pitfalls of the national political system. In the five months that I was in the area, I saw many changes within OZIWASUG. Frustrated with the lack of participation of many of the communities and their refusal to part with some of their transfer payment money to pay for workshops or salaries for OZIWASUG, some of the assessors have decided to run for election in the area, believing that they would have more clout in the political arena if they were elected. The days of OZIWASUG are numbered. Without funding or support from the resguardos, it will not be able to continue to exist as a representative force before the municipality. The resguardos will have to seek representation elsewhere, with other indigenous organizations, or through stronger, local political leaders.

Picon (1983:16) states that previously successful defensive strategies such as bellicosity and guerrilla warfare that worked as a deterrent to Spanish conquest no longer function in the reality of the urbanization experience. The military advantages of a mobile food source are now undermined by losses to the labour force, ecological degradation, and disease. The hostile desert environment of the Guajira is now overrun with planes and other vehicles, and previous treaties that the Spaniards made with uterine kin and affines no longer are valid in today's global exchanges. Rivera (1986:16) explains that ironically this behaviour, which in the past served to maintain the social organization of the Wayúu, and kept intact their social and political systems of structure, now works against them, as their local interests are negatively affected as "transnational concerns, and the nation-state benefit from their headless political organization. By dealing with individual series of uterine kin (apushi) on a one to one basis, outsiders are able to take away land and resources without effective opposition."

Decree 1088 of 1993 declares that the state recognizes the traditional authority of the Wayúu as legitimate in its uses and customs for the community, and derives its legitimacy from the national indigenous legislation that recognizes an autochthonous criteria of leadership. The state believes that the traditional authorities should manage the state transfer payments to the resguardos. Up until recently there was no organization of traditional authorities within the Wayúu community. It was the state legislation requiring the formalization of consejo de viejos that changed the Wayúu political system. The

external relations with the state and the mines has created a situation of dependency in which the traditional authorities are in need of strategies to allow them to agree to the new politics of investment and management of resources. However, this process is difficult, given that the politics of the state in indigenous communities has not been constant: and often produces confusion for those who are not familiar with western legislation or the political logic of the state (Dover et al. 1997: 12).

The OZIWASUG assessor to San Francisco expressed his frustration with the state's inablilty to integrate fully the indigenous system into national politics. He explained that:

> "For every region there must be a an indigenous collaborator. And they (the state) put him there. in the sector for NGOs, community actions, indigenous council ... or something like that. This fills the government's requisite for having an indigenous presence. And the Indian sits there; things happen, and he is quiet. He says nothing. And the government says 'But look, there is the indigenous presence!.' The government recognizes the need to have indigenous representation but places them where they will have no impact or effect. They see them as pendejos (idiots). Presence and action are two different things" (oral testimony 1996).

The creation of associations of traditional authorities without their capacitation is not a benefit for the community nor for the traditional authorities; it functions to the contrary, as it creates a situation in which the traditional authorities begin to lose their autonomy. For example, in the months of May to July 1996 we attended various meetings between the municipal government, the representatives of the mine, the members of the community, and their OZIWASUG assessors. Because of problems of language and lack of understanding on the part of the state representatives, the proposals were discussed without taking into account the presence of the traditional authority and the cabildo gobernador at the meeting. At one particular meeting in May 1996, the same above-mentioned people were identifying the problems that exist in San Francisco in order to find a way to fix them. Everyone met in the municipal Mayor's office. On one side of the office there were the representatives of municipal planning (who admitted later that the municipality had not undertaken one project within the indigenous communities), and a representative from the mine; on the other side were the Wayúu traditional authorities, the cabildo gobernador, OZIWASUG assessors, and ourselves. Before the presentation of the problems that San Francisco was facing by the assessor to San Francisco, and presentation of possible solutions by the Mayor of Barrancas, neither the OZIWASUG assessor, nor the cabildo gobernador of San Francisco, much less the traditional authorities of the community present in the meeting, had been consulted. When the assessor tried to intervene and suggest that the mayor and mine people consult the cabildo, he received the response: "Do you want actions or words?" (Dover et al. 1997: 13). This example serves

to indicate the lack of understanding and acknowledgement of constitutionally-sanctioned political systems, systems that the government itself requested, and the associated legislation which gives legal representation to the cabildo and legal responsibilities for the community to the traditional authorities.

Capacitation or the empowerment of the communities is not a one-way street. The government also has to develop a mutual cultural understanding as the Wayúu learn to function within the bureaucracy of the 21st century. The lack of political capacitation of the Wayúu communities, the traditional authorities, the young and the future political leaders, aggravates the conditions of life in the communities. They do not have the knowledge to question the politics they encounter, they do not have access to municipal and state planning sources, and they do not have tools to utilize transfer payments, a situation which impedes the Wayúu communities' development as an autonomous social and political voice in the economy. They have not voice nor vote in the municipal government. The crisis of leadership is not for lack of capable persons in the Wayúu community, but is attributed to the fact that they are politically and socially marginalized from the processes of state planning, and ignored when they ask for cultural space (Dover et al. 1997: 13).

The transfer payments that San Francisco has received are held in a bank account until the community decides how best they should be spent. As of 1996 San Francisco held $33,462,100 pesos in transfer payments in an account in Barrancas. They had discussed buying more land close to the Rio Rancheria to provide the community with a source of water and more land to sow (personal communication: Segundo Martínez Epieyu). The OZIWASUG assessor to San Francisco explained to me that he feels that the cabildos are selfish with the money from the transfer payments. He explained how OZIWASUG programmed a workshop to evaluate the needs of the resguardos and the conditions under which the communities were living. The organization identified health, education, and land as the main areas needing immediate attention. However, the cabildos of the resguardos did not want to pay for projects within the communities. This development indicates a need on behalf of the cabildos to be taught how best to use the transfer payments given by law from the Colombian government.

b) Cultural Response

Since the opening of the mine, the Wayúu have been impacted by changes within their communities. No longer able to be self-sufficient, the Wayúu now must search for employment outside of the resguardos. The little employment available is in a form that does not empower the communities, nor does it serve to strengthen the abilities of the

communities to survive the impact of the national culture upon their traditional forms of subsistence.

The judicial system of the Wayúu is based on a series of expectations or principles that if ignored, serve to function contrary to the maintenance of Wayúu culture in the face of outsiders. These conditions serve as strategies to maintain their cultural survival, and enable them to adapt to changes surrounding them. Certain manners of conduct are expected from Wayúu. These regulations of conduct serve to preserve the essence of Wayúu culture and to maintain a cultural base of expectations that differentiate them from others. Simmonds (1995: 216-218) lists anti-cultural offences that, while not punishable by fines, are nevertheless viewed as anti-social; and function contrary to the maintenance of Wayúu identity.

While to "become alijuna" is not a punishable offence, it is viewed as functioning contrary to Wayúu norms and concepts of identity. The elders accept that within the Wayúu community there are people who have adopted alijuna ways. They refer to these internal alijunas as having "long testicles vs. those with short testicles," referring to those men who wear long pants as opposed to the guayucos[64] traditionally worn by Wayúu men. The elders state that the young men have forgotten what it is to be Wayúu because they have learned other modes of dress from working in the dominant culture[65]. By giving up this marker of Wayúu identity, they are exchanging the world of the Wayúu for that of the dominant culture.

As well, speaking Spanish is not an offence; but it is acknowledged that to be a true Wayúu one must also be able to speak Wayuunaiki. Wayúu that can not speak his or her mother tongue or who speak it poorly are subject to ridicule and derisive comments, and are often relegated to a lower social standing within the community. Fortunately newly-organized bilingual education programs are serving to preserve the language of the Wayúu as well as to enable them to participate within the national culture. However, bilingual programs are a recent occurrance; and many middle-aged and older Wayúu do not feel comfortable conversing in Spanish. This monolingualism also affects their ability to earn money in an economy driven by the national culture.

Not to participate within the traditional economy is a serious offence within the Wayúu judicial system. Anyone who does not participate in yanamas (work parties) or take part in the family's herding and garden operations is castigated by the family and

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[64] A *guayuco* is a piece of cloth held in place between the legs with an intricately woven belt (*si'irra*) of cotton. It is similar to a loin cloth.

[65] Elders in the community described to me incidences of police brutality that were inflicted upon them because they wore their traditional guayucos. They also described incidences of castigation by colonos who mocked them for wearing their traditional clothing (interviews 1996).

community. Even people living in the larger cities return during planting and harvesting seasons to fulfill familial obligations (interviews 1996). While it does not generate a fine, lack of participation is seen as an anti-social activity that results in the person being left out of the reciprocal relations and redistribution of goods within the community.

Nowadays it is essential that the Wayúu seek wage labour opportunities outside of the resguardos. The land they own is insufficient to plant or to herd goats, and they are completely encompassed by the dominant culture. Whereas in the past the Wayúu were able to migrate to the cities for wage labour jobs and return to their motherlands to herd and garden during specific times, this form of lifestyle is now impossible. The land is being consumed by the mines at terrific speeds, and the Wayúu are relegated to less and less territory. To obtain work outside of the community, a knowledge of Spanish is essential: and the Wayúu are feeling the pressure to fit in with the surrounding dominant culture. In San Francisco, pubescent girls no longer want to go through the puberty rituals of being enclosed; and older teenage girls speak only of wanting to find work washing clothes or cleaning houses in nearby Papayal. While they would receive money for this work, it is viewed by Wayúu and alijuna alike as the lowest form of wage labour and demeaning. The desire to obtain material objects fuels the search for wage labour, and many young boys in the resguardo would rather own a transistor radio to listen to <u>vallanatos</u> than have their own goats (interviews 1996).

The Wayúu have always had contact with cultures outside of their own. What is different now is that the Wayúu are unable to choose their level of integration and amount of contact with the alijunas. Pressures from the mines and the increasing population have crowded the Wayúu into a position of having to acculturate or disappear. Little consideration has been given to enabling the Wayúu to survive as an independent culture in the face of unavoidable development. Autonomy and self-determination have not even been examined by the Colombian government as a possible alternative enabling the Wayúu to survive.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

VA) Summary and Interpretation of the Situation

> "Todo se va perdiendo, ya no soy sino una pobre madre decadente que llora en silencio sus propias penas" ("All is being lost. Now I am nothing but a poor decaying mother that cries in silence at her own pains" My translation.Monólogo de la Madre Tierra en el libro Pulowi cited in ECOPETROL 1996).

Al Gedicks cites many examples of indigenous vs. multinational development struggles in his 1994 book The New Resource Wars: Native and Environmental Struggles against Multinational Corporations. He states:

> "Native peoples are under assault on every continent because their lands contain a wide variety of valuable resources needed for industrial development. From the Amazon basin to the frozen stretches of northern Saskatchewan, to the tropical rainforests of southeast Asia and central Africa, energy, mining, logging, hydro-electric, and other megaprojects have uprooted, dislocated, and even destroyed native communities.
> A basic aspect of the resource colonization process is, as John Bodley has emphasized in his classic work, Victims of Progress, 'that the prior ownership rights and interests of the aboriginal inhabitants are totally ignored as irelevant by both the state and the invading individuals'.
> Exxon's investment in the El Cerrejón project in Colombia, South America is a case in point. El Cerrejón is one of the richest undeveloped coal fields in the world and the largest project of any kind undertaken in Colombia. It is a joint venture of Intercor, a Colombian subsidiary of Exxon, and Carbocol, a Colombian government corporation. The project is located on the lands of Colombia's largest group of native people. Although a four-volume environmental impact statement was prepared on the project, the presence of the Guajiros was practically omitted from the report. The land the Guajiros have occupied for centuries is called vacant (baldío). 'The overall impression' according to one critic of the study, 'is of a wasteland inhabited by a few unorganized and insignificant indigenous groups, in which the construction of a road, a port, and workers' camps can proceed without problem. Not a word is said about Guajiro history, culture, social organization, or economy' " (Gedicks 1994: 13-4).

Throughout recent history, the Wayúu have been able to choose their participation selectively with the national culture and the rest of the world. However, in 1982 with the start-up of the El Cerrejón coal mine, the Wayúu lost the ability to choose the extent of their associations with outsiders. The infringement of multinational companies on their territorial soil, and the progressive loss of pasturing land, has been exacerbated by the appropriation of land to facilitate the running of the world's largest open pit coal mine. Roads, railways, settlements, not to mention the mine itself, have resulted in large scale consumption of land that the Wayúu traditionally used to sustain themselves for centuries. They are now marginalized to a large extent, and their traditional concepts and uses of land are being challenged.

Within this harsh semi-desertic climate, the Wayúu have carefully managed their environment as nomadic pastoralists; and have learned and passed down the tools from generation to generation to maintain the delicate balance of nature and man. Today the Wayúu are unable to utilize their land freely throughout the peninsula, as much of the land has been bought by the mine, municipalities, and private land owners. All their traditional knowledge of land management is in danger of being lost. They no longer have the freedom to range throughout the area, and the expanding environmental degredation caused by climate change and operation of the mines is destroying the limited land they have left. The lack of drinking water, arable land, atmospheric changes, malnutrition, and the hjealthcrisis due to the impact of the mine is bringing the Wayúu closer and closer to cultural and biological exttinction. The mine has not brought one economic or cultural benefit to the community. The multinationals are daily contributing to the ethnocide of the Wayúu through the pollution of the water, contamination of the land, and open neglect (Dover et al. 1997: 41).

Recently with the opening of the El Cerrejón mines, pressures are being felt by the Wayúu from the outside world to abandon their ethnic identity and the customs of the community (interviews 1996). As the communities are now surrounded by the dominant society and the influences of the multinational coal companies, they face strong pressure to learn Spanish, seek wage labour, and assimilate into the dominant culture around them. For the Wayúu to be employed, especially within the mine, they must be able to communicate in Spanish. The monolingualism of the Wayúu may be a defensive choice against complete integration, as it is this lack of communicative ability in Spanish which prevents their complete integration into the dominant society.

The problems of lack of water and pollution that San Francisco faces are not unique to this resguardo. These problems are felt by all Wayúu and mestizos living on the edge of the mines. However, the problems faced in the resguardos are much more severe, as the indigenous people of the area are suffering the consequences of the ecological degradation to a much greater extent than the mestizo population, due to limited interest and action on the part of the mines and the local government, and through their marginalized status within the national culture. Basic necessities such as land and health care are severely lacking. The indigenous population is not integrated into the political arena. Existing on their resguardos, they are forgotten by the government and the mine; and little attempt is made to understand their way of life and initiate a dialogue to solve the health and environmental crises that are slowly disintegrating the cultural forms of the Wayúu[66].

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[66]When discussing the lack of available food resources and the extreme cases of malnutrition within the resguardo, the Carbones del Caribe mine representative had this to say to the community of San Francisco:

The Wayúu are ever-conscious of the disintegration of their social and subsistence systems since the opening of the El Cerrejón mine in 1982. They have felt the negative impacts, and know that the future does not bode well for them without substantial legal and economic intervention. At this point, the Wayúu realize that they could not take on Exxon and RTZ and expect any changes be made to ensure their survival. The Wayúu are pragmatic, and have identified realistic goals and needs to ensure that they are not forgotten in the rush for development.

Lack of land influences all other areas of life including economic subsistence, cultural survival, and health. Long- range planning, diagnostic tests, and an increased medical presence within the communities is essential to avoid and mitigate the health problems caused by open pit mining. This planning must be undertaken by the state to avoid the annihilation of an entire culture living on the outskirts of the mines. Long range planning has been identified by the Wayúu as one of the most important actions that must occur in the immediate future. As there will be an increase in population in the face of decreasing land, there must be plans on how to augment the area of the resguardos to take account of the growing population (through migration and birth) and provide for their members. There also must be culturally appropriate economic opportunities for the Wayúu to permit them to maintain their ethnic distinction in the face of development.

If the ecological and environmental conditions permit it, the Wayúu can sustain themselves with traditional economic activities such as agriculture and the raising of goats and sheep. It is important to recognize that the mine is not an economic nor cultural solution for the Wayúu even though in the future, more may be employed within it. According to members of the Wayúu communities, the mining industry does not represent their relationship with the earth. The Wayúu have a profound cultural relation with the earth that revolves around reciprocal use and respect. For them, the mining industry is a violation of their land (Dover at al. 1997: 43).

There must also be an acknowledgement of the population pressure and lack of land caused by the mines. This is the most severe problem that the communities are facing right now. The land is not sufficient for them to maintain their traditional life and grow as a community, distinct but integrated within Colombian society. The new constitution of

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"Why don't you participate in the fish breeding program? Don't you know 50 pounds of fish are 50 pounds of meat?" (meeting May 1996). This lack of cultural sensitivity, exhibited by not understanding the prestige systems involved in goat breeding, is another example of the lack of desire of the mine to solve the problems that the Wayúu are facing tangibly. Gedicks (1994: 17) cites an example of a similar incident with a Cree elder in Canada. Andrew Natachequan stated that " Telling us that we'll be OK if we don't eat fish is like telling us that we will be OK if we just cut our own legs off." This example illustrates that the lack of cultural understanding by multinational companies is a problem that exists throughout the world.

1991 supposedly laid the groundwork for Indigenous Territorial Entities (ETIs). These are politically administrative entities set up to function autonomously with state recognition. These ETIs were to be funded with federal money but their projects directed, organized, and administered by indigenous authorities. In 1993, the government attempted to formalize the ETIs through drafting legislation. However, many issues came into contention, such as how territories would be demarcated, and who would control the subsoil rights in the territories. After much discussion, the proposal was never presented to congress: and the ETIs still do not exist (Murillo 1996: 22).

With the amount of territory diminishing rapidly, new ways of communal organizing have been suggested to enable the Wayúu to survive. The OZIWASUG assessor to San Francisco, himself a Wayúu, feels that the community has to be prepared and taught to work within a cooperative system within the resguardos. At the present a co-op will not work because the people do not perceive the goats as being communal property: and not having to raise the goats from kids, they lack an intimate association with the animal. The solution, according to the assessor, would be to buy goats for each family: and have the co-op managed by two or three people identified in confidence by the community, to monitor the upkeep and management of the herds. This procedure would not only permit each family to own their own herds but also enable the herds and the community to flourish through communal exchanges. This system would serve as an important form of capacitation for the Wayúu, as it would maintain their herds and also the sense of family and community that is essential to the Wayúu culture.

Self-determination is another important aspect for the Wayúu. Even though the new Colombian constitution of 1991 recognizes a certain level of self-determination for indigenous communities, the environmental and socio-cultural impact of the mining companies, and the lack of political and economic empowerment, have made it difficult for the Wayúu to determine their future as a community and distinct ethnic group.

The Wayúu have expressed the desire to have representation within the political arena as it has a direct impact upon the communities. This arrangement would guarantee that a Wayúu point of view would always be present in discussing state planning, and that there would be an exchange of perspectives and teaching between the Wayúu and the alijunas.

As well, the Wayúu feel they must re-evaluate their political structure within their communities in order to function within the state political institutions. At present, there exists a difference in political ideologies between the Wayúu communities and the indigenous organizations that are supposed to represent them. One way would be politically to empower the elders and the youth by increasing their participation within the

decision- making process, to enable them to maintain their communities and the communal participation that has characterized Wayúu society. The Colombian state must also conform to the legislation it has developed for indigenous communities, such as free medicine and recognition of the power of traditional authority within the community (Dover et al. 1997: 43-44).

"Every society responds to the requirements for life. Humans spend their own energy and that of their environment carrying out their daily activities. The resulting transformation of matter, of the physical surroundings reproduces the conditions of social life. ... The foundation for production, the relation between means and ends is culturally formulated and locally explained" (Rivera 1986: 2). We can see no greater difference in environmental perceptions than by looking at the uses of land between the Wayúu and the state multinational mining companies. Rivera (1986: 167) states that " the notion of development is not a universal category, nor is it an objective indicator applicable to any society." There must be acknowledgement of behalf of the dominant society that there exists other forms of land use and development that are culturally determined and culturally valid. A dialogue must be developed to create a basis for understanding between two vastly different cultures.

There has been no attempt by the municipal governments or the mining companies to understand the Wayúu model of development, or simply even their uses of land. It was assumed that the land was baldío, or unused; and thus some or even any development would be preferable to the vacant land that Colombians have always perceived it to be. There was no consideration as to whose model of development was going to be used, or whose concepts of growth would provide the basis to indicate development. It was always assumed that the western notion of development, measured in increased profits and visible structures, would be the only applicable measure.

The Wayúu want the dominant society to understand that they have their own culture and society and cosmology, and own perspectives that are solely Wayúu. Long-range solutions to the problems that the Wayúu are facing must take into account the Wayúu perspective as being different from the dominant society. The Wayúu acknowledge that there exists a tendency to scorn things which are different or foreign, and the sociocultural requisites of the Wayúu do not seem important to the state or to the multinational companies and their development agendas. The Wayúu want to recuperate and maintain their culture, and have their sociocultural necessities taken into account by the state.

The contamination generated by the coal industry is the main instigator that is contributing to the physical and cultural death of the Wayúu. The mines are contaminating

the water sources, the air and the ground: the elements that the Wayúu need to survive physically. The coal boom has produced a mestizo cultural reality in which the Wayúu population views the modern urban infrastructure, culturally deficient for them, within their ancestral territory, where it generates principles of social control in daily life activities that have devastating impacts upon the social structure of the Wayúu. The government has given space to mestizo systems of occupation of space and social control in the region. In spite of strong discrimination, abuse, and exploitation of the Wayúu and their resources, they (the Wayúu) have maintained a relatively autonomous space and ethnic reaffirmation: and continue with the essential cultural aspects important in this life that is now confronted by the threats that the transformation to world industrialization has placed before them (Correa 1994: 103).

The El Cerrejón mining project came as a shock to the Wayúu community. As recently as 1986, folklorist Michael Perrin stated that: "Within its limits, the traditional territory (of the Wayúu) is intact, forming a geographical and cultural bastion protected against Western economic conquest by its natural poverty" (Perrin 1986: 3). Unfortunately, this statement is no longer true. The advent of the El Cerrejón coal mine has changed the face of the Guajira forever.

VB) Recommendations

Christian Gros (1991: 268) states that

> "for indigenous communities of the wold and Colombia, the land has a particularily important significance. For one part the economic life of the indigenous is almost exclusively dependant upon the earth. As for all campesinos, the earth offers the indigenous special places for their gardens and crops... the land is the most important. It is important for the communal life of indigenous peoples. The indigenous live as a community and can not live without community. When the community disappears, the culture disappears, the knowledge accumulated over many years vanishes as do the indigenous themselves. When the indigenous have little or no land, they are obligated to work for non-indigenous and are obligated to abandon their families, leave the group and leave their people. They are obligated to find other ways of life distinct from their own and abandon their customs. The solidarity vanishes as does the mutual aid. When there is no land every indigenous person must fight alone, defend themselves alone, think alone, survive illness alone and have no one to share happiness or pain. The indigenous person can not survive alone because the force to live resides within the community."

It is urgent that provisions be made to enable the Wayúu communities to survive the expansion that is occurring right on their territorial borders. Now, more than ever, a dialogue must be created between the mines, the government, and the Wayúu communities: and advances made to enable the Wayúu to survive and maintain their cultural identity in the face of unstoppable development .

It is now inevitable that the Wayúu will have to live alongside the mining operations until, in thirty or so years, the mine has used up the land and contaminated the water systems, leaving very little of what previously existed. The mine does not hesitate in its operation. Everyday the pits are dug deeper, and greater distance is created between the Wayúu and their future autonomous survival. The Wayúu see this and are afraid for the future. They are seeking cognitive, political participation within the decisions being made regarding their future. They have accepted that development in the area will proceed and they recognize the need to be prepared. The Wayúu realize that development is going to continue in their traditional land use area. For this reason some Wayúu have made the following recommendations, focussing on the political and economic capacitation for their communities through active participation within decision-making processes. These suggestions were made in a meeting of the traditional authorities and cabildo gobernadors in June 1996 as an attempt to prepare to combat the effects of the coal mine (Dover et al. 1997: 42-43). There are seven areas in which the Wayúu cabildos and traditional authorities focussed their recommendations:

a) Political capacitation: the Wayúu want to be aware of their rights and the legislation that has an impact upon their lives; and how the government must comply with their legislation. They want also to have a greater say within their communities; and to have more participation acknowledged within the dominant culture legal systems; and, as well, more direct participation within development activities that affect the community.

b) Administrative and economic capacitation: the Wayúu identify the necessity for economic and administrative capacitation to recuperate their traditional lifestyle, and to respond to the needs of the community in the face of the state. They want to create their own culturally-determined economy that will provide them with a level of autonomy. They do not want to be dependant upon the government or the mines for their survival.

c) Capacitation in regards to transfer payments: As per Law 60 of 1993, the communities have their own resources but do not have the orientation as to manage these payments, nor organize potential economic or socio/cultural projects. The Wayúu want direction on how best to use the monies given to strengthen further and insure the survival of their community.

d) Concept of territory: the Wayúu acknowledge that sociocultural, economic, and political autonomy is impossible if it does not have a base in territory. This territory must be adequate to maintain their traditional economic activities. There is a limit as to how much territory is available for them to amplify their existing land, as the mines have bought most of the land surrounding the resguardos. The possibility of buying land in areas that

have not been affected by the ecological destruction of the past 30 years must be considered for the Wayúu to survive.

e) Capacitation of public administrators, military, physicians, and the mine: it is essential to educate them on the cultural differences of the Wayúu, so that they may know the 'other' in the social, political, and economic processes inside Colombia. This knowledge would go a long way to ensure that the needs of the Wayúu were taken into consideration in further development projects.

f) Bilingual curriculum/meetings are important to include the participation of the elders to record their memories and have them documented to be used as part of the bilingual education of traditions for the Wayúu. This program would initiate and help the process of self-knowledge, and strengthen bilingual education curriculum. A recording of the ethnohistory of the area as opposed to the official history is also an important consideration. An ethnohistory of the Wayúu of the southern Guajira does not exist, and it is slowly being lost as the elders die.

g) Cultural recuperation through workshops: to produce traditional crafts and music, traditional medicine, and encounters with elders, identified as areas in need of strengthening for the Wayúu to maintain their identity.

Development is happening all around the Wayúu. The mines have plans to keep expanding throughout the next 30 years. Cognitive participation of all involved at this moment is essential. The community objectives are realistic expectations and may be achieved, provided that a dialouge can be created between the municipal governments, the mines, and the communities. The realization of these objectives, however, needs time. First and perhaps most importantly, an understanding and acceptance of differences needs to be acknowledged to bridge the vast expanse that exists between the two cultures. Active participation would create a base of understanding from which the other needs the community is facing may be realized.

Although I believe that increasing development is unavoidable, I agree with Bodley in his suggestion of enabling tribal cultures to survive through cultural autonomy. According to Bodley (1975: 169):

1) National governments and international organizations must recognize and support tribal rights to traditional land, cultural autonomy, and full local sovereignty.

2) The responsibility for initiating outside contacts must rest with tribal peoples themselves. Outside influences may not have free access to tribal areas.

3) Industrial states must not compete with tribal societies for their resources. Tribal societies are free to choose their level of isolation.

Self-determination and active political participation are two options that the Wayúu have to survive development and state intervention in their traditional land use area. These options, according to Bodley (1988: 5), ideally would involve full ownership of their traditional territory as well as political control of the land. They would be free to manage their resources and maintain a self-sufficient communal socio-economic system, based upon their own cultural traditions and social control mechanisms. Bodley delineates these as important measures to enact change. However, in Colombia's present situation, this objective is very difficult to attain. Without any real political or economic power, the Wayúu simply do not have the means to achieve any degree of autonomy in the face of the world's largest mining and energy companies, and a state that refuses to grant any tangible autonomy to its indigenous people. The expansion of the extraction of natural resources in a developing country affected by trade deficits and foreign debt is inevitable.

While the granting of autonomy and ownership of land seem impossible on the large scale, small advances in granting political participation, health care, and the environmental space needed to survive will go a long way to ensuring cultural survival. If the Wayúu are empowered to initiate changes that correspond to their own cultural paths, they will continue to grow; and communities like San Francisco will not become yet another society that the state and multinationals have effectively annihilated in their insatiable hunger for natural resources.

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