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OF NETS, NAILS AND PROBLEMAS:
A FOLK VISION OF CONFLICT IN CENTRAL AMERICA

by

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B.A., BETHEL COLLEGE, 1980

A thesis submitted to the
Faculty of the Graduate School of the
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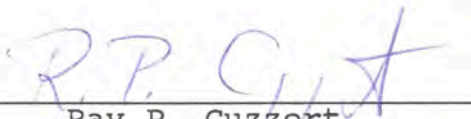
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Of Nets, Nails and Problemas: A Folk Vision of Conflict
in Central America

Thesis directed by Associate Professor Dr. Paul Wehr

This thesis examines how people in a Central American setting create, understand and manage conflict in everyday encounters. The investigation is based on tape recordings of actual conflict episodes, member talk about conflict and extensive participant observation in various Central American settings. The ethnography describing a folk vision of conflict is accompanied by the application of a phenomenological framework drawing extensively from the sociology of language and knowledge to describe processes central in the accomplishment of conflict at the microsociological level, building toward a general theory of how social conflict and social realities are constructed.

Central to the thesis is an examination of how members of Genesis, a community leadership training group in Puntarenas, Costa Rica created and managed a conflict over the participation of two homosexuals in their project. Based on this episode an examination is made of the members' activity they refer to as ubicarse, or locating oneself and experience. It is suggested that conflict is accomplished by creating "locations:"

Present experience is "coordinated" in accumulated knowledge deemed relevant and useful for understanding and responding appropriately to the present and emerging future. Genesis' members' conflict language and their talk about conflict is also analyzed uncovering a holistic and circular conception and management of problems. Key strategies used in folk conflict management, confianza (trust) and patas (connections), describe how personal networks are used to both understand and handle problems. Several micro discoveries and processes are compared with macro analogues, based on participant observation in the mediation of the YATAMA/Sandinista negotiations during 1987.

The thesis inductively builds a theory of transvaluation. It is argued that the creation and accomplishment of conflict is better understood when connected to a theoretical framework that endeavors to describe the constitutive process of how social meaning is negotiated and constructed.

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digmatic shift in my view and study of the social world and have greatly influenced both the research and writing of this thesis. I consider myself fortunate for having had the opportunity of studying under Dr. Ray Cuzzort and to have received his graceful and wise critiques of my ingenuous and wordy drafts of this and other papers. I greatly appreciate the input and contribution of Dr. Tom Mayer and Dr. Gary Stahl in the final draft of the thesis. I am very grateful to Dr. Christopher Moore for his comments and clarity of analysis, particularly as related to mediation and third parties, and for his example and commitment to linking theory and practice in this field.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

A dissertation is the story of a quest and a discovery. Within sociology it is a story about a slice of human experience, a story about people and their "ways" of being, thinking and doing. Inevitably, it is also a story about the storyteller, the sociologist, and the eyeglasses we use to see and talk about the world of lived experience. In the following pages I tell a story about conflict in a Central American setting. This introduction speaks both to why and how I chose to study and write this story.

For the past ten years I have intentionally been a student of conflict. Conflict is that unique unit of study which we unavoidably experience in the course of everyday life and which affords us, if we so desire, the possibility of intentional and simultaneous observation. I am also a trained mediator, a person who gets paid for

meddling in other people's problems. For the past few years I have been particularly interested in conflict and mediation in a Central American context. I am a member of the Mennonite Church and early in 1984 I entered into conversation with numerous Central and North Americans living in the region and collaborating with the Mennonite Central Committee, a relief and development organization of our denomination. They relayed a growing concern of Central American Mennonite leaders who wanted to better understand social conflict and specifically to develop skills and procedures for channeling their energy toward more constructive outcomes. In collaboration with them I began to develop materials for a training program in conflict management and mediation skills applicable to a Latin setting.

In January, 1985 I conducted a series of "trial" trainings to test the usefulness of the materials. While I agree with Wehr's (1978:8) assertion that conflict is a "natural process common to all societies, with predictable dynamics and amenable to regulation" my experience in Central America suggested that models appropriate for regulating conflict in one context are not necessarily directly transferable to another. Although I spoke Spanish fluently and had spent considerable time researching and adapting the training so it would be culturally relevant, I came face to face with

my own inadequate knowledge and understanding of their knowledge and understanding about conflict. In fact, I found that important aspects of the North American mediation model, when transposed directly into a Central American context may exacerbate rather than regulate conflict (Lederach, 1985). Over the course of the next few years I met and negotiated a paradigmatic shift in my research, training and intervention approach: I discovered that the very people I was proposing to teach and study, not I, were the experts about conflict in their setting. The shift is perhaps best exemplified in the title of a short report I wrote after several months of extensive training in the Central American region during 1986: "Some Thoughts on the Trainer as Student" (Lederach, 1988).

From the beginning I have systematically looked and watched for social science literature related to processes of micro-conflict (interpersonal, family, community, small group disputes and negotiations) in a Central American and more broadly a Latin American setting. I found very little. Apart from several anthropological studies (Nader, 1964; 1969; Nader and Metzger, 1963; Forman, 1978) few studies have focussed directly, in an empirical and grounded manner, on this subject in a Central American context. I did find

useful, but indirectly relevant research in different areas of specialty, particularly international negotiations (Caisse and Deol, 1985; Fisher, 1980; Cepada Ulloa and Garcia-Peña, 1985), cross-cultural communication (Condon and Yousef, 1981; Hall, 1973; 1983), and cross-cultural therapy and counseling (Levine and Padilla, 1980; McGoldrick, Pearce and Giordano, 1982; Augsburger, 1987).

What I wanted but could not find became the justification for this thesis. I was simply interested in knowing how people in a Central American setting create, understand and manage conflict in everyday settings. While the literature from cross-cultural work and the broader field of sociology provided some handles, I was left consistently with an uneasiness about the generalities of their explanations, an uneasiness perhaps best exemplified in the question that kept cropping up as I mediated and talked with people about their conflicts in Central America: What is really going on here?

Cross-cultural experience has the unique quality of "shocking" us into unexplored worlds. This is most obvious when we first enter their world: we experience and struggle with different ways of doing things that do not always make sense to us but seem to make perfect sense to them. The cross-cultural experience can also

launch us into a less obvious unexplored world: our own taken-for-granted ways of thinking, being and doing. In exploring both of these worlds, and especially in choosing an appropriate approach for studying everyday conflict in Central America, I found several perspectives within sociological theory and method useful: Interpretive sociology, in particular phenomenology; and the approach of grounded theory, in particular the methods of ethnography.

In the broader inclusive sense the stream of interpretive sociology, including Weber (1946; 1947), Simmel (1950; 1955), Schutz (1967), Goffman (1959), Berger and Luckman (1967), and Blumer, (1969) have greatly influenced my thinking. They are concerned with and emphasize how people in everyday settings understand and accomplish the myriad of interactions they encounter and help create. The narrower stream of phenomenology, particularly as developed in the work of Weber (1947), Schutz (1967), and Berger and Luckman (1967) provides a more specific lens focussing on the constitution of social meaning in human actions and interaction. Their emphasis on the taken-for-granted procedures inherent in the construction of social reality became the principle angle by which I explored and examined conflict in this thesis, particularly as accomplished in everyday actions

in Central America. At the theoretical level I believe that a direct link between conflict theory, especially at the micro level, and phenomenology is long overdue.

In terms of method, grounded theory and ethnography provide a unique toolbox for studying conflict-in-situ. A concept often used in archeology, in situ refers to the study of records produced of "finds" as discovered in their original position. In our context it refers to the study of records produced of human interaction and encounters in the setting and context in which they were originally created and accomplished.

The goal of grounded theory and ethnography is description, discovery and inductive theory building (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Glazer, 1972). Primary emphasis is placed on describing what people do in a particular setting and how they interpret their behavior and action, that is, how they make sense of the things they do (Agar, 1980; Emerson, 1983; Geertz, 1983). Ethnography posits that direct observation of what they do in their natural setting and their taken-for-granted knowledge -- discovered primarily through their talk in and about their setting and action -- are the most important and useful resources uncovering the relevant categories for understanding those actions. That is best accomplished through an extensive, holistic approach of observation through participation in their everyday ex-

periences (Spradley, 1980; Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983). Further, ethnography has the unique advantage of flexibility. It is not a method but a set of approaches (Spradley, 1979). It approaches its subject matter from many angles: tape recording (study of actual talk), interviewing (talk about talk), participatory observation and journaling, and photography. The goal of ethnography and hence its flexibility and constant search for various angles, is to see some "thing" through the eyes of those creating and experiencing the "thing." I found this flexibility and creativity useful for studying conflict from numerous vantage points.

Returning to my earlier statement, at the initiation of this research I set out to provide a description from a variety of angles of how people in a Central American setting create, understand and manage conflict in everyday settings. I chose to do this by combining the theoretical framework of phenomenology with the methods of ethnography. The resulting investigation, as it relates to micro-conflict can be summarized in three everyday folk expressive inquiries: Where did that come from? What did they think they were doing? How did they manage to do that? These questions and the above statement of purpose underscore the two complementary goals of the thesis: 1) to contribute to a phenomeno-

logical theory of conflict, and 2) to demonstrate an ethnographic method by which the study of conflict in other cultural settings can be fruitfully pursued.

First, I propose to describe and examine how conflict is created, understood and managed from the perspective of those creating, organizing and experiencing the conflict. This will be accomplished through the examination of data accumulated during nearly two years (1986-1987) of living and working in Central America. My materials include numerous types of experiences and observations I have recorded in different ways. A description of what these are, how and where I recorded them, and how I used them in writing this dissertation is crucial to understanding both my approach as a researcher and the results I found.

In the summer of 1986 my wife, daughter and I moved to San José, Costa Rica. For the next 18 months I worked for the Mennonite Central Committee as a resource person traveling throughout the region. I led workshops on mediation and conflict management with many church and community groups. Most of these were in Central America although we did work in Mexico, Belice, Panamá, Colombia and Brazil. I also intervened as a mediator in numerous conflictive situations, particularly in the arena of family, community and church settings. I had the unusual opportunity to serve on the "Conciliation

Commission" mediating between the Sandinista Government and the East Coast indigenous resistance in Nicaragua known as YATAMA. All of these events and circumstances were recorded and discussed in my field journals. Many of the training seminars were tape-recorded in their entirety, particularly the conflict simulations. On rare occasion I tape-recorded actual mediation and negotiation sessions. I also had the opportunity of photographing various aspects of my experience, in some instances the real-life dispute process in its natural setting.

All of these however, represent secondary data for the dissertation. The primary source of data, after narrowing the topic down to a specific setting, came from a project I collaborated with in the West Coast town of Puntarenas, Costa Rica. During all of 1987 and part of 1988 I worked with a community development project initiated in the poorer barrios of this port town. In conjunction with the University for Peace (Costa Rica) and the Ministry of Justice's program on delinquency prevention (Programa de atención al menor en comunidad) the project implemented a participatory leadership training design with a special emphasis on community organizing and problem-solving. It was billed as a "Course in Social Empowerment." For over a year we

met twice a week with as many as 25 Porteños (Port town people) deciding together what the group was all about, what we needed to learn, what problems we had to study, how we would learn and organize ourselves. What emerged was Genesis, the name chosen by a group of common Porteños working and creating their training together. It was part therapy group, part training seminar, and part friendship club. Genesis was a living laboratory.

I tape-recorded nearly all our meetings. Early on, members were informed of the research and gave permission to use the tape-recordings for that purpose, except when related to discussions of personal problems. Those sessions were also tape recorded but have been disguised in a variety of ways in keeping with their desire for confidentiality. At times these recordings and transcripts have been listened to and discussed by members of Genesis as a method of further eliciting their view and understanding of events. In many instances the meetings were mundane group tasks and talk. Others included in-group conflicts and decision-making. On other occasions members talked about typical problems and ways of dealing with them in Puntarenas. These meetings generated nearly 100 hours of group process. Meetings and episodes particularly useful for the study of conflict were transcribed, examined and coded on a computer based text analysis program known as The

Ethnograph (See Appendices for examples).

As has been surmised by now, this thesis draws most extensively from the Puntarenas experience. The most accurate and correct way of identifying this study is no longer under the broad rubric of "Central America." It is rather an ethnography describing how a group of Porteños created, understood, managed and talked about conflict. In particular I chose to examine intensively an episode of conflict that took several weeks of meetings to create and manage. Thus, while I traveled, lived and observed conflict in many settings in Central America, in this thesis I will draw from that broader experience only peripherally, in an illustrative fashion, choosing instead to concentrate specifically on the Puntarenas setting as seen through the eyes of Genesis members as the main object of investigation.

To summarize, the thesis is based on participant observation and text analysis of tape recorded real life, in-situ episodes of conflict creation and talk in Puntarenas, talk about the process and management of conflict in Puntarenas and a wide variety of other Central American settings, photography, and my recorded observations about the people, places and events I experienced. Needless to say a major concern throughout this investigation has been deciding what to include and

what to leave out. As I use my various sources of data I will identify the specific context and process by which the descriptive and analytical data were generated. The first goal, then, is to illustrate and describe from a variety of angles how members in this setting, namely Puntarenas, made sense of and dealt with conflict.

Second, this thesis contributes both to phenomenological and conflict theory. As researchers we have available any number of useful and legitimate approaches for the study of conflict. For example, marxist perspective analyzes the economic organization of society and the relations to modes of production and property. Here particular emphasis would be paid to how that organization effects class development and revolution, certainly a relevant and important perspective in Central America. A conflict functionalist on the other hand, may choose to study the purpose and role regional conflict plays in the maintenance of certain international and economic interests and systems. Persons approaching the study from the perspective of sociology of law may compare the social organization of authority in traditional society with the types of dispute processing that emerges. Each of these and many others are useful and legitimate in a Central American setting, particularly as related to the root causes of macro

conflicts in the region.

However, in this thesis I will make an explicit link between phenomenology and conflict theory. Here I will address both my concern for how conflict is created and the question of "where did that come from?"

Phenomenology is particularly concerned with how things appear in the social world. It does not examine as its primary focus the causes or societal constraints affecting people's action. Phenomenology is useful for examining the interpretive and constitutive processes necessary for the creation and accomplishment of social conflict. In other words, I concern myself with the examination of how people create something they experience as conflict. A phenomenological perspective suggests that the creative and artful accomplishment of conflict by members is better understood when connected to a theoretical framework that endeavors to explain the constitutive process of creating social meanings. It further suggests that conflict is a key and necessary component for the construction of social realities. Finally, in this discussion I will suggest that this theoretical framework, while primarily drawn from a micro setting, can be and is useful for understanding macro processes.

To introduce and make the case for this approach

the first chapter examines a specific occurrence of conflict through the lens of phenomenology. The next set of chapters describes and examines how members of Genesis created something they experienced as conflict. This intensive case study serves to develop a simple theory of the phenomenology of conflict. Following that I describe how conflict is understood and managed by Porteños, viewing it from their perspective in everyday thinking and action.

I chose to put these two different but complementary goals together in a single thesis. I believe that one without the other would leave each incomplete. The ethnography of conflict in the Puntarenas group grounds the discussion in a specific setting and provides rich detail into how a particular set of people accomplished that episode and how they conceived and dealt with conflict in everyday settings. Phenomenology provides a theoretical framework for moving the discussion from the specific case to a more general level in a specific part of the conflict process; namely, how conflict is really accomplished, both in its creation and management by members who experience it as such. We now turn our attention to a specific example of conflict, with the purpose of examining its constitutive and interpretive features.

CHAPTER 2

THE LICENSE PLATE THAT TALKED: THE CASE FOR A PHENOMENOLOGY OF CONFLICT

Introduction

This thesis proposes to examine conflict through the lens of phenomenology. My concern is how conflict appears, is transformed, understood and managed. Through this lens what is "really" there, or what "really" happened, is irrelevant. What is thought and understood to be there by the group accomplishing the event is central (Abraham, 1982). I am interested in conflict as a meaningful and artful accomplishment, and in the social construction of meaning as the key to understanding conflict.

Many may consider the philosophical and sociological investigative exercise of examining the construction of meaning as esoteric, too much of a "mind-game," or perhaps worse, boring. To counter this popular notion, I posit the following episode of conflict as

an introduction to the themes of this dissertation and as an initial point of reference for our discussion. It profiles sociological research as down-to-earth, invigorating and dangerous, particularly when the investigator inadvertently is observer and participant in the study and construction of conflict. Through the episode described below I will make the case that conflict is constituted through interpretive work carried out by those creating and simultaneously experiencing the conflict. As such, conflict provides a unique view into the social construction of reality. More than any other unit of study, conflict episodes underscore that we live simultaneously in multiple realities, and that we humans must in the course of everyday activities coordinate these realities.

The events of this particular morning introduce us to the phenomenology of conflict, of how "things", like fights, riots and wars, are constituted in the social world. The events described below, extracted from my research journal recount a single morning of conflict experienced by a historian (Jim Hershberger), a sociologist (myself), several Mennonite pastors, and a cast of 1000s. The setting for this unexpected episode was a refugee camp located in Tilaran, Costa Rica on the morning of May 25, 1987. For nearly two years the camp of exclusively Nicaraguan refugees, 2,900 of them to be

exact, 58% of which were male and 48% children, was host to a Mennonite congregation. The congregation consisted of some 200 men, women and children, or as they counted them "around forty families" who had fled the fighting in the Southern part of Nicaragua. The congregation was thus a subgroup in the larger refugee camp community, one among several small "evangelical" groups in the camp.

Jim, the Mennonite Central Committee's (MCC) country representative in Nicaragua, was writing the history of these Mennonites from El Rama, a town in the interior of the Southeast province of the Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua, before, during and following the armed conflicts between the Sandinista army and the "contra" that forced people to flee their home area in 1983. I had been living in San José, Costa Rica for about a year and had been collaborating in starting a cooperative for these Mennonites. I had visited the camp on numerous occasions.

The story begins the night before we departed when Jim and I hastily discussed in San José how we would get to the camp. The MCC vehicle we used in Costa Rica would be occupied in the morning but Jim had driven their jeep down from Nicaragua. I mentioned, somewhat in passing, that the Nicaraguan license plate on their

MCC jeep would probably catch some attention in the camp. Very briefly we discussed whether we should take the other car, but since that seemed to involve several complications we opted to take the jeep. Such are the decisions that make history. Some readers may ask, as numerous friends have, "Didn't you know better?" The fact is we did not. In hindsight this is rather embarrassing, as will soon be evident.

MAY 26, 1987

San José, Costa Rica (From my field notes written the morning following the events of the 25th). Yesterday we were up at 4:30 and headed for the camp, some three hours away. By 8:00 we arrived. On the way we again discussed strategy. Jim wanted to talk with the two pastors, "Carlos" and "Javier," and if possible, with several other Mennonite refugees. We decided it would work best if we could get those two out of the camp and into a more private place, like the main square in Tilarán or perhaps a local restaurant. We did not mention the jeep and its license plates.

At the gates we were met by the guards. I went into the guard house and presented the letter we had from the government, giving us permission to enter the camp for four hours. I spoke with the guards about our interest in looking up the pastors, taking them out and

then returning to spend a little time in the camp with the others. That was not a problem, they said, as long as the pastors had permission to leave. They took down our passport numbers, jotted several details including the license plate number, and then returned the letter. They signaled Jim to drive the jeep in past the gate. There, just inside, they searched the inside of the jeep making sure nothing illegal entered the camp. Jim asked them if we should park it near the entrance. "No," they replied with a wave, "take it on in." Nothing was said about the plates.

We proceeded past the first set of barracks and the school ground. People were curious to see new faces and vehicles as they always are, and I seemed to note a few faces looking at the plates but nothing unusual. On the way we passed several of the refugees I knew. We shook hands and greeted each other. Javier and Carlos lived in the barracks at the end of the camp near the administrative offices. In former visits we always parked our car there and did so on this occasion. This is also where the majority of the living barracks are located and there were a lot of people milling around.

We parked and walked past a line of refugees about 40 deep waiting to get into the administrative offices which would open at nine. We eventually found Carlos and about six other Mennonites, many of them from

the elders council. Javier had apparently left the camp to run an errand in town. After greetings and proper questions, I introduced Jim. I told them he had just come from Nicaragua, that he had been with some of their families, that he had letters and wanted to talk with them. At that point Carlos suggested we find a "little place to talk." Knowing that Javier was in town I asked if it would be difficult to get permission to leave. Carlos looked at his watch and hedged a bit, indicating that it would take time. So about five of us headed for the playground and the shade trees.

Upon arrival Jim got out some of the letters and small talk emerged around families and recent events. Carlos was visibly excited about the arrival of a letter from his sister that had a photo in it of her children. Soon Jim started his introductory talk about why he had come. Among other things he mentioned he was doing a study, a thesis on the history of the Mennonite church in Rama, a poorly developed region in Southeastern Nicaragua. The study, he reported, would be used for Mennonites in Nicaragua as well as those here, to preserve their story. He mentioned that he had spoken with members of their families and churches who had decided to stay in Nicaragua and that he hoped to talk with them here to get their story to complete the history.

They all shook their heads in agreement and then Carlos asked if he should just tell his story. Jim said that would be fine, although he also had some questions he was asking everyone. The conversation started around the history of how Carlos had originally arrived at the farm in Jobo near Rama taking him back to when his family first moved from the Northwest near Managua. Carlos' brother joined us about half way through this conversation and, as is always the case, others drifted in and out. The conversation continued around questions of how they acquired their farm in Rama, how big it was, how many cattle and pigs they had, and so on. The discussion soon turned toward their war and exodus experience.

About this time a young man joined us. He went around the circle shaking hands and sat down. I assumed he was Mennonite, although I had not seen him before. Looking back, however, I did not hear the telltale greeting of "God bless you brother." He sat and listened. The talk drifted in and out of recalling events, places, and people. We talked about the contra, the long walk out, the fighting. Carlos was doing most of the talking, since it was still his story. After a few minutes, the young man got up and motioned to Javier who had joined us, having now returned from town. The

two went over to a tree and talked, then came back and sat down. Suddenly, out of the blue, the young man broke in and started to ask Jim questions. "Who are you? What is your name? How long ago did you come from Nicaragua? What is your nationality?" He was very direct, and not especially polite. It was disconcerting. Jim offered him his passport if he wanted to see it. He said no. Then Jim asked him if he was Mennonite. He said no. Jim asked again if he was with the Mennonite church here at the camp. This time he said yes. His manner and questions surprised me. I had been in on many meetings with these Mennonites and knew their style. They rarely interrupted each other, especially if one of the elders or pastors was talking. They never were direct in their questions and had never asked me these kinds of questions. Still, I did not think much of it because the other Mennonites did not say anything. Jim told me later that Carlos had said, "It's nothing, he is not one of us." A short time later the boy got up and left.

The interview continued. Jim had a sheet of questions that he was following and was jotting down notes as he went. A few minutes later, we were interrupted by José an administrator at the camp. He asked who was in charge. I stood up and walked over with him

a few feet away. With a note of urgency, and getting a little red in the face, he said that there was a problem with the jeep. "People are really upset and we have a problem back there," he said, motioning back toward the jeep and the barracks. "We need to get it out. Could one of you come and get it?" I turned to get Jim and noticed that the others had been watching. I reported that the jeep was causing a problem. We all got up and started walking toward the road. I asked José if it would be possible to get permission for Carlos and Javier to leave with us to continue talking. He said yes but they would have to go to the offices. As we reached the road the Chief of Security came walking toward us and asked for the owner of the jeep. We explained quickly who we were and that it was ours. Only one person should go because, he said, there were a lot of people who were very upset and angry. None of the Nicaraguans should go with us. They should not be seen with whoever picks up the car. We started out and he again suggested that only Jim go. So only the three went ahead, José, the Chief, and Jim. On the hill I could see the jeep, surrounded by people. I would estimate that there were more than 200 standing on the embankment behind it. I turned and talked with the people who had stayed. One of them said they had walked by the car earlier and that people were saying it was a

Sandinista infiltration. He had also heard someone else suggest they should burn the jeep.

Soon Jim returned with the jeep and I got in. We spoke briefly with the pastors and they decided to ask for permission to meet us outside. José had told us to wait at the front gate for them. We said goodbye to several people and then drove on to the front gate. We had been inside the camp for less than an hour. At the gate I turned our entry permit back in and said that the plates had caused a problem. The guard just laughed and said, "There's a lot of suspicion here." I explained we wanted to wait for the pastors to come out and join us. He nodded and asked us to wait outside. We parked along the road some 30 feet from the gate and waited. Jim went to shut the back entry door and noticed that something had been written on the jeep, "Fuera piricuaco." Piricuaco is a derogatory term used by the Contra and exiles to refer to the Sandinistas. It is of Miskito origin and roughly translates into English as "mad dog." So the phrase on the jeep essentially said, "Get out mad dog."

We were becoming nervous. We began to feel the danger of a crowd mentality and how they must have seen the situation. The new, post 1979 license plates from Nicaragua say "Nicaragua libre" (Free Nicaragua). The

yearly revision tag on our windshield includes the words "Sandinista Police." Jim reported that no one had done anything when he retrieved the jeep inside the camp, except for a few derogatory catcalls. Minute after minute passed and we waited. People from the camp came and went. Some seemed to be watching us very closely. Then the pastors finally came. They were visibly worried. "It is a real problem in the camp," Javier reported. People were upset. "They think we have been infiltrated," Carlos said. One person had even shouted at him to get out of the camp, accusing him of being a Sandinista collaborator. They had come with a request. The pastors wanted us to come back in and "explain" to the people "who you are" and "what you are doing" so that the "population" inside would not think it was anything bad. However, they did not want us to just go in. That would be too dangerous. They were going back to Jose and ask him to accompany us in. They asked us to wait a few more minutes for them.

Their comments did little to alleviate our fears. It sounded like a riot might be building. We did not relish the thought of going in there and hoped that José would veto the idea. At the same time we were most concerned about what would happen to the Mennonites, if they now were perceived as collaborators with suspicious people. As we sat, one of the church members

stopped by the jeep on his way back into the camp. He listened to our story and then reported that inside the camp there were many who had left the Sandinista army, as high as captains, and others who were former field commanders for ARDE (the Southern front led by Eden Pastora). Suspicion was always high. Suddenly the young man's visit began to make sense. Carlos had said that he was telling everyone that Jim was "asking lots of questions and taking notes." The questions were about the war, the contra, naming people and dates. Our case was looking increasingly worse.

About 30 minutes later the guard came out to the jeep. He politely said that our four hours were up. He had been asked to tell us to leave. Parking in front and talking with refugees still counted as time. People were getting suspicious, watching us all the time, and it would be better if we left. We agreed. We spoke briefly with one of the Mennonites who was nearby writing letters to send with Jim. We asked him to tell the pastors we would go into town and eat. If they could get the permission, they should come join us and we would talk more about what to do. We left, drove into town and ate lunch. Nobody came. We decided to leave for San José. Slowly we circled the main square and ran into José, the administrator from the camp. We

apologized for any problems we had caused. He said it was not that big of a deal. "These people get ideas put in their heads." It would pass. "If you came next week in a different car," he said, "nobody would even know you." He seemed mostly worried about whether they had damaged the car. We mentioned our concern that the Mennonites might be in trouble with the others. He responded that he would talk to "the population" about the case. We drove back by the camp, slowly, thinking that maybe they would be waiting. Nobody was there. So we set out for San José and home.

In this episode we can see how meaning emerges and is related to action in conflict. In less than an hour a riot nearly reached fruition and produced animosity and conflict, which, as it turned out, lasted months. To date I have not returned to this camp, because my permission was revoked for my own protection. In later conversations the pastors reported they were under considerable pressure from other refugees for several weeks. Nobody was ever physically injured, but they were verbally assaulted and accused on several occasions of being collaborators and traitors. Eventually, they reported, the accusations dissipated, in part because José, the camp administrator, spoke to several people on their behalf.

"How," I have asked myself, "did we manage to do

that?" How could a "missionary" visit with an agenda as innocent as researching the history of the Mennonite Church in Rama produce such a response? W.I. Thomas (1923) once wrote that "situations defined as real are real in their consequences." This episode permits us to investigate a crucial question: How does situational definition take place? Or to use José's words: How do "these people get ideas put in their heads?"

COYUNTURA: THE JUNCTURE OF TIME, SPACE AND PEOPLE

During the Fall of 1987 I participated in the mediating team shuttling between the Sandinista Government and YATAMA, the exiled resistance group of Miskito and East Coast peoples of Nicaragua. For months we worked on a format that would permit the face-to-face negotiations to begin in Managua. We finally reached a solution and prepared for the event to take place. Days before the scheduled entry, however, we received word that problems had arisen. "Things" had changed, Tomás Borge, the chief Sandinista negotiator reported. "coyuntura is not right and we cannot permit the entry of YATAMA now." Three months later, under virtually the same format, the Indian exiles entered Managua to begin negotiations. The coyuntura had changed.

In Central America you will rarely hear a discussion of social, political, religious, and even family

process without a passing reference to coyuntura. It is an impossible word to translate literally, a metaphor for the unique and mostly unconscious human endeavour of locating ourselves and experience, and therefore meaning, in the stream of time and space. It is not simply the "setting", "events," or "circumstances." Nor is it just "timing." It is, at once, the "junction", a "concatenation," that point which tripartitely links time, space and human participation. It is no coincidence that Dell Hyme's (1967) heuristic device for examining and understanding any speech event begins with a description of time, space and participants.

Bergson's (1923) refers to experienced time as durée and Schutz (1947) speaks of our "retrospective, prospective, perspective." In this view, humans do not exist "in the present" as if it were a static moment in time. Rather we live in a present that is a continuously moving "project" which integrates both the past and the future. That is precisely the coyuntura sense of an event.

The coyuntura of the jeep episode described above takes place in a refugee camp, filled with hurt, at times embittered and almost always suspicious people. All of them have experienced war firsthand. Many have fought. A few have killed. Most have family and

friends who have been killed. They have seen the internal workings and intricacies of a guerrilla war. It is no covert operation or secret war for them. The vast majority are peasants with less than a third grade education. All of them left their homes less than five years ago.

Refugees are both target and weapon in modern warfare. In Central America a primary strategy of conflict is that of Low Intensity Warfare. As Barry (1987) and Klare and Kornbluh (1988) report, this approach does not seek the physical elimination of one's enemies, but rather to delegitimize, isolate and suffocate them. Success is not measured militarily but politically. In this strategy, refugees play a key role. They are not simply the lamentable consequence of war, but are viewed as being actors and a resource impacting the political and ideological conflict. There is a need for the provocation and emergence of refugees. This population, beside suffering the physical and social consequences of war, become and remain the target of an intense psychological war to "win their hearts and minds," and neutralize their support for the enemy. War is redefined as a "battle for the six inches between the ears of the peasant."

But refugees are survivors. Survival, in most of their cases, has been part luck and part skill. The

skill emerges, I believe, from a reorientation of the taken-for-granted mechanisms by which we make sense of everyday life and interaction. War accomplishes naturally what phenomenologists attempt for the purposes of scientific investigation: the suspension of meaning, or perhaps more accurately stated, the suspension of received meanings and routine recipes for dealing with everyday situations. Refugees live in a world in which little or nothing is taken-for-granted. Meaning is rarely readily apparent. Special attention must be paid to everything, and refugees must coordinate their activity around this fact. The result, is, as the guard said: ". . . there is a lot suspicion here." The coyuntura of war is one in which everyone is suspect, even friends and family: you never know who might be with whom or what they are up to.

The mechanisms of a sociology of ignorance become a constant. We might broadly consider the art and management of secrecy, hiding and manipulating information, of lying, misrepresenting and misinforming to be included in a realm of a sociology of ignorance. While these elements are part of everyone's everyday experience, they generally, or "normally," are not the primary frame of reference for interaction and interpretation of everyday interaction.

Let me explain this in more detail. Phenomenologists suggest that in our everyday experience meaning is automatic. We tend to take-for-granted that "things" -- people, places and events -- are what they purport to be on the surface. In fact, in most circumstances we pay little attention to them, assuming that we automatically understand what is happening, or that we have sufficient understanding to proceed until, through continued interaction we assume it will become clearer. In essence we depend on our accumulated, already constituted knowledge to serve us and provide automatic, appropriate and effective responses. Some "things" however are unusual and are not readily understood. The "thing" then requires more attention, we must investigate and situate it in our accumulated knowledge in an intentional, not just automatic, manner in order to respond appropriately to the situation. This process is what Weber (1947) referred to as action in which the "actor attaches meaning to it" or what Schutz (1967) more clearly identified as the process of a "special act of attention" that is paid to something in order to locate it in our "stock of knowledge."

Returning now to our discussion, in most settings we assume things are what they appear to be until proven otherwise. In war, however, assuming that

any "thing" is as it apparently purports to be can be hazardous. Thus, the mechanisms of ignorance become the sine qua non of survival: Lie, not truth, is the taken-for-granted frame of reference. Meaning is bracketed: every event, place and person is carefully scrutinized. New implicit rules of everyday interaction replace the old: Believe nothing. Trust no one. Assume nothing is as it initially appears. Assume no one is who he or she purports to be. Scrutinize carefully. Hide what you can about yourself. Disguise what cannot be hidden. In sum: Assume the worst. A mistake may cost your life. For their own protection, indeed sanity, the sociology of ignorance is the coyuntura of the refugee camp's inhabitants.

WHEN THINGS BEGIN TO TALK . . .

Leonardo Boff (1987) writes that no human is illiterate. We are all capable of "reading the message of the world . . . in the multiplicity of languages, (we) can read and interpret. To live is to read and interpret." Meaning emerges through the reading and interpreting of cues and clues related to events, places and people. "Things," so to say, begin to talk and we listen to their voices. Initially, we "read" and "listen" to people, not just through their talk, but more importantly through their presentation of self and

their paraphernalia (Goffman, 1959), like dress and equipment (and cars and license plates). Consider briefly, from the perspective of the "population," the cues and clues that were read.

A jeep with Nicaraguan plates enters the camp. It is highly likely that this was the first and last time such an event took place. Two foreigners emerge and meet some refugees, who are known to be members of an "evangelical" church, a small subgroup in the camp. A quick look up close at the jeep and there is a sticker that says "Sandinista Police." These are all symbols of the enemy. Someone goes down to see who they are. He finds them sitting around asking questions about people, places, dates and the war. The foreigners are taking notes. They have clipboards and official looking papers. They seem educated. They know Nicaraguan geography. Quick questions about who they are raises suspicion. They seem hesitant to give clear information. They claim to be gringos. That throws a little wrench in the works. But in this war you never know what the gringo may be doing. After all Eden Pastora just said this week that the CIA planned his assassination, and here these folks are talking about ARDE.

In the reading the clues are interpreted and exteriorized. First they are translated into person-

descriptions. In Central American folk terms we ubicar, or "locate" these people. In Weber's (1947) terms, we formulate an "ideal-type." According to Schutz (1969), "typification" is a constitutive process by which we locate a person in our "stock of knowledge" in order to predict their probable behavior, their motives, and their goals. Such an exercise, carried out unconsciously, instantaneously and constantly by all of us, prepares us to respond adequately and appropriately to the myriad of social interactions we all engage in daily. Normally, we pay very little attention to this process. In conflict situations we are more conscious of it because the situation and the people we deal with appear "problematic" and an appropriate action or response is not always evident. In the case of war and refugees this process has a special twist given the immediate and hazardous consequences of miscalculating.

In our episode we can visualize the process of typification in the minds of the refugees: "Foreigners. Educated. Gringos (but who knows what that means?). They drove in a jeep from Nicaragua, a "Sandinista Police" sticker on the window. They are knowledgeable about the war and geography and are asking very specific questions and writing down the information. They claim they are missionaries but the license plates and tag indicate connections to Sandinistas. They are potential

enemies." In war of this nature the word potential is dropped. There is no room for assuming that people are who they claim to be. There is no time for the temporary suspension of conclusion. Answers and action must be immediate. Survival depends on it. For the angry group gathered around the jeep it was as if the license plate speaks and its voice is heard.

WHEN PEOPLE BEGIN TO TALK . . .

We can now add a third element: Talk. The construction of social reality is inextricably tied to intersubjectively shared knowledge. Put simply, people begin to talk about what they see, how they see it, and what it means. "Social reality" is more than "my" perception and knowledge. Some "thing-social" becomes real only when it is shared with and by others. Thus, the definition of any social situation is always a process of negotiation.

Again we can visualize this process through its components. Paraphernalia clues - the jeep, the license plate, the police sticker, clipboards, pens, survey forms -- and presentation clues -- mannerisms, knowledge, talk -- are connected to people who must be "located." We talk with others about these people and signs. Through our talk the meaning of these people -- who they are and their purpose and motives -- is located

in our accumulated and shared knowledge about these kinds of events, people and things. The social situation is being defined. Responses then emerge as logical and natural: "We have been infiltrated by the enemy. They are in our house. We are not safe. We must respond. Burn the car. Do something to them. Unmask the collaborators. Sound the alarm." Through their talk Jim and I were "located" as the enemy, the "mad dogs" to be driven out.

We can further see this process through Carlos and Javier's behavior. In the situational definition they have been identified as collaborators with the enemy. Their response is also immediate. They ask us to return and explain "who we are" and "what we are doing." The constitutive process can be read between the lines: "The definition is set. We have to reconstruct it. Come, explain who you are and why you are here. Give them the correct interpretation of the events, people, places, and things involved. If you succeed we will not be seen as anything other than pastors talking with missionaries about our churches. If you do not, we are collaborators with the enemy." In simple phenomenological terms they are asking us to redefine the situation by reconstituting the typifications.

LIVING IN MULTIPLE REALITIES

This analysis suggests that conflict is, at essence, the construction of a special type of reality. Most of the time we assume and take-for-granted that we share a single reality with others. That is not true. We simultaneously live in multiple realities (Schutz, 1971a). We accomplish this rather amazing feat because, "for all practical purposes," we assume we share a common definition of a situation with others at least sufficiently enough so that we can make sense of people and events in a coordinated fashion in order to act and respond appropriately. There are times, however, when our definitions clash. When suddenly we come to realize that what we assumed and took-for-granted was not shared by others. That is the emergence of conflict defined in a purely phenomenological view. We are suddenly suspended in a meaningless world, and we have to begin the mind boggling task of discovering the juxtaposed meanings and searching for a common meaning. It is the task of establishing what Alfred Schutz (1967) calls a common "subuniverse of discourse." It brings to mind his essay (1971b) on Don Quijote and Sancho Panza. Throughout Cervante's novel these two adventurers are attempting to convince each other of the realness of their different experiences. In the end Quijote whis-

pers to Sancho, "If you want me to believe what you saw in the sky, I wish you to accept my account of what I saw in the cave of Montesinos. I say no more." To make our experiences intersubjectively real, Schutz suggests, we must get others to bestow an "accent of reality" on our experiences, and vice versa. Conflict situations are those unique episodes when we explicitly recognize the existence of multiple realities and negotiate the creation of a common meaning.

In the jeep episode, in just a few minutes, we moved from one reality to another, from one subuniverse to another. Everything changed. Every event, every person, every interaction was transformed and had to be viewed, understood, and considered under a new accent of reality. We moved from the world of Mennonites and churches, of pastors and missionaries, to that of war, suspicion, secrecy, collaborators and enemies. We occupied the same physical space and chronological time, yet were worlds apart. Through something as simple as a license plate and a traffic tag we entered the other world that nearly bubbled into violence and destruction. Having passed through the license plate we could empathize with Dorothy as she commented to her four legged friend upon entering the Land of Oz, "This ain't Kansas anymore, Toto."

CONCLUSION

Because situations defined as real are real in their consequences, the jeep episode is a poignant example that conflict is intimately tied to the creation of social meaning and accomplished through a complex process of interpretive work that lies behind situational definitions. Essential are the mechanisms of reading and interpreting people, circumstances and events in the "juncture" of social space and social time. The heart of the process is the emergence of meaning through the constitutive process of locating these elements in personal and socially accumulated knowledge. The license plate underscored the centrality and immediacy of the constitutive process in the accomplishment of conflict. As José remarked, "It is really no big deal. If you come back next week in a different car nobody would even know you." He was right in a certain sense. We had been typified by angry refugees that day not through their accumulated knowledge of us as persons but through their accumulated knowledge about things they connected with us in order to locate and typify us. It was their reading and interpreting of things known, situated in their accumulated knowledge, that led to their response and the events experienced as conflict. Conflict is accomplished, created and trans-

formed because of and through the interpretive work taking place in and between people.

From the phenomenological perspective we can make several basic propositions. Conflict is a human product. It is created and transformed through the constitution and negotiation of social meanings. These are, in fact, sufficient and necessary elements: without the constitution and negotiation of social meaning there is no product created that is experienced as conflict. This is a key contribution of phenomenology to conflict theory.

On the other hand, phenomenology also posits that social reality is negotiated (Berger and Luckman, 1967). What has not been clarified, except peripherally in the work of Simmel (1955) is that social reality, defined here as intersubjectively shared meaning, is necessarily born out of a certain degree of conflict. We again can make a basic proposition. Social realities are constituted through the negotiation of intersubjectively created conflict. In other words, if there is no conflict there is no negotiation. As such, a clear explanation of the constitution of social reality requires an understanding of mechanisms creating conflict because they are the necessary processes resulting in the negotiation of experienced multiple realities,

the birthplace of common, shared and coordinated social meaning. That is the contribution of conflict makes to phenomenological theory.

It is precisely these processes and taken-for-granted mechanisms inherent in the creation and transformation of conflict I propose to examine in detail in this thesis. The jeep episode points us in the direction of areas that need clarification, particularly that of describing the organization of our "locating" procedures and the accumulated knowledge into which they are dipped, as keys to grasping how people in a particular setting make sense of and accomplish conflict in everyday life. Description of these mechanisms simultaneously permits us to examine how social reality is created and sustained and its relationship to conflict. We now turn our attention to these procedures and knowledge by engaging in an intensive examination of how people in a particular setting, Puntarenas, Costa Rica, created, understood and managed some "thing" they experienced as conflict.

CHAPTER 3

THE DELICATE CASE OF LOS MUCHACHOS

"There is a majority," Adriano said moving to the blackboard. "Ten against three." In the third grade classroom at the Mora y Cañas elementary school, Genesis members were struggling with a decision. Rusty fans turned slowly overhead, barely moving the steamy tropical air. Its humming complemented the murmuring of voices as people whispered and discussed with their neighbors the last ronda vote. They were deciding whether to include or exclude two recent participants. The group was sharply divided. In the last round only thirteen of nineteen had voted.

"But we have said, we have created a rule," Adriano continued, "that when there are votes it must be 75%. Today because it is too rough an issue, because it is so thorny, it more or less is like how to grab a snake by the tail." He stopped and then repeated, "It is like how to grab a snake by tail."

Conflict is a social accomplishment. Created and sustained in the everyday ebb and flow of human relationships, conflict is like a snake in the grass slithering through new formations, appearing, disappearing and emerging again. As a point of departure I will examine a sequence of "episodes" of conflict. In order to provide some sense of context and development, it will be necessary to describe in detail the interaction and exchanges. The episodic sequences I wish to examine took place over the course of several weeks. I tape recorded group meetings and made journal entries noting events between meetings. Before analyzing these episodes, I will describe in more detail the setting and people involved in Genesis. This chapter recounts the story of the muchachos (the boys) relying directly on the recorded-as-coded records of taped and transcribed in-group talk.

THE SETTING

The town of Puntarenas sits on a narrow strip of land forming a penninsula jutting out into Nicoya Bay on the Pacific side of Costa Rica (See maps Appendices 1 and 2). The "Porteños" (People of the Port), 36,000 plus in the area known as the Gran Chacarita, have lived with the boom and bust cycles typical of port towns throughout Central America. They depend heavily on

fishing and shipping industries, often working intensively for short bursts of time and then drifting through periods of unemployment. Like many port towns there is an array of "social" problems: prostitution, alcoholism, drug trafficking, delinquency and particularly, unemployment. Like most of Central America, there has been no detailed census made of Puntarenas providing exact facts about the make-up of the population. The Program for Attention of Youth in Community estimates that 75% of the population of greater Puntarenas are twenty years old or younger.

Where the peninsula meets the mainland, at the outskirts of the city, begin the "tugurios." Tugurios in Costa Rica are barrios created through "land invasions:" landless families will group together and "occupy" an unused terrain, constructing, often overnight, their shacks. The people who live in these makeshift villages are known as precaristas, denoting the "precarious" nature of their existence. Over time, if they are successful in making their case to the government and confronting the landowner, the land is purchased by the government and sold back to the "invaders" on a low interest long-term loan. The outskirts of Puntarenas is made up of dozens of tugurios in varying stages of development: from well established housing with electricity, sewer and water to barrios of

makeshift shacks with no modern amenities.

In this setting a project was initiated under the broad heading of "A Course on Social Empowerment" (Capacitación Social). Institutionally it was supported by the Program for Attention to Youth in Community, a delinquent prevention effort in the Ministry of Justice of the Costa Rican government, and the University for Peace. The approach of the project was "participatory design" in line with the concept of "popular education" in Latin America. The design projected the formation of a group made up of interested community people. The members in the group would identify and discuss personal and community needs, problems and goals. They would further specify what they needed to learn in order to deal with those problems, and then would help design activities aimed at promoting that learning. Three of us had a special role in convening and initiating the group: Teresa Morales, a Costa Rican social worker; Jim Kavanaugh, North American community organizer; and myself.

Spanish readers may question the translation of the word capacitarse, which usually refers to training and development. I choose to translate it as empowerment in this context because we specifically oriented the course around the notion of participatory design.

In our first meetings we discussed capacitarse not as a traditional learning course but rather as connected to the root of the word: capaz. Soy capaz means "I am able to, or capable of." This is similar to its synonym poder, or puedo: "I can." Poder also means power, to have the power to do something. In the sense we used capacitación and in the way Genesis members understood it, participatory learning was a course aimed at helping people become aware that they can. It is social empowerment, more than "training." Thus, the title of the manual (Kavanaugh, 1988) written by the group about our year long experience is entitled "We Must Never Say That We Cannot: A Guide for Social Empowerment" (Nunca debemos decir no podemos; Una guía para la capacitación social).

We had our first meeting in late February, 1987 and would work with the group for the next fourteen months. While real life experience rarely follows even the best laid plans "of mice and men," the experience with this approach in Puntarenas provided a dynamic laboratory. We started with a group of around 25 from several barrios. The majority were between 20 and 30 years of age, although we did have numerous teenagers and two grandmothers. Roughly two thirds of the group were women. A small minority had a secondary education. Only a few could not read or write. The participants

came from six different barrios. In their lives they had all experienced the devastating combination of extreme poverty and low self-esteem, prevalent in many situations of structural injustice in two thirds of the world. We make note of the importance of systemic constraints like unemployment resulting from multi-national investment and disinvestment, landlessness, low education, and restricted access to basic resources on the daily lives of the members of Genesis. Our focus, however, is not to investigate and explain the effects of systemic constraints on their lives, but rather to center on their face-to-face interaction in relating to each other, on the negotiation of a new social reality, and the constitution of conflict in that process.

Most everyone in Genesis knew each other, at least by face if not by name. The group, however, was made up of inner cliques, groups of people who came together to the meetings. These were often family connected or huevitos, meaning close friends. Where you find one you find the other.

There were the Post Office guys, Adriano, Miguel and José Luis. All three were married, fathers, and often acted as stabilizers in the group. Adriano was in his thirties, a thoughtful man, who often pondered deeply subjects we dealt with in the group. He had worked

for years in the Post Office and was a native of Puntarenas. Post Office work was a stable job in an otherwise unstable economy. In recent years he had built a house at the edge of Barrio 20, a more modernized squatters' village.

Miguel came from a fishing family. His house, along with those of his parents and siblings were all located together along the edge of the river that ran out into the polluted lagoon and eventually the salt-water bay of Nicoya leading to the Pacific. Miguel was well respected by others in the group and was elected President of Genesis when we decided to pursue more formal organization. In his late twenties, he and his wife had several children.

José Luis lived in Juanito Mora, a recent and considerably more impoverished invasion. He and his wife lived in their own house, that really was nothing more than a shack, a ranchito they called it. Only recently had electricity been installed and he was still waiting for water. José Luis was timid and spoke with a slur through his missing teeth. In his thirties he was content to be on the lower end of office work at the Post Office, mostly just selling stamps.

The women from "20" formed another group. These women had joined together to create a sewing cooperative when they found themselves without work. They had

struggled to keep it going. Maria Teresa was the quiet, soft-spoken mother. Heavysset and a tongue-in-cheek joker, she nevertheless had a low self-esteem. The co-op was lodged in her house in "20" and was the hub of much neighborhood talk and interaction.

Ruth, a thirty year old mother was Nicaraguan. She left Nicaragua a few years ago and eventually made her way to Puntarenas with no official status. She lived with her mother and several sisters and their husbands in a one room shack in the most precarious turqurio in Puntarenas. Her ranchito was situated at the edge of a condemned airstrip, that was still used by wealthy people flying in for weekend vacations. Her children played on the strip with all their friends, and when on those rare occasions a plane arrived a shout would emanate down the strip: "AVION," and the children would scurry to get off. The long row of shacks along the strip had been built overnight, but had never received any official approval and had been condemned. The neighbors all agreed to stay, band together, and fight it out. In their struggle for housing and land rights they were led by what Ruth called a "communist" guy. Ruth dreamt of the time when it would be possible to return to Nicaragua, or perhaps Miami. Her life was a small slice of the Central American drama: leaving

your Nicaragua in disagreement with "leftist" policies only to live in a shack and struggle with "communists" to achieve a few basic rights in Costa Rica.

Lorena and Esmeralda were sisters and co-op members. They were young, the age of Teresa's daughters. Esmeralda was timid, almost afraid. She had suffered through various degrees of family and father perpetrated violence. Lorena, with coal black hair and eyes to match, had taken the same abuse but had conquered it through a firebrand rebelliousness. At 17 she already had children that her mother was raising. She sometimes missed our nightly meetings because she was trying to complete the third grade in night school. There were other women who worked at the co-op on a part time basis, like Ana a young friend of Esmeralda and Lorena, who had suffered much abuse in her short 17 years, or Doña Flor who was married to an alcoholic.

Then there were families. Doña Fidelia and her two sons lived in Juanito Mora, near José Luis. Doña Fidelia was a grandmother many times over. Javier and Roberto were her youngest sons. She had moved to Juanito Mora, living in a one room shack with no electricity or water with her mother, now nearly 80. She had lived with several of her sons in a better house in "20," but decided to "invade" Juanito Mora in order to get the great-grandmother a place of her own. Doña

Fidelia had experienced numerous land invasions with her husband. They had since separated. He had been unfaithful and it left a bitter taste in her mouth. Javier her youngest (16 years) was perhaps the most timid person in Genesis. At a young age he had developed medical problems that the family could not afford to fully treat. As a result, he was weaker and more dependent as a boy. He was smart, but it was hidden. According to his brother Javier was forced to drop out of school when the family could not afford the required uniforms. Roberto, only a year older, was outgoing. He liked to dance and work. He would leave with boats going fishing, or work in construction with the oldest brother. His dark complexion and large Afro hairdo gave him a typical porteño look.

Doña Lupe was the other grandmother. She worked as cleaning lady and cook for the dock boys where Jim rented a room. Her husband died some years earlier and several of her daughters still lived with her. She was poor but poised, quietly confident of herself, and extremely sensitive. Her daughters, Rosario and Judy, were less so. Judy was married and living with a prototype macho, who routinely controlled and physically battered her. She came to the group, in part for an outlet and in part seeking help. Her younger sister,

Rosario, was still in school. Her attitude was friendly and outgoing, but she seemed to not really care much about the complexities of life.

There were several loners. Magdalena was a young single mother. She lived with her parents at the edge of the old port, enmeshed in the closeness of brothers, cousins and grandparents living all together. She was vivacious and unusually outspoken. Carmen was a retired school teacher. She came from the only middle class family in the group. Since her retirement she had dedicated herself to participating in a number of community groups, offering her time and services voluntarily. She was educated and often pushed the group to move into more formal ways of learning and organizing. There were others: Minor, a young university student; Marisol, one of the youth leaders of the program with the Ministry of Justice; and Henry, a jeweler and director of the community peoples' theater group.

During an early meeting each person suggested names for the group. The group chose "Genesis" and decided on the motto "Born to serve; We serve to create." Both name and motto pointed to the emerging goals identified by the group: "prepare community leadership to respond to family and community problems, and multiply ourselves through the creation of other groups." By the end of the year, as they themselves had

predicted, of 30 or more people who at one point or another joined the group, only a core of six people followed through on the project, opening a community center for peer counseling.

Genesis was a unique combination of a "club of friends," a therapy group and a leadership training course. We met in a local grade school, sitting behind third grade chairs and desks in a circle. Twice weekly twenty or more porteños met for several hours under the buzz of dirty ceiling fans and 40-watt lighting, barely noticing the humid sweltering heat. Spontaneously certain procedures and organization developed. The evening started with a dinámica, a participatory activity, usually a game, then moved to announcements and finally to the night's "theme." They decided to share the challenge of facilitating meetings, although not everyone felt comfortable serving as "coordinator" for the evening. Early on the group made decisions about schedule, name, motto and rules. During these decisions, as input and opinions were needed they "went around the circle" asking each person for their view. This routine was identified and named by them as the "ronda" (the "round"). Formalized by the end of the first month the ronda became part of the rules and regulations of Genesis: In any major decision, as many

rondas would be used as necessary until 75% of the group could agree on a decision.

In the twice weekly meetings we not only explored the width and depth of personal, family and community problems, but watched the emergence and management of numerous in-group conflicts. At its inception Genesis was an open group. No criteria were established for entry and participation except that of personal interest. New people would come either because they had heard of the group or had been invited by another participant. Soon, however, as it became clearer that a principal group goal was for each member to prepare for leading and coordinating their own group, questions began to emerge about membership and the type of person who could be in the group. This concern came to a head at the end of the second month with the arrival of several new members, in particular two "muchachos," friends of the four women members in the group who ran the sewing co-op. The muchachos, both 17 years old, were known by most everyone in the group, and it was soon apparent for those who did not that they were homosexual. Around the presence and participation of the muchachos emerged a dispute that would occupy our time for several weeks and nearly brought our living laboratory of learning to a screeching halt.

In the following pages I recount the muchachos episode, relying directly on the transcriptions to give the reader a flavor of group process and porteño talk. The value and quality of ethnographic work is determined by the types of records it produces and how they are used and incorporated in the final research document. I chose to write the rest of this chapter in narrative fashion, almost like a novel. I believe this permits the reader to get a flavor of the process and events I will analyze in subsequent chapters. However, in this writing style I will incorporate several types of records that need clarification.

First, the entire story is based directly on transcripts of tape recorded Genesis meetings between April 21 and 29, 1987. In my narrative I will use quotation marks only to identify actual statements emerging from the transcripts. Second, I also make use of notes taken in situ during these meetings. These will be identified in the narration in boldface print. Third, in reconstructing and writing the narration I have used journal entries, written after each meeting. Pieces of my journal entries will be referenced in the narration through the use of parentheses. Anything that is not in quotation marks, parentheses or boldface represents my general reconstruction of events and

statements, including indirect dialogue based on transcriptions, descriptions of people's actions, voice tone, and reactions, and generally setting the stage concerning group process, setting and events. This reconstruction was written during the summer months of 1988, at the time of the writing of this thesis. To summarize I suggest the following the key:

1. " _____ " = Quotes from transcripts;
2. **Boldface** = Notes taken in situ;
3. (_____) = Pieces from journal entry;
4. All else = General reconstruction.

Finally, in keeping with our confidentiality agreement and to protect several people in the story I have disguised names and several events, without affecting the important aspects of the story I will subsequently analyze.

APRIL 21, 1987

It was a typical evening in Puntarenas. A steamy heat pervaded the town, a tropical seaboard heat that the Porteños never seem to notice and which outsiders cannot seem to get off their minds. In the dim classroom of Moras y Cañas grade school, Genesis opened its seventh week of meetings. Sitting behind the third grade desks we watched as the coordinators described the evening's agenda. Three new people were introduced,

invited by the co-op women from barrio "20:" Doña Flor, the middle aged woman was a part-time member of the co-op and the two young men, José and Julio, were friends and neighbors.

The activities moved along unusually smoothly. The dinámica, slated for fifteen minutes, lasted forty. In a tight circle we all sat shoulder-to-shoulder in our chairs. One person started, getting down on all fours and playing the part of the "poor little cat," purring and cooing up to another member. The trick, it had been explained, was not to laugh, so much as a grin at the questions or behavior of the "cat", and you became the cat. Laughter and talk filled the room as twenty adults made themselves at home in the third grade.

There was a crisp energy in the group. The coordinators soon divided us into small groups, requesting that we each identify one problem in the community or family that Genesis should study and deal with in the learning course. In about an hour my small group of five persons had listed several: parents who dominate children; what to do with criticism from neighbors; how to help a husband and wife who are splitting up; alcoholism and family violence. No time was left for reports back to the larger group and we moved to the closing phase of the agenda.

"Who will do the dinámica tomorrow night?" came the first question. No volunteers until someone shouted, "Get the new guys to do it." Laughter and general approval followed. José and Julio protested but then agreed. Participation was integration, Genesis members had often commented. When you participate you become part of each other.

APRIL 22, 1987

We started at 7:00 p.m. "Tico time." Tico is a nickname for Costa Ricans. Early on the group had decided starting times were always a problem. They had decided that we would "enter" at 6:30, but not expect to "start" until 7:15 or even 7:30. But tonight the new guys were anxious to share their dinámica. José, more outgoing than Julio, led the event. He was confident, enthusiastic and articulate. Certain distinguishing characteristics stood out as he proceeded with the instructions. His voice and manners were obviously effeminate. When Julio joined him, he displayed similar mannerisms. Their first game was so short that they led us in a second one. Forty minutes later we started with the theme for the evening, returning to our small groups where we had left off the night before.

Seven groups were to report in to the composite group on the problems they had identified in their small

groups. The room was filled with talk. Throughout the room in the small groups, people joked and talked with each other as spokespersons for other groups reported and told stories about family and community situations. Categories began to emerge that were tracked on the blackboard: **family spats, machismo, drugs, alcohol, unemployment.**

The spokesperson for the last group was Doña Carmen, a retired teacher. The evening was drawing to a close when she agreed that drugs, alcohol, and prostitution were problems and wanted to add those of "lesbianism and homosexuality which affect us all." The room fell unusually quiet as those words left her mouth. She continued, explaining that there were many causes: Parents who overprotect and spoil the child; parents who wanted a girl and got a boy; prostitution in the home; and most of all, lack of sex education. In the end, she said, for one reason or another, something pushes the child to take "other roads." To further illustrate her point she told an anecdote. The room stayed quiet. A few heads were down, few looked directly at her, but everyone was listening.

Her story described a ten year old boy who begins to change and mature. Suddenly he is frightened when one night he has a wet dream and ejaculates. He

goes to his mother and tells her about the things that have happened. She responds, "Don't tell me about it, go to your father." He goes to his father. "Papi, I'm sick. I don't know what is happening." His father gets angry and answers, "You are too young to talk about this." So the boy asks his uncle who does not want to mix in with things that "are your father's responsibility." His grandfather gives him the same response. Nobody wants to talk with him about it and he becomes increasingly worried every night.

The following day he goes out to the town square, where kids are hanging out. Seeing his worried face someone asks him "what is happening" and begins to "pull out his story." "That is nothing," the friend answers, "that can be cured quickly. I'll fix it for you," he says and "takes him off." As it turns out, this person was already "walking down other roads" and he directs the young boy down a mistaken path. "Whenever you have this problem, just let me know," the friend says. At the end of the experience, Doña Carmen explained, the youngster has become a homosexual. When the parents realize it, they do not want a desviado (a deviant who has lost the right way) in their house, so they throw him out. In the street, nobody wants him and he is rejected by the neighborhood. With his example, parents threaten their children, "do you see so-and-so.

Do you want to be like him?"

"That is just an example, a story I wanted to tell," she ended. Nobody responded. The list of problems was finalized. Homosexuality was not written on the board. The evening agenda finished with a decision about the coordinators for the next weeks' meeting. As usual, no one immediately volunteered. Somebody then suggested José. Under pressure from friends he agreed to coordinate and no one objected.

APRIL 28, 1987

Genesis met two days a week, usually Monday and Tuesday. Between Tuesday and the following Monday we all went our separate ways. However, many of the members lived in close proximity and a few worked together. Our contact was unplanned and sporadic. The times that we did meet, particularly Jim and the three men who worked at the Post Office and with Doña Guadalupe, the grandmother who washed clothes and cleaned the "dock house" where he lived, discussion often centered around the meetings and what was happening in the group.

Between Tuesday, April 22 and Monday, April 28 "talk" centered around what to do about "los muchachos." Doña Carmen's speech had signaled the first sighting of the "snake." Chisme, neighborhood gossip, about the

muchachos and their participation in the group was going on in several of the cliques in Genesis. While we did not know all of these, we knew the grapevine was at work. At the Post Office, Adriano, Miguel and José Luis quickly identified the issue as "delicate." Monday morning, José had not come to visit with Jim to prepare for that evenings' meeting. Word had drifted in from Doña Guadalupe through her daughter that the muchachos knew they were the subject of concern. Ruth and Maria Teresa, two principal leaders of the co-op and friends of José and Julio, later confirmed they had asked the two what they thought of Doña Carmen's speech. The muchachos knew they had been targeted. José never did come to plan the evening's meeting. That afternoon we met with Adriano and Magdalena, who decided they would try to coordinate the meeting that night. They decided the agenda would include a discussion of absences and more importantly, criteria for membership in Genesis, and ultimately what kind of a group were we to be. Adriano would take the lead.

Just after supper, before the meeting began Jim and I visited briefly with Ruth and Maria Teresa. In a few minutes that we had alone with Ruth she offered a crucial piece of information: Another friend of theirs, Ana, one of the younger (17 years) founding members of

Genesis, was lesbian. As a child she had been abused, physically and sexually by her father. She was very quiet, timid and insecure. They had originally invited José and Julio, in part because they were interested and friends, but also to provide more support for Ana. The muchachos would not come tonight. Ana would, but she was scared.

By 7:00 we were twenty strong: the five women from the co-op (Ruth, Maria Teresa, Lorena, Esmeralda and Ana); the three men from the Post Office (Adriano, Miguel, and José Luis); Doña Fidelia's family with the two sons (Javier and Roberto) and a new friend, Maximo; Doña Guadalupe's family with her two daughter's (Rosario and Judy) and a grandson, Faisal; Doña Carmen, Magdalena, the social worker, Teresita, Jim and I. Nobody was sure whether the muchachos would show, but they did not. Adriano began the evening saying we would discuss two issues: "one of them is very thorny (espinoso) and delicate (delicado), the other is less so but important." After a short dinámica and several announcements, the floor returned to Adriano. He opened up the delicate issue, carefully working his way around the thorns. "We will need," he said, "to put into practice the ronda." Each of us would give our opinion concerning what we wanted for the group. Then, very carefully he introduced the theme and the decision about

the muchachos, talking nearly 20 minutes.

"We know that we are going to be coordinators. Necessarily, as coordinators we must inspire confianza (trust). Necessarily, we must inspire our compañeros in the communities. We must display self-control, and be able to offer that confianza. We must with complete confianza expose our problems," Adriano was carefully choosing his words. He continued. "Here in this group, if there is a person that does not have problems, I envy you. But no one is vaccinated against problems," he looked around the circle, "each of us have our own problems. This afternoon we discussed, and it is very delicate the case of the muchachos that came, José and Julio," his voice dropped a bit as he said their names and he mumbled repeating his thought, "knowing that it is such a delicate situation we must proceed with care. I don't know if you all observed the muchachos and their way of living, but, I believe they have problems. I am nobody to criticize them, because it is a problem like any other, but we must ask ourselves if we are prepared for this."

People in the room were listening carefully. The fiddling with papers and desks seemed to signal the underlying tension that was building as the muchachos problem was publicly mentioned. Adriano continued. "We

are and must be carriers of our own culture. So we must give some ideas, some suggestions, if we are going to be a group that is simply open, or if we are going to be a group that is closed. Not that no one else will join. Don't misinterpret," Adriano seemed to bump up against the realization of the precarious position he was in. He winced. "The situation is very delicate because they can accuse, they can accuse us, because we are marginalizing human beings just like us. We are closing doors to them who are perhaps coming seeking help. That is a possibility, that they are coming to seek help. But it so happens that we are not yet prepared to provide that help. We are still in a process of forming the group and preparing ourselves, of arming ourselves so that tomorrow we can learn to respond to people. I refer to people like: marihauna smokers, that we should know how to (entrarle) deal with a marihauna smoker; that we can attend to an acoholic, or to a prostitute. And likewise if a homosexual comes." He paused arranging his thoughts. "But right now, sincerely speaking, we are in diapers. We are starting. You all know that I have said we do not have any place to go when we have problems. Nobody is vaccinated against problems. How beautiful it would be if we could share our problems. But right now it is not individual interests we each have, but rather the interest of the group. If we must inspire confianza

who are the people who will inspire that confianza?"

Adriano drew his comments to a close. He suggested we do a ronda. A question arose: What exactly are we deciding? Adriano repeated the task suggestion, this time with more clarity. "First we are going to discuss whether the group should be open, taking in everyone that comes, taking in all comers without requiring any characteristics, any qualities; or whether on the contrary, we close ourselves a little and include ourselves in what are the characteristics that we should have in the case of," he hedged, worried again about the implications of what he was about to say, "well, hey, I do not believe that anyone is going to unload tomorrow what I have said, what was my job to do here. I know it is very delicate, too delicate. Hey, personal issues, so, I don't know if someone is afraid to talk about them (muchachos). I live in the barrio where they live and tomorrow either of them could confront me because someone told them I spoke badly of them. This can be easily misinterpreted."

He finished and again asked to start the ronda. Doña Lupe, the grandmother broke in first, suggesting the muchachos come not as leaders but as "auditors." Magdalena, the other coordinator, responded, reacting to this suggestion, although her thoughts were disjointed.

"Doña Lupe, it is that we had spoken, I have been, as he said, in disagreement with--right--that they would integrate. It was said that there were some in the group who agreed that they be here, so that we could prepare ourselves to become leaders--right--and also be able to resolve community problems and all. So then they come here, supposedly, I understood they came to hear from us. But to suggest that someone who has a problem would go to them, doesn't feel," she stopped, not wanting to complete her sentence out loud. "Right--because, that is the way they are," she offered. "But I said that in this case we are, I agree with the process and system with which we are reorganizing." She again seemed stuck and finally blurted out a possible solution. "How to resolve this, once after everything is set-up, once reorganized, we would know how to resolve certain problems, right? We could be a therapy group. Then this could be sort of like an exercise for us, and these cases could come here to the group, and we would know how to resolve them and talk to them, and that way we would help them get out (salir) of the problems that they have gotten into (entrado). Later they could come, once we have our bearings (ubicados)."

Teresita, the social worker then interjected her view, suggesting that now was not the proper time for the muchachos to join. They should come back at the

second stage of our process, once the coordinators had been sufficiently trained. However, Doña Lupe pressed her opinion.

"I agree," she said, "that they are not coordinators, but why can't they help, maybe, another muchacho who is like themselves?"

Before Adriano could get the ronda started we were interrupted by visitors from another community group wanting a few minutes to talk about their program. Following their speech and a break, we returned to our circle. As the Porteños would say, this was a "heavy" task. Adriano tried to start the ronda, but there was confusion. Several people had not been there last week when the muchachos had come. They preferred to wait in the ronda and hear first what others said. Roberto started. He was obviously unsure of the terrain and did not want to disagree with anyone. He spoke in circles and with uncertainty.

"Now, who should make up the group, hey, see, hey, anyone would be a, I don't know, at least, concerning the two compañeros that came, hey, maybe, I don't know if they came for some interest, to help, or I don't know, hey, right now it should be us, nothing more, who should organize those who are going to be a part of this. It should be us."

Skipping Maximo, a first time visitor, the ronda circled to the right finding Teresita, the social worker, who gave a summary of her view stated earlier.

"The ideal," she said, "would be that the group stay open, but to take advantage of the resources and to maximize what we are going to learn, I think, at a personal level -- right -- that it must be, it must be closed and then offer open participation in a second stage, in the community groups to be formed."

To the right of Teresita sat Doña Lupe. Still perplexed about not permitting the muchachos to participate, she looked for a new way of stating the case.

"I believe in the point that we are all able to be in this group. We are responsible persons and I believe we are capable, as leaders, we go to the communities where they are, and they can come here asking us for help that we can give ourselves, because we are able. That is all."

Next came Doña Carmen, whose allusion the week earlier had signaled the problem. She again spoke at length, reiterating Adriano's words.

"For my part I found Adriano's talk good and have added a few points. He said a coordinator must inspire confianza. That is a reality. We must inspire confianza, respect and consideration of other people for whom we are responsible and for those that are around

us. And to inspire confianza, respect and consideration we must be educated people, and, of course," she slowed, not sure if she wanted to complete her thought. "Uh, the muchachos that joined last week, José and Julio, well, at first when we saw them, it made us, at least for me, it made me, I hurt for this type of people, it creates a great sadness to know how they are treated in society, and it hurts my soul," she carefully weighed the next words. "Um, to reject them, because, I don't know, the, the, the factors that carried these people to these, these conditions. Last week I told a story about some of the factors that lead to this and there are others which are the community disorders that means many of us can have a problem at any time given that our children are growing up in this. At any time we can be faced with a problem. I know that it is a shame. But in reality, what Adriano said, if we are coordinators we are going to be educators, people who orient, and we cannot afterward have this attitude, because, then, who would we be?"

She looked around the room as the impact of these words fell on the group. "Nobody would come near us. Or if we try to seek out people that have conflicts they would respond, "hey, what do you have to offer? You are just a so-and-so.' So in this respect we have

to be very careful. People in the group should be people with experience and, shall we say, maturity. Even young people who haven't had a lot of experience have considerable maturity of thought and have a positive attitude toward society. And at the side of older people, those of us that are old already at times we have nothing," she slowed again. "Uh, the presence of young people in groups is very important because they are people who are growing, they are growing in their responsibility to society. And for this reason I give, I believe that the muchachos, José and Julio . . . " again she had trouble completing her thought. "Uh, it is not that they are being rejected, rather," Doña Carmen looked for some acceptable way to say it. "Maybe we could find, as someone said, further on or communicate to them that, uh, it is not," she hedged, "I don't know," and then offered, "look for some way to tell them that they have not been rejected, because that is what, that is what society does, it destroys them even more. We destroy our own society. So we must look for a way, some manner to tell them that they must wait until the group would be ready to take them in." She finished.

The ronda now reached Maria Teresa. She was the first person to speak from among those who had actually invited the muchachos. She rarely spoke in the group, being both timid and very insecure. Her first words

were so quiet that it was impossible to pick them up on the tape. Someone asked her to repeat them. She hesitated and then repeated.

"About the muchachos, uh, they are people, aren't they? I agree with their participation here," she mumbled and then went on. "I don't know what to say. If they came here it was for something, looking for something," her voice trailed, "because I was one who invited them."

She was interrupted by Adriano, who challenged her suggestion.

"In this matter it is not about them. It is not about them. Is it clear that it is not about them? It is about us. About whether we are prepared. Us, us. We have already walked twice in life, as they say, well, I don't know," his thoughts seem to turn inward, to his own problems. "I, as, well to me, I have been sleeping, fallen twice. I fell twice," he stopped and then continued back with his original idea. "I have the impression that if this happens like this, well, let's say tomorrow we get the case of an alcoholic. Let's talk about the result if a drunkard comes, a drunk comes here. If tomorrow an drunk walks in and sits down here and says: "I want to be a part of the group. I want to prepare myself. I want to be a leader." Are we in

agreement that the drunkard should become a part of us?"

Comments and whispers erupted in several places around the room. The next two people in the circle declined to give an opinion. Doña Fidelia, the other grandmother in the group put it succinctly, "About them, I am not going to give an opinion." Rosario, a teenage friend of the muchachos but a second time visitor to the group suggested they could at least come as auditors. Judy said that she agreed with Doña Carmen and nothing more. Jim trying to build some middle ground suggested we could develop an interview process by which new people could be informed about the group and a decision made about whether they should participate. It was then Adriano's turn in the ronda. Although he had spoken numerous times he again summarized his view with a story.

"I do not believe they will inspire confianza," he started. "We need to be very honest with ourselves. At times we swallow our problems. Our tongue is tied, we do not talk about the things we are living, we swallow it. Why? Because we are afraid to go and talk about our problem to someone. And it doesn't bother me, I have friends, well let's not say friends, hey, I had some dealings with a homosexual person and the relationship was that I was a customer of his. He did his part and I paid to make me, for example, a shirt. And he did

good work. Well done, because that was his specialty. But nothing more. Now how could I go to this tailor, to this guy, and tell him about my problems. I don't know, but I would never do that."

Magdalena followed Adriano, her words were perhaps more direct than the others, as if suddenly the implications of homosexuality dawned on her.

"If they do that it is because they want to," she started. "If I go out with another woman, we can go out but not mixed up like that, never. I at least would never go with them. A person like that, don't believe it. They are not worth the pain. No. It is a person who is not worth anything, a person to pity," her voice trailed off.

It was now Ana's turn. Watching her during the evening one could see the tension within her. The feet bouncing and knees flexing. She responded curtly, "I have nothing to say." Few, if any would know how much she had to say but could not. The decision about the muchachos was a judgement of her as well. It was now my turn. I suggested the decision must rest with those who know their situation and culture best.

To my right sat Ruth. She would give perhaps the most controversial opinion of the evening, not unlike her nor unexpectedly according to the others.

Nicaraguans have a certain reputation in Costa Rica. As Doña Fidelia would comment later, "she is a Nica, but she acts properly." Generally, in Costa Rica, Nicas, people from Nicaragua, are stereotyped as being more confrontive, more direct, and in the worst scenario more likely to fight. In Costa Rica a common response to the casual inquiry of whether someone has a pocketknife is, "No, I am not a nica". Ruth started by admitting that she had invited the muchachos, in part because they were interested in the group and in part because they needed support and help. She then turned the tables.

"Not all of us are going to turn out to be coordinators," she said looking around the room. "Not all of us have the ability. Because, at least I believe there are people who confronted with a situation . . ." she stopped and gazed down at Javier, "hey, Javier is a little timid. He doesn't speak. At times you ask him something and he is like, like out of it and responds, 'What was it?' A person like that doesn't inspire confidence. And if I started to list all the people," she intentionally did not continue, but smiled and looked around. "So I believe, all of us that are in this group, not all of us are capable of becoming coordinators, see, and more than this, thinking in this," she hesitated again and started anew. "Because I thought when I invited these persons that they might

cause a problem, but then I look around and see persons who are not going to serve as coordinators and they are in the group and are accepted. Maybe I acted stupidly and did not look beyond at the problem it could cause and told them to come." Ruth now proceeded a little more slowly, changing her argument. People were obviously uncomfortable.

"I believe a person can, can continue to adapt himself and at least try to restore himself a little, right?" Ruth asked, referring to the muchachos. "And also, uh, I don't know if I am thinking evilly, at times a person thinks badly, right, but I looked at Enrique and the little ways he has, and I don't know if they are little ways or whether he is also like this." She was referring to a member not present that evening, who also had some effeminate characteristics, but who had never caused any controversy in the group. "And I saw that you all, all of you in the group had accepted him. He comes and everything. And then I did not have a problem in inviting them to the group."

She was not finished yet. She had another complaint about the group. "I want to clarify," she started, "that if you were not in agreement that these muchachos were here, you could have been clear. I believe that if in this group we are learning to be

coordinators and we want to have complete confianza -- and we do not have it yet, I believe there is a lot of ground to cover to gain trust, because from the first instant that a person is not in agreement that another be here in the group, he should have said, at least, he did not have the courage to say it, 'eh, don't come.' Or at least you could have communicated to any one of us who invited them, right, because they came with Doña Tere, Lorena, Ana and I. To any one of us you could have said, 'Girl, don't bring back these muchachos, for this reason.' Or for whatever the motive might be. But not that once they come and participate in the dinámica and everyone gives them confianza when they asked who would lead the dinámica the next day you said, "let the new ones do it." And then José did it and I did not see that it caused a problem, but rather you all accepted it. And when they said "Who will be the next coordinator?" And someone suggested him as well. So if you had not accepted him why did you suggest this. This is something which rather than helping them, pulls them under, like Doña Carmen said." Ruth barely disguised her frustration and sense of betrayal. She went on. "I believe that something at the beginning, it is better to say things no matter how hard, than to let time go by. They are, like Doña Carmen said, persons who have been rejected by society. Who knows how they feel. Thank

God I am not in that situation, right?, but it makes me sad. They are people that I feel sorry for and I would like to help them."

Ruth now revealed something of her on-going conversations with the muchachos. The group listened intently. "When Doña Carmen mentioned the problem of homosexuality I did not say anything to them. But the next day I said, 'muchachos didn't you feel bad with what we studied last night?'

'What we were talking about?' they asked.

'About what Doña Carmen explained about homosexuality, you all did not feel a little cornered? Didn't you feel bad?'"

Ruth continued telling the story. "Julio did not answer and José said, "Me, me, why? What Doña Carmen said was true,' he said, 'that is why we have so many men with this problem,' he said, 'because parents do not understand us,' he said, 'and we have this problem,' he said, 'because there are also people who do not know what it is or why we do this,' he said. And then it went on, him explaining to me a whole series of things."

She hesitated. "I never imagined that they would not be angry, at least if what they say is right, "I am not going to feel bad because what Doña Carmen is

saying is reality, right?, why am I going to get angry over truth,' he said." She finished and the room was unusually quiet.

The last person to speak that night was Miguel. "Well, this problem we have has not even been resolved by the professionals," he mused and then continued. "But what is clear in everything we have spoken is that we need an image, a profile of the participant, of the group, and the coordinator. For what reason? So that we have this problem again, so that there is a certain sense after bringing a person in and who for certain social reasons is not accepted. So this is the little problem we have, that we did not have an image of the member of the group. I believe that next time we should all bring the characteristics of who can be accepted and who cannot in the group," he hesitated. "Hey, so that we don't go back into this, of having to say names. But rather that there is already an idea of who can be and who cannot."

It was now nearly 10:00. People needed to catch the last bus home and the ronda came to an end. We would pick it up again the next night.

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A few less people came, but the principal actors were all present. The muchachos had not returned. The

evening progressed normally with dinámica and announcements. As we proceeded toward the ronda where we had left off the night before, someone asked about them. Maria Teresa and Ruth reported that they had spoken with José and he knew about the discussion. Ruth said José would come if he was accepted, but that he could not force anyone to accept him. He even offered to come simply as a member and not a coordinator. Adriano then moved us toward making a decision that night. He suggested that we do another ronda where each person gives their opinion briefly, and that we record that as a vote. Doña Lupe started, again stating there was no reason the muchachos should not be coming. It was then Jim's turn.

"I would like to say something about this subject. Yesterday, I, because I come from another culture, I am seeing this a little different. In my culture to be a homosexual is not a problem," he looked around. "Yesterday, I heard people say that homosexuals are sick, and my concern is that some people in the group think that if they are with us we can change them. My experience has been that it is very difficult to change a homosexual and I do not believe that we can change the muchachos. If they come, my preference as a human is that we accept them as humans and not for their sexual preference." He finished with a short summary.

"If they come I am in favor of accepting them as anyone else. Perhaps in this group there are other people with problems we do not know, perhaps a thief, or maybe an alcoholic and we do not know it. Why not a homosexual."

The next five people, including Doña Carmen and Maria Teresa abstained and made no comment. Judy gave an opinion this time stating more clearly that we should help them.

"We have rejected them, and one cannot do that. We are all human, at least I see it the same. For me," she stumbled to find the words, "already they, this, I always see them as persons, as men. I treat them the same as a man should be treated. That is my opinion."

Teresita held the same opinion as the day before, that they should not join at this time. Miguel then gave a longer opinion.

"Well, I do not think that it is that we are rejecting anyone. We are not rejecting anyone as a person. What we are rejecting," he stopped, seeming to weigh his words, "is, hey, their morality. Morality." He put special emphasis on the word as he found it. "That does not mean we are rejecting them as persons, because, I don't know, it would seem that these people have a way of treating one that is sort of affective," he continued. "It is not that we are rejecting them but

rather we have to think about how far, how far can it be good for the group and the spiritual problems that it causes later. That doesn't mean these muchachos cannot come as auditors, but then they will feel marginal. The fact is they are. They could participate in a second stage, but not preparing them as leaders so that they work on problems. It is a fact, we are all aware that it is not the same to treat a problem with a person who inspires confidence by his moral character, through his moral values more than anything, than with another who we know is already prejudiced as a homosexual, or that he is a marihuana smoker, or someone who likes to fight." He ended with a proposal. "So I think it is good that we accept these muchachos as auditors." Adriano was now making four categories on the board as he recorded the comments as votes: **Yes, No, Abstain, and Auditor.**

Roberto echoed Miguel's theme. It would be better that they come as auditors and maybe later we could treat their problem. "If we do not accept them as auditors, then they are going to feel rejected," he finished. "I hold to what I said yesterday. It is stupid to be repeating all this," Doña Fidelia said, a bit perplexed at why so much time was spent on this issue. Javier, the most timid of the group who in seven weeks of meetings had never initiated a single opinion,

declined to comment. Adriano, a bit irritated, pressed him for an opinion. Finally, and with a nervous twitch he blurted "Hey, one speaks badly of them. One's child could turn out to be the same as them." Smiles and a few chuckles emerged in the group. A few heads nodded in agreement, in part because they were surprised to hear Javier make a statement, in part because what he said made sense.

The ronda came to Ana, who tonight offered a view. With her feet shuffling and her knees bouncing she said one sentence. "I don't see any inconvenience in their coming." Rosario and Magdalena, both supporting the idea that one never knows what will happen to one's kids, agreed with the auditor option, "so they can come and not be rejected." The first ronda of the evening was finished. Adriano, who had been recording all these opinions as a vote on the board, tried to summarize.

"Actually this issue is not easy. It is not easy because the thing is not easy. Because situations come into the play like our culture. Religion comes into play, science and genetics come into play," he paused, then pulled out his wallet and extracted a picture of his daughters. "I do not know what will become of my children. None of us do." He stopped, seeming to switch back to a different thought. "I

continue in my opinion that we have to inspire confianza. He turned to the board and pointed at the auditor category of votes. "Now here is a third position emerging. Five people have accepted them as auditors. But then we are setting up a division in the group. Two categories, two classes: First class are going to be a leaders. Second class are auditors. I know that this position is perhaps the most, the easiest. We do not tell them "no'; but we do not tell them "yes.' We don't tell them "yes' and we do not tell them "no.' We accept them half-way."

In his mind this was unacceptable. It was not a decision. He moved to a new ronda with defined parameters for the "definitive" vote: Yes meant they were accepted as leaders; No meant they were not allowed in the group; Auditor meant they could be in the group but not as leader. The ronda started with each casting his or her vote.

I was first and abstained, explaining it was not my place as an outsider to vote on this issue. Two "no's" followed. Doña Carmen was perplexed. "No matter what, it is bad. If you say yes, it is impossible. If you say no, the group divides. If you say auditor, the group divides. I just abstain." Several more decided on auditor status for the muchachos. Then came a series of abstentions. Several voices broke out, arguing that

those abstaining were just evading their responsibility. On the blackboard Adriano chalked-in the results:

Yes - 1 No - 5 Auditor - 4 Abstention - 9.

Adriano tried to make sense of it. "The truth is this has got me confused," he looked at the board. "Something is coming to the surface here, this means something." His chalk was tapping on the numbers near the abstention category. This means something. It isn't just saying, this is saying more than this," he finished, running the chalk around the nine votes in the abstention. "This is what we Ticos do."

Now the group was faced with a perplexing problem. "We still need a 75% agreement," Adriano reminded us. And went on to interpret what the "vote" was saying.

"Doña Carmen sniffed this out earlier. We were just commenting as we were coming in that there is a division being created in the group. Those that invited the muchachos believe that there is a battle. Whether we admit it or not there is a battle," he shuffled a bit and continued. "It is uncomfortable, this issue. It is thorny. I cannot walk on the edge of a cliff. Why? Because there are many interests, there are many interests."

Members in the group were getting impatient. Someone suggested we vote by secret ballot rather than open ronda. Magdalena wanted quick action. "My opinion," she said, "is that we get this problem over quickly, because it is being drawn out too much, and is more problematic. You are just adding more pepper to the thing. It is better to decide yes or no, nothing about auditors. Nothing. Just yes or no. Just quit dragging it out. Nothing more with these roundabouts. We have lost the time for two lessons because of this."

Adriano, sensing the mood, agreed to a secret ballot. After more comments, each person received a slip of paper and voted secretly. The room was filled with the buzz of conversation as Adriano and Magdalena counted the ballots. They put up the results:

Yes - 3 No - 10 Abstention - 4.

Two people had not voted. "I doubt we will ever get a 75% majority on this," Miguel commented and others agreed.

During the ballot Lorena had arrived. She had missed portions of both nights' meetings because of her night school classes, but as a friend of the muchachos she had a few things to say.

"Listen, I say just one thing," her voice, harsh and tense cut across the room and immediately got attention. "Why so much of a thing over this? If they are

not going to come anymore, why so much problem over this?

Adriano, trying to control this outburst, responded with several other voices talking, "this is something we have been discussing." But Lorena was not stopping.

"On top of that, one other thing, when we were asked to bring people here," she paused strategically, "we were not asked what class of person to bring were we?"

"Right," Adriano started with others talking, "that, uh, we did not have a profile," cut off again by Lorena he stopped.

"Another thing, given that, that they did not come back, why such a problem? It makes it look like it is the end of the world or who knows what. I do not see that it is made into such a thing," again Adriano tried to break in, but to no avail. Lorena continued on, paying little attention to him. "They are human beings aren't they? Just like us and us like them. I don't see the importance in all of this. That a thing like this would take place here, for two days now."

Magdalena now tried to speak, "that was already discussed," she said. "That is what we talked about." Her comment drew a sharp response.

"Hey, but I wasn't here yesterday, and hey, I can give an opinion."

"Sure, but we already," Magdalena was cut off in mid sentence by other voices and by Lorena, who insisted in the loudest voice with Adriano trying to break back in to gain control.

"But I can give an opinion as the person that I am can't I? You all have given your opinion, I have mine as well."

Adriano kept trying, "If you just let me, one second, now, a few minutes, a few seconds we were talking just about that," but other voices, took the floor. "Come on let's get this going," someone said. Another reiterated, "Let's do it by ballot again."

Lorena tried one more time, "Hey I think it would be better if we didn't vote." Adriano paying little attention, again took more leadership asking if anyone would be opposed to breaking the 75% rule. People were now actively engaged in talking with their neighbors. A suggestion was made to start another ronda, but others disagreed. In the midst of discussing how to proceed Lorena, who was sitting near Adriano, got up and left the room. Watching her leave he made a suggestion.

"For now, we can do it like this. There is a majority, ten against three. But we have said, we have

created a rule that when there are votes it must be 75%. Today because it is too rough an issue, because it is so thorny, it is more or less like how to grab a snake by the tail, hey, we are, it's like how to grab a snake by the tail." He pressed with his suggestion for a final ronda, using clear voting categories: Would they agree to let the majority opinion stand as the group's decision. All it required was a simple **yes** or **no**.

Around we went. A few responded verbally, most just nodded their answer. The ronda finished: twelve agreed, one disagreed and five abstained. The muchachos would not be a part of the group. The atmosphere was tense. The three who abstained, beside Jim and I, were Ruth, Esmeralda and Maria Teresa. Adriano asked who was going to tell the muchachos. Nobody answered. He made his last comment. "I believe that we are now, well it is like walking the deceased to the cemetery. That is how we are, at the cemetery. Let's take a break."

My journal entry of April 30, 1987 written the morning after these events describes the meeting's conclusion.

(At the end of the last vote, the surprises were given out and we had our drinks. The ambiente was heavy. I spoke briefly with Maria Teresa outside. She was talking about a recent conversation with José, the feeling of rejection, of not being accepted. She was hurt. It was already late. Doña Flor, who did not like what we had done with the discussions -- she looked especially uncomfortable throughout the whole thing -- said she was going home. She couldn't stay any longer. Last

night had gone until 10:00 and she couldn't take that. Adriano, Jim and Teresita decided on a little dinámica. Teresita introduced it. "It has been a tense night, we are going to alleviate the tension a little, we are going to do a dinámica. We made a tight circle with the chairs. Once again we were close. In the circle there was one less chair than persons present. The person who stood out had to give an order: "Everyone change chairs that has white shoes" or anything s/he wanted. Those with white shoes then dashed to change chairs with one another and inevitably someone else would get left out and would make the next order.

The game started off slowly but built. I watched the first time Ruth got caught out. She was showing the strain of the evening. She had brought the muchachos. She knew them, had talked to them about the problem and did not understand why they could not be a part of the group. I imagine she was tired and upset with the process and decision. She got up slowly, not with her usual energy and smile. She gave the command and people went running. The dinámica built, gaining momentum. The atmosphere was changing. You could feel it. There was laughter, then lots of laughter. It was becoming cathartic, reaffirming. The group was still together. Adriano laughed so hard he had tears pouring out of his eyes. He took his thumbs up across the bottom of his eyes and flung the tears. Rosario, in the middle, was laughing so hard she could not give the command. Maria Teresa was involved. Ruth was laughing. The dinámica was doing its thing: creating the group, giving it confianza and support. After about twenty minutes it ended. Judy said, "Okay, the last one." And that was it. We started on our ways home. Not nearly as heavy, but still thinking).

The muchachos were informed unofficially by Ruth and Maria Teresa of the results. They never returned to Genesis.

CHAPTER 4

GRABBING THE SNAKE BY THE TAIL: THE ARTFUL COORDINATION OF CONFLICT

INTRODUCTION

Early on in the muchacho debate, Magdalena proposed that Genesis could eventually serve as a therapy group for cases like these. "We could help them get out (salir) of the problems they have gotten themselves into (entrado)" she said. But now was not the time. The muchachos should return later, once "we are ubicados" as a group, once we have our bearings."

In the first chapter I suggested that from a phenomenological perspective conflict must be understood as a constitutive process, one that is intimately tied to the use of knowledge and the creation of social meaning. A key in that process is the mechanism that Magdalena calls ubicarse: getting located. In this chapter, based on the case of the muchachos, I want to examine how conflict is accomplished through the process of ubicarse, of locating oneself, or, if you will, the

art of how conflict is coordinated.

Ubicarse means to locate something, someone or oneself. Consider for example several everyday uses of the term ubicar. In Central America where streets are not always named and numbered, a business will often give its ubicacion (location) through its relationship to other prominent city buildings or features: "We are ubicado 200 meters south of Central Park, then 100 meters to the West." Taxi drivers, in their rapid lingo often reduce everything to the essential "coordinates": "From Central Park, 200 South and 100 West." It is not uncommon to hear someone say that they are "ubicados (living) in such and such a neighborhood." Likewise, when a person is lost in the city, they are desubicado (disoriented). "Tengo que ubicarme," they will say, "I have to get my bearings."

The same feeling and terminology is also used in social settings. Magdalena 's statement that the muchachos should come "once we are ubicados" is used in this sense. They should come once we have "figured out" what we are doing. One of the porteñas talked about her experience in San José with a group of professors and diplomats. "Me sentí bien desubicada," she reported, "I felt out of place." In the rondas, it was not unusual for people to struggle with what was being asked of them, what they should say, or how they should vote. We

would often hear, "es que no me siento bien ubicado. De que se trata?" (I am not sure what is going on. I'm lost. What are we talking about here?"). Recently in Guatemala, I met a person whom I had briefly visited with about a year earlier. While I recognized him, he did not immediately remember me. After a few minutes of discussion it suddenly dawned on him who I was and he said, "Now I have you ubicado." That might roughly translate in English, "Now I've got you pegged."

In these examples, the sense of lost and found, of meaningless and meaningful hinges on locating the person, thing or event within society. Ubicarse is at the center of what phenomenologists (Schutz, 1967; Kjolseth, 1972) and ethnomethodologists (Garfinkel, 1967; Cicourel, 1973) refer to as the process of "making sense." Closely related are terms from other disciplines. Sociolinguists generally refer to this as "situated" language-variety-in-use referring to the need to place the meaning of talk in social time, social space and social purpose (Hymes, 1967; Fishman, 1972). Literary critique, for example, refers to this as contextualization. In the practice of psychiatry it is referred to as "framing" and "reframing" (Watzlawick, 1978; Minuchin and Fishman, 1981), terminology that is also commonly used in mediation (Young, 1972; Moore,

1986). As described by Watzlawick, Weakland and Fisch (1974:95) reframing changes a persons viewpoint in relation to a situation when it is "placed in another frame which fits the facts . . . and thereby changes its entire meaning." In a parallel vein the process of ubicarse is analogous at the folk level to what Wehr (1979) calls conflict "mapping." It is, however, central for our purposes to take account of the sociological perception inherent in this key folk term.

Ubicarse "makes sense" of something when, quite literally, its location is coordinated. Consider the etymology of ubicar. In English we have a word of similar roots, ubiquity: made up of Latin ubi (where) and qui (who), resulting in "presence that is everywhere." In the Spanish, ubi and car is action aimed at finding "where" one is. Notice in the examples above, all of them common, everyday expressions in Central America, the action of ubicarse is that of "seeking where." In other words, it is the work we do to coordinate things. It is the putting together of things into a larger whole with a new and discrete meaning. A location is determined, not in and of itself, but rather in comparison with and in connection to other things. Coordinates are an intersection that result in a defined location.

In the social constitutive sense, ubicarse -- "seeking where" -- is activity aimed at locating the intersection between past and present, between the known and the newly encountered. Literally, ubicarse are procedures for locating present experience in the past bank of knowledge. The intersection of these two permits us to know "where we are" and therefore decide "where to go." In other words, the location, as an intersection of present in past, permits us to assess and give meaning to the present and anticipate the probable emerging future toward which we are propelled. The locating procedures create a "place to be" in reference to the emerging situation. Metaphorically, in this folk understanding, dealing with social interaction and particularly conflict, is like looking for a new address and being lost in the city. In this sense it is like map making and reading. We must find where we are at in order to get where we are going. As we will see in later chapters, much of the folk language in Central American conflict settings revolves around metaphors of travel and movement: enter, arrive, get in, get out. Conflict, like life, is a journey.

Ubicarse then, is a member activity aimed at locating experience and oneself. The resulting location, a place to be, provides meaning, but only as it is

individually and socially "coordinated." For our purposes we will now consider a "location" to be the coordinates, the intersection of present experience in past knowledge; the point at which meaning is evaluated and assessed. A location emerges when present experience is coordinated in a portion of already accumulated member knowledge that is deemed relevant for understanding the current situation and useful for appropriately managing it.

We can now explore the case of the muchachos as an effort of coordination and examine the appearance and transformation of the members' work in negotiating with one another "where they were at" in reference to the participation of the muchachos in their group. In this chapter, unless identified otherwise, I will use the word "member" to refer to members of Genesis. Following and describing their interactive work is considerably more challenging than it appears to be on the surface and underscores both the richness and complexity of studying the taken-for-granted constitutive procedural elements involved in accomplishing conflict or any other social reality.

The "very delicate case of the muchachos" emerged over the course of two weeks. While it probably consumed untold hours of talk and consideration by and among different members, it formally occupied Genesis'

agenda for parts of four consecutive meetings. In those meetings a variety of activities took place and the actual face-to-face interaction around the muchacho decision resulted in about an hour and half of recorded-as-coded talk most of which appears in the preceding chapter. Recorded-as-coded simply means that the actual talk-in-use by members, that is their "coding," at the time the event took place, was tape recorded in the original and subsequently transcribed. Analysis of this talk reveals numerous proposals suggested by members for locating their group and for situating the muchachos. This was used to create and understand the problem.

Initially, one is struck with the fluid rather than the fixed nature of "locations." Members rarely defined them clearly, nor were these locations expressed as single, independent units. Rather multiple locations are constantly being handled between members at any one time and often by single individuals. In other words, locations are in a constant process of subjective and intersubjective negotiation. I have already used the words subjective and intersubjective in several instances without a clear definition. By subjective I refer to the individual internal proceedings going on inside a single individual. It is his or her internal "mental" view of the world. By intersubjective I refer

to proceedings taking place between individuals. It refers to knowledge held in common with others. Inter-subjective knowledge is synonymous with social facts or objectively shared realities. I am suggesting then, that behind the creation of locations is a constant and fluid process of negotiation both within and between individuals. However, for analytical purposes in this chapter I will describe and isolate locations as individual and independent units. Reduced to their coordinates, it is as if we were observing them through a stop-action camera, taking away most, if not all of their emergent, transforming, and interactive nature. Our initial objective here is to identify and describe member knowledge deemed relevant, and how it was used to coordinate understanding and management of the muchacho case.

Doña Carmen's initial speech, for example, signaled the most obvious and least disputed location: Homosexuality is a social problem. In the course of the discussions homosexuality was, in the minds of the members, equated with alcoholism, drug addiction and prostitution. So great was the acknowledgement of this activity as a "problem" that they rarely could bring themselves to say the word "homosexual." In the course of the two weeks' discussions the word homosexual was used fewer than five times by members, except for Jim,

the foreigner, who in a single intervention of less than a minute repeated it four times. "Eso" (this) and los muchachos became convenient handles for referring to the problem thus avoiding the directness of naming it publicly. With the exception of Jim, in the entire interaction there was no expressed refutation of the definition of homosexuality as a problem, in other words as an undesirable state of affairs that should, if possible, be changed. The problem was what to do with homosexuals in the group.

As coordinator for the two weeks of meetings, Adriano had a special role in creating locations. In his introductory remarks he located this problem as the question of whether Genesis would be an "open" or "closed" group; a group that "takes all comers" or one that closes itself a little and defines "characteristics" and "qualities" of its members. While this location was at times viewed in a broader sense -- what kind of people will be permitted to join Genesis -- it was more generally interpreted as meaning: Will we permit these muchachos to join us now? Around this question emerged the members' different locations. Rooted in their accumulated but taken-for-granted knowledge these locations created, evaluated and transformed the conflict.

THE PROFILE OF TRUST

"Who," Adriano asked early on, "are the people who will inspire confianza?" Confianza is a concept central to our overall study and one we will investigate in considerable detail in later chapters. For our present purposes we will consider its meaning as confidence or trust. As Adriano suggested in his opening speeches, the location of trust, that is who and what will inspire confianza was a primary concern for evaluating what should be done with the muchachos.

Implicit in the confianza location is the members' understanding of group purpose. It seems to respond to the unspoken question, "Who are we?" "We know that we are going to be coordinators," Adriano said. As Magdalena described it, Genesis' purpose was to prepare "ourselves to become leaders...and resolve community problems." For many members the purpose of Genesis was leadership training and helping others in the community with their problems. In their view the confianza location emerges from the taken-for-granted understanding that trust is necessary if someone is to permit others to help him/her. This is so obvious and so necessary in Adriano's mind that he consistently refers to it in the imperative: "Necessarily, we must inspire confianza" if we are to achieve our purpose.

Doña Carmen called it a "reality" and Miguel referred to it as a "fact." "We are all aware," he said, "that it is not the same to treat a problem with a person who inspires confianza by his moral character . . . than with another who we already know is a homosexual or a marihuana smoker."

"Who inspires confianza?" is less a question than a statement. Members view confianza as necessary for achieving the purpose of helping others. Homosexuals, in their expressed view, do not inspire confianza, but rather suspicion. Thus, the confianza location creates a negative solution: the muchachos should not participate in Genesis. Three other statements shed light on this view.

Magdalena, soon after she identified the group purpose of becoming leaders and solving community problems continues:

So then they (the muchachos) come here, supposedly, I understood they came to hear from us. But from there, that someone who has a problem would go to them, doesn't feel-- well--because that is the way they are.

We can almost feel the tension and contradiction of locations in Magdalena's mind as she visualizes an image representing the present problem: a homosexual as resource person helping others with their personal problems in Puntarenas barrios. In the above citation, as in many other cases, the breaks in speech pattern --

here depicted as a "well" -- are used by people to move from one location to another. Here Magdalena is staging in her mind while speaking the scenario of a homosexual consejero (helper) in her barrio. The very notion holds an inherent contradiction important enough that the scene while completed in her mind is cut off in the public delivery. She breaks, "well" and moves to the conclusion without completing the sentence. The "well" indicates a shift to a completely different set of coordinates. In her relevant knowledge she concludes that people will not go to them with their problems simply because of who they are.

Likewise, Adriano told a story to ubicar his idea. He starts by saying porteños are "tongue swallows:" "We are afraid to go and talk about our problem to someone." As he had said on many other occasions, "we have no one to turn to when we have a problem, no one to trust." Then he recounts a story. He once had an acquaintance who was homosexual, a tailor by trade. Adriano ordered shirts from him and he did good work. But that was the extent of the relationship, nothing more. He concludes, "Now how could I go to this tailor and tell him about my problems. Never. I don't know but I would never do that." The moral of the story: homosexuals do not inspire confianza. But let

us draw out Adriano's logic in more detail. As he and other members discussed in some detail, to have confianza is to open yourself up. To reveal a problem is to expose and reveal a weakness. This is a vulnerable position to place yourself in, giving the other an advantage. Therefore, you must be certain (confianza) that the other person is "trust"worthy, will not take advantage, and that the risk will not be for naught because you have reason to be fairly certain (confianza) that there is something the other can actually do for you. People who do not inspire that sense of certainty are not people you share personal problems with. Hence, in his logic, homosexuals do not inspire confianza, a sense of certainty and trustworthiness, and therefore do not serve as helpers for personal problems. They are not a good resource for resolving problems in our communities.

Doña Carmen drew this picture even clearer.

If we are going to be . . . people who orient . . . we cannot afterward have this attitude (homosexuality), because, then, who would we be? Nobody would come near us. Or if we try to seek people out that have conflicts, they would respond, "Hey, what do you have to offer. You are just a so-and-so."

We can now describe more clearly the coordinates of the trust location. In members' minds, preparing leaders and people who can help others in their community is one purpose of group activity. "Helping others"

necessitates confianza. Without confianza others will not accept our help. They will not "confide" in us. Homosexuals, because of the "problem" they have and "who they are" do not inspire confianza. Thus, as a location, confianza is organized and used to suggest that the muchachos should not participate in the group because they, as homosexuals, will not be accepted in the community as "helpers" or "leaders" and should not, therefore, be a part of a group whose purpose is precisely that. Homosexuals are located as persons who need help, not as people who can extend help.

There are several variations of the confianza location as related to group purpose. This was named by Miguel as a question of "profile," something Schutz (1967) would call a "typification:" Genesis needed an "image, a profile of the participant, of the group and the coordinator." The profile is both of the group as it enters the community -- as Adriano said, the concern is with "us" as a group -- and of individuals who will be leaders. Both of these co-related profile locations of member and group emerge from the confianza theme.

In the members' view Genesis' purpose is to offer a service to the community and prepare leaders. To be successful it must be known and must attain a profile in the community -- as a group and as indivi-

duals -- conducive to carrying out that goal. The presence and participation of homosexuals in Genesis creates a profile that is in opposition to those goals. It creates the wrong image, one that is incongruent with respected leaders or people who will "orient." "We must inspire confianza" responds negatively to muchacho participation, in part because of the image it creates of us-in-community and of us-as-leaders-in-community.

A third profile concerns not only the outside image of Genesis but also how the group will operate internally with the active presence of homosexuals. As Miguel put it, "how can it (participation of the muchachos) be good for the group." Again the location suggests a negative solution: homosexuals in the group will hinder our internal development and group interaction.

These same themes, however, can be reevaluated, or re-coordinated, providing a new location. This comes by "placing" the question of purpose -- who are we? -- in different but still relevant member knowledge. Consider Ruth's intervention, which argued in favor of the muchachos staying. She starts with the simple phrase, "Not all of us are going to turn out to be coordinators. Not all of us have the ability." Like Adriano, she develops the location by recounting known experience of others' activities in the group.

I believe there are people (in the group) who confronted with a situation--hey--Javier is a little timid. He doesn't speak. At times you ask him something and he is like, like out of it and responds, "What was it?" A person like that doesn't inspire confianza. And if I started to list all the people-- well-- . . .

Notice that her location coincides with earlier "profile" knowledge: Certain people will not be accepted as leaders and helpers in our community. She agrees that there are people who do not inspire confianza and will not be successful in certain roles. While she accepts the confianza premise, her location changes its meaning by taking account of the present membership of Genesis. This "account" is actually quite literal. In the original Spanish the translated phrase "list all the people" is their common expression enumerar personas: To "number-out persons." In context it means, "If I took a count of the examples of non-leaders who do not inspire confianza in our group . . ." We should not forget that counting is valuing. We simultaneously count and evaluate, that is, assess the value of a thing. Coordinating a location is, at essence, a process of valuation, of accounting for the placement of some "thing" among others.

Ruth's conclusion invites group members to look at themselves and take account that ". . . we are not all leaders." She then implies that the purpose of

Genesis must be more than just leadership. In her mind it is participation in a weekly course, in a new social group. Her coordinates are not located in knowledge related to a projection of us-in-community, or us-as-leaders-in-community, but rather in knowledge that accounts-for-us now. In her accounting she notes that to date the group has taken all comers, that there are other non-leader people in the group, and that there is one potential homosexual already accepted in the group. This location, while still in the framework of a profile, transvalues the muchacho participation from negative to positive.

The confianza location emerges because members evaluated the meaning of homosexual participation in Genesis. It develops in response to two questions: Who are we? What is our purpose? Locations evolve when members take "account" and coordinate homosexual participation in their knowledge and then project future situational and role definitions and the presentation of self in the community. Close examination of the confianza location indicates a consistent dramaturgical nature in its development (Goffman, 1959). The location creates a projected stage with actors: a homosexual as a community leader helping people with personal problems. Instantaneously the interaction is played out in the "stage creator's" mind and s/he hops immediately

and unconsciously to the conclusion: In our community a homosexual will not successfully accomplish a definition of the situation in which he presents himself as a leader and helper. He will not inspire confianza, therefore he should not participate in Genesis.

WE ARE ALL HUMANS

The primary response in favor of the muchachos emerged not by counteracting the confianza location but rather by creating an entirely new one and expanding the stage. This new location is perhaps best named by Judy who simply said, "We are all human." Others reiterated that idea. Lorena, for example, noted, "They are human beings aren't they. Just like us and us like them." Or as Maria Teresa said, "They are people, aren't they? I agree with their participation here." At essence this location is coordinated in relevant member knowledge that values positively muchachos' participation because they are like us. They are one of us. Consider the various accountings that coordinate the we-are-all-human location.

First, everyone agreed that we all have problems. As Doña Carmen noted, there are "... many disorders in the human structure that means many of us can have a problem (like theirs) at any time because our children are growing up in this." This location emerged

consistently in the minds of all, even of those who were opposed to muchacho participation. Consider Adriano's comment. "No one is vaccinated against problems . . . each of us have our own problems . . . I don't know if you all observed the muchachos and their way of living, but I believe they have problems. I am nobody to criticize them, because it is a problem like any other . . ." Relevant knowledge here seems to suggest that while the muchachos have a problem, so do we. Given that we are like them because we all have problems, having a problem is not a sufficient justification for them not participating, or we would all have to resign from the group.

A second variation of this location lies in Doña Carmen's words that our ". . . children are growing up in this." Javier puts this most succinctly in his brief words, "Hey, one speaks badly of them. One's child could turn out to be the same as them." There is recognition that a serious problem like homosexuality could happen to any of us and to our children, raising implicitly the question of how we would like to be treated if found in similar circumstances, or more importantly yet, how we would like our children treated. There is the unspoken conclusion to this question: acceptance not rejection is the right thing to do. They are, after all, like us.

Finally, a third variation coordinates this question from another angle: The muchachos came for help. Maria Teresa makes this insinuation when she says, "if they came here, it was for something. They were looking for something." Others are more direct, noting that the muchachos came to "hear from us", to get "help" from us. Doña Lupe puts it most clearly. "They can come here asking for help that we can give ourselves." Relevant member knowledge suggests an unspoken norm: "Someone seeking help must not be rejected, but helped, for, after all, we too have problems and need help at times."

All these variations are related to implicit member knowledge about when it is and is not appropriate to reject someone. This in fact provides the punch to the argument for accepting the muchachos. In the members' minds, rejection and "marginalization" are simply wrong and create a powerful location for responding to the muchacho dilemma. Members are not only invoking but negotiating relevant norms for regulating the situation.

The first variation of the rejection location notes that, in general, societal treatment of homosexuals is wrong. Consider Doña Carmen's speech. "I hurt for these type of people. It makes me very sad to know how they are treated in society and it hurts my

soul -- um -- to reject them." She struggled for some time to argue that they not be admitted, yet each time the "rejection" location confronted her. She finished saying, "We have to look for some way to tell them that they have not been rejected. Because that is what, that is what society does. It destroys them even more."

Ruth on the other hand develops a different location. She starts from the premise that it is wrong to reject someone once they have already participated and are part of us. Consider her words:

I believe there is a lot of ground to cover to gain confianza (in this group) because from the first instant that a person is not in agreement that another be here in the group, he should have said . . . "eh, don't come" . . . but not once they come and participated and everyone gave them confianza . . . when José led the dinámica I did not see it caused a problem, but rather you accepted it . . . and someone suggested him (as coordinator). So if you had not accepted him why did you suggest this. This is something which rather than helping them pulls them under like Doña Carmen said . . .

Ruth is negotiating a norm based on knowledge about what is right and wrong: Participation with us, giving them confianza to lead us was tantamount to our giving them acceptance. As such they are now "integrated." They are now part of us, and as part of us cannot be rejected. That is what society does to them, to all of us that have problems. And that is wrong. As Judy said it, "We have rejected them and one cannot do that. We are all human, at least I see it the same."

It is here that we understand the metaphoric talk-in-context used to describe the problem: it is a "delicate" situation. Consider, for example, Adriano's description. "The situation is very delicate because they can accuse, they can perfectly well accuse us, because we are marginalizing human beings just like us. We are closing doors to them who are perhaps seeking help." It is delicate because unspoken but relevant norms are broken. Those norms are consistently connected to protecting and governing perhaps the single most important social construction: their network. The situation is "delicate" because we risk breaking that which has been carefully constructed. "Us. Us. Its about us," Adriano said. As in a later interview when asked to reflect back on the muchacho problem Roberto commented that earlier we could have found a suavecito, a kind way, to tell them they could not participate. But now it was going to feel like a "rejection, and that is very bad, very delicate." Rejection is bad, not simply because it hurts others, but, as suggested here, because it comes after we have accepted them and they have become a part of us. It breaks the delicate construction that ties us all together: our social selves, purpose and network.

Herein lies the heart of the conflict. The case of the muchachos is created through differing valuations of locations, which at essence are intersubjective negotiations of unspoken group norms. On the one hand, the problem of the muchachos is located as an assessment of confianza, an accounting, and evaluation of profile, image and purpose. This location suggests homosexuals will not successfully accomplish the presentation of themselves as leaders and helpers in this community, and will, therefore, create an undesirable image of the group and undermine its goals. Successful creation and management of this location depends on taken-for-granted knowledge about what is appropriate and normal in terms of helping others, as based primarily on their conceptualization of confianza as intersubjectively negotiated in the wider community. On the other hand, the muchacho problem is located as an assessment of network norms: members call forth knowledge to account and evaluate the rules governing our mutual needs and responsibilities. In this location we cannot reject people who are a part of us. Rejection destroys them and us. "One cannot do that." In the end, as Adriano named it, the public interaction of these locations produces a "battle . . . a division . . . created in the group." In other words, the social organization and pursuit of different places to be on something was experienced by members creating

those places to be as conflict.

WE ARE NOT PREPARED

A third major location evolves around the potential for Genesis to handle the muchacho problem. This location assumes several of the points already discussed. First, homosexuality is a community problem. Second, Genesis' purpose is to deal with and respond to community problems. Third, the muchachos have come to Genesis for help with their problem. Fourth, Genesis "could be a therapy group," and the muchachos could be the first major case.

There are two evaluations of this possibility that emerge. Adriano, for example, suggests that while it is possible that they are coming for help, it so happens that "we are not yet prepared to provide that help. We are still in a process of forming the group, of preparing ourselves . . . so that tomorrow we can learn to respond to people." Genesis is, as he says, "still in diapers." Here further participation of the muchachos is valued negatively because the group is not prepared to handle their problem.

Doña Lupe's evaluation on the other hand, suggests the opposite. "I believe in the point that we are able to be in this group . . . we are capable . . . as leaders we go to the communities where they are and

they can come here. And they ask for help and we can give ourselves, because we are able." This location suggests that we do have something to offer and the muchachos should come.

In both of these views we see a distinction most clearly analyzed from dramaturgical angle (Goffman, 1959). Adriano believes that Genesis must still "prepare" and practice before it can perform. Genesis is not yet prepared to stage a helping scene with the muchachos, hence the metaphor of "diapers." Doña Lupe feels that the performance is possible and could be successfully accomplished. In both instances "helping" is like an act, a scene on a stage. The scene is instantly and simultaneously played out in the person's mind and a conclusion reached about the probability of accomplishing the act. This creates a location for suggesting appropriate responses faced with the current situation. Here we see Schutz' notion of the retrospective, prospective, perspective of time, or what we called the coyuntura of an event, depicted clearly in the dynamic nature of locations: They are negotiated by enacting the future event coordinated in past accumulated knowledge to understand the present.

ADDING PEPPER TO THE THING

Throughout the discussion members created loca-

tions using knowledge relevant to the way the decision about the muchachos was being made. For example, on numerous occasions the observation was made that as Miguel put it, "We should all bring characteristics of who can be accepted and who cannot in the group." Here Miguel makes use of knowledge about appropriate procedures for managing the decision. First, as others also suggested, responsibility is placed with the group: "We should decide." Second, the decision could be made by establishing characteristics or qualities that define the participant.

As the discussions evolved, procedural locations became more evident and intense. Members began to coordinate the entire process in their knowledge about priorities and time. The muchacho decision in the minds of several was "taking too much time." Frustration emerged with the inability of the group to finalize a clear consensus. The vote rule was discussed and renegotiated to make it easier to reach a decision. Even then, as Magdalena voiced, Genesis could not declare itself in one clear cut decision.

My opinion is that we get this problem over quick, because it is being drawn out too much, and is more problematic. You are just adding more pepper to the thing. It is better to just decide yes or no. Nothing with auditor. Nothing. Just yes or no . . . Nothing more with these roundabouts. We have lost two lessons because of this.

Her location coordinates the problem as going in circles, as "making it long." The problem and time are measured in occurrences, constituted units of some "thing" happening repeatedly. She advocates getting the problem over now by not permitting any alternatives except a straight "yes" or "no." Lorena, frustrated at the end engages in similar process tactics, creating different locations. Consider again this exchange in some detail.

Lorena: Listen, I say just one thing. Why so much of a thing over this? If they are not going to come anymore, why so much problem over this?

Adriano: (with other voices talking) This is something we have been discussing . . .

Lorena: (breaking in) . . . on top of that, one other thing, when we were asked to bring people here, -- uh -- we were not asked what class of person to bring were we?

Adriano: (with others talking) . . .Right, that, -- uh -- we did not have a profile . . .

Lorena: (breaking in) . . . another thing, given that, that they did not come back, why such a problem. It makes it look like it is the end of the world or who knows what. I do not see it is made into such a thing . . .

Adriano: (breaking back in) . . . it is that they
. . .

Lorena: (going on) . . . they are human beings aren't they? Just like us and us like them. I don't see the importance in all of this. That a thing like this would take place here, two days now.

Magdalena: That was already discussed, that is what we talked about.

Lorena: Hey, but I wasn't here yesterday, and hey, I can give an opinion.

Magdalena: Sure, but we already . . . (other voices)

Lorena: But I can give an opinion (Adriano talks over her) as the person that I am can't I? You all have given your opinion, I have mine as well.

Adriano: If you just let me, one second, now, a few minutes, a few seconds we were talking just about that . . .

Other voices: Come on let's get this going. Let's do it by ballot again.

Lorena: Hey I think it would be better if we didn't vote.

Notice that both Magdalena and Lorena identify the "problem" as a "thing." To understand Lorena's intervention and her frustration with the "thing" we must understand where, in her mind, she is. She is one of four people who invited the muchachos. She is a friend of Ana who is a lesbian. Her comments then must be understood, not as opposing the muchachos participation but rather in the context of her interpretation that they have been rejected, that her invitation was incorrect, and that the "battle" has been lost.

Now compare Magdalena's response to the "thing" with that of Lorena. Magdalena wants a clear vote to get it over with. The more we talk the more we "add pepper to the thing." Her location suggests that there should be no more talk that produce "circles:" "Just

say yes or no." In other words, Magdalena is concerned about time and how long this has taken.

Lorena, on the other hand, creates a new location: It is no big thing. It is not important. She insinuates that "we really don't care." In her creation Lorena pinpoints several key propositions in the phenomenology of conflict created through locating procedures: A "thing" appears in the social world because someone cares about it. A "thing" disappears when it becomes unimportant and people become indifferent. Lorena's tactic is not simply to transvalue the muchacho problem from a "yes" to "no." Her location activity attempts to transvalue it from existent-in-society to indifference and nonexistent. "Why such a big thing," means "it should not be a "thing." In the end she advocates not voting. "We made it into such a thing" she insinuates. "Let us remake it into no-thing. Let us not care about it anymore."

THE WAYS OUT

Finally, a set of locations evolves around solutions of what to do with the muchachos. Broadly speaking three solution locations emerged: They should not join, they should join now, and they should join later. Ironically, the first option became the one chosen even though it was the least expressed and advo-

cated in the course of the discussions. Only one person overtly said, "I am in disagreement that the muchachos participate." Most of the member coordinating activities proposed evolved around the question of "when" they should join, not if.

The "join-now" option developed two locations. First, several people simply advocated that the muchachos, like the rest of us, have participated, have been accepted and should continue. As Maria Teresa said, "I agree with their participation here." Ana, who had unspoken reasons for advocating muchacho participation finally offered her direct public support, "I don't see why they can't come." Those supporting this option usually based it on the perspective of the "we are all human -- we cannot reject them" locations.

The rejection location carried considerable weight. People who were opposed to muchacho participation were rarely willing to shoulder the unpleasantness and dissonance accompanying the accusation that they had rejected them. Thus they engaged in finding, a salida, a way out of this problem. The first way out was to permit the muchacho participation as auditors but not as leaders. The second, and most popular way out was for the muchachos to join Genesis at a later time when we are "ready to take them in" and the group is open to

broader community participation. In considering solution locations it is useful to examine them as locations-in-use, rather than as analytical isolates. For example, in Figure 1 consider how Miguel coordinates problem and solution locations.

The key identifies nine locations found in Miguel's intervention (an overall summary of the locations is found in Figure 2). This is the first time that I introduce the types of coded records produced through the use of the ETHNOGRAPH, and Figure 1 therefore merits some explanation. I suggest the reader turn his/her attention to the Figure in order to follow more clearly the analysis and discussion of Miguel's turn.

Toward the bottom of Figure 1 the reader will find the text under consideration, a transcription of part of Miguel's turn. The numbering (549 - 583) is the line numbering in the file. This simply means that this portion represents lines 549 through 583 of the file I titled MUCHACHO.ETH. In the upper half of the Figure the reader will find the numbers 1 - 9 listed in three categories. Beside each number is a key word, a code I chose to represent a particular finding, interest or discovery. In this case, these are my coded shorthand titles for different locations created by members. Beside each code word between parentheses is a short definition of the location. For example, Number 1,

PROBLEM LOCATIONS

POSITIVE VALUATION OF MUCHACHO PARTICIPATION

- 1 = REJECT1US (We cannot reject one of us)
- 2 = PEOPLETOO (They are people too)

NEGATIVE VALUATION OF MUCHACHO PARTICIPATION

- 3 = HANDLENO (We are not prepared to handle muchacho problem)
- 4 = IMAGELEADR (Must protect image-of-us-as-leaders-in-community)
- 5 = HOMOSOCPROB (Homosexuality is a social/community problem)
- 6 = REJMORAL (We reject morality, not persons)
- 7 = USINGROUP (We must consider problems it could cause in group)

SOLUTION LOCATIONS

- 8 = AUDITYES (Join-as-auditors)
- 9 = OPENLATE (Join group later, when we are prepared)

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Well, I do not think that it is that	549	1	2							
we are rejecting anyone. We are not	550	1	2							
rejecting anyone as a person. We are	551	1	2							
rejecting	552	1	2							6
-- is --	553	1	2							6
-- hey --	554	1	2							6
-- their morality.	555	1	2							6
Morality. That does not mean we are	556	1	2							6
rejecting them as persons, because, I	557	1	2							6
don't know, it would seem that these	560	1								
people have a way of treating one that	561	1								
is sort of affective, it is not that	562	1								6-7
we are rejecting them, rather we have	563	1			3					6 7
to think about how far, how far can it	564	1			3					6 7
be good for the group and the	565	1			3					6 7
spiritual problems that it causes	566	1			3					6 7
later. That doesn't mean these	567	1			3					6-7-8
muchachos cannot come as auditors, but	568	1								8
then they will feel marginated. The	569	1								8
fact is they are. They could partici-	570	1				4				9
pate in a second stage, but not	571					4				9
preparing them as leaders so that they	572					4				9
work on problems. It is a fact, we	573					4				6-9
are all aware that it is not the same	574					4				6
to treat a problem with a person who	575					4				6
inspires confianza by his moral	576					4				6
formation, through his moral values	577					4				6
more than anything, than with another	578					4				5-6
who we know already prejudiced as a	579					4				5 6
homosexual, or that he is marihuana	580					4				5 6
smoker, or someone who likes to	581					4				5 6
fight...so I think it is good that we	582					4				5-6-8
accept these muchachos as auditors...	583					4				5-6-8

Figure 1 Locations created and used by Miguel

REJECT1US, is shorthand for the location "We cannot reject one of us." I have listed the nine locations that Miguel creates and uses during his turn in three categories: Locations that value positively and negatively muchacho participation in Genesis, and locations that create solutions. Returning again to the lower half of the Figure, the reader will now see that to the right of the line numbering there are nine numbered columns. These columns and the rows of the text form a matrix. I have marked the occurrences of where in the text I find a particular location emerging and being used. For example, number 1, REJECT1US, is developed from line 549 through 570, or as I will refer to it later in the text 1:549-570. Number 8, AUDITYES, is created twice, 567 through 569 (8:567-569), and 582 through 583 (8:582-583). We can now turn our attention to how Miguel's coordinates his response.

Miguel is obviously managing numerous and conflicting locations at one time as one can see from the overlapping code categories to the right of the line numbers in Figure 1, especially in the occurrences of positive and negative valuations at the same time. He is, at it were, at different places on this question, at the same time. This is not unusual. In fact it is the normal operative talk procedure evident throughout the

members' discussions of the muchacho case and underlying their locating actions. This underscores the degree to which everyday life, and particularly everyday experience of conflict is a constant exercise in the management of multiple locations and hence multiple realities. Miguel's very management procedure indicates his acceptance of multiple locations as legitimate and worth evaluating.

Consider this in more detail. Miguel is aware that the muchachos are people (2:549-557) and cannot be rejected as persons (1:549-570). These locations are used by Miguel, as they were by others, to value positively continued participation of the muchachos. However, simultaneous to these he also recognizes a rejection of their homosexuality in terms of their "morality" (6:551-557). He further attempts to transvalue, or re-coordinate, the rejection location by differentiating between "morality" and the "person" permitting rejection of morality while not marginalizing the person. He raises questions about spiritual problems (6:562-567) the group will experience and whether members are ready to handle the muchacho problem (3:563-567). He is also acutely aware that Genesis members must inspire confianza if they want to help in community and in others' personal problems (4:570-583). These locations five (3 - 7) are used to value negatively the continued

participation of the two muchachos.

In the midst of this internal location struggle and his ongoing effort to formulate the problem he is also creating solution locations. First, he suggests that the muchachos participate as auditors (8:567-569), then that they join at a later date (9:570-573), only to return in the end to the auditor option (8:582-583). These locations appear, in a single turn of talk, as a response to managing simultaneously numerous conflicting problem locations. This effort is what the porteños commonly call a salida or a "way out," or at other times an arreglo, or an "arrangement."

It is worth noting that Miguel's process of ubicarse, of locating himself or seeing where he is at, plays out in the talk of his turn the very conflict that is being coordinated between members of Genesis. This was the case for almost every one of the interventions made during the two weeks. Looking closely through the members' talk as recorded in this verbatim recorded text we can begin to see how they were "staging" the conflict in their own minds as they talked and attempted to present their locations for understanding and thereby formulating the problem and solutions. While a person makes sense of something by locating it in their own accumulated knowledge that is particular to them as

individuals, we must also remember that that very knowledge was originally constituted through interaction in the social world and is always intimately tied to the constructed reality they experience and have experienced with others. Thus, while locations are created and presented by an individual through a subjective process of valuation, they become socially real and relevant when shared, negotiated, accepted and legitimized by others. That is, when they are intersubjectively valued. It is this collective process of coordinating and valuing experience in numerous and different ways that creates a real, that is social "thing" that is experienced by members as being there. It is some "thing" that matters (Kjolseth, 1986). Conflict is coordinated and accomplished through a process of valuation.

We can now discern two types of solution locations put forward in the muchacho case. The first solution location is created from a single set of coordinates: present experience is located in past knowledge that provides the problem valuation and solution. In short, the way the problem is defined determines the solution possible. For example, the definition of homosexuals as persons who do not inspire confianza and who will undermine our group goals leads necessarily to the solution that the muchachos should not join Genesis.

These are salidas-de-razón, or solutions that are logically demanded by the prior definition of the problem. To have razón, (reason), that is to be right is a common expression in conflict situations. As we are describing its creation from the perspective of solution locations, to have razón means that the person has located the problem according to a single and logical set of coordinates that gives him/her a winning argument, posited in a required solution it becomes the only correct and proper response. The porteños often talk about getting someone to "enter into razón," (to come to their senses). That means trying to get them to see things like we see them, to agree with our reasoning and that we are right. This way out, when reached and insisted on, suggests that there is a right way to locate and understand the problem providing one with the "right way out."

The second and more complex type of solution locations found appear through member management of two or more locations at the same time. Recognition of two or more locations is experienced by members as a "problem." A "way out" of the problem can be created when at least two sets of differing and conflicting coordinates are managed simultaneously by members. Miguel, in the example above, managed seven different

coordinates as he created two "ways out:" Let them be auditors (8), or, let them join later but not as leaders (9).

A LOCATION SUMMARY

We are now in a position to summarize descriptively the locations used to coordinate and organize the muchacho conflict. Figure 2 lists the locations we have discussed emerging from the muchacho case. Figure 2 lists two columns: Locations created and used to argue against participation and those in favor of it. In these respective columns I placed the locations members created that we have discussed in this chapter. I grouped them according to the major emerging themes (e.g. confianza, rejection, we are humans, etc.). These are then placed under one of three categories representing the types of locations activity Genesis members engaged in: Problem, solution and process valuation. The Process category near the bottom I have chosen to place in a position that crosses the two columns given that these locations were used, implicitly and at times explicitly, by members to argue both for and against muchacho participation, but doing so by concentrating on some aspect of how the decision was being made rather than on the substantive issues of the decision.

The reader should recognize each of these locations based on our earlier discussion. Our goal here is to briefly summarize the key learnings. It is worth noting that in most cases a theme, confianza for example, can be created to make a particular point and then re-coordinated to argue the exact opposite point, underscoring the fluid and negotiated nature by which everyday knowledge about things like roles and norms is used and appears in the social world. Consider this in more detail according to the three categories.

First, creating and managing some 25 locations (Figure 2, Problem Valuation) by valuing and coordinating the muchachos presence and participation in different ways in relevant accumulated knowledge, members created a problem of the present situation that they experienced as conflict. These locations assessed and defined what the problem was and how it was to be understood. The conflict emerges because intersubjectively created and managed locations account for and value muchacho participation in incompatible ways. This can be viewed as a proposition. Social conflict is created and experienced as such when interdependent members, in the same social space and social time, care for and value some "thing" positively and negatively.

Second, members also coordinated knowledge use-

ful for solving the "thing" they created and experienced as conflict (Figure 2 Solution Valuation). Solution locations emerge as coordinated responses to the problem valuation in which members seek a way out. This can be based on a single set of coordinates, using a single location with its corresponding logical and required solution, or by managing several locations at the same time. As discussed earlier the prevalence of individually and intersubjectively managed multiple locations underscores the everyday nature of living and experiencing multiple realities and the centrality of conflict to the construction of social reality.

Third, members coordinated knowledge useful for managing the rhythm and flow of the "thing" created. Process locations are coordinated responses orienting the sequence, timing and dynamics of interaction as members manage together the "thing" they created. Multiple and opposing valuations of process locations were frequently a source of added conflictive interaction.

In summary, a location is accomplished by a member coordinating present experience in a specific area of accumulated knowledge deemed relevant for understanding the present. Coordination must pick and choose what is relevant from the past for locating the present and propel one toward the immediate future. It must

account for and evaluate. Coordination is a process of valuation, like map reading it must pinpoint a location, a place to be.

However, as we have seen in the muchacho case, any "thing" can be accounted for and valued according to multiple and varying coordinates. It can be located at different points on the social map creating different "places to be" for the same experience. Thus we hear the vernacular questions and phrases used so often in conflict like, "Where are you at on this issue?" "I can see where you're coming from." "And that is where I stand on this." "We have had a meeting of the minds." When different locations were expressed and pursued intersubjectively the interaction was experienced by members as a "problem." That is, the intersubjective coordination of members organizing to pursue different locations created a "thing" they experienced as social conflict.

Adriano's ending metaphor was phenomenologically astute. Dealing with the very thing they had created was experienced as trying to "grab a snake by the tail." Conflict, like a snake, can slither in many directions through many formations because it is intersubjectively created through fluid locating mechanisms. It can (and did) turn and bite the hands that create it and are

simultaneously trying to grab it. This paradox points to the underlying dialectic of conflict and the construction of social realities. Conflict, the snake, is a human creation. Having created it, the snake is real and we try to "grab" and deal with it. It slithers, turns on us, and changes our relationships, structures and actions. To use more classic phenomenological phrasing. "Society is a human product. Society is an objective reality. Man is a social product" (Berger and Luckman, 1967:61).

In this chapter we have examined in detail the concept of ubicarse as a key aspect in the creation and accomplishment of the muchacho conflict. These locating and interpretive procedures and the use of everyday knowledge on which they are dependent are central to the development of a constitutive theory of conflict. Before turning our attention to that theory it will be useful to first describe some of the forms by which locations are expressed and make their appearance in the social world.

CHAPTER 5

CREATING THINGS: THE SCHEMA FOR EXPRESSING LOCATIONS

In the preceding chapter we isolated and described locating procedures. That discussion centered on the interpretive mechanisms and processes involved in creating a location. The purpose of the present chapter is to examine how these locations make their appearance on the social scene and to examine how they were used to coordinate conflict. The emphasis here is not on the interpretive but rather the expressive schema used by members to make known a location. We are now concerned more with describing the forms of expression rather than the content (Simmel, 1950). The case of the muchachos provides us with at least four such expressions.

NADA-QUE-DECIR: I-HAVE-NOTHING-TO-SAY

Locations appear not only through word of mouth and what is said, but more commonly through what is not said. Perhaps the clearest example of this in the

muchacho case was Ana's participation. Only a handful of her closest friends and family knew that she was a lesbian. Ruth informed us that the muchachos were invited, in part, to provide her support. However, when it was her turn to give an opinion about their participation she chose not comment: "I have nothing to say." Her face was tense. Her legs were bouncing. Her hands were crimping a paper. Her eyes were down. A location was being expressed, but one that for most was difficult to read. The closest one could come was a sense that she felt intensely about something.

Likewise, in the subsequent rondas others followed suit with numerous abstentions. Often they would simply shake their head and abstain. Others said they had nothing to say. The result of the first counted ronda included nine abstentions. Adriano makes an insightful comment about the "I-have-nothing-to-say" as he attempted to make sense of these abstentions.

The truth is this has got me vexed . . . something is coming to the surface here. This means something. This means something. It isn't just saying, this is saying more than this.

That is precisely the nature of the I-have-nothing-to-say scheme: It is saying more than this. It points to a created but hidden or camouflaged location. Inevitably, silence is not merely the absence of talk, but rather the presence of the absence talk rendering it

a "thing" to be interpreted.

Consider Adriano's repeated statement of "this means something." He is trying to understand the location that has been publicly expressed but without words, and calls, therefore, for an extraordinary process of discovery and identification. My later conversations with members about this activity indicated some chose not to comment because they felt uncomfortable "defining" themselves in public and having to talk about such "delicate" issues. Others, like Ana, felt threatened: Public disclosure of her opinion might mean she would be rejected.

The I-have-nothing-to-say scheme is a tactic, a move, a kind of turn taken in the conversation that engages in and is dependent on implicit member knowledge related to the sociology of ignorance in its purest form. The member has created and subjectively knows the coordinates of his/her location, but engages in public activity that actively hides, disguises and does not make known those coordinates, even though signals are sent that a location has been created. Others intuitively recognize the appearance of a location, but are given no handles for situating the coordinates. Meaning therefore is immanent but not apparent.

In sum, the I-have-nothing-to-say scheme signals the presence of a hidden location. It is "non-talk"

indicating a location without identifying the coordinates necessary to clarify what knowledge has been deemed relevant for the problem at hand. One is left with the feeling expressed by Adriano, "this means something . . . this is saying more than this."

CHISME: THE CREATION OF THINGS THAT ARE NOT

In the minds of Genesis members the single most important cause of conflict in the barrios of Puntarenas is chisme. Roughly translated chisme is gossip, that is hearsay with some distinguishing characteristics as defined and used by the Porteños. To understand this expressive scheme consider the following words by Adriano in the muchacho case.

First we are going to discuss whether the group should be open, taking in everyone that comes, taking in all comers without requesting any characteristics, any qualities; or whether on the contrary, we close ourselves a little and include ourselves in what are the characteristics that we should have in the case of

-- well --

-- hey --

I do not believe that anyone is going to unload tomorrow what I have said, what was my job to do here. I know it is very delicate, too delicate

-- hey --

-- personal issues --

-- so --

I don't know if someone is afraid to talk about them (muchachos). I live in the barrio where they live and tomorrow either of them could confront me because someone told them I spoke badly of them. This can be easily misinterpreted . . .

In this piece, Adriano is laying out the agenda that Genesis must carry out for the evening. Suddenly he realizes the overall task requires, if seen from the perspective of the muchachos, that the group engage in chisme. He, in fact, initially recognizes it because he sees that what he is doing could be interpreted as chisme. This he articulates with a sudden flash of fear, "Hey -- I don't think anyone will tell them what I said about them." Underlying it is his implicit recognition of an important norm: It is wrong to talk of others' personal problems with them not present in a way they would interpret as demeaning. Breaking that norm carries consequences, however, only if they find out. Now we see Adriano's dilemma. He lives in their barrio and if others tell them, he could be confronted with what he said about them. Notice that it is not just that he spoke about them, but that his "talk" was about "personal issues." Further, the task of Genesis members is to do the same thing: "I don't know if someone is afraid to talk about them." Here again the metaphor "delicate" is used to describe the activity. It is delicate precisely because it breaks a community norm: It is wrong to talk about others in a way they would interpret as demeaning or alienating when they are not present. The expected consequence of being found out --

being caught in the chisme -- is confrontation.

We can now suggest an initial understanding of chisme. It is talk about others when they are not present. It is characterized as talk that can be interpreted by the person-object of the talk as malicious, manipulative or destructive of them. Given its centrality in members' minds it warrants further discussion.

Several months following the muchacho case, at a meeting of Genesis, members discussed their understanding of chisme. The following paragraphs are based on that evening's activity. This is their talk-about-their-talk. They concluded, in their words, that chisme are "things you do not want to hear that are not true, that others say about you." It reminds me of a phrase a Nicaraguan used to confront someone who had used chisme against him: "Why," he asked, pointing at the chismoso, "does he say things that are not?" In the folk explanation, chisme is the creation of a "thing" that once was not, but has now appeared. It appears through talk, through a story told about someone when s/he is not there. In this sense, chisme does not talk about things as they are, that is "make-society-out" (Kjolseth, 1972) but rather makes-society-up.

In their discussions that evening the danger of chisme in their minds was three-fold. First, it creates, through storytelling, a new reality that is

part true, part false but nonetheless real. In their explanation they used the saying, "A noisy river carries stones." As one of them reported, the chisme always has something certain in it. Second, it spreads and grows. In their words se hizo grande: It made itself big. The entire community becomes the stage on which the story is told. Again, they had a phrase to explain it: "Small town, big hell." Everyone knows everyone else's business. Third, the last person to hear the story is the person whom the story is about. As several jokingly put it, "Everyone knows but you." By the time it reaches you it is too late to do anything to correct or even tell the story from your perspective. Chisme is dangerous because it creates a new reality that you must deal with in your own back yard. It is a story that is organized and appears through the network and that ties you to it without permitting you to help create the story. As such, it is a form of social control used by groups to manage their members.

As an expressive scheme chisme is central to the folk understanding of conflict. Unconsciously, they recognize that we humans are the authors of the very social reality we experience (Kjolseth, 1986). That reality is created through the stories we tell. Locations emerge as tools for telling stories to ourselves,

for creating an understanding of what our experience is and means. Thus generically, chisme underscores that social realities are created through human storytelling. As a specific differentiated form, locations make their appearance through chisme when certain kinds of stories are told about others without their knowledge and presence. They are both "things that you don't want to hear" and "things that are not" that have become real. Chisme is yet another form of the sociology of ignorance, creating a constructed reality through storytelling that is based on manipulation of events, partial information and distortion that nevertheless becomes real in its consequences.

INDIRECTAS

Locations are expressed through a third scheme, by indirectas. The case of the muchachos was, in fact, initiated through an indirecta. Doña Carmen, the second evening the muchachos participated made a lengthy intervention in which she identified homosexuality as a problem and told a story describing how it develops. Although the muchachos were present she never directly addressed them nor did she relay in any direct fashion that homosexuality was a problem in the group. Her comments could easily have been interpreted like any others during the evening's work of identifying commun-

ity problems like alcoholism, family violence or unemployment. But in the minds of Genesis members her speech was different. To capture their interpretation consider Ruth's comments several days later addressed to the group.

So, they, when Doña Carmen mentioned the problem of homosexuality -- Doña Carmen explained to me -- I did not say anything to them, so, I, everything she said was good, right, but the next day I said to them, "muchachos didn't you feel bad about what we studied last night?"

"What did we talk about?"

"What Doña Carmen explained about homosexuality. You didn't feel put down? You didn't feel hurt, or I don't know."

Julio did not answer and José said, "Me, me? Why? I don't feel, what Doña Carmen is saying is true . . ."

Ruth and subsequently José recognized and interpreted the muchachos as the object of Doña Carmen's speech. Ruth asks them, "Didn't you feel a little put down?" She is seeking the muchachos reaction to comments that she interprets were directed in a confronting manner at them. She in fact expects them to be upset. "I never imagined," she says, "that they would not be angry." José responds, "Why am I going to get angry over the Truth." Anger, in the mind of both, could have been a legitimate and appropriate response to Doña Carmen's speech, although the muchachos report they chose not be angry. Why is anger expected? Precisely

because both Ruth and José interpret that the muchachos, and not homosexuality in general, were the object and intent of Doña Carmen's speech.

We can now delineate the characteristics of the indirecta scheme present in the Doña Carmen speech. First, the muchachos were present during her intervention. Second, she spoke of a problem in general terms, never mentioning why she chose to speak of this issue at this time nor who exactly had the problem or why it was a problem for the group. "Homosexuality is a problem," she said, "that affects us all." Third, she addressed the group as a whole and never made any reference whatsoever to the muchachos during her speech. While this may not have been aimed at the muchachos, the members' interpretation suggests that the target of her intervention flagged muchacho participation as problematic in the group. Her speech, was, in fact, a major contributing factor in creating a problem out of their participation. Her speech was an indirecta.

An indirecta gives birth to a location through confronting, accusative, or even complaining talk characterized by generality, inference and innuendo about a person, delivered in his/her presence, but never directed to the person who is the object of the talk in such a manner as to avoid a direct I-you link. Key to the accomplishment of an indirecta is the interpretive

ability of members to identify the location through the camouflage of inference, generality and innuendo. They must, literally, coordinate together their accumulated knowledge about problem valuation and the method chosen to express that valuation. Indirectas represent yet another form of the sociology of ignorance by which locations are disguised and inferred in the presence of the person, rather than hidden completely from them or expressed explicitly, identifying clearly its coordinates.

ENUMERAR-PERSONAS

Each of the three schemata just examined bring locations onto the social scene in ways that are roundabout, hidden or indirect. Enumerar-personas is more straightforward. Consider again, Ruth's approach when she confronted the group with her account of "who we are."

Not all of us are going to turn out to be coordinators. Not all of us have the ability. Because, at least, I believe there are people who confronted with a situation, hey, Javier is a little timid. He doesn't speak. At times you ask him something and he is like, like out of it and responds, "What was it?" A person like that doesn't inspire confianza. And if I started to enumerar personas (list all the people), right, so I believe, all of that are in this group, not all of us are capable of becoming coordinators.

Earlier we noted that enumerar-personas, enumerate persons, literally means to "number-out people," in

other words to specify separately. It "takes a count" of people who fit a certain category. Generality and allusion are eliminated in favor of directness and specificity. In this case Ruth is counting people who are not leaders in the group. However, our interest here is with the characteristics of enumerar-personas as a scheme for expressing the location.

First, Ruth names the problem publicly. She explicitly identifies the coordinates of her location: "Not all of us are leaders." Second, she "numbers-out," that is, she counts publicly people who are examples of this problem. She names specific names. Third, she counts, in other words, specifies publicly people who are present at the time of the counting. In this case she specifically "counts" Javier, notes that he is not a leader who inspires confianza, then looks around the room and says, ". . . and if I started to enumerar-personas..." She means, "There are more like Javier I could count." Enumerar-personas, then, is direct, specific talk about the problem and the person in the presence of the person. The person has been numbered, accounted for, and valued in a specific and public manner.

This expressive scheme is generally experienced as distasteful to members. It is too direct, hurtful,

and confrontational. Consider, for example, Miguel's comments when we were discussing the muchachos. "I believe the next time," he said, "we should all bring the characteristics of who can be accepted and who cannot in the group, hey, so that we don't go back into this, of having to say names." He found the process of directly talking about "names," in other words, pin-pointing publicly the coordinates characterizing a person in a confrontational manner, both difficult and distasteful.

CONCLUSION

In summary, expressive schemata are forms by which members present their locations publicly. They are the mechanisms by which locations appear in the social world. The four forms discussed here make use of knowledge appropriate for assessing the ways of making locations known, or as is often the case, disguising them. This can take place in the presence of the person (indirectas, enumerar-personas) or without them (chisme), by direct reference to the coordinates (enumerar) or by hiding them (nada que decir).

Expressive schemata make extensive use of the mechanisms related to a sociology of ignorance. As we have seen, these mechanisms are used to construct social realities based on manipulation, partial disclosure,

inference, allusion and deception. These mechanisms are used in the coordination of conflict because they make use of and manage social knowledge. For example, the "I have nothing to say" scheme makes known publicly that a location has been created but its coordinates are hidden. Chisme, on the other hand, using the social network, tells stories based on distortion that are real in their social consequences for those about whom the story is told and those who tell the story.

In this chapter we have looked at schemata that are expressive rather than interpretive mechanisms, but which must be interpreted and evaluated by members. They are social forms for carrying social content. They are accomplished through subjective and intersubjective coordination. A person must choose the form by which a location, the content, will be presented on the social scene. And others must correctly interpret the form and the substance it is carrying. This is all accomplished through taken-for-granted knowledge accumulated, constituted and relevant, in this case, in a Puntarenas setting.

Having now examined both locating procedures necessary for interpretation and expressive forms through which they appear in the social world we can turn our attention to a constitutive theory of conflict. Our objective is to suggest the basic theses by which

conflict is created and transformed from the perspective of a sociology of knowledge.

CHAPTER 6

A SIMPLE THEORY OF TRANSVALUATION

The muchacho case permitted us to examine the folk method of ubicarse as a means for understanding, creating and coordinating conflict. This was accomplished through a process of individual valuation and intersubjective transvaluation. We are now in a position to suggest the basic assumptions and tenets of a simple theory of transvaluation, or, if you will, a constitutive theory of conflict as observed in the folk practice of ubicarse and their expressive schemes for making known their locations as observed in the muchacho case. We should note that in terms of the basic phenomenological dialectic we are here most concerned with the characteristic of how it is that society, and in this case conflict, is a human product and is experienced as real. We begin with the basic assumptions.

First, our conclusions about transvaluation have emerged from an examination of everyday face-to-face

activities in a particular setting. This microsociological approach assumes that interaction between and interdependence of the members underlie their creation and management of conflict.

Second, the process we have identified as ubicarse assumes that the meaning of any "thing" in society is created and assessed through a process of coordination. Coordination occurs when one "thing" is located, that is intersects, with other "things" which represent already constituted knowledge deemed relevant and useful for understanding the "thing" in question. Put simply, meaning occurs through comparison. As a logical but inverse statement, we posit that no "thing" in society can be understood in isolation. All social meanings are situated.

Third, coordination, where the "thing" is placed in relationship to other things, takes place through a process of accounting for and evaluating something. Locations are thus, mechanisms of valuing. Ubicarse, the production of coordinated locations, is the simultaneous and instantaneous act of accounting and evaluating.

Fourth, any "thing" can be valued in multiple ways, both within an individual (subjective meaning) and between individuals (intersubjective, or objective social meaning). This assumes that "no thing in society

has inherent value" (Kjolseth, 1986:5). Consequentially, ubicarse assumes that multiple locations and thus multiple meanings for any one "thing" in society can be and are commonly managed simultaneously by and between individuals. What underlies this assumption is central to the theory: Values are not "things." "Things-in-society" are valued (Kjolseth, 1986).

Fifth, ubicarse assumes that intersubjective, shared meaning emerges in two circular phases. First, the "thing" in question is valued and coordinated by individuals within their stock of knowledge at hand, accumulated knowledge, thus creating a location making it some "thing" meaningful. This is valuation. Second, the locations are expressed publicly and coordinated between individuals. Individual psychological reality becomes social reality. Publicly expressed locations that place the "thing" in question according to different coordinates are perceived as a "problem." In other words, some "thing" is cared about and valued according to different coordinates. It is therefore located on the social map at different places. In the vernacular, people say, "Well, we are just at a different place on this." Transvaluation of locations through member interaction and intersubjective coordination -- they talk it over -- can result in agreement on

a common set of coordinates. Where different coordinates persist accompanied by the social organization of caring about them, the interaction is experienced as a "thing" in its own right, identified by the Porteños as a problem. The "thing-as-a-problem" is experienced at the folk level as conflict, created and sustained through intersubjective and interactive transvaluational negotiations.

We can now suggest the basic tenets of a constitutive theory of conflict. The theory will be built inductively from our examination of the muchacho case, but will be substantiated by drawing from other relevant theory, particularly Kjolseth's (1986) "Constitutive theory of stratification." Our focus will be the constitution of social conflict. However, I will argue that this theory is more generally appreciable in that it describes how all things in society are constructed and destroyed, because conflict is a necessary element for social realities to appear in the world. I am therefore working toward a general theory of everyday life with conflict as a normal and necessary part of everyday constitutive work by members in order to create the realities they experience as real.

THESIS 1: HOW THINGS APPEAR IN SOCIETY

The first thesis states that things appear in

the social world because people care about them. Its antithesis: things disappear when they cease to be cared about. In other words, things appear and remain in the social world because they are and continue to be valued. In the folk wisdom of Doña Fidelia "if there is not any love, there is no arrangement." Or to use Kjolseth's (1986:4) terse formulation, "everything that matters in society is valued."

The presence or absence of caring about things creates two worlds: Those things not cared about define the universe of indifference. This is the universe of all non-real but potential things. It is what Kjolseth (1986:4) has called "the great void of possibility." On the other hand, those things cared about defines the universe that matters, in other words, that which we experience as real. (Figure 3).

0=INDIFFERENCE	1=CARED ABOUT
*****	*****
* *	* *
* NONEXISTENT*	* EXISTENT *
* *	* *
* NONVALUED *	* VALUED *
* *	* *
* IGNORED *	* ATTENTION *
* *	* PAID *
*****	*****
ABSENT	PRESENT
FROM SOCIETY	IN SOCIETY

Figure 3 Two Worlds: Indifference and Cared About

Transvaluation is the intersubjective act of evaluating and accounting for some "thing," of locating it in people's shared knowledge in order to make of it some "thing" meaningful. The first step in this process is to "count from zero (indifference) to one (caring about)." The "thing" counted thus crosses the ontological border from nonexistence to existence, becoming a social object. The categories of Figure 3 and the Figures that follow in this chapter are a form of "simplest mathematics" used here as a metaphor for describing in as simple, straightforward and categorical way the ontogenesis of social objects. Thus we have the formulae: 0 = no social object; and 1 = a social object. The movement from 0 ---> 1 is the transformation from mere possibility to real actuality. It is the genesis, the creation of something experienced as socially real. It is, as the Apostle Paul wrote, the "calling into existence the things that do not exist" (Romans 4:17).

Here, we can draw on several examples from Genesis. First, consider their name. Members consciously chose Genesis because, as Eduardo who suggested the name explained, "We are the birth. We are the start. We are the beginning . . . We are being born. . . in a new experience, in a new idea. We are being born to create." As he puts it metaphorically, Genesis is in

the process of creating and becoming a new social reality. They are appearing on the social scene as something experienced as real.

On a different track consider, for example, the folk understanding that chisme is the creative act of "saying things that are not." It is the creation of some "thing" that was not but now is through the telling of a story. It is the act of making something appear. Or take Lorena's reaction to the muchacho process. "I don't see the importance," she says, "to have made such a big thing." She is suggesting that rather than making some "thing" of this issue, it would be better to take an attitude of indifference, to care less or not at all about it. She re-evaluates the situation and attempts to move the muchacho question from the realm of existence back to nonexistence by minimizing the importance of the problem and caring less.

A rich folk language describes this process. The category "absent from society" is talked about as: "It's no big deal (cosa). Why such a problem? I could care less about it (no me importa nada eso). It just isn't worth the trouble (no vale la peña). It doesn't really matter." On the other hand, the "caring" category suggests it is "worth the effort. We have to do something. This is serious (va en serio, eso). Hey, this matters to me!"

In the vernacular of ubicarse, we see that things appear in the social world through the act of caring which in turn is accomplished by the process of coordination. In this vein, consider a brief summary of our discussion in earlier chapters. The meaning of any "thing," like muchacho participation, is created because it is coordinated in a location. Initially, this location is a subjective member creation, constructed by coordinating present experience in relevant past knowledge of an individual. The location is then presented in the social world through a variety of expressive schemata. The expression of a location by whatever scheme signals its appearance in the social world.

Once created and expressed in the social world the location is intersubjectively coordinated, that is valued (cared about) or ignored (indifference). If a subjective location is intersubjectively cared about, that is socially organized, it is sustained and experienced as real by the members. It creates an explanation for and gives social meaning to it and other "things" and is, therefore, "real" in its social consequences. However, if the expressed location is not valued, that is if it is ignored, or if the social organization of indifference is pursued, then it is lost to the shared and objective world of members. If sustained at all it

is only subjectively, that is in the mind of a single individual, a part of his or her personal reality but not social reality. This describes the appearance of "things" not as "social facts" sui generis (Durkheim, 1950:14) but which, consistent with the depiction of intersubjectively shared social realities, are better understood as accomplishments (Garfinkel, 1967:vii; Kjolseth, 1972:50).

THESIS 2: HOW THINGS ARE VALUED IN SOCIETY

Any "thing" cared about in society can be valued along two distinct dimensions: negatively or positively. Transvaluation is thus tripartite: 1) No thing is inherently valued; 2) a thing is valued positively; or 3) a thing is valued negatively. Thus, some "thing" is first cared about creating its appearance-as-entry in the social world. In other words it moves from non-existence into existence because it matters. Second it is valued negatively or positively creating its appearance-as-image in the social world (Figure 4).

It is here that we find the perspective of phenomenology particularly useful. Its primary concern is not the study of how things already constituted are distributed in society, but rather how things appear and disappear from society, that is, it focuses on the constitution of social realities. Applied to conflict

0	+	-
*****	*****	*****
* *	* *	* *
* NONEXISTENT*	* EXISTENT *	* EXISTENT *
* *	* *	* *
* NONVALUED *	* VALUED *	* VALUED *
* *	* *	* *
* IGNORED *	* POSITIVELY *	* NEGATIVELY *
* *	* *	* *
* *	* *	* *
*****	*****	*****
ABSENT FROM SOCIETY	PRESENT IN SOCIETY	

LEGEND:

- 0 = INDIFFERENCE
- 1 = CARED ABOUT
- 1+ = CARED FOR
- 1- = CARED AGAINST

Figure 4 Tripartite Valuation of Things (Kjolseth, 1986)

our theory says all conflicts appear and disappear through three ways of valuing: indifference, caring for or caring against.

THESIS 3: HOW SOCIAL CONFLICT IS CREATED

Social conflict is created when three or more people (Simmel, 1950) value some "thing" differently and organize its social, intersubjective coordination. Consider the muchacho case in the framework of transvaluation.

A leadership training program is initiated and

opened for community participation. Within several months numerous people have joined, some have come and gone, and new people drift in and out of the group. One evening two muchachos are invited for a visit, return the following week, and are asked to lead the "ice-breaker" exercise. New participants have always been welcomed and nobody paid special attention to them. The participation of new people was normally taken-for-granted and was not worthy of special attention. The muchachos as an entity at first did not make a difference, in other words, they were immaterial. However, when attention was drawn to "who they were" as homosexuals, members' began to pay attention and "cared" about their participation in varying ways. Their presence and participation thus became "problematic" and resulted in a conscious negotiation of care rather than a taken-for-granted consensual act of valuation.

Some members subjectively located the muchachos-as-homosexuals caring negatively about their participation. Through expressive schemes, mostly some form of talk, they presented their location in the social world. The organization of caring negatively about their continued presence transvalued muchacho participation from no "thing" -- a "thing" toward which people were indifferent -- into some "thing" cared about. Others, however, cared about the muchacho participation

0		+		1		-
*****		*****		*****		*****
* *		* *		* *		* *
* DON'T CARE *		* CARE *		* CARE *		* CARE *
* *		* *		* *		* *
* ABOUT *		* FOR *		* AGAINST *		* AGAINST *
* *		* *		* *		* *
* MUCHACHOS *		* THEIR *		* THEIR *		* THEIR *
* *		* *		* *		* *
* *		* PRESENCE *		* PRESENCE *		* PRESENCE *
*****		*****		*****		*****
ABSENCE OF PROBLEM				PRESENCE OF PROBLEM		

Figure 5 Genesis Members Construct a Problem

positively, desiring their presence-in-group. The active presence of organized caring creating different locations was intersubjectively shared as real and experienced by members as a problem (Figure 5).

Thus, the expressed locations that cared about the muchachos valued their presence in the group as negative or positive. When these locations were pursued, that is, when socially organized caring took place by and among other members, the muchacho presence was experienced by members as a "problem." Through intersubjective coordination Genesis members created of the muchacho participation a "thing" that they themselves experienced as a conflict. Conflict from this perspective, then, is the clash of any of these categories

-- indifference, caring for and caring against --
 represented through the social organization of locations
 vying for existence and a place in the social world.

THESIS 4: HOW SOCIAL CONFLICT IS MANAGED

Social conflict is managed through the inter-
 subjective coordination of knowledge (Figure 6). The
 transvaluation of conflict manages three types of know-

	0		+		1		-

	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
	* DON'T CARE	*	THEY ARE	*	THEY DO NOT	*	*
	*	*		*		*	*
PROBLEM	* ABOUT	*	PEOPLE TOO	*	INSPIRE	*	*
VALUATION	* MUCHACHOS	*		*	CONFIANZA	*	*
	*	*		*		*	*
	* 1	* 2		* 3		*	*

	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
	* DON'T CARE	*	THEY CAN	*	THEY CANNOT	*	*
	*	*		*		*	*
SOLUTION	* ABOUT THE	*	COME AS	*	JOIN NOW	*	*
VALUATION	* DECISION	*	AUDITORS	*	ONLY LATER	*	*
	*	*		*		*	*
	* 4	* 5		* 6		*	*

	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
	* DON'T CARE	*	TAKE MORE	*	TAKING TOO	*	*
	*	*		*		*	*
PROCESS	* ABOUT WAY	*	TIME TO	*	MUCH TIME	*	*
VALUATION	* WE DECIDE	*	DISCUSS	*	TO DISCUSS	*	*
	*	*		*		*	*
	* 7	* 8		* 9		*	*

Figure 6 Knowledge Used in Transvaluation of Muchachos

ledge: knowledge useful for understanding, defining and locating the problem; knowledge useful for discovering and creating solutions; knowledge useful for regulating member interaction and decisionmaking. Consider this once again in the context of Genesis' dealing with the participation of the muchachos.

First, through member-created locations understandings and definitions of the problem are presented. For example, some created a location that explained the problem in terms of the muchachos being "people too" (cell 2: positive valuation of muchacho presence) while others located it as a "lack of confianza" (cell 3: negative valuation of muchacho presence). Both, however, become possible only when muchacho presence is cared about.

Second, solutions to the "problem" were valued and expressed. These, again, fall into negative and positive. For example, some members suggested they come as "auditors" (cell 5: positive valuation of muchacho presence) while others suggested they come later, not now (cell 6: negative valuation of muchacho presence).

Finally, locations were expressed concerning how the problem was handled by members. For example, some felt too much time was being taken (cell 9: negative valuation) while others wanted to discuss longer (cell

8: positive valuation). Cells 1, 4, and 7 are categories of indifference to each of the knowledge areas.

Given that conflict is managed through the intersubjective coordination of knowledge it is best characterized as fluid, dynamic and transforming. It is accomplished by members continually creating and managing multiple locations emerging from their coordination of problem, solution and process knowledge. This is visible only through observation of member talk-in-use in the face-to-face interaction of intersubjective coordination of conflict. That is why this study has so carefully recorded, transcribed and analyzed the naturally occurring situated talk of the Genesis sessions. We can observe this process by examining two interventions, the first a single turn of talk by Doña Carmen (Figure 7) and the second the interaction between Lorena, Adriano, Magdalena and the group (Figure 8).

In Figure 7 we track five numbered stations on Carmen's path. In this segment, Carmen initially accepts Adriano's location of confianza. She recreates it in her intervention, transvaluing it from "no-thing" to "some-thing" cared for negatively (1), in the sense that the confianza location viewed homosexuality as mistrustful and therefore the muchacho participation as working against the goals of the group. Carmen then began to articulate publicly the conclusion of the

Carmen: For my part I found Adriano's 188
 talk good and have added a few points. 189
 He said a coordinator must inspire 190
 confidence. That is a reality. We 191
 must inspire confidence, respect and 192
 consideration of other people for whom 193
 we are responsible and those that are 194
 around us. And to inspire confidence, 195
 respect and consideration we must be 196
 cultural people, and, of course 197
 — uh — 198
 — the muchachos that joined last 199
 week, Jose and Julio 200
 — well — 201
 — at first 202
 when we saw them, it made us, at least 203
 for me, it made me, I hurt for these 204
 type of people, it creates a great 205
 sadness to know how they are treated 206
 in society, and it hurts my soul 207
 — um — 208
 — to reject them, because 209

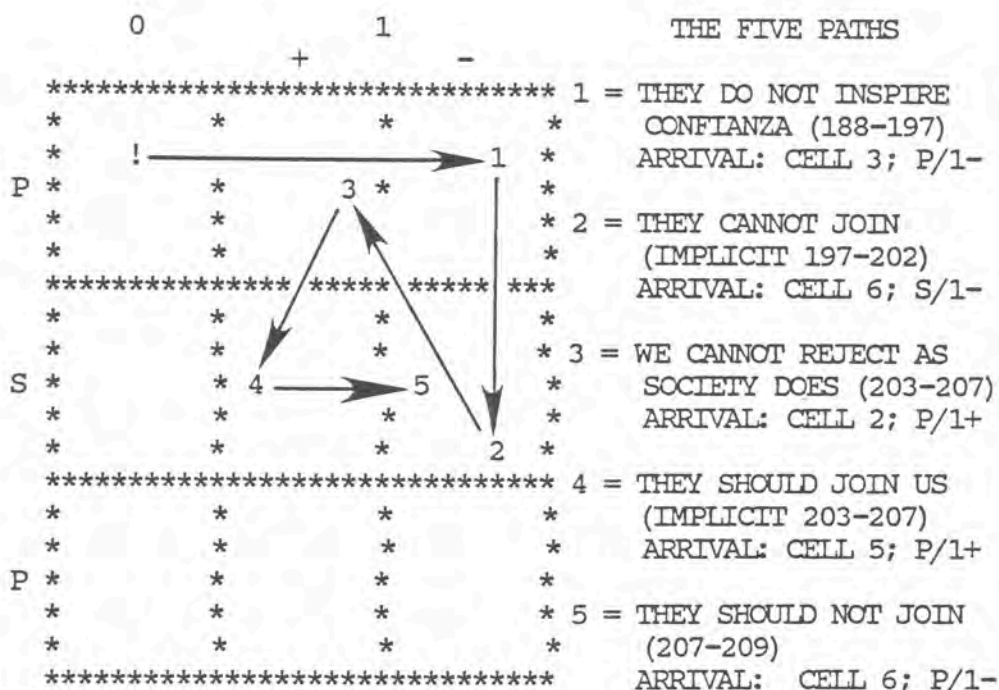


Figure 7 Carmen's Location Journey

confianza problem location, which, in its purest form, would have been a simple, "they cannot join." However, this was left unspoken and implicitly understood (2) because she herself also recreated the "rejection" location (3) standing in contrast to that of confianza. She creates the "rejection" location recognizing that society treats homosexuals in a way that is not consistent with how other persons should be treated, thus transvaluing the problem and solution of the muchachos in positive light (4). She concludes, however, with an articulation of the original location, "we reject them, even though it hurts" (5). We can again understand the breaks in thought pattern, the half-completed sentences and the "softeners" (uh, well, um) serving as buffer zones between locations as Carmen manages simultaneously to handle and deal with conflicting ways of valuing and coordinating the muchacho question.

The interaction between Lorena, Adriano, Magdalena and the rest of the group exemplifies how conflict is transvalued and coordinated intersubjectively. To follow this process I have listed the people who interact and the chronology of their interventions in Figure 8. Here, following the creation and movement of locations is like reading a social map of a conflict episode.

	Maps of Paths Following Page
Lorena: Listen, I say just one thing,	636 ---
why so much of a mess over this? If	637 ! L1
they are not going to come anymore,	638 !
why so much problem over this?	639 ---
Adriano: This is something we have been	641 --- A1
discussing.	642 ---
Lorena: On top of that, one other thing,	644 ---
when we were asked to bring people	645 !
here, -- uh -- we were not asked what	646 ! L2; L3
class of person to bring were we?	647 ---
Adriano: Right, that, -- uh -- we did	649 --- A2
not have a profile	650 ---
Lorena: (breaking in) Another thing,	652 ---
given that, that they did not come	653 !
its, like it is the end of the world	655 ! L4
or who knows what. I do not see it is	656 !
such a big deal...	657 ---
Adriano: (breaking back) it is that	659
they...	660
Lorena: (going on) ...they are human	662 ---
beings aren't they? Just like us and	663 ! L5; L6
us like them. I don't see the	664 ---
importance in all of this, that	665 ! L7
something like this takes up all our	666 !
time, two days now.	667 ---
Magdalena: That was already discussed,	669 --- M1
that is what we talked about.	670 ---
Lorena: Hey, but I wasn't here	672 ---
yesterday, and hey, I can give an	673 ! L8
opinion.	674 ---
Magdalena: Sure, but we already	676 --- M2
Lorena: But I can give an opinion	678 ---
(Adriano talks over her) as the person	679 !
that I am can't I? You all have given	680 ! L9
your opinion, I have mine as well.	681 ---
Adriano: If you just let me, one second,	683
now, a few minutes, a few seconds we	684
were talking just about that	685
Other voices: Come on let's get this	687 --- O1
going. Let's do it by paper again.	688 --- O2
Lorena: Hey I think it would be better	690 --- L10
if we didn't vote.	691 ---
Group opts to vote, by secret ballot, in	--- G1
favor or against the simple majority	
standing. The majority stands.	
<u>Muchachos</u> will not participate.	--- G2

Figure 8 Tracing Group Map

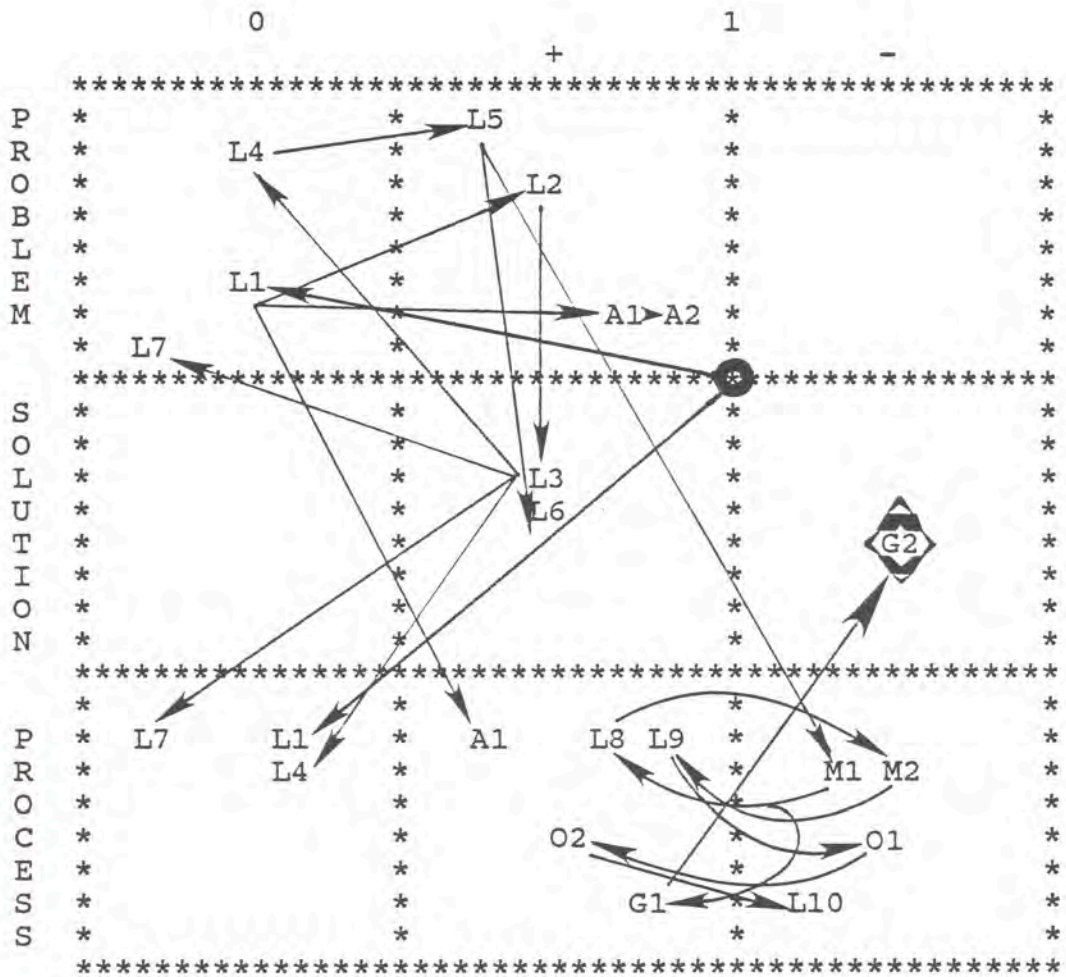


Figure 8 Tracing the Group Map (Continued)

Lorena follows a sequence of transvaluation interactively with Adriano, Magdalena and the group. She starts by suggesting that this is not a problem that is worth all the discussion. She publicly tries to transvalue the muchacho discussion from some "thing" worth caring for to "no-thing" (L1). Simultaneously this is a valuation of the problem and the process. Adriano indicates this has been "some-thing" therefore a "thing" worth discussing locating it back in the world of things cared about (A1). Lorena responds by questioning whether they had been told "what class of person to bring." This is really not a question but a statement indicating that anyone could attend, that there had been no special "type" of people who had been invited, thus suggesting that the muchachos presence, like anyone else's, should be valued positively (L2), with an unspoken solution that they should continue to be a part of the group (L3). Adriano agrees with her problem location, because no special profile had been agreed to for those who came (A2), but makes no reference that this leads to her solution.

Lorena then engages in several movements that indicate her frustration with the debate and process. Feeling powerless with the simple majority in the group which is willing to vote the muchachos out, she vacillates between locations that argue in favor of their

presence and those that attempt to remake it into a nonissue. She starts with a return to her first locating strategy, it is not worth discussing (L4), again attempting to move the muchacho issue into the realm of indifference. However, without giving Adriano a chance to respond, she immediately relocates it as something worth discussing, transvaluing into a problem of "us all being humans" (L5) with the unspoken solution valuation that they should join the group (L6). But in the same breath, she contradicts that location transvaluing the muchacho problem back to something not worth discussing, but this time does it in terms of the time the group has spent on this question (L7).

Magdalena responds to Lorena's comment about "being human," with the process valuation that "we have already discussed this." In other words, time is up on that discussion. Her tone suggests that Lorena should not be raising these issues at this time. It is a negative valuation of Lorena's intervention and process suggestions (M1). Lorena responds by justifying her intervention and valuing it light of her rights (L8). Magdalena begins to repeat her position (M2) but is cut off by Lorena defending more vigorously her right to give an opinion (L9). Other voices in the group then push for a vote by secret ballot. There is a sense of

impatience with the process and against Lorena's view of exerting rights to continue talking. The voices make process valuations, pushing for outcome through a vote. "No more talk" (negative of Lorena's process, O1). "Vote now" (positive for a vote, O2), pushing for an accelerated outcome (O1). Lorena responds that it would be better not to vote (L10).

This exchange comes at a crucial time for the group. Within minutes the decision is made to vote (G1), on whether the simple majority will stand as the final decision. In other words the group decides to vote on the process which will render a decision. The result (G2) decides that the muchachos will not participate. The graphic of Figure 8 helps us visualize group decisionmaking, as the interaction, movement and negotiation of individual paths. This is accomplished through the coordination of three types of relevant knowledge (problem, solution, and process) valued in three ways (indifference, caring for and caring against). In this group example, as well as the individual example of Carmen we see how dealing with conflict involves the management of multiple locations. This is a fluid, dynamic and transforming process based on the taken-for-granted use of everyday knowledge. With this cross tabulation the theory suggests that conflict in the social world is managed in one or a combination of

nine ways, accomplished through the social organization of paying attention to one or several locations and the simultaneous disattention to others.

THESIS 5: HOW CONFLICT OUTCOMES ARE ACCOMPLISHED

Interaction of problem and solution valuations create the salidas, the "ways out" of the conflict pursued by members (Figure 9). Salidas can pursue multiple options in two categories: "the no problem" and "the problem."

"No problem" categories (cells 1, 2, 3, 4, and 7) are created when members are indifferent either about the problem or the solution, or about both. These result in salidas that accommodate to other members, avoid the problem, or eliminate it by transvaluing it back out of society and into realm of indifference and social non-existence. The double zero category, indifference about both solution and problem, should not be understood simply as the absence of caring or the presence of ignorance. It can also be the presence of the social organization of indifference and disattention, which creates and maintains the absence of caring and the presence of ignorance.

Problem categories (cells 5, 6, 8, and 9), on the other hand, are created through the social organization of caring about both the solution and the problem

SOLUTION VALUATION

	0		1	
		+		-
	***** N			
	* MUCHACHOS	* DON'T CARE	* DON'T CARE	* O
	* NOT WORTH	* IF THEY	* IF THEY	* P
0	* DISCUSSING	* JOIN	* QUIT	* R
				* O
P				* B
R				* L
O				* E
B	***** M			
L				
E				
M				
	* THEY CAME FOR	* THEY CAME FOR	* THEY CAME FOR	*
				*
+	* HELP, BUT HAVE	* HELP, LET	* HELP;	*
				* P
	* NOT RETURNED	* THEM JOIN NOW	* JOIN LATER	* R
V				* O
A				* B
L	***** L			
U				* E
A	* NO CONFIANZA	* NO CONFIANZA	* NO CONFIANZA	* M
T				*
I	* BUT ARE NOT	* LET THEM JOIN	* THEY SHOULD	*
O				*
N	* RETURNING:	* LATER, BUT	* NOT JOIN	*
				*
	* WHY BOTHER?	* NOT AS LEADERS*		*

Figure 9 Creating Conflict Outcomes

come, commonly referred to as a zero-sum game in negotiation and game theory (Richardson, 1960; Boulding, 1962). The final solution reached by Genesis was a solution of this type, in which no accommodation was made for the participation of the muchachos. They were simply out. They lost.

Second, combined negative and positive valuations of problem and solution result in salidas-as-arreglos in which members accept and manage multiple locations at the same time. In negotiation and game theory literature these salidas result in what is referred to as positive sum outcomes, compromises or win/win (Boulding, 1962; Young, 1975; Zartman, 1978), or in mediation and conflict management generally as a collaborative solution (Thomas, 1976; Fisher and Ury, 1981; Moore, 1985).

Outcomes are thus interactive in multiple ways: 1) through the interaction and movement between problem/solution locations; 2) through an individual's path, representing the subjective movement and negotiation of problem/solution locations; 3) through the group journey representing the intersubjective movement and negotiation of problem/solution locations.

We can add other common terms of conflict resolution in relation to this outcome scheme.

"Consensus," for example, can fall into any of the nine cells in the "problem" or "no problem" categories. Consensus from this view occurs when individuals in a group, while following different paths, arrive at the same location. On the other hand "majority rules" type outcomes, in which more people arrive at one location than at another involve the subjugation of the second to the first.

We must also add a proposition here concerning the procedural valuation which can be induced from the Genesis experience, and related directly to outcomes. The longer a group is unable to arrive at common problem/solution locations the more likely are process locations to become instrumental points of conflict. In the Genesis experience the most significant moment in the development of the conflict came when the group was unable to reach consensus or majority rule and the social organization of caring then turned its focus from solution to process valuation. The infinitude of possibilities was closed off in favor of getting it over. "It was taking too much time." The vote rule was renegotiated making it easier for a majority path to provide a solution. In the end, the group voted not for the solution, but for the process: "Do we agree to let the simple majority stand?"

The inability of members of a group to arrive at a common location and the continued existence of organized caring for and against the muchacho presence translated into frustration, externalized and internalized anger, and eventually in the case of Genesis, indifference, not only about the muchachos but about the group. Social power, which we define in this framework as the ability to influence others' paths toward or away from certain locations, in other words, the ability to create, maintain as dominant, or destroy locations, is closely related to indifference and procedural valuations. Paradoxically, in circumstances of perceived and real powerlessness, indifference is the first step toward empowerment, involving the removal of self and legitimacy from the world of caring that sustains a given social reality, leading to outcomes as varied as apathy, resignation, and revolution. It is then from the world of indifference that new procedural initiatives emerge for addressing problem/solution location incompatibilities.

CONCLUDING THESIS: HOW REALITIES ARE CONSTRUCTED

The everyday construction of social realities are accomplished through the intersubjective coordination of conflict and the resulting "ways out." Thus, everything that matters in society, that is, all that is

present in society is a negotiated response to conflict. It further stands that everything that has come into, gone out of and is currently sustained within society is accomplished through the process of member coordination.

The social construction of people's shared reality is and must be conceived of as a dialectical process, because their reality is created and sustained by the coordinating activity of the very persons who both create it and experience it as real. Conflict thus underlies both the integration and disintegration of all social realities. Life thrives on conflict for it engenders human care. To expand on John Dewey (1930) conflict is not only the essential ingredient of "reflection and ingenuity," it is the sine qua non of creativity, of all we know and experience in the social world.

CHAPTER 7

HOW BLOOD REACHES THE RIVER: THE FOLK LANGUAGE OF CONFLICT

INTRODUCTION

On our way to the weekly Genesis meeting one evening, Magdalena, Jim and I were discussing different conflictive situations in Magdalena's barrio. With some animation she recounted several events of the week about her neighbors who were in a real clavo (nail, meaning a jam or problem). After she finished, I remarked that people in Puntarenas do not frequently use the word "conflict" to describe these situations. "Ah no," she replied, "here we don't have conflicts. Conflicts are what they have in Nicaragua. In Puntarenas we have pleitos (fights, disputes), lios (jams, mess), enredos (entanglements, confusions) and problemas."

Her response typified something I had noticed in my travels throughout Central America: Virtually nobody, and certainly no one in Genesis, used the word

"conflict" to describe their everyday disputes. At the same time I noticed a wealth of folk terms and phrases used to talk about conflict. I noticed them because they were often different from the wealth of folk terms I had grown up with and took for granted. Curious about this language, I began to collect words and phrases used by people in their natural talk and setting to describe conflictive situations. This curiosity further developed into a teaching exercise in conflict management seminars. I would often start the seminar by asking participants to gather in small groups and make a list of all the words and phrases they could think of that were, in their minds, synonymous with or closely related to conflict. In several groups they came up with more than 80 terms. Over time my collection has grown to nearly 200 folk-ways of saying conflict, from "pig's blood" and "egg plants" to being "carried off by a mule" and "bit by a witch." Convinced that these folk-descriptions provided special insight into the taken-for-granted everyday knowledge about conflict, we designed a didactic exercise with the "collection" in Genesis. This chapter will outline the results of that exercise, involving most of four sessions over two weeks with a group of eight members from Genesis. This chapter is thus based on notes taken during the meetings and the verbatim transcription of members discussing and

organizing these words and phrases into a meaningful arrangement for them. Thus it is based on their talk-about-their-talk about conflict.

PROBLEMAS: THE MOTHER OF CONFLICT

To initiate the exercise I had written each of the words and phrases in my collection on an index card. These included words I had gleaned in Puntarenas and in Costa Rica, but also terms I had heard in other parts of Central America. The first evening with Genesis members we randomly read through and spread all the cards out on the floor in front of us. As a first step any words or phrases that were not commonly understood or used by members in Puntarenas were discarded. There was usually quick agreement among everyone that a word was known and used, or was not. Most often, however, there was a reaction of smiles and laughter as the next one would be read. On several occasions people turned to each other and said "that's the word you use a lot," or "my mother always said that when she was mad at us kids." By the end of the first evening, members had reduced the number of index cards to around 80 with several new ones added as they talked. The group spent next few evenings making sense of all these words. I suggested several guiding and open questions: What do you see here in all these cards? Are there any patterns or groups, or some

reason why some cards should be together with others?

The first and most important common denominator among all the words had already emerged in reading them. As they were read I would often ask, "Do you recognize this word? What does it mean?" Their response was always the same, "Yes. It is a problema." Problema, in their mind was the single word related to all others. They chose the problema card as the title of all the others, placing it alone, above the rest of the cards. The prominence of the problema in the folk conceptualization should not be overlooked as accidental or casual. With great frequency, when Porteños find themselves in a bind they will exclaim, "Ay, qué problema" (Wow, what a problem). It is often said with a sigh or an added Latin hand gesture, like shaking water from one's fingers resulting in a repeated snapping sound as the fingers slap together, used to emphasize the difficulty and the complexity of the situation. The message is clear. Conflicts are experienced as a jolt in the flow of everyday life. In the folk vision, conflicts are literally, problematic. In other words, "meaning" is not readily apparent and cannot be taken-for-granted. The person is faced with the task and the need to pay special attention to the events and actions surrounding the conflictive interaction, in order to know what is

happening and how to respond appropriately. There is an intimate connection between ubicarse, getting one's bearings and problemas: people must locate themselves in order to manage the situation confronting them. Thus, appropriately for them, every aspect and type of conflict is a problema.

By the end of the second session the group of Porteños had agreed on certain categories. They worked initially by putting cards together that formed groups of words they felt were related. These were then rank-ordered from less to more serious levels of "gravity" and taped together. Much discussion and shuffling of cards took place until across the wall on sheets of newsprint a classified order of taped index cards appeared (Figure 11).¹

Genesis members identified five initial categories: "Individual" (terms describing what is happening inside the person), "words" (terms describing conflict when it remains at the level of verbal exchange); "violence" (terms describing conflict as it moves toward physical exchange), "causes" (terms describing the source of the conflict), and "causers" (terms describing the perpetrators of the conflict). At various places in the mural of index cards, words were written describing horizontal relationships between columns or titling different levels of gravity as the

INDIVIDUAL (INDIVIDUAL)	PALABRAS (WORDS)	VIOLENCIA (VIOLENCE)	PROBLEMAS (PROBLEMS)	CAUSANTES (CAUSERS)
FICADO (ROUGH, WASHED)	OFENSA (OFFENSE)	ALARDE (BRAG)		TORTERO (TROUBLEMAKER)
REHEURTO MOLESTO (GRUBBLING) (DOTTHERED)	RESENTIDO (RESENTFUL)	CONATO DE BRONCA (START A ROW)		CHISME (DAD NEWS, LARK)
DISGUSTO (PUT OFF)	SANGRE EN EL OJO (BLOOD IN THE EYE)	SE APROPIO LAS MANGAS (ROLLING UP YOUR SLEEVES)		RODRACHO EN VELA (DRUNKARD TROUBLE)
SANGRE CALIENTE (HOT BLOOD)	DESACUERDO (DISAGREEMENT)	SE FUSO LAS GANITES (PUTTING ON THE GLOVES)		SE METIO LA PATA (FOOT IN MOUTH)
LE SURJO LA SANGRE (HER BLOOD WENT UP)	DIFERENCIAS (DIFFERENCES)	SE QUITO LA CAMISA (TAKING OFF THE SHIRT)		APRIETO (IN A FIX)
BRAVO (AGGRESSIVE, FIERCE)	DISCUSION (ARGUE)	CONTIENNA (STRUGGLE)		(HOLE, IN THE LURCH)
SANGRE CHANCHO (STEAMFID OFF)	FOCES (RUB, FRICTION)	LUCHA (FIGHT)		REPEGNAL (FINE MESS)
SANGRE DE POLLO (CHICKEN SHIT)	EMFENTAMIENTO (CONFRONTATION)	FELEA (FIGHT)		AFURO (IN TROUBLE)
ECHAQUETANO (HEATED IN)	DISPUTA (DISPUTE)	PLEITO (LAWSUIT, FIGHT)		CONGOJA (ANGUISS, GRIEF)
ENDEMOHIADO (TOSSESSED)	FOLEMICA (TOLEMIC)	RIVA (FIGHT)		
BERRIUCHE (TABIRUM)	QUERRELLA (QUARREL)	BOCHINCHE (RIOT)		ENTRE LA ESPADA Y PARED (ROCK AND A HARDPLACE)
AL ROJO VIVO (RED HOT)	FUCHA (BATTLE)	BURRUBUN (UNCONTROLLED FIGHT)		LADERINTO (MAZE, INTRICATE MATTER)
LE METIO EL AGUA (PISSSED OFF)	DIVISION (DIVISION)	CAMORRA (BRAWL, FIGHT)		PARADO EN UN HORMIGUERO (STUCK ON AN ANT HILL)
LE SURJO EL ATALLADO (ACTING TUFF A BABY)	TRAIDO (FIGHT)	BRONCA (QUARREL)		CAMISA DE OMBE VARRAS (BIT OFF TOO MUCH)
LE SALJO EL INDIO (THE SAVAGE COMES OUT)	CLAVO (NAIL, STUCK)	LA SANGRE LIEGA AL RIO (BLOOD REACHES THE RIVER)		
LE SALJO LA VIRGEN (HER VIRGEN CAME OUT)				
AGUA PARA CHOCOLATE (BOILING MAD)				
ECHAR CHISFAS (SEND OFF STARKS)				
NOTA EL HIGADO (GOT RID OFF THE BILE)				

KEY: () = TRANSLATION; - = GENESIS ADDITIONAL WRITING BETWEEN, INDEX CARDS
 Each word was an index card, those above or below were taped together.

Figure 11 Genesis' Original Card Sequence

cards descended down the wall. As the group continued to discuss and grapple with the cards over the course of the next meetings, several ways of describing conflict began to gel more clearly. These can be outlined in four views, which combined produced a Portêno folk theory of conflict creation and growth through their natural language.

CONFLICT: THE NET OF LIFE

One of the first discoveries in the group was the relationship between the causes and the perpetrators of problemas. The first four terms appearing in the causers category were personified: Troublemakers, Friday-the-13th-types, Trouble-searching-drunks, and Foot-in-the-mouth-types. These are people who cause us grief and get us in trouble. While it is possible that their actions are unintentional, members of Genesis consistently reported that these people get others in trouble intentionally through a very specific mechanism: chisme (gossip). When asked and probed in their responses, the group insisted that the single biggest and most important cause of conflict in Puntarenas communities was chisme. They identified numerous other terms that are used almost synonymously with chisme, among them were cuentos (stories) and ofensas (offensive put-downs). Chisme results in our being metido en un

enredo, put in a tangled net. A phrase was coined that evening describing what they called the "causes and causers of problemas:" Por medio del chisme, un tortero nos mete en un enredo: Through gossip, troublemakers puts us in a tangled net. The phrase provides insights into the folk vision of conflict in this Port town setting. To understand it, we must first examine their concept of enredo.

Un enredo, or as they often say, estamos bien enredados is perhaps the single most significant term describing the folk conceptualization of conflict. "We are all entangled." However, a simple translation does not transmit the full meaning of the term. This is a fishing metaphor in its roots. It is built around the Spanish word red, a fisherman's net. To be enredado is to be tangled, caught in a net. The image is one of knots and connections; an intimate and intricate mess. A net, when tangled, must slowly and patiently be worked through and undone. When untangled it still remains connected and knotted. It is a whole. A net is also frequently torn leaving holes that must be sewn back together, knotting once again the separated loose ends. I can think of nothing that better describes conflict and the characteristics of its management at the inter-personal level in Puntarenas than this folk metaphor.²

"Interpersonal conflict" is obviously a misnomer in this context. It leaves the impression that individual persons are in conflict. It fits a Western conceptualization that emphasizes a psychological focus on individuals and their issues, often in isolation from their network. In the Porteños minds, issues and people and therefore conflicts are always viewed holistically, as embedded in their social networks. Members of Genesis clearly felt that the single most important characteristic affecting both the understanding and development of conflict is a person's network. La red, or "net," the root word in the formation of enredo, is also the word for network, although in Puntarenas they more naturally would refer to it as mi gente, my people. Broadly this covers people who are well known to a person, usually friends, fellow workers, neighbors from the barrio and most importantly the extended family. In short one's support group.

People in Puntarenas, as throughout most of Central America think in terms of families. For example, refugee camps, barrios, housing projects are always counted in families, not individuals. They would rarely say, "1,000 people live in this neighborhood." From government officials to the person in the street it is almost always: "200 families live here." Extended

family members often live in close proximity to each other, occupying various houses on the same block. I remember that my first visit to the garage for an oil change included an introductory tour of my mechanic's house. As we walked down the block toward his house he pointed, "Here is where my brother lives. Here, my cousin. Here my mother with my sister. Here my uncle." When we got to his house he turned and smiled, "This is your house. You'll never get lost. Just make it to the neighborhood and ask for the Morales. Everyone knows which street the family is on." Time and again, little pieces of evidence underscore that Central America is familial in social construction, not individualistic.

In the Porteños view, families and mi gente are the context in which conflicts, or the daily "entanglements" develop, are understood and managed. Recognition that a person is "in" a "tangled net" usually comes with some form of the verb meterse. "I have been metido," that is, placed, put, introduced, or forced "into" an entanglement. In everyday use people often accuse others of "putting me in this problem." As Ruth said, in telling a story about a problem she had with a friend, "I told her, vos me metiste en chisme, (you put me in gossip, got me trouble)." It is not unusual, however, to hear that "I put myself in." Meterse also has the connotation of meddling and interfering. For example,

before one of our meetings I was talking with Carlos and Minor, another member. We started discussing how we would "enter" Carlos' family to help. Minor shook his head. "It wouldn't work here, because here, the family is the family and nobody interferences (se mete). The family is closed (cerrada). It is very porteño to not meterse (meddle) in family problems. That is the family's job." In all the cases however, to be metido carries the recognition that one is now a part of and inside a larger whole.

We can now connect the folk use of chisme with being "put in a tangled net." Chisme as we defined it earlier, is the creation of things-that-are-not through talk. Drawing on a related term, cuentos, it is storytelling about others not present. According to the Porteños however, chisme is storytelling with a method and a madness. It is unique to and is exclusively created within a network. It makes its appearance through member networking and is created through the taken-for-granted knowledge about their network. Chisme is effective precisely because members are acutely aware of their relationships and mutual dependence. The very creation that serves and supports and in which the Porteños instinctively conceptualize themselves -- mi gente -- can and is used to create conflict and fights

among each other.

The madness derives from the purpose, from the taken-for-granted knowledge that chisme (in the minds of these Porteños) is used as an instrument for "doing battle" with each other through their very network. In the course of our discussions numerous stories were recounted by the members of Genesis detailing how they were victimized by troublemakers, who, in retaliation for earlier offenses or out of simple jealousy, circulated a chisme about "my family" or "my wife and I." As one member reported, "I was the last to hear it. Someone, just in passing said something about my wife's visit to a friend's house." Notice here that the chisme is the content (something about a wife's visit to a friend's house) delivered in the form of an indirecta. That was enough to know that others were talking about him, that he was being played for a fool and a cuckold. Now he had a serious enredo in his home, with his neighbor, with his gente and in his barrio. Whether it was true or not hardly mattered. Some "Foot-in-the-mouth-type" had told a story that had put him in a tangled net to which he had to respond. This kind of experience, as reported by the Porteños, describes the creation and the growth of a problema. It is intimately related to their sense of network, best depicted as a fisherman's net weathering the daily ebb and flow sym-

bolic of tight-knit port town relationships.

LOSING CONTROL

A second perspective developed by Genesis involved what they called the "individual" or what happens inside the person. This they described in terms of two processes: feelings, and animo or spirit. The majority of terms were used to describe a person's animo and the four levels of increasing gravity as one moves down the list were described with a specific "feeling" term as shown in Figure 12.

The first level, a person's spirit, was described as "grumbling", feeling a bit "mashed" and "resentful." This level was depicted as a "bother." The person feels irritated and uncomfortable, but not upset. It is the second level in which the person becomes "angry." Here the members grouped four phrases revolving around "blood" metaphors. Increasing in gravity the folk descriptors started with "hot blood" and "rising blood" proceeding through "pig's blood" and ended with "blood in the eye." Each of these, besides using the metaphor of blood, also connoted "red" and "heat." For example, "pig's blood" was described by members as being "hot" when it was butchered. This level ended with the behavior descriptor bravo. Bravo is an everyday conflict expression in most of Central

<u>SPIRIT</u>		<u>FEELINGS</u>
PICADO	-----	
(MASHED)	!	
REFUNFUNO	!	
(GRUMBLING)	MOLESTO	
DISGUSTO	(BOTHERED)	
(PUT OFF)	!	
RESENTIDO	!	
(RESENTFUL)		
SANGRE CALIENTE	-----	
(HOT BLOOD)	!	
SE LE SUBIO LA SANGRE	!	
(HIS BLOOD IS RISING)	!	
SANGRE CHANCHO	ENOJADO	
(PIG'S BLOOD)	(ANGRY, MAD)	
SANGRE EN EL OJO	!	
(BLOOD IN THE EYE)	!	
BRAVO	!	
(AGGRESSIVE)		
ENCHAQUETADO	-----	
(HEMMED IN)	!	
ENDEMONIADO	!	
(POSSESSED)	!	
BERRINCHE	!	
(TANTRUM)	!	
AL ROJO VIVO	!	
(RED HOT)	!	
LE METIO EL AGUA	PIERDE CONTROL	
(PISSSED OFF)	(LOSES CONTROL)	
LE SUBIO EL APELLIDO	!	
(ACTING LIKE A BABY)	!	
LE SALIO EL INDIO	!	
(THE SAVAGE CAME OUT)	!	
LE SALIO LA VIRGEN	!	
(HER VIRGIN CAME OUT)	!	
AGUA PARA CHOCOLATE	!	
(BOILING MAD)	!	
ECHAR CHISPAS	CAPAZ DE TODO	
(THROWING SPARKS)	(ANYTHING GOES)	
BOTAR EL HIGADO	!	
(GOT RID OF THE BILE)	!	
SE PUSO FEO	!	
(IT GOT UGLY)		

Figure 12 Spirit and Feeling of Conflict

America. Perhaps the most common usage is that of describing dogs. "Beware of dog" signs are almost always the simple phrase "Perro bravo." In Central American's descriptions these dogs are mean, aggressive, fierce and dangerous. Bravo when used for a person-description usually refers to confrontational actions when people become aggressive, mad and shouting. Appropriately, this level was titled "angry" or "mad" by Genesis members.

In the third level Genesis members combined two sets of descriptors. First, they placed together four terms: hemmed-in, possessed, passionate anger, and living vivid red. The third term, for example, berrinche, is often used to describe children's behavior when, in a fit of rage, they "lose it." It is an unleashing of passion with little or no control. Following these, came several other phrases. Each relates something happening to the individual: acting like a baby, the Indian or virgin came out of him/her. As described by the members, each refers to a regression, a moving back from adult to child, from maturity to immaturity, from civilized to uncivilized behavior. "Your Indian came out" they will say to someone who has "lost control," which is precisely how they titled level three.

Level four was titled, "capable of anything" or perhaps more accurately translated, "anything is possible." This level starts with the phrase, "water for chocolate." In their explanation, to make chocolate you need hot boiling water, the point at which chocolate melts. Therefore, a person who is "boiling mad" or "steamed." This is then followed by two phrases, "throwing sparks" and "throwing out the liver." The former follows the metaphors of heat and fire, but the latter is different. As explained by them, "throwing out the liver" is symbolic of someone who has accumulated a great deal of anger and bitterness, the opportunity then arises for them to unload it, to "get it out of their system," to "spill their guts." A phrase that was identified with this was "getting rid of the bile." The process is the same, a person literally takes the bitterness and externalizes it, in an often emotional, angry session. "Throwing out the liver" gets the bitterness out.

Level four ends with the phrase "it got ugly." I have heard these words used in various contexts, the vast majority to describe situations of social interaction of great emotional anger and intensity. At times these could be described as shouting matches, but in most circumstances it was used to talk about potential

or real violence. For example, in March of 1988 I participated in a mediation team serving as intermediaries between the Sandinista Government of Nicaragua and Miskito Indian exiles of the East Coast of Nicaragua. As part of our work we accompanied the exiles on a trip through their homelands in East Nicaragua. During the main public meeting in Puerto Cabezas in the midst of some 2000 people a street riot broke out between sympathizers of one side and the other. Several of us of the mediation team were caught in the middle and were seriously injured. Later in the hospital while we were being stitched up, one of the government officials said to me, "it got a little ugly back there didn't it."

In the words of the Genesis members, conflict is experienced inside the person as increasing in intensity and gravity. It moves from bothersome to anger, from anger to losing control and ultimately to a place where the person is capable of doing anything. Dominant metaphors describe this progression are blood, red and heat.

TOUCHING GOD WITH DIRTY HANDS

In a third perspective Genesis members grouped words and phrases together that described a conflict situation from inside and out, the internal and the external. The external descriptors are terms used to

characterize how the situation looks to an observer, whereas the internal, like the earlier mentioned "individual" perspective, describes how the situation feels to the participants.

Of particular interest are the internal descriptors dominated by metaphors of being caught with no way out: a person is stuck in a "hole"; caught in the entanglement of an eggplant; pinned between a sword and a wall, or lost in a maze. These folk phrases are consistent and descriptive of the taken-for-granted process of ubicarse and the conceptualization of conflict as a problema: Faced with the problematic we must locate ourselves in order to find an appropriate way out. As we will describe later, handling problemas is a matter of finding a way out. Nonetheless, the feeling depicted in these terms identified by Genesis members as the internal aspect, is that conflict is like a maze, calling for a search for the right path out. Take for example the phrase "an eleven yard shirt." Members explained that a problema is like a greatly oversized shirt. It is so large that you are lost in it, there is no way to make fit. You feel small, insignificant and lost.

"You touched God with dirty hands," they placed as the last phrase in the internal category. "It is the ultimate," Adriano said, "there is nothing more." The

phrase is metaphoric of breaking norms, of having gone too far. It connects the sacred with human relations of conflict. The divine and pure has been dirtied by the vulgar and mundane. What is done to others is related to the divine. The explanation of the members -- this is the ultimate -- indicates conflict has reached a level where violence has been done to others. However, this is experienced not only as violence against others, but also against God and oneself. This makes sense only when it is seen holistically in the context of the network. Doing violence to others in our network is literally as if we have touched God with dirty hands: that which we depend upon and which has created us has been shattered. We participated in destroying something that was a part of us. We end up destroying ourselves. The net that holds us together has been ripped and untied, leaving gaping holes. It is in this context, that the power of the "rejection location" in the muchacho case and its identification as delicate can be understood. We cannot reject those who are already a part of us, for if we do, we tear asunder the "delicate" fabric holding us together. Our carefully constructed net of relations will be damaged, disconnected and incomplete. Such is the case of rejection and conflict carried to violence in the network. Touching God with

dirty hands leaves a sense of great tragedy and loss. It is the ultimate.

HOW BLOOD REACHES THE RIVER

Finally, out of the "collection" Genesis developed a fourth perspective around actions and behavior between people in conflict. In their minds there are three major categories: 1) not speaking and cutting off direct contact in the relationship, 2) terms describing verbal conflictive exchange, and 3) terms describing violent physical exchange (Figure 13).

In the first category, members identified two phrases characterizing the actions: no se hablan (they are not talking) and no se ven (they are not seeing each other). Each refers to a tactical action choice of not initiating direct contact with each other, of not addressing each other as a means of expressing relational rupture and dissatisfaction. Consider several examples of this behavior. Doña Fidelia, a grandmother many times over, has been separated but never divorced from her husband of many years because of his infidelity. They live separately but in close proximity. I asked her once whether she ever talks with him or has tried to resolve their differences. "No, no Juan Pablo," she responded, "es que no nos vemos (we do not see each other)." Living in the same barrio and con-

----- ACTIONS -----

!	!	!
USE SILENCE	USE WORDS	USE VIOLENCE
NOT SPEAKING		
NOT SEEING		

INDIRECTAS	-----	
DESACUERDO		!
DIFERENCIAS		BOTHERED
DISCUSION		!

ROCES	-----	
ENFRENTAMIENTO		!
DISPUTA		!
POLEMICA		!
QUERELA		!
PUGNA		ANGRY
DIVISION		!
TRAIDO		!
CLAVO		!

ALARDE	-----	
CONATO DE		!
BRONCA		!
SE ARROLLO		!
LAS MANGAS		!
SE PUSO		!
LAS GUANTES		!
SE QUITO		!
LA CAMISA		LOSING CONTROL
CONTIENDA		!
LUCHA		!
PELEA		!
PLEITO		!

RIÑA	-----	
BOCHINCHE		!
BURUNBUM		ANYTHING
CAMORRA		GOES
BRONCA		!
LA SANGRE		!
LLEGA AL RIO		!

Figure 13 Action Responses

ducting the normal affairs with their children they obviously have many opportunities to "see" each other, yet, as she reports, they are not seeing each other. When asked, she and others indicate this means they do not address each other, they do not initiate contact with each other. Simply put, even while in the presence of the other, they act like the other was not there. When necessary, spoken messages between the two pass through others, usually one of the older boys or a daughter-in-law.

This tactic is known and seems prevalent to other settings in Latin America. In Brazil, for example, they call it intriga. When I am intrigado with a person I do not talk, or address that person directly, nor does s/he talk with me. While leading a seminar in Recife, a Northamerican friend described to me the case of his two employees who became intrigado. One morning they had a number of errands to complete but the car was not working. The three of them were together in the room as they discussed what to do. Employee 1 had certain tasks that morning and did not need a vehicle. My friend then suggested that employee 2 take the bike which belonged to employee 1 to complete his errands. He said he could not do that. When asked why he responded, "we are intrigado and I cannot ask him if I

may use the bike." They could not directly address "the word," that is, could not talk to each other, much less make requests. It could only be accomplished through the employer even though both of them were in the room together and engaged in the discussion. The conflict action tactic of no hablarse is a way of pursuing and expressing a grievance without using words or violence. It is, in fact, viewed by members as an alternative to the more distasteful and public confrontational tactics, often instigated through an enumerar-personas expressive scheme and quickly leading to exchanges in the form of arguing, shouting or fighting.

Actions that involve verbal and physical exchange were classified according to the four-tiered "feeling" levels. At the "bothered" level the terms describe exchange as "disagreement" or "argument." As it moves to "anger" the descriptions intensify: "rubbing each other;" quarrels and division. The anger category finishes with the word clavo. A clavo is a nail. It is one of the most commonly used metaphors for conflict in Puntarenas and Central America. People are often heard to exclaim, "Ay, what a nail I've got," or "I got myself in a real nail." Members explained that a nail, once driven in is hard to get out, to retrieve. Clavo describes a point at which the conflict is advanced, driven in place, and "getting out" is

difficult.

The movement from words to violence happens between anger and losing control. Here various words for fighting appear, with the metaphors of rolling up the sleeves, taking off the shirt and putting on the gloves. The "losing control" level ends with the term pleito. Pleito has several uses and meanings. For example, it can be used as a formal legal term referring to a lawsuit. More generically it may be used to say that two people are arguing. However, for the members of Genesis, pleito describes a serious conflict expressed through physical violence between people. A pleito means the conflict has reached the level of blows and brawling.

The final level of "anything goes" include terms describing uncontrolled fighting. Bochinche for example characterizes street rioting and confrontations between demonstrators and police. Burunbum phonetically sounds like what it describes, a confused noisy brawl. I first heard it when mediating a family dispute in Costa Rica. The son was describing an incident between himself and his father. The father had never accepted the son's new wife, and took every opportunity to subtly and not so subtly insult her. This often caused confrontation. On one occasion following a particularly obvious insult,

the son came to her defense. A loud argument ensued. "We lost control," the son reported, "it was a real burunbum." He described a violent struggle and fist fight in which both of them were taken by ambulance to the hospital. "That," the Porteños would say, "is how blood reaches the river."

CONCLUSION

Figure 14 lays out the combination of these perspectives together as Genesis members finalized their conclusions. This Porteño folk theory of conflict views an ever increasing progression of intensity and exchange, that can be followed through their language in three parallel categories: situation, individuals and action. In their words this is the progression.

It starts with some troublemaker who through chisme and indirectas get us put in an enredo. We're stuck, its complicated and we have to confront it. We face off, our blood gets hot, and we get bravo. Now we've got ourselves stuck like a nail. Neighbors are watching. It is a scandal. We lose control. The savage in us comes out and off come our shirts. We have got a disaster and a pleito. We unload our bile and anything becomes possible. It is a real free for all. It gets ugly. We touch God with dirty hands. Blood reaches the river.

THE CAUSE: BY WAY OF CHISHE A TROUBLEMAKER PUTS US IN A TANGLED NET

---SITUATION---		---INDIVIDUAL---		-----ACTION-----	
EXTERNAL	INTERNAL	SPIRIT	FEELING	NOT SPEAKING WORDS	VIOLENCE
<u>LEVEL 1: EL ENREDO</u>					
CHISHE	APRIETO	PICADO	MOLESTO	INDIRECTAS	
INCOMODIDAD	ATOLLADERO	REFUFUNAR		DESACUERDO	
DESATINO	BEREGINAL	DISGUSTO		DIFERENCIAS	
LIO	APURO	RESENTIDO		DISCUSION	
TAHATE	CONGOJA				
ENREDO	EMBROLLO				
<u>LEVEL 2: EL CLAVO</u>					
COMPLICADO	ENTRE LA ESPADA Y LA PARED	SANGRE CALIENTE	EROJADO	ROCES	
FREGADO	LABERINTO	SUBIO LA SANGRE		ENFRENTAMIENTO	
		SANGRE CHIARCHO		DISPUTA	
		SANGRE EN EL OJO		POLEMICA	
				QUERELA	
				PUGNA	
				DIVISION	
				TRAIDO	
				CLAVO	
ESCARDALO	PARADO EN UN HORNIQUERO	BRAVO			
<u>LEVEL 3: EL PLEITO</u>					
CRISIS	CAMISA DE OHCÉ VARAS	ERCHAQUETADO	PIERDE	ALARDE	
		ENDEMONIADO	CONTROL	CONATO/BRONCA	
		BERRINCHE		SE ARROLLO LAS	
		AL ROJO VIVO		MANGAS	
		LE SALIO		SE PUSO GUANTES	
		EL INDIÓ		SE QUITO LA CAMISA	
		SUBIO		CONTIENDA	
		EL APELLIDO		LUCHA	
		LE SALIO		PELEA	
		LA VIRGEN		PLEITO	
<u>LEVEL 4: EL BURUNDUM</u>					
CATASTROFE		AGUA/CHOCOLATE	CAPAZ DE TODO	RINA	
		ECHAR CHIISPAS		BOCHINCHE	
		BOTA EL HIGADO		BURUNBUN	
		SE PUSO FEO		CAMORRA	
CAOS	TOCASTE A DIOS CON MANOS SUCIAS			BRONCA	
				LA SANGRE	
				LLEGA AL RIO	

Figure 14 A Porteno Folk Theory of Conflict Through Everyday Language

Through their arrangement of folk terminology we have gained insight into how conflict is both experienced and conceptualized by the members of Genesis. Dominant metaphors are those revolving around heat and emotional expression, those giving a sense of being caught or lost and unable to find a way out, and those related to a holistic view of problems and people embedded in a network. While the first two are similar to common conflict concepts in North American anglo setting, the third is less familiar and represents a theme we will detail more extensively in later chapters. The words and phrases, discussed here out of their natural use-in-context, cannot be taken as literally representing certain levels or degrees of conflict intensity. However, their coordination and resulting arrangement by members of Genesis produced evidence of the internal taken-for-granted knowledge accumulated and used by the members in understanding and handling everyday conflicts in a Puntarenas setting.

Their folk-theory suggests that conflict initiates and expands in the context of a tight-knit highly interdependent network. It thus is conceptualized and described in terms of patterns of responses and actions in the context of that network. Responses are categorized in three ways: 1) forms of avoidance; 2) forms

of verbal exchange; and 3) forms of physical interaction. These correspond, in the members minds, to levels of feelings experienced by the individual and types of spirit expressed by them, each the result of interpretive work carried out by the members concerning others' intentions and purposes.

The way members of Genesis carried out this "card game" exercise for sorting their folk categories and this subsequent examination suggest that the very language developed and used in everyday settings is itself a window into the folk understanding, conceptualization and management of conflict. More importantly, this metaphoric language is inherently a feature helping to organize both the understanding and accomplishment of conflict pointing to the cultural ways of comprehending the experience of conflict (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980). Of particular importance is the dimension of conflict occurring not between isolated individuals, nor as representing isolated issues, but rather as embedded in an extended, highly interdependent network. We now turn our attention to a related matter, that of how porteños conceptualize the handling of conflicts once they emerge.

CHAPTER NOTES

1. It is especially difficult when discussing concepts like these to easily deal with translations. I have included in Figure I rough one or two word translations of the concepts and phrases. This obviously does not communicate their fuller meaning-in-context. However, it does provide the non-Spanish speaker with some idea of the words and phrases. Elsewhere in the chapter a number of these will be discussed in more detail.

2. The point should not be lost that this folk vision closely parallels and lends support to the work of Simmel (1955), who consistently viewed conflict, as one of his titles suggests, as the "web" of group affiliation. Coser (1956) later discussed this as a function, the "cross-stitching" or "binding" effect of conflict.

CHAPTER 8

THE INS AND OUTS OF PROBLEMAS: EVERYDAY TALK ABOUT CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

"I knew how to connect-in (entrarle) with my dad," Carlos said, "but my mother won't let me in (no me deja entrarle). I don't know her. She is totally shut (cerrada)." It was a typical muggy night in Puntarenas. Carlos perspired as he explained the "situation" in his family to 20 of his fellow Porteños, members of Genesis. He was in the middle of "sculpting" his family with members of the group, describing them as he went. Around his mother he placed the middle brother and his little sister. "We are six," he explained, "my mother is close with these two. They have their little group." He placed his father across the other end of the room, and then his oldest brother about in the middle of the two parents. The distance between his parents was obvious. At one point he said, "At times I just feel like telling them 'Mamá. Papá. Háblense (Talk to each other).'" Finally, he put himself, the youngest of the

brothers, close to his father. "The family is separated," he said. "Not one of the family group gives even a grain of sand to fix (arreglar) this situation. Each one is on their own, alone." Now it was the group's turn. "What counsel (consejo) would you give me, so that there would be an opening (entrada) in my family?"

During the course of the evening we divided into small groups and then came back with ideas presented to the larger group. Everyone related to Carlos' problem. Numerous people commented, "we know that family, it's like our problem." Participation was high, advice came from all sides. Even the two grandmothers in the group, who rarely offered to speak, had special insights when it came to family difficulties. Doña Fidelia immediately spoke in the small group. "If there is no love, there is no arrangement (arreglo). The family needs to be more sincero" (open, sincere). Later, Doña Guadalupe gave Carlos a consejo, a piece of advice about his mother, "you have to llegarle suavemente (connect-in soft and slow). Show her your love," she said, "go to her with your heart in your hand."

It was Henry, however, who came up with the dominant strategy for the evening.

This is how I explain it. The mother is the trunk. The brothers and sister are the branches. Many times if one wants to get to (entrarle) the trunk,

one has to go through the branches (irse por las ramas). It is not with the trunk that you start. Start with the brothers. Carlos needs moral support, (apoyo moral) we all need moral support to be able to live. So talk to the oldest brother, tú a tú (one-on-one, intimately), tell him that you need it, make him see that you need this love and moral support.

The above conversations are a streamlined version of a transcript describing interaction that took place during an evening Genesis meeting. Carlos had come to the group seeking help. After participating for a few weeks he decided to lay out his family problem, so the group could counsel him. Members of Genesis listened, then gave their advice and perspective. What emerged was member talk-about-appropriate-responses to a conflictive family situation. The present chapter will examine this talk and their approaches as a different angle on how members conceptualize the everyday procedures of managing conflict.

ENTRARLE: THE PROCESS OF GETTING IN

Carlos feels metido in an enredo. His family relations are not right. His parents do not talk. His mother is closed and distant. His siblings are isolated. "The family is separated," he reports. The question posed to the members: What should he do? Their immediate and natural response is a search for what they call the entrada. It involves the process of finding a way to entrarle, to "enter into" the problem

and the person. This is, in fact, the most common response to feeling that one is metido. Once metido, the first step is to "get into the problem," meaning finding an opening or a way for dealing with it. But this concept is more complex than simple "entry." The verb invariably is used in the form entrarle, and it is the le that points to the effort to get "into" or "inside of."

Como entrarle al problema is used in two ways by members. First, it is the question of how to gain access to the problem. This is foremost a search for the right connection, that is, for la entrada, which invariably is a person. Consider for example the following consejos that emerged in the small group.

Maximo suggested the starting point is the older brother. "He is more sincere, the one that brings the dialogue."

"In some families," Carlos responded, "the oldest brother has a lot of influence when he has been given the importance that the older brother has . . . but in this case he is just another brother."

Miguel, in listening, suggested it should be the "second brother, try to be more open with him first."

Roberto, based on the level of confianza that Carlos said he had in his father, had a different idea.

"You have to dialogar (talk it over) with your father first, then your mother."

Miguel disagreed. "At first I thought the parents were the place to start but now I think it's with the brothers."

Later, Henry suggested that the entry with the mother is best accomplished by going through the brothers. He was the one who used a common saying and metaphor to describe what came to be the consensus point of view. "The mother is the trunk, the brothers are the branches. To get to the trunk, it is best to irse por las ramas, go through the branches."

Inherent in this folk wisdom are several important taken-for-granted locations about openings and entry. First we see them using natural knowledge about who, in the family, is the correct person to approach first. Several suggested the older brother, who in many families has special responsibilities as a go-between and trouble shooter. As Carlos responded, he recognized the shared knowledge that produced this consejo as being correct, proper and traditional. But in his family, the older brother had lost this role and influence. Miguel then suggested the second brother in line following the logic of birth order. Both of these suggestions located the solution based on accumulated knowledge about the hierarchical authority of people, roles and responsibi-

lities in the traditional family network. Roberto, however, starts from a different place, that of confianza. Rather than using knowledge about who is traditionally responsible for family maintenance, he looks for relations of trust. Since Carlos has more confianza in his father, he suggests, that is the place to start. Confianza gives entry into the problem and the person.

Another set of locations emerges around the question of how to proceed. Henry's suggestion, for example, is to go "through the branches." This popular saying refers to tactics of problem solving through an indirect and roundabout entry in approaching the person and the problem. While the shortest distance between two physical points is said to be a straight line, the safer and more appropriate Porteño procedure of problem-solving is indirect: Go through others and their channels to reach your goal. In this case he suggests that the objective is the mother, the trunk. The best entry or opening however is approach her through the brothers, the branches. Implicit in this folk knowledge is the understanding that too direct an entrance may upset or put-off people because of the confrontational nature implied and therefore "close" the person. It is important, as Doña Guadalupe put it earlier, to initial-

ly "arrive in the world of the other soft and slow."

We notice in all this that members consistently focus on how to enter the problem by finding the right person to approach as an entry into the problem. This can be accomplished by "locating" one's approach according to taken-for-granted knowledge about proper and traditional roles established and respected in the family, or according to evaluation of trust relations. The first is a formal approach, a folk equivalent to a structural functional theory of action (Parsons, 1937; Merton, 1949). Here appropriate responses and entry are derived using knowledge about the function of traditional roles, which are givens by logic (Fishman, 1967). The second is an informal approach, a folk equivalent to an interactionist perspective (Goffman, 1959; Blumer, 1969). Here appropriate ways of finding entry are derived from knowledge about how relationships interact and how interpersonal contact is negotiated. Of particular interest here is the fact that these two, seemingly contradictory descriptions of human action, appear side by side consistently. The tendency of a functionalist view of culture and folk activities is to explain them as if the knowledge about traditional roles and norms determines actions. What we find here is that members indeed have knowledge relevant to a functional theory but that does not determine or explain their

response. Rather, we find that members use both types of knowledge, coordinating and negotiating together their definitions of a situation and then creating appropriate, effective responses.

Second, como entrarle al problema is also the question of how to get "inside" in order to understand. To enter the problem through a person is to enter into the other person's world. Thus the phrase "enter into the problem" is consistently accompanied with "enter into the person." Another common term accompanying entrarle is compenetrar. "We are very compenetrados" the Porteños will say about someone who is close, open and understood. We have penetrated into each other's world. In this conception if problems are to be understood they must be felt and seen from the "inside out." This is parallel to Weber's (1947) notion of verstehen, or interpretive sociology, and underscores the implicit folk recognition of living in a social world of interacting multiple realities. To understand, one must "penetrate" into the world of the other.

How to "enter the person" is connected with this idea of "penetrating." The basic question is both how to approach and then connect-in successfully with the other. Used interchangeably is the phrase como llegarle: How to arrive in the world of the other.

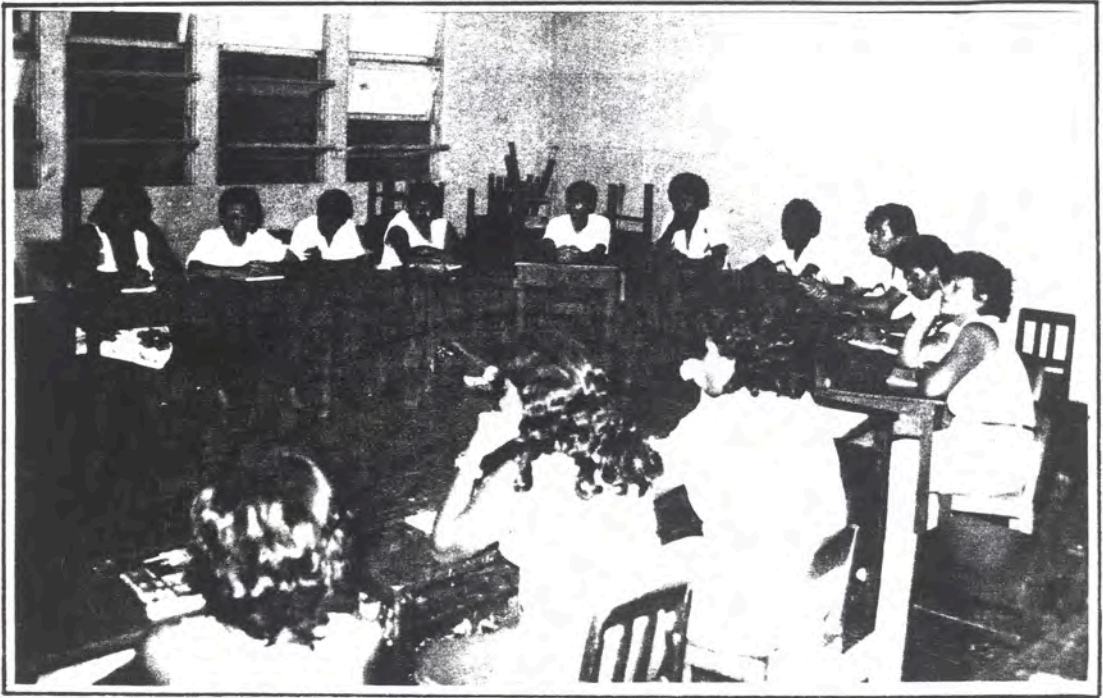
Viewed in context, successful entrance into the person means we have spoken and understood, we have seen each other from the inside. The ultimate purpose is to enter and penetrate into the world of the person with whom we have the problem. This is synonymous in members' minds with entering the problem. The search for entry into the problem through a person implicitly means that others serve as a bridge between our separation. Since "arrival" is not always possible or appropriate directly, we search for the connection point, the person who has access and knows the inside of both worlds.

This understanding sheds light on the prevalence and importance of the typical conflict "person-description" as someone who is cerrado. Carlos' problem with his mother, and the difficulty the group experienced in giving him advice repeatedly came from the "closed" nature of his family. This in fact was Minor's description of many families in Puntarenas. "The family is the family and nobody interferes." Cerrado is not so much that a person is stuck in their position, difficult to negotiate with, or hardheaded. The term reserved for that is duro (hard headed). It is specifically that they will not let you into their world. The entrance is shut. You cannot get inside. Notice how Carlos reports that his mother "... won't let me in. She is closed." Then, in the following breath, "I don't know her." If

you cannot get inside, you do not know the person, you do not feel their world, nor do they feel yours. In the folk view, a closed person means that there is no way to "get into the problem" and consequentially no way out of the entanglement.

We will now consider this mechanism and process of entry from several different angles. In the session following the muchacho decision, the friends who had originally invited them, demonstrated some obvious signs of dissatisfaction. Due to several problems at home, they left an hour early after the break. The meeting was particularly tense that evening, an underlying feeling of hurt and misunderstanding was still prevalent. After the disgruntled members left, the group decided to evaluate the progress and problems in Genesis during the remaining hour. One of the first interventions came from Judy. She was uncomfortable with the group set-up. "We are too distant," she said. "We don't have enough confianza. I think we should get closer. We cannot talk all spread like this. We need a ronda familiar, a family circle." After her suggestion we left our positions behind the desks and formed a new circle, tighter and inside the desk circle.

To visualize this I have displayed on the following page two photographs (Figure 15). In the



A. LARGER CIRCLE

"FAMILY" CIRCLE B.



Figure 15 The Ronda Familiar

first we see the larger group in the typical ronda set-up. The second photo was taken the last evening of the muchacho discussion. It is a picture of the dinámica I described at the end of Chapter 3. What the reader will note is the organization of a smaller, tighter circle. From this date forth, following Judy's depiction, the smaller, tighter circle became known as the ronda familiar. The procedure and organization of a "tighter" group circle was used by members on several occasions when evaluations or internal problems had to be faced.

Notice the folk knowledge implicit in this procedure and visible in the proxemic contrast between the two photos. To get-into the problem, it is necessary to get close. Metaphorically and literally the movement is toward the inside solidifying members' sense of connection to each other. This contrasts, for example, with the metaphor of needing to "get distance" in order to reflect on and understand what is happening. In the photo of the ronda familiar we see an image of the normally invisible yet powerful network connections, best depicted in their minds as the metaphor of the "family." Familiar here should not be understood as "common" or "known", but rather as connected to their notion of "family." "We are like family," is often used to describe close relationships. The procedure is inti-

mately linked to getting inside in order to understand each other, to penetrate into the other's world. As we will see later, being "like family" is related to a deeper level of trust (confianza) in which open, frank talk is permitted. This is why the ronda familiar was useful to Genesis members for procuring a group set-up that matched the purpose of talk they desired, evaluation or dealing with personal problems. We let others inside when we feel close and part of them. Thus entry is implicitly based on the mutual recognition that we are part of one another.

Consider yet another example. Several months later Genesis spent an evening discussing nonverbal messages that are common in Puntarenas. The subject was approached through a dinámica, a game. Each person thought of a typical nonverbal expression or gesture. It was then expressed to the group. The person to his/her right then had to interpret the meaning of the message. As the game progressed Javier, the 16 year old, was to interpret Doña Guadalupe, the grandmother's nonverbal gesture. Doña Lupe thought for a time, then nodded that she was ready. Her gesture was barely noticeable. She leaned forward slightly in her chair. Her arms came forward a bit, her hands joined in her lap over her already crossed legs. She then abruptly stopped and looked at Javier. Without hesitation he

said, "Doña Lupe is with a close friend and is getting ready to share a problema or a consejo." She smiled and said, "That's it. He is exactly right."

Her symbolic gesture, barely noticeable to a foreigner but clear as a bell even to a 16 year old porteño, was movement in, getting closer, a sign of entry, preparation for intimate sharing. To understand and work on problems, it is necessary to connect with each other, to enter the world of the other. "You must go to your mother soft and slow, with your heart in your hand," Doña Lupe had suggested to Carlos. Offer your insides. Allow your hidden inside world to be seen and understood. That is entry.

LA SALIDA: FINDING A WAY OUT

Accompanying this notion of how to "get into the problem" is the other side of the coin: How to get out. A common expression of the Porteño caught in a problem is the simple phrase: "Como voy a salir de eso?" (How am I going to get out of this?). They think less in terms of "resolution" than in the task of "getting out" of the entanglement. Consider again the phrase for conflict, "what a nail I've got." "Having a nail" could mean pain, something hard or sharp. As was explained in their terms, a nail, once driven "in" is very hard to get "out." Here we see the fundamental folk understand-

ing emerging: the management of everyday conflict is conceived as a process of "ins and outs."

"Getting out" usually has one of three meanings. It can mean pursuing a variety of avoidance tactics so that one is not forced to directly confront the problem or more importantly, the person. Earlier we outlined a number of expressive schemes by which these tactics are accomplished. "Not talking," "not seeing," "I-have-nothing-to-say" are methods of attempting to stay out or getting-out without direct confrontation. These, however, as Carlos put it, are experienced as separation, distant and painful. The net remains torn and incomplete. People employing these tactics are viewed as "closed", there is no access into their world. There is no entrance. In Carlos' case he describes this as isolation, each is in their own world, alone.

The second are salidas-de-razón. Here the approach is a conviction that one is right. My way of seeing things is the correct one and the other person simply has not understood or refuses to understand. Members often engage in tactics to convince the other person, to help them, as Magdalena once said about her mother with whom she was having an argument, to "enter into reason." The common tactic in many conflictive situations is to judge, to weigh the evidence and decide

who has razón. Members report they often pursue consejos in order to know if they have razón, to check if their "location" is correct and shared by others. Razón as a way out tries to convince others of our location, or impose it, if we have that power, or get others to side with us in our "reasoning."

The third approach pursues the task of "putting things back together." This is accomplished through the arreglo. To understand an arreglo we must return to the concept of ubicarse and how it is accomplished. Ubicarse, we have said, is to locate or situate something or oneself. It is the process of "making sense" of something. The single most important way to ubicarse is through la plática (talk, conversation, chat). Platicar is more than simply "talking," it is a way of sharing, exchanging and checking things out. It cannot be reduced to a technique because it is a way of being with the other. It is conversing with, not talking to or at another. This is perhaps best understood through an example. Consider the following experience I had with our landlord's hired hand in San José.

Manuel is a Nicaraguan refugee, one of thousands of undocumented exiles in Costa Rica. He makes a living doing odd jobs and has built a good reputation for being honest. This puts him in demand for housesitting when people go on vacation or travel. Soon after moving into

our house, we went on a short trip and had Manuel house sit. Upon our return, I told him we would be traveling again and several weeks later he came by, as I would soon discover, to raise his nightly wage for house-sitting.

He arrived at about 8:00 in the evening. We went through all the customary greetings as I invited the unexpected visitor in. Our conversation wandered through a variety of subjects: first family, then work, religion and Nicaraguan politics. He was curious about our religion. He listened patiently as I explained Mennonite theology. We talked at length about Nicaragua. We drank coffee. He spoke about his distrust of all politicians, the life of a "Nica" in Costa Rica. The conversation lasted more than two hours. Finally, Manuel stood and said, "me gusto la plática (I enjoyed our conversation)" and we headed for the door. As he went out into the garage he turned and said, "Don Juan Pablo, look, if you need my services for watching the house it will be 300 colones a night." That effectively doubled his earlier price. We then proceeded to negotiate for another half an hour until we reached an arreglo.

In terms of timing and sequencing, his purpose of request, which required confrontation, came after

connections and entry had been accomplished with me as a person. This was achieved through the plática, a time of being with me in talk, before more delicate matters are dealt with. In this instance, as in many others la plática is a way of being with, of reaffirming the relationship, of preparing the way for dialogue. It is open ended, and feels roundabout in nature. As Henry said, "go through the branches" not directly to the trunk. La plática permits one to test the waters. A word sometimes used is sondear, to sound out, get a feel for the situation. The Porteños interchangeably used the word ambientarse: to acclimate oneself, to get in tune with the atmosphere, the setting, the mood. Each of these is synonymous with the important folk management mechanism of ubicarse, of assessing where one is and how to proceed. It is through la plática that all important contact is made, a precondition but not a guarantee that helps one "penetrate and settle into" the world of the other.

La plática lies at a very important border in folk categorization of conflict: talking and not talking. For example, note Carlos' deep felt need to just say, "Mamá. Papá. Hablense" (talk to each other). Here again we see the implicit folk recognition that the conflict has reached a level where people no se hablan (do not directly talk to each other). "Talk" must now

travel through a tercero, a third person. It is la plática once removed. Subtle forms of confrontation take place through inferences, skirting the risk of more volatile direct fighting. From Carlos' description members surmised that Carlos' family "was not speaking." Much of their advice centered on how to reconnect and start the talking.

Several other "talk" terms parallel this notion of platicar. Conversarle or dialogar, implicitly refer to the movement back from no se hablan to se hablan, that is, the movement of conflict from one qualitative level of expression to another. Consider, for example, Roberto's consejo to Carlos: "You are the head now. You have the confianza (trust) of your father, but not your mother. You have to dialogar with your father, and then later your mother." Or, as Maximo told him, "you have to carry them (llevarlos) to dialogue." Dialogar, implicitly recognizing separation and distance in the relationship, is conceived as a bridge for reconnecting. Dialogar sees talk as an entrance into a space in which it is possible to exchange, a contact that permits restoration of a broken or entangled whole.

We can now return to the notion of an arreglo as a salida. This is a multifaceted concept. Consider, for example, different contexts in which forms of the

term are used. "Arreglo de llantas" handpainted on a sign hanging on a garage denotes a common form of self-employment: fixing flat tires. Florist shops make flower "arrangements" (arreglos); children are arreglados, gotten ready for school; and accounts are "settled" (arregladas). To the question of surprise, "How did you pull that off?", a common response may be "I've got my ways" (yo me las arreglo). Or in Costa Rica looking more directly at a particular arena of conflict negotiated settlements arranged directly between workers and management as a way to avoid strikes and which do not use arbitration, court or government intervention are called arreglos directos, a direct agreement.

In folk usage as it refers to conflict, arreglo seems to combine three primary meanings. The first we see in Carlos' statement that nobody in his family gives "even a grain of sand to arreglar this situation." Here, the conceptualization is that of repair, or fix. Viewing his explanation in its broader context, Carlos understands an arreglo for his family as a way of fixing, of putting back together that which is broken and separated. We see an underlying and implicit recognition that the network is not as it should be and must be restored. This way of thinking evolves through holistic problem conception, understood in the context

of the network, rather than isolated or independent of it.

The second and third meanings we see in Doña Fidelia's comment, "if there is no love, there is no arreglo." That is, without the basis of mutual caring, there is no possibility of creating an "arrangement" that permits restoration. In other statements she added that the family has to be more sinceros, in the sense of being more open, and that they have to know how to "understand" and "get along with each other" (Hay que saberlo comprender y saberlo llevar). "Arrangements" seem to be based on permitting mutual entry into the world of the other: "We understand each other." From understanding comes the possibility of "carrying each other": We mutually recognize our part in the whole. An arreglo is conceived as a combination of "understanding" and "arranging." Through an arrangement and an understanding, we fix the broken and undo the tangled.

CONCLUSION

In Figure 16 we can visualize the folk understanding of the conflict process as described through their everyday language. It could be summarized in the following phrase: "We get in to figure out where we are at so we can manage to arrange a way out." In short,

metido is a recognition that we are caught. Entrarle is a set of social processes for moving fully "into" the problem through the people involved. Once inside, it is necessary to "get located." In keeping with ubicarse and the creation of locations, we try to "figure out where we are at." This evolves through some form of "talk." If it is not directly between those involved it will come through the "third", who talking with both sides formulates the "arrangement" and "understanding." An "arrangement" then becomes the salida, or the "way

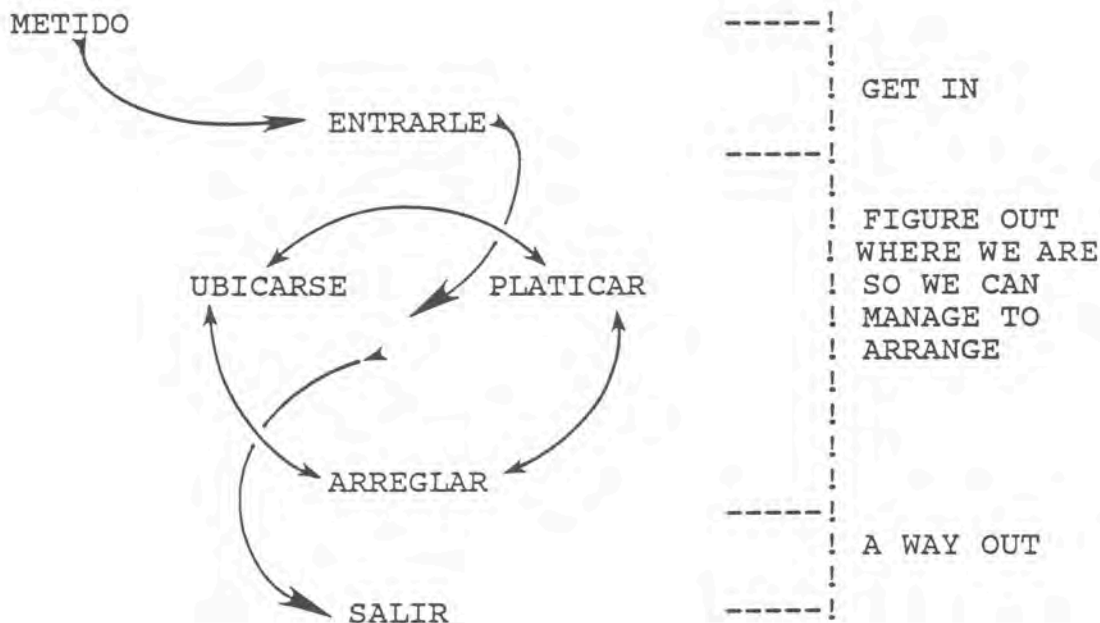


Figure 16 The "Ins and Outs" of Conflict

out." While a salida can often be a form of escape or accomodation, an arreglo is a "way out" that restores the relationship through mutual comprehension resulting from dialogue. As such, arreglar, based on "ubicarse" and la plática" is a folk term for "conflict management." However, it is not a series of explicit strategies for controlling the expression of conflict, but rather reflects their implicit, taken-for-granted sense of "managing to work it out," based on the fluid process of coordinating together their problem and solution locations. There is, throughout, the recognition that one is a part of a wider whole, which has to be entered and restored.

Further, the visualization helps us perceive the process as circular rather than linear, as a constant movement back and forth between these taken-for-granted yet crucial aspects of getting in and out of a conflict. One is struck again with the imagery of conflict as travel, as a journey. Consistent with our theory, conflict is the creation of different places to be. The everyday language surrounding talk-about-appropriate-responses evokes images of movement, of getting into, arriving and getting out. It is as if individuals are perceived as separate worlds into which we must travel to understand and deal with problems. This port-town talk about conflict can and should be understood as a

metaphor for the multiple realities lived in and experienced daily. We now turn our attention to describing what paths they follow in dealing with conflictive situations.

CHAPTER 9

CULTURAL PATHS OF CONFLICT ACTION

The preceding chapter examining talk-about-management of conflict leads to our next discussion: By what means is getting-in and out accomplished. In keeping with the imagery of conflict as a journey I will now examine three cultural paths of conflict action: el consejo, la confianza and las patas. A Western mind would be tempted to call these techniques. It is hard, however, to reduce a way of being and relating to a technique. I believe it will be more useful to our understanding to consider them cultural paths, which essentially are folk categories of appropriate ways to respond to a conflict. These are, therefore, more akin to general strategies than specific tactics.

EL CONSEJO: ASKING FOR HELP FROM A FRIEND

In exposing his problem to the group Carlos was seeking a consejo, a piece of advice. To ask and give consejos is the first and most common path of response

to conflict. A consejo is the intersection between ubicarse and platicar: I talk with others to get my bearings in this situation. In other words, a consejo is talk for the purpose of intersubjective location creation. To put it in the words of the Beatle's pop song, "I'll get by with a little help from my friends." While this may sound facetious, the underlying phenomenological importance of a consejo in the process of conflict should not be lost, that is, the "how" and the "why" a consejo makes its appearance is very significant.

We can better understand the reasons and process behind a consejo by returning to the typical folk expression for conflict: "Qué problema!" (What a problem). We suggested that conflict is experienced as a problem because the appropriate response to a particular situation is not taken-for-granted and automatic, but rather is problematic. Meaning is not readily apparent. Thus, the situation poses the need to ubicarse, to coordinate oneself and "things" in a location that renders them meaningful. A first step involves explaining those "things" and the problem to oneself, what we called subjective valuation, a process that takes place internally in the individual. To seek a consejo, however, is a process that moves the explanation from a subjective and individual to a social and

intersubjectively shared, that is objective level. This process creates a social reality in as much as it represents the entry of the "third:" the problem I experience with another person is shared with yet a third, seeking their perspective and advice. Simmel (1950) suggests that society starts at three because the entry of the third creates social realities that are "individually unwishawayable." Through a consejo we create and tie ourselves to a reality beyond the personal. This seemingly simple process represents the very basis of constructing social reality, and merits further description from the folk perspective.

Superficially and with a Western individualistic bias, a consejo feels like one person is telling the other what to do. For example, take the groups' consejos given to Carlos. In virtually every instance, people told him, "you have to" (vos tenés que). However, careful study of the broader context and complete transcript highlights a key observation. In the course of interaction with Carlos and through their talk, a wide variety of consejos came out. In some cases the same person gave different and even somewhat contrary opinions. This parallels what I have seen in other Central American settings where consejos were being offered. While framed in what appears to be an impera-

tive grammatical structure, the consejo is intended and interpreted not as an order but rather an option, a possible way out, a possible view of the situation. From the perspective of all involved, the most important thing is participation: spontaneously give your view, your advice. And virtually everybody has an opinion, something to offer. Rarely, if ever, do you hear, "Boy I don't know what I'd do." It is a little like giving directions in Central America, even if I do not know where it is, it is improper not to respond with an idea. Nobody is firmly bound to a consejo, not even those who give it. In the course of the platicá they often offer several alternatives and views. However, by giving our piece, we are part of the consejo, we participate.

A consejo is also the externalization of locations. The person with the problem seeks one or more others and explains the situation, much like Carlos did to the group. The consejero, the sought out person responds, typically before the seeker has even finished. Through their talk, they both create and recreate locations for understanding and dealing with the problem. Thus through the consejo as process we work at creating better understanding. We find and help create appropriate locations.

Thus we find that there are several facets to consejos. First, there is the obvious, initial aspect:

a person's piece or advice about what is happening. Second, we can visualize the consejo-as-process which invites location creation through wider participation. Third, we have the consejo as a product, the coordinating and piecing together of the locations suggested. Together these facets of the consejo make best sense in the context of a network tasks. By seeking and giving consejos we participate in recreating our shared social reality, in reaffirming and connecting ourselves to it. In this example from the Puntarenas group, the consejo represented a way of "thinking together," of being with the other, of sharing, of not only situating the problem in the network, but more importantly of once again reconstructing our shared sense of the whole as it should be, the reality we simultaneously create and experience.

This was further affirmed through responses members made when asked about "asking advice." Their talk-about-consejos identified other key terms indicating a variety of purposes and expectations. Through a consejo, members expected an "orientation." This is similar to the idea that a consejo helps to get one located. We are directed, shown the proper way to proceed. "Orient" is closely related in its meaning to "coordinating." In a consejo we coordinate the meaning

and appropriate action responses through a process of talk-about-the-problem. On the other hand, people may seek ayuda (help) through the consejo indicating more involvement: action and intervention on the part of the third party in behalf of the person is expected. Further, ayuda is often specifically related to financial problems. Apoyo (support) through consejo is indicative that a person needs a safe place to share a problem and a friend to listen and talk with. Its purpose may simply be to reaffirm and show "moral support" for the person.

Seeking and giving consejos is a path by which problemas are shared and externalized in the context of the network. Through a consejo the process of ubicación is moved from a subjective to an intersubjective level. The problema therefore is rarely experienced as "mine" but rather as "ours." Activity is aimed at finding, together, an appropriate location for understanding both the problema and the path of action to follow. It coordinates knowledge in an intersubjective, that is, community fashion, in order to create appropriate locations. Through consejos we participate in understanding and managing the problems.

LA CONFIANZA: CIRCULAR LEVELS OF TRUST

We can now introduce the second major path: It

is not possible to ask a consejo of just anybody, but rather it can only be with those who "inspire" confianza. This complex and profoundly cultural idea is inadequately conveyed by a single English term, although it is most often translated as trust or confidence. However, to have confianza denotes a special quality of relationship, a bond of mutuality and understanding. Time and again everything we did or did not accomplish in Genesis was related, in members' minds, to the question of confianza. Over time I began to pay special attention to the use of this concept and to the context and language with which it appeared. In the group setting, for example, the inability to share openly or to confront each other honestly were signs, in members' minds, of a lack of confianza. As a didactic dinámica one evening, Genesis members examined the process and meaning of confianza. We again used the index card approach, writing out the words and phrases that in one context or another had appeared frequently with the concept. As the evening progressed new ones were added and those that did not "stick" were sorted out. In the end we worked with about forty cards, twenty-five of which were ordered and linked creating the "map" known as the Genesis' theory of confianza (See Figure 20). The cards forming the map were "puzzled" together by a small group of five Genesis members who showed up for

the July 8, 1987 evening meeting. The discussion here is based on the tape from that evening and my journal notes.

Following an initial reading and sorting out process, the members worked at grouping words and phrases that they felt were related. The first row of ordered cards to appear (See Figure 17, column 3) came together under the heading of the verb ganar (to gain or win). They used the longer phrase, "we gain more confianza . . ." Underneath it appeared a set of four concepts which they made into a sentence: with time and through personal exchange, we get personal knowledge" of each other. The row of taped index cards finished with the phrase: I know him/her; S/he knows me (Figure 9).

For members, this whole set of ideas composited in the above sentence depicts the first level of confianza: knowing each other. A conocido is someone we know, an acquaintance. "I know who he is, but I don't know him well," we might say in English. Or, "I know him by face. We've met. We're acquainted." These all parallel the sense of a conocido. As the evening progressed, however, they began to feel a little uncomfortable about this first level. Something was missing. They soon clarified that the missing component was identification of what happens before you become

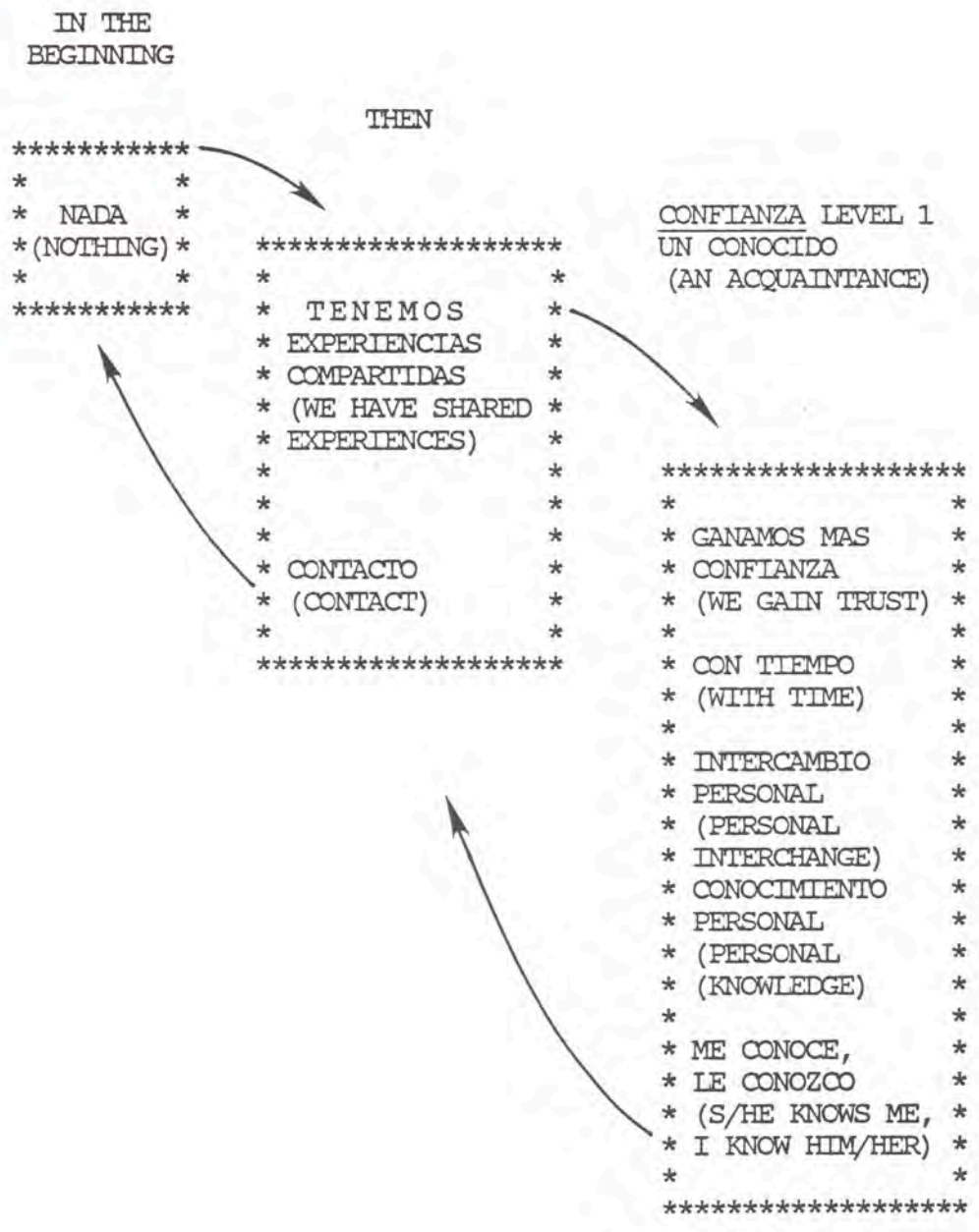


Figure 17 Development of Un Conocido: An Acquaintance

conocido. Luis put it, there is a prior process of moving from "nothing" (Figure 17, column 1) to a "conocido." Thus the starting point for the development of confianza is no confianza because there is no relationship. Confianza is uniquely and exclusively relation-based. It initiates through the development of a relationship. Crucial in their minds for the initiation to take place was the need for "contact" and "shared experiences." "Like, for example," Adriano said, "I ride on the bus each day. A lot of people do. We see each other. We may begin to greet each other and talk. We are known to each other."

Confianza increases, is "gained" when over time we have contact, shared experiences and increased exchange and knowledge of each other. Members understood confianza to be both accumulative and circular. Each new and deeper level of confianza not only depends on but interactively circulates back through the former level. In Figure 1, for example, we see that the emergence of a conocido (acquaintance) develops through personal knowledge that is constantly dependent on contact and shared experiences. Thus confianza, is accumulated over time. "We have, we gain, we deposit" are all ways of commonly talking about confianza, denoting almost a feeling of confianza-as-thing, the pro-

duct of the relationship shared and accumulated by both sides. For example, the phrase la confianza que rompió el saco is a useful case in point. This refers to an abuse of trust, that someone has taken advantage of our friendship by asking for too much. Such an abuse, "broke the sack", with the folk image of the accumulated contents spilling out.

In Figure 18, the second depth level of confianza is laid out as it was created by members. Personal knowledge permits an assessment of "inspiration." The unspoken, taken-for-granted mechanism at play in any relationship is the evaluation of whether the person "inspires confianza in me." The process of "inspiring" is a folk reference term for "creating." It is at this critical juncture where confianza appears in the relationship as some "thing" felt by the members. As described by members, this is known primarily through a feeling, a subjective sense of security. Deeper levels of confianza are achieved when "we feel secure about and in them." The result of this subjective evaluative process permits the movement from being conocidos to being friends.

Friendship emerges when the relationship is increasingly characterized by sincerity. Being sincere is used synonymously with franqueza (frankness) and openness. It is an opening in which a person lets us in

and we see them from the inside out. Correspondingly, we let them in and they see part of us. As Adriano put it, "if I am sincere, if I have confianza in you, I am going to be open." Thus, sincerity is ultimately related to the process of "entry." For example, recall that Doña Fidelia's analysis of Carlos' family problem was simply that there existed a lack of sincerity. In other words there was no opening into each others' world. Openness leads to new, more in-depth knowledge of each other. The opening in turn permits an evaluation of the true nature of their sincerity and whether we feel secure about them, whether they inspire trust in us. The process of sincerity, of opening oneself, is the basis for friendship.

Feeling secure that sincerity is genuine is assessed at the next depth, becoming "like family" (Figure 19). This row starts with the single most important test of sincerity and therefore confianza in the members' minds: Can the person be trusted to keep to him/herself what I shared when I opened up? This is identified as saber guardar, knowing how to keep shared intimacies in, to keep to oneself that which has been placed in confidence. The unspoken, looming fear is that the process of opening, of sincerity will result in betrayal (defraudar) and I will become the subject of

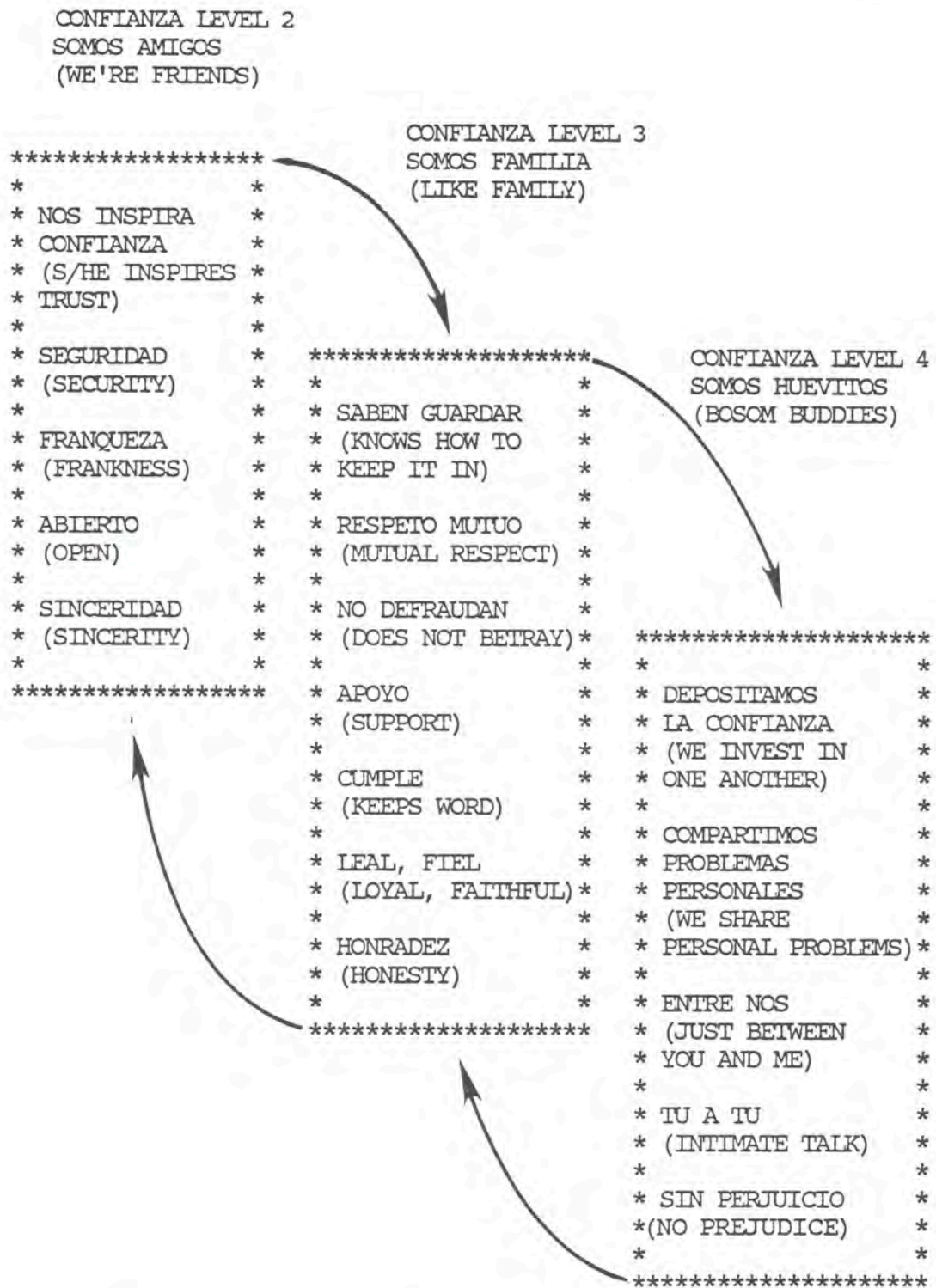


Figure 19 Confianza in Family:
Sharing a Personal Problem

ridicule and chisme. Others will talk about my secrets and intimacies. As Jose Luis said it that evening, "la confianza is the contrary of chisme." In fact, at one point chisme was defined as "not feeling secure because they betray us with not being discreet and knowing how to keep it to themselves." Symbolic of this concern was the "oath" and "circle of hands" Genesis members took when, as a smaller group, they desired to move into new depths of confianza with each other. Standing in a circle, connected with each other, we gave our word not to talk to anyone outside the group about things shared in the group. This was placed on a plaque on the wall of the counseling room: "We will not repeat out there what has been shared here."

Other concepts in the column are different angles on the same theme. Is the person loyal and faithful? Does s/he keep his/her word? Is s/he supportive? These all could be summarized in the phrase mutual respect. Mutual respect reiterates the connectedness of people with each other. Sincerity and openness, letting others into my world and having them let me into theirs, is a delicate matter. I recognize in this process our mutual dependence. To respect the other is to respect myself. Such respect, through support, faithfulness and keeping shared confidences, is a demonstration of my sincerity.

These qualities and actions are metaphorically identified as being "like family." Obviously not all families display these ideal qualities, as in Carlos' case. However, in the Porteño mind they should be found and are in fact initially learned in the family context. In almost all cases, members report that there is usually someone in the family with whom this level of confianza is experienced. This person often serves as the entry, the bridge to other family members when internal problems set in. Notice this natural tendency in the consejos offered to Carlos. Members searched for the family member with whom Carlos had the most confianza, that person was the starting point, the entry into the problem.

The true test of sincerity, and therefore whether we are "like family" is the feeling of security that we can "share a personal problem." At this level we deposit our trust. Here again, through the language we see the circular quality of confianza. It is a relational process by which another inspires confianza in me and I deposit confianza in them. That which has been created in me, through my evaluation of another, is deposited back into the person who helped create it.

We can understand this third level of confianza by placing it with the other levels in the context of

folk networking. In members' minds both confianza and the network are considered as resources for problem-solving. At the first level, "to know someone", makes that person a potential contact. S/he is at the periphery of our network but not in it. At this level there is not sufficient confianza to ask for a consejo or ayuda in solving a problem. If that person was determined to be in a special position to be helpful, that is perceived as an entrada into our problem, then we would look for a "friend of a friend." In other words, we go to someone in our network, with whom we have more confianza and who, simultaneously, has confianza with the other targeted person, who will in turn serve as an "entry" into the problem.

This carries us to the second level of confianza, friendship. Friendship comes with time and more intimate knowledge. Friends are "in" my network, part of mi gente. Here we can expect more and expect to give more. However, the type of problem-solving that emerges at this level can be seen through the type of consejos sought and given. They will often be related to what might be called "external matters": how to deal with a financial problem, how to get through bureaucracy, how to handle a community problem.

"Internal problems", or what they would call "problemas personales," are saved for the third level,

what the Porteños call the entre nos insider level. Entre nos means "just between you and me." Here we can talk, as if we were "family." It will go no farther. In some instances it is an opening for sharing a piece of secret gossip. But it always carries with it a sense of intimacy, of openness and trust. It is done only when we feel secure in their sincerity. This is similar to the consejo Henry offered Carlos. "Talk to your oldest brother tú a tú, tell him what you need." The phrase tú a tú comes from the use of the familiar "you" rather than Ud. the formal "you" in Spanish grammar. To use tú, or as is more often the case in Central America, the vos form, denotes a sense of equality, closeness and friendship. Thus, tú a tú is a folk category for a type of talk. It will be intimate. I will reveal myself, my needs. I will open myself and expect openness from you. What is said will be respected and kept to ourselves. Tú a tú talk takes-for-granted a mutual understanding of sincerity and discretion.

The Porteños have a special word for these type of friends, huevitos (little eggs). The origin of the image, in their explanation, is picturesque if a bit vulgar. In most of Latin America, huevos, or eggs, is a slang term for testicles, or "balls" as one might say in American slang. In port town talk, huevitos are the

closest of friends, like "two balls in the sack." As José Luis and Adriano described it, "where you find one, you will find the other. Huevitos are usually not family members, but are friends who know each other "like family." They are compenetrados, they know each other from the "inside out." It is with one's huevito that one has the surest sense of confianza. It is confianza entre nos. Confianza entre nos takes place between only a select few in the network. It is reserved for intimate friends and family. It is distinguished above all by the ability to share and talk about a "personal problem."

Confianza at this level can also be recognized by the fact that two relational norms can be broken without consequence. The first involves "talk about the other." Tú a tú permits open, frank talk about the other. As one group in Guatemala said, "we can decirlo todo (say it all), without that affecting our relationship. We are still friends." In other words, we can confront directly, face-to-face, without paying the "normal" costs. The second norm involves "talk about self." As the Porteños said it, confianza entre nos permits us to ventilar, "air out" our personal problems. It is a time, in the relational context to reveal my hidden world, to let another into my world. "What comes out of confianza is myself," Adriano commented near the

end, looking at the map of cards on the wall. He continued, "the masks are taken off. With the person with whom I have confianza I am the real me. With others," his voiced trailed and he finished the message shaking his hands "no."

Figure 20 lays out the visual map of confianza created by Genesis that evening. I have added the matrix form emphasizing time and depth. In this map confianza, is understood as a circular process, as something that is built over time and is cumulative. It moves from the level of an "acquaintance" (un conocido) to "friendship" (we know each other well), to the ultimate, "a person with whom I can share personal problems." Through contact and time I discover if a person "inspires" confianza in me, that is, whether I have the sense of security that they are sincere and I can safely "deposit" trust with them. As a group of social workers in San José decided after doing this same exercise completely separate from Genesis members, "with time we arrive at personal knowledge that permits us to ascertain their sincerity, the base for friendship and confianza." It is a process by which I evaluate if and how many of my intimacies I can safely place with the other.

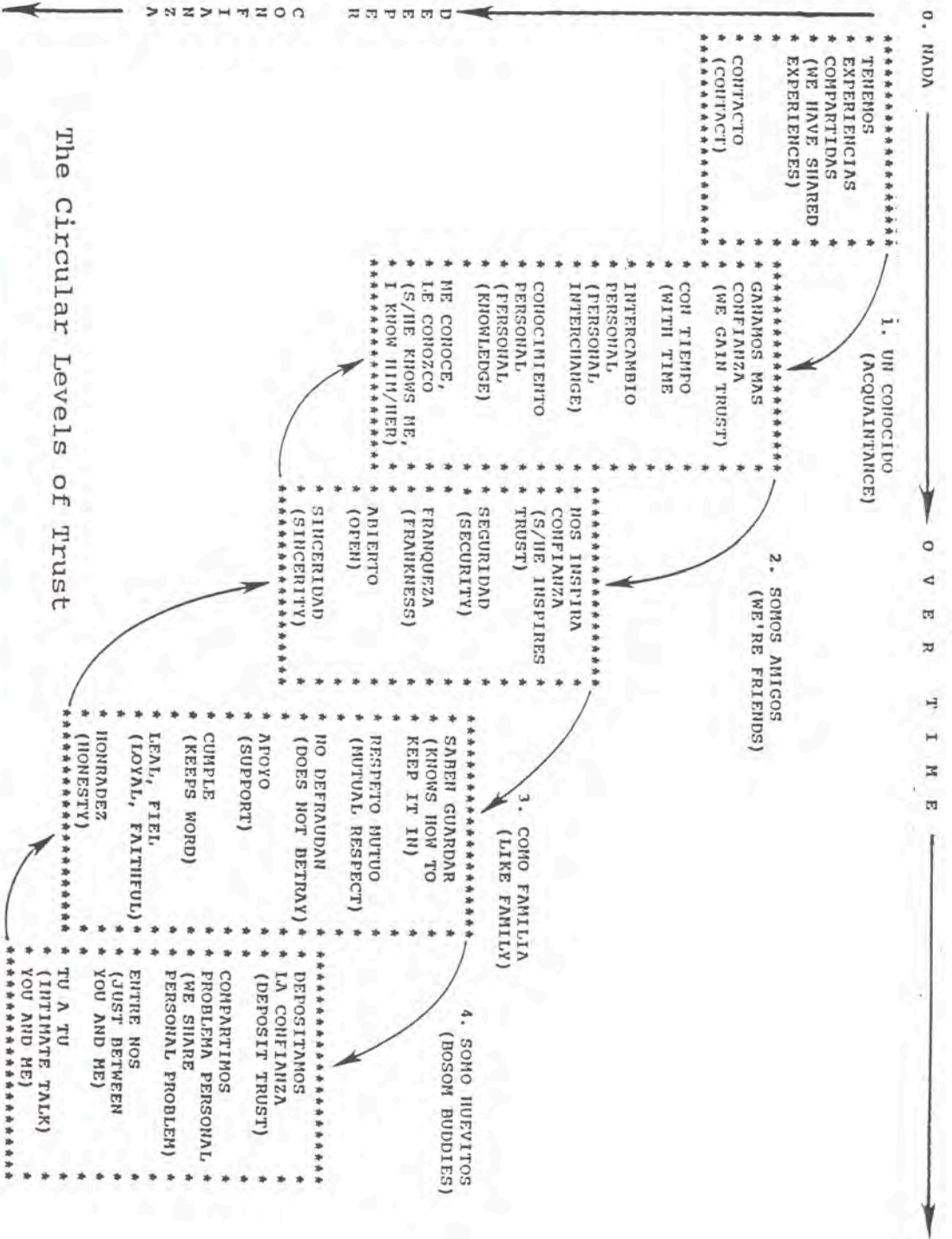


Figure 20 Genesis' Arrangement of Confianza:

The Circular Levels of Trust

C O N F I A N N Z A

At the deepest level, confianza entre nos is problem-solving based on a mutuality of trust, and rare, intimate self-revelation of problems, hurts and weaknesses. In other words what we find in confianza is problem-solving not based on instrumental calculation of aimed at maximizing outcome, but rather the subtleties of relational interaction and assessment of trust. It is a form of peer therapy, of healing through a trust relationship, of restoration of the network through the healing. It was with considerable insight then that when they decided to launch out into the community and offer themselves as "counselors," Genesis members hung a sign in front of their room that read: "The Confianza Center: Orientation and Counseling."

LAS PATAS: GETTING IN THROUGH PEOPLE

A third path for problem-solving is to have patas, or connections. Patas are feet. To have feet is a Costa Rican way of saying you get things done through the right people by having the right connections. Tener patas is "net-working." It views people in our network as resources who can, because of their position, abilities, or connections, accomplish something that we need in order to get in and out of our problem. It is a concept that is well known throughout Latin America, although it goes under a variety of names. In Mexico it

is known as having palanca or leverage. In Honduras and other parts of Central America you have cuello or "neck." In Spain they often say enchufe, a plug-in. The images are much the same, related to the idea of having connections. To have patas is the conflict-action of knowing people in the right place who can effect the action desired.

In Puntarenas, patas and entrada are similar activities. Consider again the consejos offered to Carlos. Most people in the group felt that the key was to reach the mother. But how do we reach the mother. Some recommended starting with the older brother. The older brother has special responsibilities in many families, as does the oldest cousin in the extended family. Because of his position in the family it was natural and logical in members' minds that the older brother would have special connections and entry to the different family members. He has patas to carry us in where we would have difficulty treading. But, Carlos reported, his oldest brother had lost his influence. The second brother was then suggested, not only because he was next in line, but also because Carlos had placed him closer to the mother. The second brother and the sister "have their little group," he had said. Miguel suggested this was a natural place. Brother could talk to brother and

in turn to the mother. The connection between the second brother and the mother, the confianza they shared would serve as an entry for Carlos. But, Carlos again reported, "there is a shock between the brothers...my brother is not interested. Neutral. Nothing." Roberto then suggested the father. "You have confianza with your father but not your mother. You have to dialogue with your father, later your mother." Implicit in these consejos is the knowledge about family networking. There is knowledge about the formal channel: normally the person with patas to get something done in a family case would be the oldest brother. There is knowledge about confianza and connections outlined in two choices. Carlos could approach a person (the second brother) who has more confianza with the objective (his mother). Or he could approach the person with whom he has the most confianza (his father) as a step toward reaching his mother. Close examination of "patas-talk" reveals its purpose is not self-revelation but rather getting action from the other on our behalf for getting in and out of a problem. It is based on accumulated knowledge about people, their functions, their relationships and connections. Patás uses knowledge about who to turn to in order to accomplish what kind of task.

Consider a second example from Genesis. This example emerges from my research notes, the tape

recording was useless since we had been in an outdoor setting with heavy wind. The following episode is further camouflaged to protect the people who were sharing the problem, in keeping with agreement not to talk about personal problems that were shared in the group.

One week a mother, single head of an extended family came to ask for help. She was a friend of several people in the group and had heard we worked with family problems. Over the course of several weeks and with considerable emotion she told us about her family problems. In her house she lives with several daughters and sons. None are married although several have their children living with them, making the mother a grandmother as well. The mother is the only wage earner in the family. As she reported it, the children take advantage of her but that was not the principal problem. Her big concern was her one daughter who recently had started spending a lot of time with a new girlfriend. This friend did not inspire much confianza and the girls were out late running around. The mother increasingly found herself arguing and fighting with the daughter. They had grown distant and resentful of each other. The atmosphere at home was tense and the mother no longer could find a way to entrarle with the daughter. On

several occasions new aspects of the problem were related and one evening a more direct appeal was made for help from Genesis. During the course of several hours eight members discussed how this situation should be approached, centering exclusively on who from the group was the appropriate person to serve as consejero.

Early on, someone asked if the mother could not attempt to talk directly with the daughter. "No," she replied, "it is too difficult. It must be done through a friend." Everyone agreed that the entry was desired with the daughter. Initial investigation suggested it was not possible to accomplish through any of the other children. The mother had already tried that unsuccessfully. Someone asked if anybody in the group knew the boyfriend or the new girlfriend. A few knew them as conocidos (acquaintances) but not as amigos (friends). The mother suggested a plática was needed between the daughter and a friend, to get into her and the problem. The mother did not want to be present when that happened because the daughter would not open up. She also did not want the daughter to know she had talked with the group. As the conversation evolved two people in the group were identified as an entry team: Doña Fidelia, the oldest member and Minor, the next to the youngest. This team was formed on the basis of friendship connections. Doña Fidelia was a friend of the mother and

known to the rest of the family. She was also older, a grandmother and would be respected. But Doña Fidelia was not a friend of the daughter. Minor was. He was both a friend of the mother and the daughter. The combination of the two, under the right circumstances would create an entry into the daughter. That evening the details of a plan were discussed. Doña Fidelia and Minor would visit the house at a time when they knew the mother would be out, on the pretense that they had come to visit the mother. Spontaneously they would engage the daughter in a plática and try to check things out with her.

We notice here that member activity looks at the network in terms of natural and taken-for-granted connections. Not just anyone can enter into another person. It takes someone whose "feet" can get there. Someone who is known and a friend. Someone who is connected. In this case patas work when entry is achieved through a friend-of-a-friend. Minor served as this bridge. Here the patas connection is achieved through friendship and confianza. On the other hand, patas also work when someone can effect certain action and results through an entry because of who they are, the position they represent, either officially or traditionally. This is the case of Doña Fidelia. As an

older person and a grandmother, the friend of the mother, she commands certain traditional respect. The daughter, knowing that Doña Fidelia is a friend and peer of the mother, creates the possibility that she will use her to send a message back to her mother that is too difficult to communicate directly. The team thus represents several implicit ways of using patas: networking through friends of friends and making use of traditionally respected roles in the network to get in and out of a problem.

In an entirely different setting we can see how this form of problem-solving takes place. Take, for example, the following situation observed during a dinner conversation at a friend's house in Guatemala. This particular friend is an appointed functionary in the Ministry of Health in the Guatemalan government. As we started to eat, the wife told a story of her conversation that morning with a close "friend who I would call a sister." The friend's husband had recently died and left her in charge of a small but successful canning company. In tears this friend had recounted the terrible experience of having just lost her principal contract with the army. A new Colonel had recently replaced a family friend as contractor for barracks' dining halls. He would cancel their orders with her company, unless she came through with a substantial

mordida (bribe), or payoff. If she lost the contract it meant the almost immediate demise of the company, her only source of income as a widow with a family. The wife had promised to help, to ask her husband for a consejo. After hearing the story and some conversation at the table the husband made the following offer.

"Tell her not to pay the mordida. I will get a cita (an appointment) for her through a friend with the Minister of Public Security." He turned to me to explain. "We are friends. It is not that I am going to cobrar cuentas, to collect debts, but he can get me the appointment with the Minister." About then the phone rang. It was the friend calling just to check in. The wife, elated, began to relate the suggestion. "Tell her," the husband called out, "that she will go and talk to the Minister and tell him about the case."

In Figure 21 the steps followed in this scenario are laid out. In the first step, a friend who is like family, shares a problem with a friend, and seeks a consejo. The friend with whom the problem is shared is not only "de confianza" but also is married to someone well connected in government, where the problem originated. The wife seeks a consejo from her husband. She serves as the first set of patas. The husband in turn offers to talk with a friend and thereby serves as a

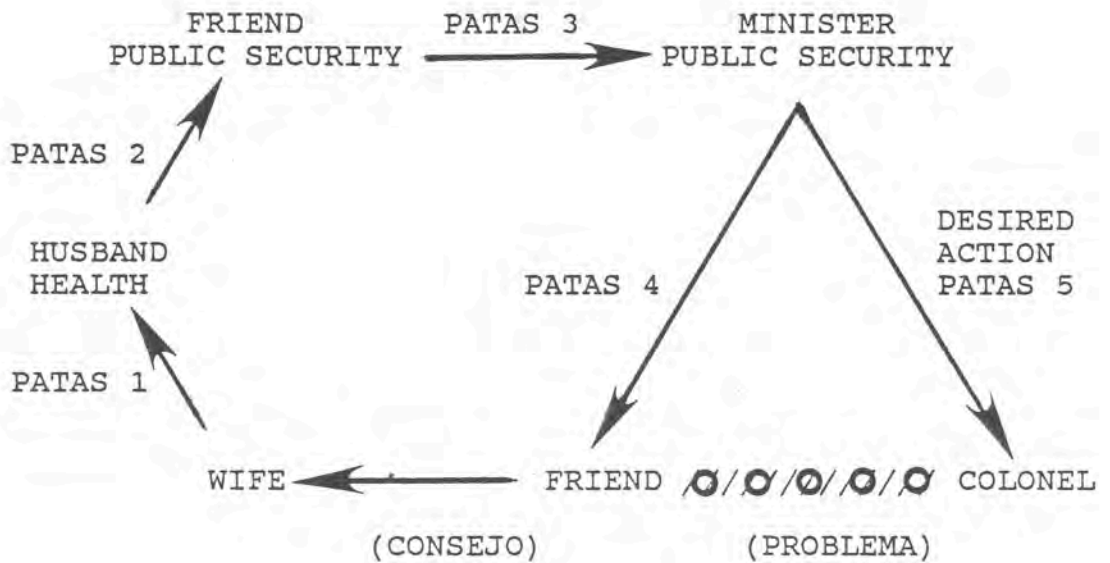


Figure 21 The Path of Patás

second set of patas. He does this, not based on past dues that this friend owes him, although from the tone of his explanation he could have. Rather it is simply because, he is a "friend and can get me the appointment." The friend then talks with the Minister (third set of patas) and sets up an appointment for the wife's friend. The meeting with the wife's friend and the Minister represents the fourth set of patas, in which, if the woman is successful in making her case, will result in the fifth set, in direct action on her behalf getting her "out" of the problem with the Colonel.

In summary, in all these cases, the network is viewed as a resource for problem-solving. It is made up of people with whom we have connections and who are looked to invariably to help us get in and out of our problems. It is necessary however to use knowledge about who is the appropriate person for achieving what task. This may be based on understandings of traditional position, respect and power, on friendship and confianza, or as is commonly the case on all the above. Through friendship our network is a resource to other friends, just as their network may serve us. Typically, all three cultural paths are coordinated by members in getting in and out of a problem. A consejo about a problem is sought from a friend with whom we have confianza, who in turn may serve as patas in getting us out of the problem. Thus, the expectations of and appropriate actions for providing help as a third party are crucial for understanding the folk management of conflict, and we now turn our attention to describing those assumptions.

CHAPTER 10

THE CHANNEL: THIRD PARTY HELP IN CONFLICT

The discussion of cultural paths has introduced the element of third party involvement in the construction and management of conflict. Here I will examine some key aspects of how third parties naturally enter and operate in conflict. In other words I wish to look at how people help each other. In this chapter I am more concerned with describing process than substance. In particular I am interested in the procedures of how confianza and patas are used to accomplish the "getting in" and "getting out" of problems based on the taken-for-granted knowledge of what others "are doing" and are expected to do to be helpful.

To elucidate the important aspects of third party entry and operation, I will depart from the more restricted study of Genesis members and the Porteño view. This chapter will consider third party activity based on several experiences and examples. The first is

a case in which I served as a "helper" working with the Nicaraguan Mennonite congregation in the Costa Rican refugee camp that experienced an internal division. The second will be based on a several photographs taken in Panama of a grievance session. Observations from both of these cases will be compared with important aspects of conflict activity we have discussed in the Puntarenas setting. The comparison will be accomplished through the use of a heuristic device I developed for analyzing third party assumptions and process in an earlier paper (Lederach, 1985). The broader context will permit us to highlight some of the taken-for-granted knowledge operative behind the entrance and expectations of natural third parties in various Central American settings.

ON BEING THE CHANNEL

During the latter part of 1986 and most of 1987 I worked off and on with a conflictive situation in the Nicaraguan Mennonite congregation of refugees in Costa Rica. I took notes during our different encounters and kept a journal describing the meetings and events as best I could directly following those encounters. The following reconstructed description of an aspect of that work is based on these two types of records. In the following pages anything that appears between quotation marks is taken from my journal.

In the second chapter I described briefly some aspects of the congregation and the Tilarán refugee camp. As a further backdrop I remind readers that I worked for a North American development and relief agency, the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC). Our agency was collaborating with the Costa Rican Mennonite Convention and Rosedale Mennonite Missions (Ohio), the mother mission of the Costa Rican and Nicaraguan Mennonites, in a resettlement project for the Nicaraguan congregation, made up of about 40 families. The resettlement eventually took them from the camp to a farm where they autonomously operate an agricultural cooperative.

The Convention leadership was made up of Costa Rican Mennonites, although it still received a portion of its budget from Rosedale Missions. Neither the Convention nor Rosedale Missions have any formal ties to the MCC. The Convention had appointed a Costa Rican Mennonite lay person, Braulio Carillo, to direct the resettlement project. Although our agencies are organizationally separate and I had nothing to do with the inner workings and decisions of the Convention and relatively little to do with the resettlement project decisions, in the view of the Nicaraguan Mennonite refugees, there seemed to be little distinction between organizational differences. By and large, in the eyes of the

refugees I was viewed as a North American missionary working with the Convention and connected to missions. There never seem to be a clear distinction in their minds between the MCC and Rosedale Missions, given that both were North American based.

As background to the conflict, recall that these refugees had originally come from the same rural region in Nicaragua, although not all of them had been members of the same congregation there. On the exodus trail others joined them coming from a variety of denominations, the majority from a pentecostal background. Once in the refugee camp the pastors were given permission to have a more formal congregational life and their numbers grew, reaching around 200 counting the children. As the possibility of resettlement became a reality, problems emerged that threatened to split the group. The differences evolved around leadership issues, who should be head pastor, membership and adherence to "Mennonite" doctrine, and access to resources, primarily who should be on the list to go to the farm. As these issues became salient and the date for leaving the camp approached I was invited by Braulio to meet with the leaders of the congregation. I met on numerous occasions with what had evolved into two major factions, each headed by a pastor: Javier, the initial pastor and

informal leader of the disgruntled "pentecostal" group who were not included on the "list," and Carlos, the current elected pastor and leader of the Mennonites who were on the "list."

Given the circumstances and events I spent considerable time alone with Javier, a Mennonite pastor who, through the long journey by foot out of Nicaragua had become close friends with and was the unspoken leader of the non-Mennonite, pentecostal group. Although never saying it directly Javier and the pentecostal group were upset that he had not been reelected as pastor and felt unfairly treated in the election process. On several occasions I met alone with Javier and we began to develop confianza. The leaders of the two groups eventually created an arreglo. As part of that arrangement Javier decided to stay and give leadership to the congregation that would remain in the camp. The Mennonites, over the course of the next months moved to the farm. Before separating a "reconciliation", as they called it, took place between the two groups, restoring their relationship.

This brief description is a backdrop for the aspect I wish to examine in more detail, for the "reconciliation" was not the end of my participation. Over the course of the next five months I received numerous phone calls from and had several meetings with Javier.

Shortly after the "reconciliation" I received a call inviting me to come and meet with the pentecostal "brothers", to hear their "expressions." Curious, and a bit uncertain about the invitation I asked if he wanted me to bring along other leaders of the Mennonite Convention, who were responsible for administering funds, directing the refugee project and providing spiritual leadership to the churches. Javier responded, "No, it is better for you to come alone, first." I went and met with Javier and the group of five pentecostal brothers. During the morning they explained their view. They had several primary concerns: an opportunity to explain their perspective of what had transpired in the conflict, not to be left alone and outside of the Convention after the others left for the farm, and whether there was any chance they could eventually get back on the "list" to go to the farm. Essentially they were interested in my consejo and in my "helping" them connect with the Costa Rican Mennonite Convention. Although they did not explicitly state it I began to understand that I was viewed as their "entry," their patas into the Convention leadership world. I promised and did contact the Convention leadership, informing them of the meeting and the desire of Javier and his group to have a connection with the Convention. How-

ever, no initiatives or contact took place between these leaders and Javier in the next few weeks.

A month later Javier called again. He reiterated their concern about getting apoyo from the Convention. In my awkward gringo style I probed the question of why he did not call and talk directly with Convention leadership. He responded, clarifying the unspoken knowledge that he assumed we all knew but which I was struggling to make explicit: "No, brother, you are the channel (canal) that can help us (ayudarnos) with this." I was, I discovered, the ongoing go-between. I again spoke at more length with Convention leaders and we agreed to set up a meeting and invite Javier the following week, si Dios quiere (God willing). God did not provide that opportunity. Between trips, conferences and work the meeting got lost in the shuffle.

Several months later I received another call from Javier. He was in the San José area and wanted to know if we could see each other and platicar. As I was soon to discover, he had made the four hour bus trip to see me, personally. We did speak and he again underscored their needs, especially as related to apoyo from the Convention for the congregation in the camp. This time his view and concern became clearer. As he explained the most frustrating aspect: "I do not know

how things are set up, who I should talk to when I have a problem." Javier was concerned that his network was falling apart. Now that the Mennonites were going to the farm, his congregation would be left without contacts in the Mennonite world. A Mennonite pastor, leading a congregation of pentecostals, in a refugee camp in a foreign country: They were a people without a net. He was engaged in a mission to put the network together. I was the entry, the first step in getting that accomplished.

We are now in a position to analyze this series of contacts and activity carried out by Javier. What is of particular interest in this example are the steps he took leading down the path of problem-solving involving both confianza and patas and implicit, everyday knowledge about how they operate. First there is recognition of the problem. In this case Javier is pursuing apoyo, the assurance that he and his group will be included in the Convention network providing a variety of potential resources, both spiritual (religious materials, visits, training) and financial (trips, help for projects in camp).

Second, there is accumulated and implicit knowledge of the net-workings. In making his decisions Javier responds to two questions: 1) Deciding who, in

the end, can help him; and 2) what is the best way to reach that person(s) to assure his/her action? The response to the first was the leadership of the Convention. They hold the key to things like trips, visits, materials and financial resources. They have jurisdiction over all the work in Costa Rica. The response to the second involved a search for an entry and an evaluation of confianza and patas.

Javier had numerous options. He knew each of the members on the council including the President. He had the telephone number of the Convention office as well as those of several individuals on the council, including the home phone number of the President and that of Braulio the person responsible for the resettlement project. Javier and I even met in front of the Convention offices when he came to the San José area the last time we spoke. But he chose not to call them. He called me. He looked for and decided on the person with whom he had the most confianza and that he believed was appropriately connected to the people who could effect the desired action. Given the history of mission structures, his locating me and my patas makes perfect sense. In many circumstances the North American missionary is directly connected to the home office and has authority over national workers, over the budget and most program decisions. In his typification I was a North American

Mennonite missionary, logically giving me a special set of patas for connecting and entering the world where he needed to be and get responses.

But we must also consider how he chose to pursue patas acting on his behalf: the confianza of personal contact. You "get into" the problem by "getting to" the right person. Returning to the Porteño theory, this was not necessarily confianza entre nos, but rather friendship confianza. Javier was not pursuing this path to work on a personal problem. He pursued it to get action on his behalf as a way to resolve an external problem. His knowledge and typifications of the persons involved, of conventions, of mission boards and missionaries suggested at least a working relationship, if not an intimate one between the Convention and myself. He had made an evaluation of me and our relationship, as compared to his relationship with others. He did not feel he had sufficient confianza to make patas work with anyone in the Costa Rican Convention. However, in his mind, our time alone "inspired" enough confianza to make his approach and expressed desire a reasonable request. He could "deposit" his trust in me. I was the logical entry. I became the channel: He contacted me to contact them. I was the "feet" that would carry him into

the other world where his problem of support could be resolved.

THIRD PARTY ASSUMPTIONS

Our discussion thus far invites us to consider the assumptions operative in third party operation and entrance. To further consider these procedural aspects I will examine a set of photographs taken in Panama in January of 1987 (Figure 22). As a means of discussing these photos and analyzing the Javier experience I want to introduce relevant elements of third party activity as depicted in the Continua of Cultural Expectations (Figure 23).

This classification originally emerged through an earlier study of the assumptions taken-for-granted in the North American, anglo, professional model of mediation (Lederach, 1985). It is based on cross-cultural literature and common characteristics identified by social scientists to distinguish "modern" and "traditional" societies (Weber, 1947; Redfield, 1943; Cooley, 1963; Tonnies, 1963). I have developed a brief definition sheet (Figure 24) for each of the continua which should be consulted before proceeding. To connect with our broader discussion here I have included in Figure 15 the basic folk language and vision of conflict as it relates to aspects of the Continua. In brief,



A.

B.



Figure 22 Arranging Under the Mango

HOIK VISION OF CONFLICT	WHILE OF INTERVENTION	X Pole "Pure Formal"	CONTINUA: THIRD PARTY KNOWLEDGE AND OPTIONS	Y Pole "Pure Informal"
	-- Setting	1. Public	<----->	Private
		2. Bureaucratic	<----->	Personal/Community
		3. Indoors	<----->	Outdoors
ENTRARLE		4. Professional Functionary Role	<----->	Friend/Known Tradition/Trust-based
	Expectations of Participants:	5. Restricted Access	<----->	Unrestricted Access
	Third Party	6. Facilitate Direct Communication	<----->	Surrogate for Direct Communication
-----		7. Relationship Restricted to Issues	<----->	All Aspects of Life Involved
	Disputants	8. Autonomous Decision Maker	<----->	Groups Dependent Decision Maker
		9. Directive/Formalized	<----->	Nondirective/Assumed
UBICARSE	Expectations of Process Structure:	10. Spoken/Overt	<----->	Assumed
	Rules of Talk	11. Tasks First	<----->	Relationship First
PLATICAR	Priorities	12. Formalized	<----->	Assumed
	Roles	13. Face-to-Face	<----->	Via Third Party
	Interaction	14. I-Topics Early	<----->	I-Topics Later
	Topic Sequencing	15. Restricted One-at-a-time	<----->	Unrestricted
-----	Speaker Sequencing	16. Analytical	<----->	Relational
	Purpose	17. Monochronic	<----->	Polychronic
ARREGLAR	Temporal Organization	18. Focus on Issues	<----->	Reconcile Relationship
-----	Purpose	19. Issues-in-Isolation from Social Network	<----->	Issues-as-Embedded in Social Network
	View of Conflict	20. Written/Signed	<----->	Personal Word/Relational
SALIR	Form	21. No Relationship	<----->	Responsible to Parties and for Outcome
	Relationship to Third Party Following			

Figure 23 Continua of Assumptions Affecting Third Party Entrance and Help

The following definitions refer to the Continua in Figure 23. The explanations should by and large not be considered as either or decisions but rather as a continuum of options.

SETTING

Setting involves decisions about choosing a correct forum for handling the dispute: whether it is more appropriately dealt with in a public or private arena, indoors or outside, and in bureaucratic (connected to functionary roles) as opposed to personal or community space (home, central plaza).

EXPECTATIONS OF PARTICIPANTS

Expectations are made both about third parties and the disputants. Third parties can be professionals playing a functionary role, their authority derived in a rational-legal manner, legitimacy invested in the role they occupy. On the other hand they can be known friends, authority and legitimacy derived from tradition and/or trust. Access to the third party thus varies from restricted to role functions—contact made during business hours and only concerning the issues for which a service is being offered — to the unrestricted dropping-in anytime of friend or family in which all aspects of life are involved, not just the issues. The third party may be expected to facilitate direct dialogue or serve as a surrogate for that dialogue passing the messages back and forth. The disputants may be assumed to have considerable independence and autonomy in making decisions or may be heavily dependent on a primary group, in which the group rather than the individual make decisions.

EXPECTATIONS OF PROCESS STRUCTURE

The process may range from highly formal and directed by the third party to completely assumed and nondirected. Thus, rules of negotiation and talk vary from explicit and overtly established to taken-for-granted; the roles may range from highly formalized to assumed and informal. The process may set priorities with a task orientation to "get things done" or may primarily be established to focus on relational aspects; it may view its purpose as primarily resolving issues to concentrating on reconciling the relationship; issues can be viewed in isolation from or completely embedded-in the social network. Interaction may be face-to-face or take place through the third party; talk about oneself and one's problems may happen early on with a rapid pace of self revelation or people may be reserved in their talking about self and problems; the speakers may have a highly formalized sequencing of speakers and turn-taking or it may be completely unrestricted, following taken-for-granted rules. Finally, the agreement and outcome may be highly formalized in rational-legal style with written, signed contracts and agreements to highly informal based on personal word and relationship. Third parties, following the agreement may have no relationship to parties, except as contracted for in professional agreement or may be closely connected to parties and responsible for outcome of implementation.

Figure 24 Definitions of Continua

the Continua suggest several basic aspects with important components that must be accomplished as third parties enter any conflict situation. How these specific components are accomplished vary from one cultural setting to another. This "variance" can be conceived as a continuum between a "pure formal" and "pure informal" model of "help." The continua are designed to be cross-cultural in nature and useful for elucidating the folk understanding of conflict we are discussing in this chapter.

As a starting point, I suggest reference to several photographs taken of a conflict and negotiation session in Yaviza, Panama in January, 1987. The photos, A and B are chronological, taken about 15 minutes apart during this episode that lasted a little over an hour. Picture A was taken in the first 15 minutes of the conversation; B at about the halfway point. The persons pictured are Wounaan and Embéré Indians from the Darien, with the presence of two North American missionaries. The two Indian men sitting at the trunk of the Mango tree are the leaders of the Church council and are listening to the young man (standing) expose his view of a problematic situation involving himself and another Church employee at the school he is attending. The latter is not present, but had informed the leaders of

the young man's arrival by two-way radio. While the photographs give us no insight into the substance of the conflict and we will not discuss it, they provide rich detail in terms of the process, as we refer to the Continua. I believe they also provide visual characterization of numerous elements discovered in the porteño folk vision of conflict and the experience with Javier. The numbers in the following paragraphs refer to continua items in Figure 23.

First, the setting is obviously outdoors (3), public (1) and "community" (2) space. It is taking place "under the mango," symbolic in itself. In this case, the Mango provides shade to the main courtyard (the basketball court) of an education institute. This is similar to the central square of a small village, a "community" space as opposed to "bureaucratic" or strictly "interpersonal." In other words, it is "our" space, as opposed to "yours" or "theirs."

This may be roughly akin to a courtroom setting but without the formalized bureaucratic trappings and paraphernalia. In many instances, especially in the campo (countryside), where there are few buildings and people feel more naturally at ease outdoors, the appropriate place to deal with problems affecting the community is community space: the central plaza, under

the Mango, the football field, in front of the local store, or, as has been the historic place of refuge, the Church.

It is here that we can also "visualize" the relevance of dominant metaphors commonly used to talk about negotiation and mediation. In modern, bureaucratic settings the dominant talk is about "getting to the table, sitting down and working out an agreement," a metaphor loaded with indoor, bureaucratic and professional senses of negotiating. Compare that with the image depicted in the picture of "squatting and arranging things under a Mango."

The sequence of photos also shows the public nature (1) of the setting, implying several important characteristics. These are, in a sense, photos of the network flow (19). The community at large, the network, is the context in which the problem is being expressed. While actual decision-making may fall traditionally to the male elders (Weber, 1947), as was the case here, it is within the network that problems are worked out. In picture B as opposed to A, we see the arrival and presence of children and other interested persons as the grievance develops. The network context carries certain, almost visible dynamics: there is coming and going, broad listening to the problem, and often more participation is giving opinions. In this case, after

the young man gave his view, the two primary figures asked some questions and gave a short opinion, then invited several others to talk, and finished with their final view and suggestions for next steps.

This kind of a process feels more "polychronic" (17) than "monochronic" (Hall, 1986), in the sense that multiple things are happening at once. Metaphorically, problem-solving of this nature is more like shopping at a Saturday market place in the main square of any Latin American village than at a neatly arranged, everything-in-its-place supermarket in Suburbia, North America. In both cases there is order and confusion depending upon what you have grown up with, what you are used to and how you assume things-get-accomplished.

Finally, the photos depict other important assumptions about third parties and help. The conflict had reached the level where the young man felt the need to personally present his view, at the highest level possible. This involved using knowledge about the network, about who is the correct person to go to, with what kind of a problem and when. Implicitly, he recognized his dependence on his wider network and the taken-for-granted authority figures. He respected this traditional authority (4) was not an autonomous decision-maker (8), as evidenced by his actions. Contact must be

made in person: He traveled nearly 10 hours by bus to reach this place, had about one hour to present his case, and had a 10 hour return trip. In the end he had 20 hours of travel for about one hour of talk. In this case and turning again to the Continua, the third parties were known and sought within the network (4), operated and worked through the problem in an assumed rather than a formalized process (9), viewed the problem and decision-making as embedded-in the network rather than as isolated issues (7; 19); and were expected to provide a forum to air the problem and render a decision about its resolution based on traditional authority and wisdom as opposed to legal-rational proceedings.

Compare these observations with the case of Javier, where parallel but different assumptions were made about my role as a third party. I was in essence a surrogate (6) for direct communication between the Convention and himself, a broker of sorts, but not a decision-maker. This was based on an evaluation of confianza and "connections." From the beginning we progressively reached higher levels of confianza which meant I was increasingly a part of his network. I was viewed as a friend within, not a professional from outside the network (4). Through that confianza I became a more effective go-between because I began to understand more clearly the assumptions Javier brought

to the relationship and process. However, that confianza also meant there were fewer limits on his access to me as a resource (5). As a gringo, I felt at times like it encroached on my "private space." That of course, never even crossed his mind. Increasingly, the broader aspects of Javier, his family and friends' lives were a part of our discussions (7). I was not expected to merely concentrate on "mediating" the congregational split: I was pulled in on personal problems, on what to do with the youth, about connections to the Convention, about communications back to Nicaragua... There was no simple "in and out" of their lives, the connection was translated into an ongoing relationship (5; 7). I was, in their taken-for-granted view responsible in an ongoing way to them and for the arrangements reached (21).

Now consider how these aspects of third party entrance and help relate to the porteño view of problem-solving and recurrent themes discussed in this thesis. First, problems are conceived in the context of the network. When seemingly problems cannot be dealt with through the resources in the immediate network then it is necessary to expand and seek other connections with other networks, to locate the patas that permit us to get "in" and "out" of the problem. Correspondingly,

third parties are naturally sought through connections in the networks. In other words, legitimacy of a go-between is established not through distance, impartiality and neutrality, but rather through personal knowledge, traditional fairness and trust. As such there is no dropping-in to resolve the problem and then getting out. At the porteño folk level as in the case of Javier, "once in, always in": you are, after all, a part of the network, more like a Godparent than a professional therapist or mediator (Falla, 1984). As Simmel (1950:44) wrote, the "more we have in common with another as whole persons, the more easily will our totality be involved in every single relation to him." Thus we find that the connection and entrance of the "third" in these informal settings is based on personal relationship, not professional function, expertise or written contract. They intersect not just as experts around the conflict but as persons more wholly involved with each other.

Second, members of Genesis view problems with others and problem-solving holistically rather than analytically. That is, understanding takes place, not by breaking down the problem into parts, but rather by viewing it as embedded in the "net-workings." Thus understanding and managing problems is naturally a process of "getting inside it" by finding a way into the

others' world through the right connections.

Third, the process of getting "in and out" of conflict is circular rather than phasic in its inner workings. It is therefore, neither linear nor "rational" in nature. In other words, it is not based on an evaluation of what is the most direct, time-efficient or effective manner of resolving this problem, nor on calculating and maximizing outcome. It is rather based on elements that are nonrational (Merry and Silbey, 1984), that is on what is proper and traditional, on evaluating the subtleties of trust and the intricacies of relations and connections. It is a process of "locating" and "re-locating" oneself, involving taken-for-granted knowledge about who to turn to, when and for what reason. Often that will involve an intricate decision about, to return to Henry's words, "how to go through the branches to get to the trunk."

I think it appropriate to mention briefly what it feels like to mediate and serve as a go-between in a another culture. The few accounts I have read of international and intercultural mediations have tended to present their interventions as the work of competent "anthropologist-politicians" who deftly make their way through the cultural meanings and mazes, understand what is going on, and press forth to reach agreement (Ilke,

1964; Lall, 1966; Carter, 1983). Quite frankly, and I pick my metaphor carefully and intentionally, I felt more like a bull in a china shop. A sensitive bull perhaps, but nonetheless a bull who with each step ran the risk of crashing through a delicately arranged social structure. The reason, I think, is clear. The understandings, the process and the expectations for dealing with conflicts were based on their implicit knowledge that they assumed was operating but which I had not fully accumulated and could not, therefore, take-for-granted. It is a little like trying to make your way through the china shop without knowing where the aisles are located. I, too, was in a constant process of trying to ubicarme. I had difficulty in locating their coordinates and could not always "see where they were at."

In many instances, while I had a good command of the language and I understood all the words, I struggled to capture the meaning. I repeatedly found myself trying to break things down, specify what exactly the concerns were, and make a list. Often, as Javier did, I would receive a smile, a look of puzzlement and then yet another story explaining what was going on. I would ask about things that were obvious to them, like "what do you expect from me?" To which they would respond: "Be the channel, talk to them, arrange it with them."

Connect, talk and arrange the words are loaded with years of accumulated meaning. In the end, my work could not be characterized as "professional intervention" but rather a slow process of discovering their meaning, their expectations and their hopes as a basis for knowing what action on my part would be appropriate and useful, and how, exactly it should be accomplished. Time and again I discovered it was not a set of techniques but rather the simple effort to be with them in person that seemed to communicate appropriate response on my part.

In sum, the entrance of the "third" is both a natural and constant part of the construction and management of conflict. In terms of help third parties serve as a connection, keeping the net integral. Our examples suggest that the third party is regularly someone from within, not outside personal networks. Persons who are too far removed are viewed with reservations, because of the lack of confianza. Often the helper will be the bridge, the channel through which messages and negotiation flow. Given the centrality of the network the expected purpose will more likely be to reconcile the relationship, to create an arrangement, than to isolate and resolve issues. Taken-for-granted is the tendency to focus on the problems holistically,

as embedded in the social network. In the end the "third" is a part of the network, and thus responsible to others for the arrangement made and its implementation, both based on the ebb and flow of relationships, not written contract.

The above discussion permits us to observe and describe two ideal types of mediation, the "neutrality" and the "confianza" based, particularly as related to how legitimacy for helping is established. These are potentially useful for cross cultural comparison and for intervention design in different cultural settings.

In the North American setting mediation has long espoused the centrality of neutrality and impartiality in the development of the professional third party role. Their intervention, in fact, is often referred to as the work of third party neutrals. Novices are trained and instructed on the principles and practice of impartiality. Ethical codes have emerged binding mediators to these principles (Moore, 1986).

Neutrality and impartiality are concerned with protecting the interests of the parties involved. They are keys in the establishment of legitimacy and authority for the mediator to act, to provide help. Typically, legitimacy and authority are created through the position or function occupied by the mediator as a professional. This is what Weber called rational-legal

authority.

A "neutrality-based" model has several characteristics. The mediator is chosen and desirable because there is no formal connection to either disputant. In other words the mediator comes from outside, with a certain distance from the conflictive situation. S/he is thus not biased. This also means that the intervenor is anonymous, that is, connected to the parties only at the place where his or her functionary role is in practice. Thus, the mediator's and disputants' lives intersect at one level, where the mediator's special expertise is needed. Here a mediator is like a neurologist, a tax accountant or lawyer, a specialist for hire.

These characteristics are relied on by both parties and mediators to create a sense of fairness, acceptability and legitimacy to help. Thus activity aimed at accomplishing the staging and performance of neutrality become an important dimension of the mediator's presentation work: demonstrating equal time, choosing neutral meeting places, arrangement of room, etc. Of particular interest however, is the fact that both neutrality and impartiality are defined in negative terms. The third party is not closely connected to, nor biased for either side and will receive no benefits from

the outcome (Moore, 1986:15).

A confianza based model, on the other hand is based on personal relationship and connectedness. Legitimacy to help is established through trust, through personal knowledge of the helper, and knowledge of his/her connections to others. As we described earlier, confianza is established through cumulative knowledge, through a relationship with a person.

Here helpers are chosen because they are close to, not distant from the parties involved. This describes aspects of what Weber called traditional authority. People's involvement is more holistic. They are not connected exclusively through the expert role in terms of the conflict, but rather through a myriad of other social situations in which they relate. As described above, confianza is used to assure sincerity, openness and revelation. Of particular interest, confianza is defined primarily in positive terms: persons are chosen because they are close to, known, with and for each side. Concern for the appearance of impartiality and neutrality is replaced with concern for the ability to know, get to and get into the world of the other. Here the mediator is like a godparent, the mayor of a small village or the pastor of a congregation.

We have been brief in the development of these

ideal types, our purpose to make note of salient dimensions. It is obvious that these are not mutually exclusive, in other words, even the most formal mediator must establish trust, and likewise, trust in the confianza model would be broken if the mediator simply sided with one party against the interests of the other. However, as ideal types, they serve to suggest several propositions. One could expect that the more informal, traditional and/or rural the setting, the more likely a confianza based model of mediation would be practiced and appropriate. Inversely, the more modern, formal, and/or urban the setting the more likely the appearance and establishment of neutrality becomes central. On another dimension, the more conflicts have been expressed and pursued in a formalized arena, the more likely a neutrality based model will be practiced. Inversely, the more conflict is expressed in informal arenas, the more likely a confianza based model will emerge.

The discussion raises some worthwhile questions about both models. For example, why is neutrality viewed as central? Is it in fact used as a facade, the performance and creation of an image, which ensures a fair process in the modern, bureaucratic, and urban society, and in the absence of personal relationships

which might otherwise adequately handle disputes? Is it a necessary dimension of intervention? In other words, is the basic necessary objective of both models the same in that the parties involved must "entrust" the process to the intervenor. If so, then creating trust, not neutrality is the pivotal dimension suggesting the need for further research into how it works in a variety of settings.

On the other hand, if neutrality is pivotal, at what point does it become salient? Is it when people chose to move a conflict from an informal to a formal arena? If so, then important questions could be explored about appropriate application of mediation models in different settings. For example, does a neutrality as opposed to a confianza based distinction shed light on the differences and underlying tensions between neighborhood justice programs, self-supported professional mediators, and institutionally based mediation? What implications, if any, would these distinctions have on the current debate of licensing and accreditation in the field of mediation? What are the implications for the mediation of inter-ethnic conflict when different cultural groups assume different dimensions are important concerning the activity of the intervenors?

Such questions raise issues relevant not only to cross cultural theory and practice in mediation but also to the diversity of models in use currently in North America. It further brings us to the question of international conciliation and mediation theory and practice, and similarities between micro and macro settings, the focus of the next chapter.

CHAPTER 11

THE MICRO-MACRO CONNECTION

INTRODUCTION

This thesis has the primary objective of examining and describing how people in a Central American setting create, understand and manage conflict in everyday life. We have been concerned essentially with what is commonly referred to as micro situations, involving restricted numbers of persons creating and dealing with face-to-face encounters. Describing and understanding the micro setting remains the primary grounded focus of this work. However, before turning our attention to inductive development of theory emerging from this investigation it is appropriate and important to consider briefly the relationship of micro to macro activities, in terms of creating and managing conflict. By macro I refer to the study of larger collectivities, involving social structures and systems, which include

national and international forms of social organization and interaction.

I do not pretend that in the confines of a single chapter I can do more than initiate a discussion of this connection. In and of itself the subject of micro-macro connections is a thesis, particularly as related to conflict. What I propose here is to extrapolate and describe a restricted set of relevant examples from our micro discoveries to analogous macro dynamics and process. Through these examples I will make the case that the theoretical approach developed in this thesis, constitutive phenomenology, is useful for understanding and explaining the creation of conflict at both micro and macro levels, even though the principal focus of this work has been at the micro level. What I will exemplify are general principles that cut across the micro-macro dimension, and culturally specific units of study but can be found and elucidated with specific examples from different settings.

In keeping with my methodological approach in this thesis the discussion will be grounded in real life events based on personal experience serving on the Conciliation Commission that facilitated negotiations between the East Coast indigenous resistance movement YATAMA and the Sandinista Government of Nicaragua. Detailing the entire process and events including the

elements causing and exacerbating the war between these two parties and those elements leading to eventual negotiations to bring the war to an end would again represent a separate thesis in its own right. I will therefore take the liberty of providing only a brief overview of chronological events and then choose several specific events and interactions to highlight relevant micro-macro analogues in the creation and management of conflict.

THE YATAMA-SANDINISTA NEGOTIATIONS

In July of 1979 a revolutionary movement, the Sandinistas, after years of war succeeded in overthrowing Nicaraguan dictator Anastasio Somoza. Thus began the era of the "process" in Nicaragua, the initiation of a new type of government in the Central American region. Oriented around socialist policies, actively nationalistic and unabashedly vocal and straightforward in its attack on historical and present imperialistic design in Nicaragua and the region, the Sandinista government soon became a point of controversy in international relations, particularly as its early years coincided with Ronald Reagan's conservative "revolution." The Reagan administration ushered in an era of active but usually indirect military confrontation of "Soviet expansionis-

tic" states and, following Cuba, Nicaragua under the Sandinistas was identified as the principal threat and beachhead of that expansionism in the Western Hemisphere.

Only a few years after the Revolution began the Sandinistas found themselves confronted with counter-revolutionary insurgence, a movement made up initially of former Somocista Guardsmen, joined gradually by disgruntled landowners and others who simply opposed the policies and reforms brought on by the Revolution. Financed and covertly directed by the United States government, primarily through the auspices of the Central Intelligence Agency, the "Contra" war escalated and came to the fore of political debate in Nicaragua, the United States and the world community.

Early in the 1980's a separate, yet unavoidably connected conflict emerged in the East Coast region of Nicaragua between the indigenous peoples and the Sandinista government. Rooted in historic mistrust of the "Spanish" West, portions of the East Coast population, particularly the Miskito Indians in the Northeast (along with Sumo and Rama Indians and Creole blacks in the Southeast) rose in armed resistance against the government. They viewed the arrival of revolutionary policies as imperial, dictatorial encroachments when applied arbitrarily to the distinct historical and cultural

context of the East Coast. It was, they said, an imposition on their traditional freedoms and way of life. Theirs, they claimed, was a fight to defend the historic rights of the native peoples. Although not "Contras" (defending historic rights of native peoples is different than overthrowing a national government) they too, were financed by the United States and were identified by everyone except themselves as a faction of the Contra.

In the context of the broader Contra war and with their high sensitivity to U.S. aggression the Sandinista government responded with swift wartime measures in the East Coast region, escalating an already volatile situation. As fighting increased Miskito Indians fled the region across the Rio Coco and into Miskito territory in Honduras (some 25,000 official refugees). For their own protection, according to the government, the Sandinistas evacuated inhabitants from the villages of the Rio Coco area relocating them further inland to the South and numerous village leaders, including Moravian pastors were taken directly to Managua. These events thrust the long ignored Miskito Indians into international limelight. Rumors flew in all directions about the Sandinista's intentions. Accusations came from all sides about who was

responsible for the war and destruction. The Reagan administration, already at odds with the Nicaraguan government, used the complicated situation to their best advantage, depicting the Sandinista intentions as the systematic genocide of the Miskito Indians. Major press reported on the war and accusations, rarely providing any historic context, doing injustice to both the Sandinistas and the Miskitos.

For years the Contra war dragged on, through battles in the farms and towns of the Honduran-Nicaraguan border and debates in the halls of the United States Congress. Factions and movements within movements emerged in both the Contra and the East Coast resistance. The fierce independence of the Indians created a constant tension between them, Contra leadership and U.S. officials, primarily the CIA, who were disbursing funds and planning strategy for the proxy war. In 1984 and part of 1985, departing in a more radical way from U.S. and Contra policy, Brooklyn Rivera, head of MISURASATA the most important of the East Coast resistance groups at the time, initiated negotiations with representatives of the Sandinista government. By this time, the Sandinistas had in private and public admitted mishandling aspects of the situation in the East Coast and had begun a process of internally trying to rebuild relationships and make

amends. This process several years down the road would result in the "Autonomy Project" a law giving fundamental recognition to the historic rights of the East Coast, to their traditional way of life, and to the principle of self-government. Thus, at that time the Sandinistas were willing to initiate talks with MISURASATA. In the first round, in Mexico, the negotiators signed an initial basis of understanding and agreed to a second round of talks that failed in Colombia in early 1985.

After two more years of frustrating conflict, the major exiled leaders and fighters in the East Coast resistance, including the factions of MISURASATA, MISURA, KISAN and NICOPA along with some 750 costeños with "voice and vote" met in an 1987 assembly in Rus Rus, Honduras. After considerable debate and confrontation, they formed an umbrella organization known as YATAMA, with a directorate and a mandate to negotiate an end to hostilities. They also made a clearer statement that they would not join the Contra organization called, by this time, The Nicaraguan Resistance (RN). The negotiating team was to be headed by Brooklyn Rivera.

A month later, in August, 1987, President Oscar Arias of Costa Rica was unexpectedly successful in getting his four colleagues from El Salvador, Nicaragua,

Honduras and Guatemala to create and sign the Arias Peace Plan or Esquipulas II. Among other things the plan called for each country to negotiate with resistance groups for the peaceful settlement of the internal conflicts. It was the Arias Plan that provided an opening and a context in which the 1987-88 YATAMA-Sandinista negotiations took place.

YATAMA leadership chose the Moravian church leadership, the Provincial Board led by Rev. Andy Shogreen, to serve as messenger and intermediary. One of the differences between East and West Nicaragua is religion. In the East it is not the Catholic Church but rather the protestant Moravian Church which is predominant. The Moravian Church in Nicaragua had experienced tension and difficulty with the Sandinista government early in the conflict. Numerous pastors had been detained, church, schools and a hospital had been destroyed in the war. But the two had improved their mutual understanding and relationship in the last several years. My entrance in the process as a consultant and intermediary came in large part through and in support of efforts of the Moravian Church to reach a modus vivendi between the Sandinistas and the East Coast exiles.

In September of 1987, contacts with Indian negotiators and then with the Sandinista government were

carried out by Moravians. The government expressed interest in pursuing negotiations with YATAMA and the contacts continued through most of the fall and into Christmas. During that time Rev. Shogreen and I shuttled the proposals and counterproposals concerning the format and basic understandings for the negotiations between the exiled Indian leadership in San José, Costa Rica and Tomás Borge, Minister of the Interior and chief negotiator for the Sandinista government in Managua. In October, at the last minute, the plan for the first face-to-face negotiations fell through, because of disagreements over whether the exiles would enter Nicaragua under the Amnesty Law or outside of it and Sandinista concern over potential precedents the YATAMA talks would create for the up-coming Contra-Sandinista negotiations.

Finally, on January 16, 1988 a delegation of East Coast exiles, headed by Brooklyn Rivera entered Nicaragua for the first face-to-face talks between a major resistance group and the Sandinistas. Two weeks later the "Preliminary Accord" between YATAMA and the Sandinistas was signed, reiterating basic Indian rights to traditional land and autonomy along with a procedural cease-fire. It represented agreement on about 60% of the issues the YATAMA negotiators had originally presented to the Sandinistas. Both sides agreed to a

second round that took place in March, 1988. That round and a subsequent third round held in May resulted in an impasse over key differences concerning autonomy implementation and military issues emerging, in part, from the clash of historic indigenous rights with modern nation-state rights, particularly in a time of war.

In the initial round of talks, the first face-to-face negotiated agreement reached was on the role and functions of the "Conciliation Commission." Included as an appendix in the Preliminary Accord, it formalized the role of the Moravian Church and the Evangelical Committee for Aid and Development (CEPAD) headed by Dr. Gustavo Parajón, a physician and Baptist pastor. I was identified formally as a technical assistant to the Commission. To the present time, August, 1988 we continue to work on the negotiations and toward a potential fourth round of talks.

Parallel to the formal activities of arranging for and helping facilitate these negotiations there transpired a series of events aimed at complicating and disrupting them. Because the Indian negotiations made quicker headway and involved more Sandinista concessions than were accomplished in the parallel negotiations between the RN and the Nicaraguan government, elements of both the Contra and the U.S. government were opposed to the YATAMA-Sandinista talks. There was pressure to

get YATAMA to join the Contra talks, rather than to present a separate, independent front. I will discuss several of these complications and disruptions in more detail along with the formative composition of the Conciliation Commission as examples of macro analogues with micro processes we have delineated in earlier chapters. The reconstruction of these examples is based on journal notes, conversations with other Conciliation Commission members and documents in our personal files.

CHISME AND INDIRECTAS: CREATING DENIABLE REALITIES

In mid-October, 1987 efforts to bring about face-to-face negotiations reached culmination. Through Moravian church contacts, YATAMA proposals and demands for the basic understanding and format for negotiations had been relayed to Tomás Borge. YATAMA proposed that the negotiations be bilateral in nature, that they be carried out at the highest level of the Sandinista government, that the YATAMA delegation not enter Nicaragua under the Amnesty Law (in other words the dialogue begins while YATAMA troops are still armed), that there be an agenda open to discussion of any subjects of interest to both sides, that this be an unconditional dialogue taking place on Nicaraguan soil, and finally, that the delegation members, all of them exiles, would travel with passports. While several of

these proposals were initially rejected by the Nicaraguan government, on October 7 a letter from Comandante Borge indicated willingness on the part of the Sandinistas, given an "authentic desire for peace," to accept all of them as a basis for initiating dialogue (Borge, 1987). It should be noted that these were the same basic demands the Contras, the Nicaraguan Resistance (RN), were making of the government in their parallel negotiations, but which had consistently been denied. For their part, the Nicaraguan government maintained verbally and in writing two key conditions: that YATAMA come independent of the Nicaraguan Resistance and U. S. government interests, and that they not be accompanied by any foreign witnesses, advisors or journalists.

Although the date for entry was debated, Saturday the 22nd of October was chosen for the YATAMA arrival. In the week preceding Saturday members of the YATAMA negotiation delegation began to arrive in San José, Costa Rica in preparation for the entrance into Nicaragua. The formation of the YATAMA delegation was itself problematic, with various factions and individuals vying for the right to travel. In the end, the October delegation was composed of ten people representing different factions, geographic regions and peoples

of the East Coast as well as the historic and internationally known Indian leaders including Brooklyn Rivera, Stedman Fagoth and Wycliffe Diego.

The negotiations did not take place. Days before the scheduled arrival date, Moravian leaders in Managua were contacted by Comandante Borge. They were told that while the Nicaraguan government had subscribed by letter to a series of basic understandings for the negotiations, Sandinista intelligence sources had subsequently picked up some key information. They reported that the Contra leadership had been following the YATAMA -- Sandinista negotiations closely. Since the Sandinistas had agreed to a negotiation format with YATAMA similar to what the RN had demanded, Contra leadership was secretly planning to take advantage of the YATAMA entry. This, in fact, was not so much of a secret, with various news accounts reporting that Contra entry into Nicaragua by some means was imminent, whether agreed to by the Sandinistas or not. The Sandinistas had publicly declared that any entry by Contra leadership without prior acceptance of the amnesty law would be dealt with strictly by immediate imprisonment or removal from the country of those infringing the law. During those days, on the numerous flights I made, officials in Managua checked our passports, one by one, before we were permitted to leave the stairway descend-

ing from the plane, to assure that no Contras were illegally entering.

The Sandinista intelligence sources, however, reportedly uncovered a new plan involving a Contra entry into Nicaragua on the heels of YATAMA. Arriving by private plane in Managua soon after YATAMA, the Contra leaders would be accompanied by several prominent persons, possibly U.S. senators or perhaps Obando y Bravo returning from the Vatican, along with journalists and television crews. They would demand to negotiate under the same conditions given YATAMA. As explained by Borge, this would put the Nicaraguan government in an undesirable and potentially vulnerable no-win position. If the government should immediately expell them or jail them in Managua for entering without amnesty, the presence of international figures and foreign press would create an uncontrollable story a negative image of the Nicaraguan government. If, on the other hand, the Nicaraguan government acceded to the Contra demands, it would be perceived as weak. Thus, Borge said, the coyuntura had changed. Every point in the basic understanding between YATAMA and the Nicaraguan government held except one: YATAMA delegates now needed to accept amnesty before entering, to permit their entry without setting a precedent for the Contra.

YATAMA leaders in San José refused the change. They would not enter under the Amnesty Law. For three days we shuttled between San José and Managua to work out a solution that would protect the essential interests of both sides. In 70 hours of continuous negotiation by shuttle and telephone we nearly succeeded through the mechanism of coordinated but separate communiques to be released publicly the day of the entry into Nicaragua. That effort failed two days before the planned Saturday arrival when wording of YATAMA's communique acceptable to both sides could not be found.

On Friday of that week, while the Commission was still working in Managua, Michael Herrington, an attache in the U.S. Embassy in San José and widely considered to be connected with the CIA, met with the YATAMA delegation at their hotel at the invitation of one of its members. In that meeting he presented a document entitled "Informe" (See Appendice 5). The document, essentially an accounting spreadsheet, detailed a breakdown of "humanitarian" aid provided by the U.S. government and accepted by Brooklyn Rivera's office for the months of April, May and June, 1987. It listed specific recipients, usually identified by their war names, to whom the funds should have been delivered. Amounts they were to have received for food and housing costs were detailed. Most of the persons listed were fighters and

field commanders in YATAMA, Costa Rica. Several of the people listed were on the negotiation delegation. These persons reported that the figures on the sheet did not correspond to the amounts of money they had actually received, and in some instances no money had been received. Released at that time to these people and in this context, the document implied mismanagement of funds and/or skimming by Brooklyn Rivera, chief negotiator for the delegation. The meeting turned into a heated discussion. Rivera accused Herrington of undermining his leadership and the negotiations, calling him a "cynic." But the doubt and subsequent damage had been created. By Friday afternoon, I had seen at least five copies of the document in the hands of various YATAMA fighters whose name they could point to on the list, wondering what had happened to their money. Over the next week dissatisfaction and suspicion spread through the rank and file of YATAMA fighters in Costa Rica. In the negotiation delegation the leaders were again dividing and lapsing into their long standing mutual mistrust.

On Saturday, Comandante Borge held a press conference in Managua and announced that YATAMA leaders had to accept amnesty before entering Nicaragua (Miami Herald, 10.22.88). By the end of the following week

seven YATAMA field commanders released a communique conjointly with the Southern Front of the Nicaraguan Resistance. They announced an agreement to henceforth coordinate their activities with the RN and denounced any agreement produced between the Sandinistas and the "sell out" negotiators who to date "have been leaders of our organization" (La República, 11.4.87). At the time of this press release the group of seven field commanders, whose names appeared on the Herrington list, received, as a group, approximately \$3000 of U.S. aid, confirmed not only by these fighters but also by State Department officials in early December, 1987. "It was not a buy-off," one official reported. "They changed on their own accord and had humanitarian needs."

The negotiation delegation split and individual leaders returned to their homes in Honduras and Miami. This was the last time YATAMA leaders would join to negotiate with the Sandinistas in a common front. In January, 1988 three months later, YATAMA headed by Rivera entered Managua to begin face-to-face talks under exactly the same conditions agreed to in the understanding of early October. Rivera was not accompanied by Fagoth or Diego.

We can now consider these events in the framework established for the micro setting in Puntarenas. I wish to examine how the process, dynamics and use of

chisme and indirectas as discovered and described in the Porteño micro arena correlates with "disinformation" and the "plausible denial" observed operating here at the macro level. We begin with chisme.

In the Puntarenas setting chisme was defined as talk about others when they are not present. This talk is interpreted by the target person as malicious, manipulative or destructive. As described by Porteños such talk is storytelling that creates "things you do not want to hear that are not true." Through stories, based on manipulative recounting of events, partial disclosure of information, distortion or outright lies, "things" that are not real become "real" and are "real" in their social consequences. A chisme, as we noted, is a form of social control, based in and making use of the network for purposes that are interpreted by the person affected as alienating and destructive.

Chisme, in the form of intentional disinformation was used in the YATAMA - Sandinista examples just described. Sandinista intelligence "discovered" and relayed information about a potential Contra plan. There are at least three possible explanations for that discovery. First, the Contra plan of entry was true and the intelligence sources were able to gather this information ahead of time. Second, while such a plan may

have been discussed as a strategy by the Contra, they never took it seriously but used it as a created story. It was then planted by the Contra themselves or by CIA operatives directing the Contra operations behind the scenes, to create confusion and suspicion on the part of the Sandinistas and to thwart the independent Indian negotiations. In other words, the story was created and "leaked" to the right people who relayed the information back to Managua creating the belief, or at least the doubt that it was a real and viable option. The third explanation might be that Managua created the story having decided it was too risky to permit YATAMA entry at that time given the precedent it may create with the Contra. A potential forced Contra entry on the heels of YATAMA was a convenient handle on which to hang the demand for amnesty. Several newspaper and radio accounts of various Contra entry plans at the time would suggest the first explanations. The third was suggested by several YATAMA members suspicious of Sandinista intentions.

The essential point of this episode is that a story was created, credible enough in its telling that it became real in its social consequences. It is, in fact, the creation of the "story" and the subsequent response to it as if it were real, that led to very real and effective demise of the YATAMA entry in October. It

is this dynamic -- that stories we tell each other carry social consequences -- that makes of chisme and disinformation an effective and often used method in the social control of group members and the transformation of events.

Chisme or the intentional use of disinformation is accomplished in the macro setting of YATAMA - Sandinista negotiations by many of the same principles we observed and identified in the micro setting. It is the creation of a reality through storytelling about others beyond their presence and therefore without their defense. Chisme is credible, usually because it contains some truth or appears plausible. It is further created and possible only within the context of a network and is effective for the same reason. In the micro setting these two principles were described through several folk sayings: "A noisy river carries stones." And, "Small town, big hell." Chisme, like the lie (Simmel, 1950), is effective because it can be believed and because it spreads and grows.

The same is true in the macro setting, with the exception that the consequential effects and those affected increase exponentially. As was the case in the YATAMA - Sandinista example, the story created was plausibly credible and became real in its consequences.

Its river carried loud stones. It also spread and grew, with the involvement of several national governments and the international press. The macro network thus not only involves the parties in question (YATAMA - Sandinistas) but many others. Chisme as disinformation is powerful, devastating and destructive in the international arena, particularly when used in the context of covert war precisely because, as Simmel (1950:313) explains, virtually everyone must depend on others for knowledge about what is happening.

Our modern life is based to a much larger extent than is usually realized upon the faith in the honesty of the other. Examples are our economy, or our science, in which most scholars must use innumerable results of other scientists which they cannot examine. We base our gravest decisions on a complex system of conceptions, most of which presuppose the confidence that we will not be betrayed. Under modern conditions, the lie, therefore, becomes something much more devastating than it was earlier, something that questions the very foundations of our life.

Thus as chisme is created, spreads and grows, truth, half-truth and whole lies quickly become rough equivalents because it is difficult to determine what and who to believe. Consequentially, as was the case with the Contra plan, chisme becomes all the more "real" in its social consequences. In other words, once created and propagated stories become "social facts," and are "reported" as such.

Macro chisme, disinformation, in the world of national security states has been refined as both art and science, intentionally manipulated for destruction in the context of covert and psychological warfare. While the YATAMA entry problems are but minor examples of this phenomenon they can be compared with other reported instances. For example, a former CIA operative, John Stockwell (1978: 194), discusses the use and propagation of disinformation in Angola.

The propaganda output from Lusaka was voluminous and imaginative, if occasionally beyond credibility. In late September, Lusaka news stories began to charge that Soviets were advising MPLA forces inside Angola. This was at first a plausible line and Lusaka kept it going. Certainly Soviet advisors might have been inside Angola, although we had no evidence to that effect. The world press dutifully picked up Lusaka's stories of Soviet advisors, while we at headquarters watched nervously, preferring that propaganda ploys have at least some basis in fact. Then, two months later, Lusaka reported that twenty Soviet advisors and thirty-five Cubans had been captured when UNITA took Malanje. UNITA spokesmen gave this information to David Ottoway, who was visiting Lusaka, and it was published in the November 22 edition of the Washington Post. The Post also printed the TASS denial the same day, carrying stories from the world's two largest intelligence services in the same issue; unwitting that the first story came from the CIA and that it was false; aware that TASS was the Soviet's propaganda arm, but not sure that this time it was telling the truth.

Again we see the themes of creating stories, using the network and constructing social facts that become real in their consequences, here described as a technique of intelligence work.

On the other hand, we have the phenomenon of indirectas. We have suggested that an indirecta is confrontation, accusation or attack accomplished through mechanisms characterized by generality, inference and innuendo about the person under attack but never directed at the person. We noted that indirectas attack in such a way that it eliminates a direct I-you link, thus permitting the attacker to deny the confrontational intent and responsibility of his/her behavior.

Consider for example the document released to the YATAMA delegation in their hotel room. As reported to me by several participants, Herrington presented the document as a note of accountability for funds sent to Rivera's Costa Rica-based group. Released in this fashion, in the presence of Rivera and others on the list it created a scandal. It is not, according to a number of YATAMA representatives I talk with, nor others who received funds, customary for "accounting" documents to reach the rank and file of Contra troops or even their leaders (Cockburn, 1987). Thus choosing to be accountable, at this time (a crucial juncture in the negotiations), in this context and way (reporting publicly to the YATAMA delegation), with these people (fighters whose names were on the list) was intended to confront, accuse and undermine Rivera's leadership. His reaction shows his interpretation: he confronted

Herrington publicly and called him a cynic.

Herrington's reply, in keeping with his chosen expressive scheme and content was something to the effect that the "figures speak for themselves." However, by choosing this vehicle to make known his "location" of the figures, he could effectively deny responsibility for interpretations concerning the intent or consequences of the document. He was simply releasing a document accounting for funds disbursed. Rivera found himself immediately on the defensive, trying to explain and give his side of the story. But the damage was done.

In this document we also see the relation of chisme to indirectas. The document, by timing and presentation created a distorted story with real and direct effects on the internal organization of YATAMA and its negotiation with the Sandinistas. However, when at the root of that effort seven commanders publicly defected and denounced the YATAMA leadership and negotiation efforts, and summarily received humanitarian aid, those helping to create that outcome could "plausibly" deny responsibility, paralleling the characterization of the indirecta expressive scheme.

The "plausible denial" as a concept has been a part of intelligence and political activity for some

time. In 1975 for example, the Senate Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities described the concept as follows (1975:11).

Non-attribution to the United States for covert operations was the original and principal purpose of the so-called doctrine of "plausible denial." ... "Plausible denial" can also lead to the use of euphemism and circumlocution, which are designed to allow the President and other senior officials to deny knowledge of an operation should it be disclosed. The converse may also occur; a President could communicate his desire for a sensitive operation in an indirect, circumlocutious manner. An additional possibility is that the President may, in fact, not be fully and accurately informed about a sensitive operation because he failed to receive the "circumlocutious" message. The evidence discussed below reveals that serious problems of assessing intent and ensuring both control and accountability may result from the use of "plausible denial."

As is the case in the Puntarenas setting, an indirecta like a "plausible denial" is an expressive scheme that permits one to create an attack, confrontation, or even an assassination but without responsibility for the consequences it produces. As the State Department official said, "it was not a buy-off." The United States government and its officials were not responsible, nor ever implicated in the difficulties and demise of the YATAMA negotiations even though several reports to that effect substantiated involvement (Honey, 1988; Barger, 1988). In response to inquiries governmental agencies had simply to write off any U.S.

involvement as "outrageous allegations" based on unfounded hearsay (Helgerson, 1988; Kassabaum, 1988). Chisme creators in the macro context are themselves protected by the fact that so much chisme has been created that any and everything is plausibly possible and deniable. Chisme and indirectas are in the macro setting both weapons of offense and defense. All that is really needed for protection is for the network, in this case the international press, to, as Stockwell put it, "dutifully pick up the stories."

In sum, we can suggest that the forms of expressive schemata used to create and manage conflict in a micro setting, chisme and indirectas are analogous to the forms of disinformation and the plausible denial used systematically in the macro setting. Both are based on the use of knowledge about hiding, manipulating and deceiving, or what we have called the mechanisms of a sociology of ignorance.

THE PROFILE OF THE CONCILIATION COMMISSION

During late Summer and early Fall, 1987 Rev. Andy Shogreen, Rev. Norman Bent and other members of the Moravian Provincial Board, Dr. Gustavo Parajón and I had worked informally as intermediaries between YATAMA and the Sandinista government. Basic understandings and agreement about agenda, the format for entry and the

initiation of negotiations had been agreed to by January, 1988. When representatives met face-to-face, then for the first time, mistrust still pervaded and differences around virtually every procedural aspect of the negotiations (when and where to meet, who would be present, who would accompany negotiators, etc.) threatened to destroy the very process before the first formal meeting took place. In Managua, shuttling between the Ministry of Interior officials and the YATAMA delegates we continued to serve as intermediaries, creating the equivalent of a "buffer zone" which absorbed frustration from each side as details were slowly worked out. We first asked both sides for an agreement on the formal acceptance and definition of the Conciliation Commission. Initially, they appeared to be in basic agreement on both the functions and composition of the Commission, but when details were discussed differences emerged. Several examples are useful as a basis for further discussion.

The YATAMA delegation had entered Nicaragua on Saturday, the 16th of January, 1988. Numerous conflictive events surrounding the entry, arrival and first official exchange of greetings between both sides in Managua had placed in doubt the first substantive meeting planned for Monday morning at the Moravian church headquarters. Comandante Tomás Borge had

communicated on Saturday night that because of urgent commitments he would not be able to join the talks until Tuesday. In his place he would send Subcomandante José Gonzales. YATAMA, by Sunday, had responded in kind indicating Brooklyn Rivera would not be present but would send a second rank delegate, Marcos Hoppington. Late on Sunday, reacting to YATAMA's response, Comandante Borge sent notification that Subcomandante Gonzales would be occupied and in his place Dr. Myrna Cunningham, the President's delegate to the Northeastern region of the East Coast and herself an East Coast native and member of the Sandinista party, would represent the government. On Monday, in response to this news, the YATAMA delegation sent a message with me from their hotel to the Moravian Church where government and Commission members were gathering that they would not proceed with the meeting. They lodged a formal protest of the government's actions. Their reasoning was twofold: 1) In the prior "entry" and negotiation letter exchange both sides had agreed to hold negotiations at the "highest level." Subcomandante Gonzales and subsequently, Dr. Cunningham were not the highest level of representation; and 2) the designation of Dr. Cunningham as a chief representative, YATAMA felt, was an attempt to pit East Coast natives against one

another.

I arrived at the Moravian Church at about the time the meeting was scheduled to begin. Dr. Parajón was already present but Rev. Shogreen had not yet arrived. To my surprise, Comandante Borge was waiting in the room designated for the negotiations. He was impatient and upset that YATAMA delegates had not arrived. In the presence of Dr. Parajón, Comandante Borge and several others I relayed YATAMA's decision not to attend until talks were at the highest level, and their reasons for not agreeing to the talks with Dr. Cunningham. Following some rather energetic reaction, Dr. Parajón asked Comandante Borge what role the government saw for the intermediaries in this process. He responded, in a rough reconstruction from my notes and memory.

Take note, that the government proposes and will accept that this dialogue be facilitated by the Rev. Andy Shogreen and Dr. Gustavo Parajón. And we further propose that the Rev. Shogreen and the Moravian church serve not only as mediator but also arbitrator between the two. Now, nobody is going say that the Moravian church is on our side. Everyone knows that the Moravian church is more "there" than "here."

He concluded with gestures indicating that the Moravians were closer to YATAMA than to the government.

Thus began another day of shuttle work between the two sides. Most of that work was focussed on arranging a meeting for Tuesday morning with Rivera and

Borge present, and in hammering out in writing the details of an agreement on the functions of the intermediaries (Appendix 6). Tuesday morning that document became the first formal agreement reached in the face-to-face negotiation. Several aspects of the document are worth considering here.

First, the intermediaries were identified as the Conciliation Commission. The term "conciliation" was proposed by Rivera and YATAMA rather than "mediation" because, in his words, the Commission is "more than a mediation team. It goes beyond that. You have to conciliate, bring us together." Arbitration was dropped as a Commission function. It was desired by neither YATAMA nor the Moravian church. The Commission was instead asked to "make recommendations" and to perform several other functions: facilitate communication, chair the meetings and moderate the face-to-face talks, monitor the progress of the talks, monitor and witness the observance and keeping of the agreements, and coordinate the site and schedule of meetings (See Appendix 6).

The composition of the Commission included the Provincial Board of the Moravian Church, representatives of the CEPAD and myself. The Moravian Church had also proposed Dr. Owyn Hodgson as legal counsel to the

Commission. Commandante Borge responded that Dr. Hodgson would be unacceptable because he was defending the "mercenary Denby." Charles Denby was a North American pilot whose plane had been shot down over Southeast Nicaragua and who was accused of providing weapons and munitions to the Contra. Dr. Hodgson was his chief counsel. Hodgson, Borge argued, would unfairly bias the Commission's work. In the course of these conversations Dr. Parajón noted that Archbishop Obando y Bravo was involved in the parallel Contra negotiations. Borge nodded, "And he is our mediator and not a friend of the revolution." Hodgson was included in the team.

These events and developments can be viewed as analogues to aspects of the muchacho case in the Genesis. The formation of the Conciliation Commission is a specific example of the fundamental principle and process of ubicarse and valuation we discussed in the creation and management of the conflict over the muchacho participation. Central to that process, the creation of a problem, and its subsequent management, was the need for an image, what Miguel called a "profile" and what I have metaphorically referred to as a map. As Genesis struggled with the muchacho case they needed to locate their identity and purpose on their collective map. They did this through the themes of inclusion and exclusion, of functions and roles, and the

community norms governing all of these. We suggested that their locations for understanding and managing the problem emerged from their simultaneously accounting for and evaluating, what we called intersubjectively coordinating the meaning of homosexuals in their group.

Likewise, in this macro setting, participants were in a constant process of coordinating locations used to create, understand and manage what they experienced as conflict over the formation and purpose of the Conciliation Commission. The composition of the Commission is a case in point. Composing the Commission was a process of constituting a social reality, the beginnings of an institution. It can be seen as normal that integration of this sort is initiated and accomplished through the creation and management of conflict. The process involved the themes of inclusion and exclusion, of creating and destroying. That is the intersubjective negotiation of functions, roles and norms governing a created social structure that subsequently would impact the interaction of the groups creating this new social entity. Put in other words, representatives of both sides and members of the Commission negotiated a location creating the Commission as a social reality. This was not done in an unusual or spectacular manner. It was accomplished through the same mechanisms by which

all institutions and social realities are constructed and/or destroyed: through the coordination of conflict.

Consider several examples from my description of these events. The formation of the Commission had to respond to the questions "Who are we?" and "What are we about?" In answer to the latter question, multiple locations from numerous individuals and perspectives were considered. Each location was created by placing present experience in past knowledge in order to pinpoint meaning, and create an appropriate, effective response. Thus the Commission would facilitate conversation and moderate meetings, but would not arbitrate decisions. In response to the question, "Who are we?" multiple locations were created not only for the profile of the Commission-as-a-group, but also the Commission-as-individuals who would comprise the group that had to match the profile under negotiation. Thus, was Dr. Hodgson located at different places on the socio-political map of Nicaragua. He was viewed as legal counsel to the Moravian Church specializing in East Coast affairs (positive valuation of his participation), or as chief counsel defending an enemy of the state (negative valuation of his participation). In the course of the conversation about Dr. Hodgson, including the functions, roles and acceptability of go-betweens, typifications were created by comparing, that is locating, in the bank

of already accumulated knowledge, different persons, such as Obando y Bravo, who have played similar roles. The resulting arrangement was the intersubjective coordination of multiple locations rising out of member accounting and evaluation of third parties, a process that was experienced by members as conflict but one that was necessary for the construction of the social reality that became the Conciliation Commission.

In sum, the creation of the Commission emerged from intersubjective coordination of "where we were at" based on an accounting and evaluation of who we were, what we were to be and what we were about. The accounting and evaluation process of discovering "where we were" brought numerous and different locations onto the social scene. The social organization of these and their resulting clash created a real, that is social "thing" that was experienced as conflict in the same way that the differing valuations of the muchachos created a "thing" experienced as conflict for Genesis members. However, the basic mechanism by which this happens are essential and necessary for the construction of any social, and therefore integrated reality. The analogue suggests that at both micro and macro levels of social systems, conflict is created, transformed and managed through coordination, a process accomplished through

intersubjective valuation. In vernacular words "we try and figure out where we are at on this issue."

CONCLUSION

We have seen that several principles of conflict creation and management observed at the micro level are found in macro conflict as well. Chisme and indirectas, two expressive schemata for bringing locations onto the social scene and creating intersubjectively shared realities are commonplace in the ebb and flow of everyday life and conflict in the barrios of Puntarenas. We see that these principles of storytelling and gossip are also highly effective techniques in covert warfare observed at the macro level as disinformation and the plausible denial.

From a different angle, the constitution of Genesis as a group and the conflict over the muchacho participation are similar to the process by which any institution or social organization is formed and negotiated as we suggest happened in the case of the Conciliation Commission. We saw that ubicarse, the process of locating things is the fundamental way conflict appears and is subsequently managed. It emerges because people locate and care about something in different ways thereby rendering it problematic on the social scene. At the same time, conflict is the element

necessary for the negotiation which creates and destroys social realities. Ubicarse is not simply a culturally bound folk term. It is a fundamental principle of how social realities are created, understood and managed universally.

Other aspects of the YATAMA-Sandinista negotiations have not been discussed in relation to the micro observations made in Puntarenas. We could, for example, fruitfully explore the crucial question of the relationship between dominant political interests and the social organization of indifference and disattention. As a case in point, we have the emergence of the plight of the Miskito Indians as international news at some points in time and its subsequent disappearance in others. Why, for example, did the Miskito question receive such extensive media attention in the United States in the early 1980's at the outset of their war with the Sandinistas, but receive virtually no attention when a peace accord between the two sides was signed? This is a combination of what Parenti (1986) calls "objectivity by omission" (systematic disattention) and "embellishment" of a story (highlighting only certain aspects of a situation). The example raises a key question about the sociological role of the media in technocratic society. While its professionals portray themselves as "reporting the news," in other words as obser-

vors of events, from the perspective of chisme, the media must be seen as an integral part of the macro network. Thus, rather than standing outside observing, from this perspective they are participant creators, fashioning what is worthy of attention and how it is viewed. They are, so to say, part of the enredo. They are, after all, the paid storytellers. Creation, we should recall, involves choosing not only what we pay attention to and how we care about it, but also the far more powerful aspect of socially organizing indifference and disattention which creates and maintains the absence of caring and the presence of ignorance, both central in the constitution of conflict and its resolution.

In a completely different direction, we only briefly touched the model of third party intervention used in the YATAMA-Sandinista negotiations. In this case, the initial work of the Moravian Church and the Conciliation Commission could best be described as a confianza based legitimacy and entry, as opposed to strict neutrality. Both sides recognized that the Moravian Church leaders were East Coast Miskito and Creoles, that they were, to use Borge's words, "more there than here." It raises several intriguing questions, especially when compared to other international negotiations with the presence of third parties. Does

the lack of a clearly accepted and binding system of conflict resolution in the international arena mean that a confianza based model is more likely to be practiced than one based in neutrality? What is the key dimension for gaining entry? Whether one is neutral? Or whether one is trusted and connected to both sides?

The point of this chapter has been to demonstrate that dynamics and strategies for creating and managing conflict on a micro level, from a constitutive perspective have analogues at a macro level. Thus, the activities and everyday procedures and knowledge employed by porteños, like ubciarse, chisme, and confianza are relevant and practiced in the more complex international arena.

CHAPTER 12

CONCLUSIONS

The opening chapter of this thesis suggested that any investigation is both a quest and a discovery. We set out to study common sense knowledge about conflict and in the preceding chapters have described from different angles how people in a Central American setting create, understand and manage it. In conclusion I will suggest the key discoveries of our investigation. In the tradition of scientific study this is best accomplished through synthesis and comparison. What have we uncovered that enhances our understanding of conflict and how is it similar to or different from previous work? In other words, what is new? We will respond to that question in three basic areas: theory, method and practice.

Theory

The sociological tradition of conflict theory is vast and varied. While it may be an ideal goal to

compare discoveries in this thesis with that broader body of theory and research, it is hardly realistic or appropriate to do so in this context. I will instead selectively compare it with approaches this work parallels and with which it sets up creative tension. Starting broadly it comes as no surprise that this inquiry has emphasized the major themes of the conflict tradition rather than those of structural functionalism. Conflict is viewed as an ubiquitous, inherent and natural part of human relations, and thus, the study's approach finds agreement with such conflict theorists as Marx (McLellan, 1977), Simmel (1950), Dahrendorf (1959) and Coser (1956).

It is, however, in the tradition of Simmel (1950, 1955) and Coser (1956) that we find the most comparability with the emphasis and conclusions of this study. Simmel's study of the forms of conflict and his view of it as a necessary sociological ingredient of unity and integration, parallel the observation that conflict is a necessary component in both the construction and destruction of any social reality. The Porteño folk description of conflict as entanglements and nets are clearly analogous to Simmel's notion of conflict as a web, or what Coser (1956) would later call the "cross stitching effect" of conflict in the maintenance and

integration of any group life. Thus, the dimension that we observed as crucial to the folk understanding of conflict in Central America, the highly interdependent extended family and friendship network traces its theoretical roots to conflict functionalism.

My observations and discussion of third party entrance and legitimacy for providing help in conflict situations draws from and supports the work of Simmel and Weber. Close examination of how people conceptualize and respond to conflict suggested a confianza-based model of intervention, particularly as practiced in informal Central American settings. It is characterized by traditional authority and legitimized through personal relations, connections and trust. We suggested this differs from a neutrality-based model prevalent in modern, bureaucratic settings and characterized by expertise and professionalism, legitimized through rational-legal authority. The dissimilarity between these models suggests that authority and legitimacy to act and to provide third party help is established through quite different mechanisms, in different settings.

This diversity would seem to hold considerable promise for further research. It raises questions about the mediation models currently in use in North America. We asked, for example, what insight the dimensions of

confianza and neutrality as different types offer in explaining the underlying tensions and differences between the more informal neighborhood, community justice and more formal professional expertise models of mediation. We were led to pose the same question of mediation models in the international arena: Which models are actually in use and which settings? While modern diplomacy and international mediation literature suggest neutrality and impartiality as requisites for legitimacy (Burton, 1987), real life practice may suggest a confianza-based model is more prevalent and effective. That would certainly seem to be true of the Moravian Church's involvement in the Sandinista/YATAMA negotiation. There would seem to be other parallel cases, like the intervention of the World Council of Churches in the Sudanese civil war (Assefa, 1987), or in any number of hostage negotiations in the Middle East, suggesting that connections and trust are more important for entry than neutrality or impartiality.

While our investigation shares some basic themes, assumptions and observations with the major sociological conflict theorists, there are also clear differences. Very different are the basic research questions and objectives guiding the approaches. Marx, for example, was principally concerned with the relation

of class structure to the conflict process; with the economic organization of societies to the development of class tensions, conflict intensity and social change. Simmel, on the other hand, concerned himself with the forms of conflict and their relationship to the consequences of change. While they look at different aspects of conflict and with divergent intellectual purposes, both Marx and Simmel are concerned with how societal organization and forms relate to cause, intensity and outcomes of conflict.

Starting from a phenomenological perspective, we asked a fundamentally different set of questions: How is conflict socially constituted? How is it accomplished? What are the creative mechanisms by which conflict appears and disappears in society? These questions do not challenge the validity of other types of theoretical inquiry but rather contribute to a better understanding of the constitutive elements of conflict.

Thus an answer to "What's new?" emerges in part from asking questions that have not heretofore been asked in conflict research. This study has investigated the constitutive process by which conflict appears as a social reality. Phenomenology does not take society as an objective given, but rather as a product of human activity. While we cannot individually wish social systems and institutions away, they are nonetheless

artifacts. In other words, they are constituted and maintained through human activity, without which they would disappear as have all manner of institutions and cultures in the past. Thus, we produce the very social realities we experience. In our study I have asked how it is that we create a social reality we experience as conflict?

The answer, we observed, lies in the concept of ubicarse, that activity of locating oneself and events in social time, social space and social knowledge, as the mechanism of constituting and negotiating social meanings. Social meaning emerges when present experience is coordinated: it is valued and accounted for by locating it in accumulated knowledge deemed relevant for assessing the present and providing an effective path to follow into the emerging future. The coordination of knowledge creates a "place to be." Different places to be emerging from different ways of caring about something are experienced intersubjectively as a problem. The social organization of indifference about, the caring for or the caring against something and the clash of these three categories is experienced as social conflict. Thus, the constitution and management of conflict necessarily depends on certain locating procedures, particularly the intersubjective coordination of

social knowledge.

This is a dense, perhaps convoluted way of making a key point: Central to the constitution and accomplishment of any conflict as a social reality is the interpretive work taking place in and between people. Common to major conflict theories is the proposition that conflict is related to "awareness" (Dahrendorf, 1959) or "consciousness" of objective interests (Marx and Engels, 1967). Such an awareness is necessary for the questioning of legitimacy, withdrawal and subsequent pursuit of disparate interests, producing the conflict (Coser, 1956). Here we do not refute such propositions nor the various societal conditions and constraints they suggest that affect the creation of awareness. Rather, our investigation suggests that ultimately all human action and its products are dependent on the procedural interpretive mechanisms necessary for constituting any social reality. Human action is dependent on the coordination of social knowledge. Thus, social conflict is necessarily born out of the constitution of negotiated social meanings. Conflict is not simply the result of society acting on humans, it emerges from humans interpreting and negotiating the meaning of social realities.

This thesis, then, describes more clearly the mechanisms by which conflict appears and disappears in

the social world. I do so through a parsimonious classificatory cross-tabulation which relates three types of social knowledge to three corresponding ways of valuing. Conflict is created through the intersubjective negotiation of everyday knowledge related to the formulation of problems, solutions and process. These are formulated by valuing any thing in one of three ways: indifference, caring for and caring against.

It is in the framework of this classification that we can locate widely divergent types of social conflict. It is here that we see the birth and death of "pressing" social issues and the social movements that emerge around them. From this perspective, social movements emerge from the intersubjective coordination of knowledge and the social negotiation of meanings resulting in the social organization of numbers of people caring for or against something. For example, it was through the intersubjective coordination of knowledge that Genesis members created of muchacho participation a "thing" they experienced as conflict. Likewise, it is through the social organization of paying attention to and caring for or against gay rights, abortion, apartheid, communism, worker exploitation or national security that conflict becomes constituted social reality experienced as conflict. Inversely, it is also

through the social organization of indifference and disattention that issues, movements, and conflict disappear from the social scene. It is this latter area that perhaps suggests some of the more challenging avenues for research. How is disattention and distraction socially organized? In technocratic societies what are the mechanisms used to create indifference?

Having made some broad comparisons with sociological theory, we can now turn our attention to a more specific approach. The conflict theoretical approach with which our investigation experiences a notable creative tension is that of game theory as it relates to the field of dispute resolution. Broadly speaking, game theory relates the structure of interests of an actor to the structure of his/her action. It is particularly interested in how interdependent actors' available choices are related to potential outcomes. It attempts to determine mathematically the best strategy or course of action that will maximize gains and minimize losses for them. Within the parameters of the theoretical paradigm, game theory demonstrates the ability to explain and predict probable courses of action. However, it assumes rational behavior; that people will choose to act in a way that is logically consistent with pursuing their goals and maximizing the attainment of their gains. This approach has been applied to games of

strategy and to decision-making in areas of collective bargaining and negotiation.

While formal research has been done primarily in controlled laboratory settings, the assumptions of this model underlie implicitly the development of dispute analysis and resolution models more generally. For example, in a review of research on dispute processing presented in a special issue of Law and Society Review (Trubek, 1980-81), disputants are generally characterized as basing decisions primarily on rewards and anticipated outcomes. The nature of disputing is depicted as rational choice-making and is instrumental, calculating activity. The conceptualization of action in conflict situations suggests that it emerges from rational finite choices, and follows linear and analytical reasoning, involving rational progression from choice of strategy to attainment of goal.

The ethnographic description of the *porteño* action in conflict experiences does not assume such linearity and rationality in conflict action. I have recorded and described actual conflict processes that are circular rather than linear. They are not rational in nature but non-rational in the sense that appropriate action in conflict emerges in part from habit, tradition and imagination. Their actions cannot be explained as a

clear cut calculation of choice toward maximizing goals. Getting in and out of conflict is based on what is viewed as proper and traditional, on evaluating the subtleties of trust and the intricacies of relations and connections between persons. As we discovered in a Central American setting, problem conception and problem solving are viewed holistically, as embedded-in the "net-workings." People conceived of themselves not as isolated actors each making choices based on self interest, but as part of a network which serves both as the context of the problem and the resource for its solution.

At a more primary level however is the question of the control necessary for the effective application of game theory. That model, in order to explain, must define parameters. It begins with a given game, a given structure of interests and a given definition of the problem. The present research suggests that in real life, face-to-face encounters the game and structure are not givens but rather emergent and negotiated. For example, we saw problem, solution and process being formulated as Genesis members created a conflict. The description included the active negotiation of norms, roles and organization through the coordination of social knowledge occurring with the case of muchacho participation at the micro level and in the formation of

the Conciliation Commission at the macro level. We described how Genesis members used knowledge about roles and traditional authority and assessed the intricacies of trust and connections, as they chose who among them would be an appropriate "third" to help another family. In their dynamic coordination of common sense knowledge they were, so to say, simultaneously structural functionalists and symbolic interactionists. They used knowledge relevant to understanding the traditional roles and authority in the family but that did not explain their actions. Knowledge of roles and authority was coordinated with the more subtle assessment of trust and connections in deciding both whom to approach and how to approach them to resolve a conflict.

These elements were emphasized in this study because the purpose was to study the constitutive aspects of conflict creation. It is here that we find the creative tension of our analysis with that of game theory, its assumptions, and with much of contemporary "dispute analysis." We view conflict as a constructed reality constituted through the coordination of knowledge and the negotiation of social meanings. We fault game theory for its unexamined assumptions about conflict action as well as its disattention to non-rational, nonlinear, affective, and creative aspects of

conflict action and its assumption of conscious actor analysis as a given. In other words this study raises the question of who creates the game? The empirical record of real life experiences suggests that the game itself is negotiated. As Boulding (1962:57) notes, "the real world is more complicated . . . than the Hobbesian universe of the game theorist. For true understanding of conflict, we also have to examine love, affection, empathy and community of feeling. These are concepts," he finishes, "alien to the theory of games." But concepts, we would add, that are instrumental in the negotiation of shared social meaning and human action in creating and managing conflict and therefore keys to understanding conflict. Ours has not been an "experimental science in search of law, but an interpretive one in search of meaning" (Geertz, 1983:38).

In a sentence, our critique is that game theory and recent dispute processing research have neglected "messy" concepts like trust, holistic and circular thinking, traditional authority and folk networking in favor of rationality, linearity and defined interests and outcomes in explaining conflict action. The critique emerges, in part, because of the different cultural settings in which the research approaches developed and were applied. The focus of this study was an in situ Central American context. I have chosen to

compare that with research taking place primarily in a North American setting. Comparability may be questioned: Informal lower class, Latin, traditional society patterns of action compared with formal, modern, bureaucratic, urban, primarily anglo patterns of conflict action. However, the concerns are consonant with those of Merry and Silbey (1984:177) whose conclusion is even more resounding given it emerges in a North American setting.

Dispute processing research and programs are grounded in a cultural theory of behavior that has been produced by educated professionals responding to aspiration for general social science; it derives from concerns internal to the development of twentieth century social science but external to the practices, behavior and cultural norms of these working and middle class populations. The concept of dispute reflects the desire for clearly delineated and identifiable common units of analysis but inadvertently incorporates a bias toward secular and rationalist orientations and interpretations of action.

In sum, this study of conflict in Central America suggests that the constitutive and interpretive elements of conflict creation are central to an understanding of how people actually accomplish this special kind of social reality. Further research could incorporate the nonrational aspects of conflict into a theory of dispute processing, or investigate holistic and circular forms of conceptualization and the development of appropriate intervention models of help incorporating

those elements.

Method

C. Wright Mills (1959:12) once argued for a maxim in social science. "Every man his own methodologist! Methodologists get to work!" Every social scientist, he continued, must be "his own methodologist and his own theorist, which means only he must be an intellectual craftsman." His point, I believe, is well taken. As sociologists we all chose our angle on the world and we should be held accountable for why it has been chosen and what it contributes. Thus we have the legitimate questions: Why ethnography in this instance? What did it do for us?

I believe that in choosing any method to study a social phenomenon we must adequately answer the question, "What is our current state of knowledge about this phenomenon in this particular setting?" The question has two qualifiers. What do we know about a particular social phenomenon or some aspect of it? What do we know about its operation in a particular social setting? With those questions in mind we could posit the following proposition in choosing an appropriate sociological method: The less that is known about the phenomenon, the more attention should be paid to descriptive investigation and discovery of relevant categories for

research.

Of the many methods available for social research, ethnography is best suited for situations where intensive description is desired and where meaningful categories are not assumed as givens but are sought to be identified. Ethnography starts from the premise that little is known and much must be discovered. Its goal is the discovery of relevant and meaningful categories of action as created and understood by the persons producing the phenomenon studied. I chose the methods of ethnography for these reasons. First, although conflict research and literature is vast, there have been few if any studies that have focused directly on the constitutive process of conflict creation. Two authors who have at least peripherally dealt with the subject, Gulliver (1979) and Thomas (1976) have noted that the least studied aspect of conflict both generally and in their own work is the process of conceptualization.

Second, there have been no studies of the disputing process at the micro level in a Central American setting. It is here that ethnographic methods have perhaps contributed most to this particular research and to the field of conflict analysis. I would hope that the reader could say "I now know more about conflict thinking and action in an everyday Central American

setting." The purpose of ethnography is to provide "thick description" (Geertz, 1983). He explains that the ethnographer must face a "multiplicity of complex conceptual structures, many of them superimposed upon or knotted into one another, which are at once strange, irregular, and inexplicit, and which he must contrive to somehow first grasp and then to render" (Geertz, 1983:42). Lieberman (1987) in his critique of current social research notes that describing what is happening is both legitimate and desirable. It is "tragic" he writes that this endeavor is looked down on:

One function of research is "simple" fact finding ...Such an activity sometimes means that social researchers are doing nothing more than a superior sort of journalism, that is, providing information about the society in as rigorous and careful a manner as possible. There are those who look down on this activity, but their disdain is unwarranted. After all, who is better suited to serve this function than social researchers. It is self destruction for social scientists to denigrate such work on the grounds that it is atheoretical. Fact finding of this nature can require great elegance and craftsmanship, it is socially useful and social scientists are uniquely skilled to accomplish it and interpret the results (1987:153).

Description is a necessary and meaningful research task. Ethnographers posit that it is a superficially accomplished task in many research endeavors, that we move too quickly to causal and predictive explanation without sufficient grounding. In other words, we misassess the status of knowledge about a phenomenon.

We assume as operative etic categories that may make sense in a theoretical model explaining people's actions but may be loosely connected to the emic interpretations and actions of people in the setting.

To relate this critique to the current study, I began by assuming that we had little grounded knowledge about how conflict is created and managed in a micro everyday Central American setting and went about the task of providing grounded description from the emic view of the actors in the situation. This choice of ethnography may well be relevant to a North American setting as well. For example, the Program on Negotiation at the Harvard Law School recently began a major research project on conflict mediation in eleven areas of practice in North America and chose "primarily ethnographic" methods as the way to approach this problem (Neeb, 1987).

There is, I think, a necessary and logical connection of theory with method in this thesis. I have found ethnography particularly useful for the cross-cultural study of conflict because of its inherent dedication to viewing the meaning of action from the emic perspective of the people in the setting. I have insisted in this study on the crucial importance of "members'" interpretive work in the process of conflict; that behind the interpretation is common sense taken-

for-granted knowledge. I have suggested that from a micro perspective, for both researcher and practitioner, the richest resource for understanding conflict actions in any given group is their shared and accumulated knowledge about conflict. The most appropriate method for uncovering that knowledge is that which emphasizes the interpretation by the participants in the setting. I have demonstrated here the usefulness of ethnographic methods for the purpose of studying conflict, particularly in settings where little empirical research has been carried out.

Practice

Finally, what are the implications of this study for the practice of conflict resolution and mediation? My comments here have two qualifications. First, they are directed particularly toward practitioners in North America interested in cross-cultural conflict resolution and mediation training and in conflict intervention with Central Americans. Second, it should be recalled that most of my experience was in nonformal settings with lower class persons with little formal education.

Our discussion of method above is a good point of departure. I have found that the methodological approach used in my sociological research led me also to reconsider my approach to "training." I had to redefine

the researcher-target population relationship. Ethnography assumes that the researcher is relatively "ignorant," and that the persons studied are the "experts," for it is their commonsense thinking and action we wish to uncover. Those studied inform those studying them. Inherent in such a stance is a shift in relational power. It is not the researcher who has the power of defining appropriate categories but the members of the target population help formulate them. Thus rather than simply responding to preformed categories and questions, they participate in the creation of what makes sense to study in order to understand their actions.

As a method this has a natural analogy with training. Training in conflict management and mediation as practiced in many North American settings is heavily prescriptive in nature. Mediators-in-training expect experts to teach them "how to do it better." The process is viewed as the transfer of expertise and knowledge. The experience in Central America, in large part because of awareness gained from the perspective of ethnographic methods, has raised questions about the validity of "expertise" training model and its assumptions in cross-cultural settings.

In my experience, with ethnographic methods as a

guide (the persons in the setting are the experts) I moved increasingly (at times slowly and painfully) to an "elicitive" rather than a "prescriptive" model of training. Based in a Freirean approach to pedagogy (Freire, 1972) the "elicitive" model of training suggests that the most important resource in learning is self-awareness and empowerment. Applied to conflict management, it suggests that people's experience with and natural knowledge about conflict is the best grounding for their learning. That experience leads them to participatory creation of appropriate models of conflict management based in that commonsense knowledge. Its thrust is not "How to . . ." but rather the question "What do . . . ?" In other words, it calls people to reflect on and talk about what they already know, and assumed unimportant because everyone knows it, that is relevant and artfully practiced in everyday settings. Such an elicitive model suggests that knowledge about conflict is not transferred or introduced from outside but is already present for creating explicit models of intervention through self-awareness and empowerment.

Let me give an example. Mediation in North American training is often presented in stages or phases (Folberg and Taylor, 1984; Beer, et. al. 1983.) The stages usually describe the mediation process from entry of the mediator through agreement. The parts of the

conceptual model are individually discussed, demonstrated and then practiced through role-plays. "Here is the process. Here is how to do it." In my elicitive approach, I started from a different place, with a set of questions: When you have a problem, who do you turn to for help? Why do you chose that person(s) from among many? What do they do for you? While exceedingly basic and apparently simple, these questions, when discussed in small groups and then shared in plenary, often generated a blackboard full of key concepts. These concepts, as discussed and arranged by participants, created a model of help very similar to their conceptualization of conflict. When graphically presented this emic theory is circular in nature and built on their everyday language (Figure 25).

These concepts are then further investigated. What is confianza? How do we know it? How does it work? In other words, an elicitive model highlights self-awareness, legitimates people's experiences and knowledge, and encourages participation in the development of appropriate models of mediation. Used in groups with which I worked, typical for two-thirds of the world characterized by settings of high poverty and little access to resources and education, this training model was effective because it began with what is known and

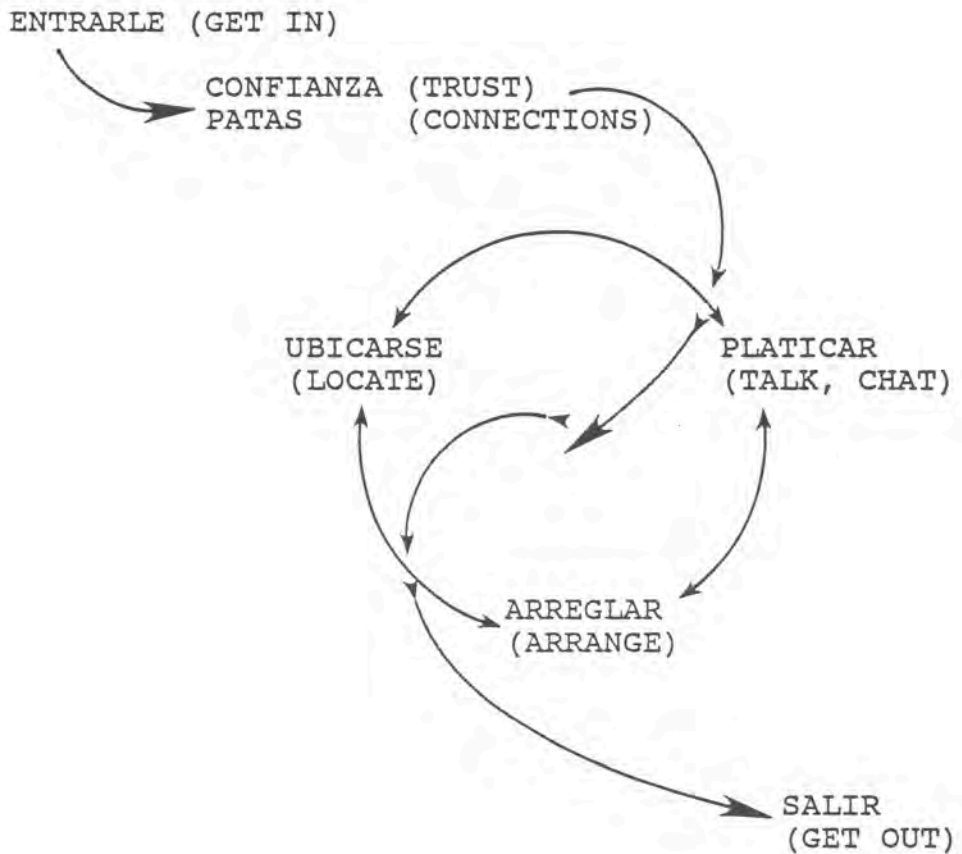


Figure 25 Emic Model of Help

accessible to persons in and of these settings. The model's underlying message is not "look to the outside and the experts," but rather "look to yourselves as the starting point. You have here, in yourselves, what is needed to discover and develop effective ways of responding to conflict in your barrios and families."

The above discussion on training leads naturally to salient features of intervention in conflicts. Perhaps the most useful conclusion of this research for

conflict management and practitioners working with Central Americans is the importance of holistic problem conception. Problems are embedded in a network and are managed through trust and connections. It is the idea of enredo: conflict as network entanglements. Conflict management practitioners are not likely to find conflict or its resolution conceived of as isolated issues, interests or individuals. Familial and personal friendship networks are the contexts within which conflict evolves and the principal resource for its resolution. This should lead intervenors to consider several important cautions and guidelines.

First, intervention strategies should be formed holistically, more in line with systems theory in family therapy (Bowen, 1985; Minuchin, 1974). Intervenors should conceive of people as part of a network, identifying key connections and using them strategically as "ways into" the problem and person. The strategic initial questions are not "What do you need? What are the issues? What are the interests?" But rather is "Who can we talk with who inspires confianza and could help us?"

Knowledge of tradition and habit are useful. For example, certain persons in the network may traditionally have special responsibility for solving certain

kinds of problems. The oldest sibling and the oldest cousin, or godparents can be viewed as resources. This is especially useful for entering and proceeding properly. However, as we saw in several cases, these are not determining factors. Consistently, the key is the assessment of trust in these relationships. Tradition provides insight, but persons of confianza help create ways out.

Second, to continue this theme, intervenors should view trust as central to their proceedings. In the settings I studied it is understood as cumulative and circular. Trust develops in the context of ongoing relationships. The practical implication for intervenors is a harsh reality: Become a part of the network; or depend heavily on someone who is. In both instances effective help emerges from holistic connection with the people, not the "in" and "out" of the expert role. The relationship will not likely be defined in terms of the issues needing resolution but rather in terms of being "one of us."

Third, the setting-specific forms of thinking, sharing and managing, like la plática or el consejo, may well confuse intervenors coming from other cultural settings. Persons familiar and comfortable with conflict resolution processes based on issue isolation and interest based analysis will likely find la plática as

very indirect, circumlocutious, illogical and time-consuming. La plática should be understood for what it is and what it is not. It is a relational form of sharing and thinking together. It is not a technique. It is a way of being with another. It takes time, but it is particularly appropriate because it demonstrates openness and wholeness: many aspects of life, family and events are discussed in and around the conflict. Likewise, for the practitioner, storytelling as a form of analysis, a skill combining understanding, interpretation and process advice, may communicate more effectively than analytic issue description no matter how direct, simple and clear.

Or another example, el consejo, may well feel like giving cheap advice, dismissed by trained therapists and mediators as unhelpful, egotistical and even harmful. If reframed as participation with the person experiencing the problem, in other words, as a folk method of brainstorming, then it poses an interesting challenge. Instead of rejecting consejos as erroneous form (advice giving), it makes more sense to use it as a constructive mode of problem solving, a form of forging mutual responsibility. The point here is that natural forms of handling conflict should be considered as resources rather than obstacles whenever possible.

Finally, it is readily apparent that moving from one cultural setting to another requires both sensitivity and flexibility. Sensitivity only emerges from immersion into natural knowledge about conflict and its management. Language facility and understanding are a sine qua non for intervention. A mediation is already a complex process of searching for understanding and meaning when practiced in one's native tongue. That complexity is tremendously increased in crosscultural settings. This should not discourage but rather encourage intervenors to take seriously the idea that the real experts on whom we depend are the people in the setting.

Flexibility refers to the form intervention takes. The many facets of varying appropriate forms of third party help discussed in Chapter 10 suggest models of intervention cannot be simply exported, transferred and applied, but should be created from and for each setting. Paradoxically stated, flexibility should be a constant, particularly as related to form.

In sum, this thesis has approached conflict as a socially constituted reality. It has revealed everyday, commonsense knowledge as a key resource used to create and manage conflict. The conclusion drawn is that tapping into this commonsense knowledge should remain a central goal of practitioners, investigators and

theorists, for it is there that they will all find a solid ground for understanding action from the perspective of the human participants experiencing the social realities they created.

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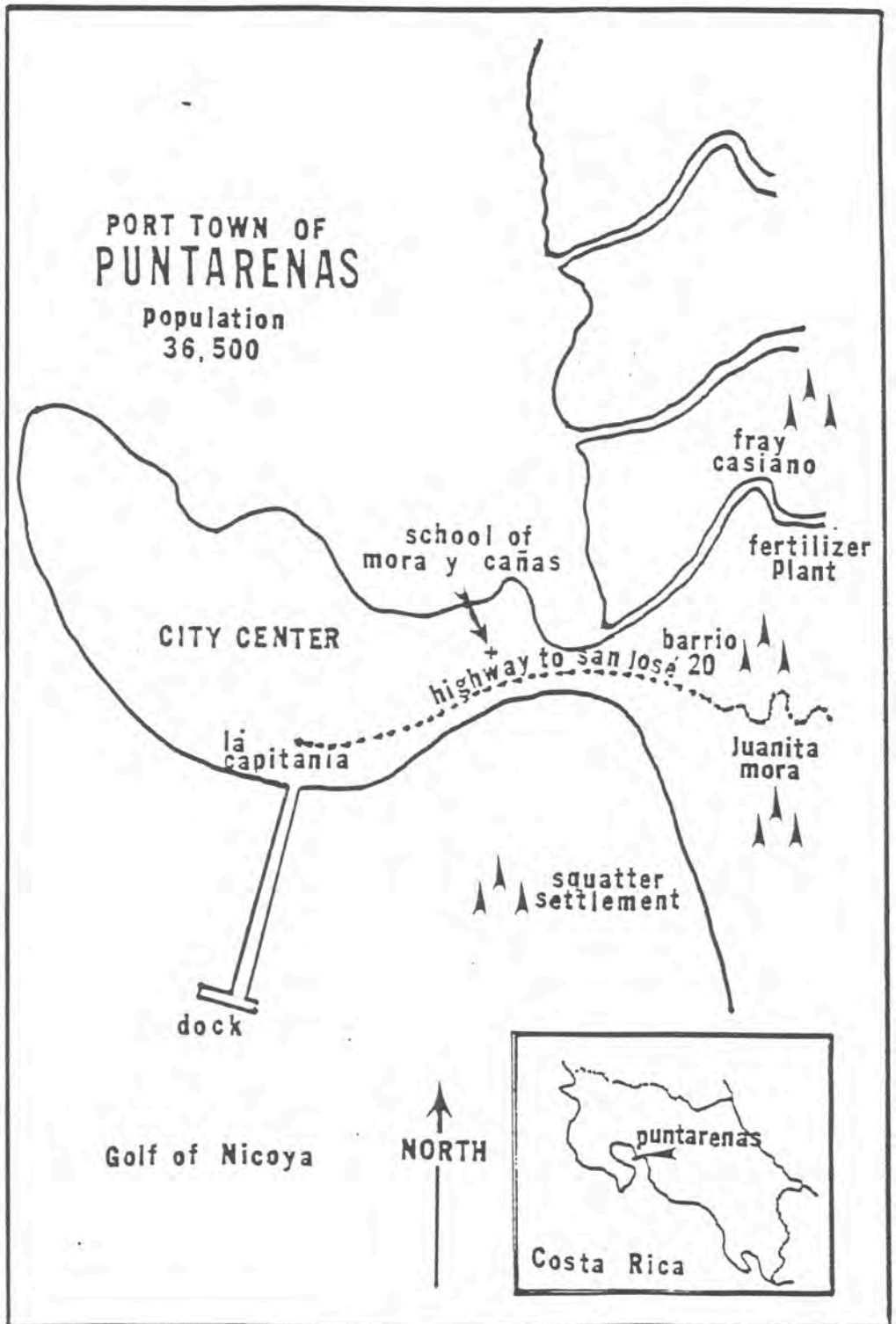
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Appendix 1 Map of Central America



Appendix 2 Map of Puntarenas



Appendix 3 Examples of Coded Tape Transcriptions

The following are two portions of a tape transcription taken from the Genesis April 28 meeting. One is a turn of talk by Adriano, the other a turn by Carmen, both related to the question of the muchacho participation. I have included here two versions of these transcript portions. Part A is a rough English translation, portions of which were used in the thesis in a refined fashion. The English version is coded and displayed in the ETHNOGRAPH format arrangement, providing the reader a view of how I coded and named different aspects of the conversation. Part B is the original Spanish version, without any coding, as it appeared in the initial transcription. In both, the astericks (***) represent areas in the tape recording that were not discernible for transcription purposes.

Part A English Translation of Transcript Coded in
ETHNOGRAPH Format

Puntarenas April 28, 1987 (Tape 2, Side A)

Adriano:

!-OPENGROUP
 We are and must be carriers of our own 30 -!
 culture. So we must give some ideas, 31 i

\$-FRAMEFIGHT
 some suggestions, if we are going to 32 i-\$
 be a a group that is simply open, or 33 i i
 if we are going to be a group that is 34 i i

%-REJECTIUS
 closed. Not that no one else will 35 i i-%

*-PEOPLETOO ü-DELICATE
 join. Don't misinterpret...The situa- 36 i i i-* -ü
 tion is very delicate because they can 37 i i i i i
 accuse, the can perfectly accuse us, 38 i i i i i
 because we are marginating human 39 i i i i i

;-CAME4HELP
 beings just like us. We are closing 40 i i i-**-;-ü
 doors to them who are perhaps coming 41 i i i i
 seeking help. That is a possibility, 42 -! i-% i
 that they are coming to seek help. 43 i i

%-HANDLENO
 But it so happens that we are not yet 44 i-% -;
 prepared to provide that help. We are 45 -\$ i
 still in a process of forming the 46 i
 group and preparing ourselves...of 47 i
 arming ourselves so that tomorrow we 48 i

\$-HOMOSOCPRB
 can learn to respond to people. I 49 -\$ i
 refer to people like: marihauna 50 i i
 smokers, that we should know how to 51 i i
 connect-in (entrarle) with a marihauna 52 i i
 smoker; that we can attend to an 53 i i
 acoholic;...or to a prostitute. And 54 i i
 likewise if a homosexual comes... 55 -\$ i
 But right now, sincerely speaking, we 57 i

!-HAVEPROBS
 are in diapers. We are starting...you 58 -! -%
 all know that I have said we do not 59 i
 have anyplace to go when we have 60 i
 problems. Nobody is vaccinated 61 i
 against problems...how beautiful it 62 i
 would be if we could share our 63 -!

!-IMAGEGROUP

problems. But right now it is not individual interests we each have, but 64 -!
65 i

§-IMAGELEADR %-CONFIANZA
rather the interest of the group. If 66 i-§-%
we must inspire confidence, who are 67 i i i
the people who will inspire that 68 i i i
confidence? 69 -!-§-%

Carmen:

... For my part I found Adriano's 188
talk good and have added a few points. 189

!-IMAGELEADR §-CONFIANZA
He said a coordinator must inspire 190 -!-§
confidence. That is a reality. We 191 i i
must inspire confidence, respect and 192 i i
consideration of other people for whom 193 i i
we are responsible and those that are 194 i i

*-FRAMEFIGHT
around us. And to inspire confidence, 195 i i -*
respect and consideration we must be 196 i i i

%-SOFTNER
cultural people, and, of course 197 -! i-% i
-- uh -- 198 i i i
-- the muchachos that joined last 199 -§ i i
week, José and Julio 200 i i
-- well -- 201 i i
-- at first 202 -% i

!-SOCTREAT
when we saw them, it made us, at least 203 -! i
for me, it made me, I hurt for these 204 i i
type of people, it creates a great 205 i i
sadness to know how they are treated 206 i i

%-SOFTNER
in society, and it hurts my soul 207 -! -% i
-- um -- 208 i i
-- to reject them, because 209 i i

!-SOCTREAT
-- I don't 210 -! -% i
know, the, the, the factors that 211 i i
carried these people to these, these 212 i i
conditions. Last week I told a story 213 i i
about some of the factors that lead to 214 i i

%-HAVEPROBS
this and there are others which are 215 i -% i
the community disorders in the human 216 i i i
structure that means many of us can 217 i i i
have a problem at any time given that 218 i i i
our children are growing up in this. 219 -! i i

At any time we can be faced with a	220	i	i
problem. I know that it is a shame	221	-%	i
!-IMAGEGRP			
But in reality, what Adriano said, if	222	-!	i
we are coordinators we are going to be	223	i	i
educators, people who orient, and we	224	i	i
cannot afterward have this attitude,	225	i	i
because, then, who would we be?	226	i	i
\$-IMAGELEADR			
Nobody would come near us. Or if we	227	i-\$	i
try to seek out people that have	228	i i	i
conflicts they would respond, "hey,	229	i i	i
what do you have to offer? You are	230	i i	i
just a so-and-so." So in this respect	231	i i	i
we have to be very careful. People in	232	-! i	i
the group should be people with	233	i	i
experience and, shall we say,	234	i	i
maturity. Even young people who	235	i	i
haven't had a lot of experience have	236	i	i
considerable maturity of thought and	237	i	i
have a positive attitude toward	238	i	i
society. And at the side of older	239	i	i
people, those of us that are old	240	i	i
!-SOFTNER			
already at times we have nothing	241	-! i	i
-- uh --	242	i i	i
-- the presence of young people in	243	i i	i
groups is very important because they	244	-! i	i
are people who are growing, they are	245	i	i
growing in their responsibility to	246	i	i
!-OPENLATE %-SOFTNER			
society. And for this reason I give,	247	-! i-%	i
*-REJECTIUS			
I believe that the muchachos, José and	248	i-\$	i i
Julio	249	i	i i
-- uh --	250	i	i i
-- it is not that they are	251	i	i i
being rejected	252	i	i i
-- rather --	253	i	i i
-- maybe we could	254	i	i i
find, as someone said, further ahead	255	i	i i
or communicate to them that	256	i	i-*
-- uh --	257	i	i
-- it	258	i	i
is not --	259	i	i
-- I don't know --	260	i	i
\$-SOCTREAT \$-REJECTIUS			
-- look for some	261	i-\$	i
way to tell them that they have not	262	i i-%	
been rejected, because that is what,	263	i i	
that is what the society does, it	264	i i	

destroys them even more. We destroy	265	i i
our own society. So we must look for	266	i-\$
a way, some manner to tell them that	267	i
they must wait until the group would	268	i
be ready to take them in.	269	-!

Part B The Original Spanish Transcript

Adriano: ...Somos y tenemos que ser portadores de nuestra propia cultura. Entonces debemos de dar algunas ideas algunas sugerencias, si vamos a ser un grupo netamente abierto o si por el contrario vamos a ser un grupo cerrado. No es que no entre nadie. No se va a mal interpretar *** La situación es muy delicada por que nos pueden acusar, pueden acusar perfectamente, por que les estamos marginando a seres humanos igual que nosotros, que les estamos cerrando las puertas a personas que tal vez vienen a buscar ayuda. Es una posibilidad, de que ellos vengan a buscar ayuda. Pero resulta ser que todavía nosotros no estamos preparados para brindar esa ayuda. Estamos en el proceso de la formación del grupo y estamos en el proceso de capacitarnos *** nos está dando las armas para que nosotros el día de mañana podamos aprender a responderles. Me refiero a personas marijuanas, que nosotros sepamos cómo poder entrarle a un marijuano. Que nosotros podamos atender a un alcohólico *** o si nos llega una prostituta, si nos llega un homosexual también *** Ahorita sinceramente estamos en pañales. Estamos empezando *** Uds. han oído que yo constantemente yo he venido diciendo que nosotros no tenemos adonde recurrir cuando estamos con algún problema. Nadie está vacunado contra los problemas *** que bonito sería que fuera un grupo donde nosotros podamos compartir. Pero ahora no es el interés de cada uno de nosotros sino el interés del grupo en general. Si tenemos que inspirar confianza, quiénes son las personas que van a inspirar confianza?

Carmen: De mi parte me pareció muy interesante la exposición de Adriano y apunté algunas cosas que dijo. Dice al ser coordinadores debemos inspirar confianza. Eso es una realidad. Tenemos que inspirar confianza, respeto y consideración a las personas que van a estar a nuestro cargo o por alrededor nuestro. Y para inspirar confianza, respeto y consideración debemos ser personas culturales, y por supuesto, este, los muchachos y , pues en primera instancia cuando los

vimos, nos dio al menos a mi da, me causa en esa clase de personas, mucho dolor, me da mucha pesadumbre, saber, como estan tratados, verdad, y me duele en el alma, este, rechazarlos, por que no sé, la, la, los factores que han llevado a esa gente a esas condiciones. La semana pasada conté una anecdota que lleva a eso, y otros los cuales es una desorden comunal dentro de la estructura humana que muchos de nosotros podemos tener un problema en cualquier momento, puesto que nuestros niños estan creciendo *** En cualquier momento se nos puede presentar un problema, yo sé que es una pena, pero en realidad lo que dice Adriano, si somos coordinadores vamos a ser educadores, y no podemos tener este, después, esta actitud por que entonces que sería? Nadie se nos arrima, o si nosotros tratamos de buscar a la gente que tiene un conflicto diay, nos dice, que le puede dar usted? Ud. es un tal por cual -- ve -- en ese aspecto pues tendríamos que andar con cuidado. Las personas del grupo que debe ser gente con, digamos, madurez *** y aún sin experiencia muchos jóvenes tienen una actitud positiva ante la sociedad y que a la par de algunas personas viejas, y a los que estamos viejos, nosotros los viejos a veces no tenemos nada, pero si, este, la presencia de la juventud en los grupos es de mucho valor por que son personas que van creciendo *** y por esa razón doy, yo creo, que los muchachos este, no es que se les rechaze, más bien, tal vez los podríamos buscar como dice, más adelante o comunicarles a ellos que no es que, no sé, buscar alguna forma, como decirles que no fueron rechazados, por que eso es lo que la sociedad hace *** los hunden más, humdimos más a nuestra propia sociedad. Tenemos que buscar alguna forma, alguna manera de decirles que deben esperar a que el grupo esté preparado para acogerlos.

Appendix 4 Example of Coded Journal Entry

The following is an example of a journal entry, displayed here in the "coded" format as arranged by the ETHNOGRAPH. The journal original is respected as it was entered and no special indications for author language or Spanish is made.

!-ID

ID: April 30, 7:30 a.m. San Jose, at 1 -!
home. 2 -!

DATA: Last night continued the discus- 4
sion on los muchachos. After a short 5
dinamica led by Miguel, we moved 6
directly into the decision about them. 7

!-RONDA

Adriano was coordinating and had 8 -!
suggested (from Jim and Guadalupe) 9 i
that instead of having a vote that we 10 i

S-DECISION

have another ronda de opiniones. We 11 -!-S
had spoken briefly with Adriano 12 i
earlier in the day at Correos and he 13 i
had expressed that "yo, eso de la 14 i

!-TWSIDES !-DIVISION

decision la veo muy dificil." He was 15 -! i
concerned that people were setting dos 16 i i
bandas, las 4 mujeres y los demas. It 17 i i
would be better not to have to vote he 18 i i
thought in order to avoid una 19 i i
división. 20 -!-S

!-RONDA

The ronda was suggested and we started 22 -!
in. Many of the same opinions came 23 i
out, a number of people just said they 24 i
were at the same place as last night. 25 i
Several others commented who had not 26 i
made any remarks the night before. 27 -!

!-HOMOSOCPRO

Emotions were high. At one point when 28 -!
Jim was talking about not being able 29 i
to change people's sexual preference, 30 i
Jose Luis laughed and ducked his head 31 i
to hide it. He was sitting right 32 i
beside Jim. Several others noticed 33 i
and giggled and laughed also. I had 34 -!
the impression they were tense and it 35
was a release. Flor, when she spoke 36
could hardly talk, she was crying. 37

!-IMAGEOFUS !-ALREADY1US !-PROFILE !-PEOPLETOO !-REJECT1US

The two frames remained strong: 1. 38 -!
we cannot accept them given our mis- 39 i
sion, their characteristics, and our 40 i
image; 2. We must accept them as a 41 i

	part of us and as humans. As Judy put	42	i
	perhaps most poignantly, "se les ha	43	i
	rechazado, no podemos hacer eso,	44	i
	porque todos somos humanos, verdad?"	45	i
	That frame carries extraordinary	46	i
	weight. Rejection of someone who is a	47	i
\$-REJMORAL	\$-CONFIANZA		
	part of us. The response of the other	48	-!-\$
	frame, transvalue rejection: Miguel	49	i
	said, "no rechazamos a nadie como	50	i
	persona, lo que rechazamos es la moral	51	i
	de ellos." No inspiran confianza, por	52	-\$
	sus valores morales. I had the	53	
	impression here that valores morales	54	
	is connected to inspirar confianza.	55	
!	-SALIDA		
	Through this first ronda a new option	57	-!
	began to emerge. It was a potential	58	i
	salida. Those under most turmoil with	59	i
	the two prominent frames took to this	60	i
\$-AUDITYES			
	rapidly. Basically it said, "pueden	61	i-\$
	venir como oyentes." The salida was	62	i i
	that we mark them as different, but do	63	i i
	not have to rechazar them. Somehow,	64	i i
	the salida was not acceptable.	65	-!-\$
!	-RAZON \$-AUDITNO		
	Magdalena reframed it by saying: it is	66	-!-\$
	either si o no, nada de esto de	67	i i
%-SCDCLASS			
	oyente. Adriano then called it an	68	-! i-%
	option of second class, nosotros	69	i i
	primera clase, ellos segunda clase.	70	i i
	It was transvalued, lost power and	71	i i
!	-AUDITYES		
	potential. Five wanted them to be	72	-!-\$-%
	accepted as oyentes, so it remained as	73	i
	a category for a time. We then moved	74	i
\$-VOTE	%-TICOSTYLE		
	to a vote. The tension was high. It	75	-!-\$-%
	was obvious that we were stuck. The	76	i i
	first vote came out with 1 yes, 5	77	i i
	no's, 4 oyente, and 9 abstentions.	78	i i
	Adriano looked at the abstentions and	79	i i
	called it "muy tico." "We do want to	80	-\$ i
	define ourselves," and yet he said,	81	i
!	-ABSTAIN !-IMAGEOFUS !-AUDITYES !-REJECT1US !-SALIDA		
	"this is saying something." Dona	82	-! -%
	Carmen perhaps made the clearest case	83	i
	for why the abstention: it was a no	84	i

	win situation; if we say yes we have a	85	i
	bad image, if we say no we reject, if	86	i
	we say oyente we have second class	87	i
	citizens, prefiero no votar. Now we	88	-!
	were really stuck. Frustration	89	
!-HACEGRAN	\$-PROCESPROB		
	started to emerge. People were	90	-!-\$
	irritated with not being able to make	91	i i
	the decision, something "pequeño" was	92	i i
	becoming "demasiado grande." Process	93	-! i
	and where to go next became	94	i
!-SALIDA			
	problematic. We were no where near	95	-! i
	our 75%, and yet no salidas had	96	i i
	appeared. Jim suggested we vote	97	i i
%-COMMENTGRP			
	privately. Others agreed, Teresita	98	i-\$-%
	did not. "Somos responsables," she	99	i i
	said. Miguel reacted strongly back to	100	-! i
	her, in favor of the private vote. It	101	i
	felt uncomfortable, people were	102	i
	talking a lot in their comment groups,	103	i
	there was almost a constant hub-ub of	104	i
	noise, although nobody called it down	105	i
	or seemed to view it as a problem.	106	i
!-SNAKE			
	Adriano said it was "como agarrar la	107	-! i
	culebra por la cola." A sense of	108	i i
	danger, wriggling, grabbing the snake	109	i i
\$-VOTE			
	by the tail. We did the private vote.	110	-!-\$-%
!-COMMENTGRP	%-UBICARSE		
	3 yes, 10 no and 4 abstentions. Still	111	-! i-%
	not 75%. What to do? Break our rule	112	i i i
	for decisions? Now the frustrations	113	i-\$ i
	were higher yet. The comment groups	114	i i
\$-RONDA			
	increased even more. I suggested we	115	-!-\$ i
	do a ronda to hear what ideas people	116	i i
	had to salir de eso, to hear what they	117	i i
	were saying in their comment groups.	118	i i
	The idea did not go over too well.	119	-\$-%
!-STAND			
	Roberto wanted to make a point. He	120	-!
	stood up to talk. Increased tension,	121	i
	increased feeling, and they stand, at	122	i
	least the men. It reminded me of the	123	i
	conflict in Guatemala, where the men	124	i
	stood to talk when they wanted to have	125	i
\$-VOTE			
	a special impact. Final decision:	126	-!-\$

	another ronda, in which just for this	127	i
	case, we would vote yes or no as to	128	i
	whether we would let this simple	129	i
	majority vote stand. 12 no, 1 yes	130	i
	(interestingly it was Jose Luis who	131	i
	earlier had voted no) and 5	132	i
!-ANGER			
	abstentions. Madgalena, when she	133	-! i
	abstained said, bueno, no voto, Uds.	134	i i
	vera lo que quieren hacer. She was	135	i i
	frustrated, angry. The decision had	136	i i
	gone to long. We should just decide,	137	i i
	women wouldn't take this long she	138	i i
	said. So the vote stood. Los	139	i i
	muchachos would not be accepted in the	140	i i
	group.	141	-!-\$
!-SALIDA !-ARREGLO			
	In my notebook I wrote. It feels	143	-!
	heavy, tense. The salida was taken	144	i
	away, no oyentes, the compromise frame	145	i
	destroyed, and now it had to get	146	i
\$-REJECTIUS			
	radicalized. They tried to arreglar,	147	i-\$
	but people lost patience. They are not	148	i i
	accepted, rechazados. It is 8:40, we	149	i i
	spent over a straight 1 1/2 on this.	150	-!-\$
!-PROCESPROB !-NOVALE			
	The general impression of many people,	152	-!
	this was not worth it. We made a	153	i
	mountain out of mole hill. Perdimos	154	i
	el tiempo, became a new and emerging	155	i
	frame in the process. The decision	156	i
	itself became less important, and what	157	i
	it was doing to us and the group more	158	i
\$-HOMOSOCPRO %-REJECTIUS			
	important. It was an impossible	159	i-\$-%
	choice: accepting homosexuals in our	160	i i i
	group or being accused of rejecting,	161	i i i
*-INCLUDE			
	marginarlos. Nobody can live with the	162	-! i i-*
	overt dissonance of having put someone	163	-\$ i i
	on the edge. In a culture where	164	i i
	inclusion and being a part of is so	165	-% i
	highly and positively valued, it	166	i
	produces almost unbelievable pain to	167	i
	reject. Adriano asked in the end, and	168	-*
	who is going to tell them? We	169	
	immediately moved to the sorpresas,	170	
	after all that nobody wanted to face	171	

!-INDIRECTA	!-AVOIDANCE	!-NETWORK	
	that question.	Indirectness in	172 -!
	conflict develops in part due to the		173 i
	dissonance produced in rejecting, in		174 i
	marginating others. This conflict may		175 i
	symbolic of the roots of "rodear",		176 i
	"disimular", "las indirectas."		177 i
	Finding a way to avoid the dissonance		178 i
	produced from confronting the process		179 i
	of transvaluation of rejecting,		180 i
	removing oneself from the network, not		181 i
	allowing others in. When the network		182 i
	comes apart it is painful.		183 -!
!-PESADO			
	At the end of the last vote, the		185 -!
	sorpresas were given out and we had		186 i
	our drinks. The ambiente was pesado.		187 i
	I spoke very briefly with Ma Teresa		188 -!
!-REJECTIUS			
	outside. She was talking about a		189 -!
	recent conversation with (), the		190 i
	feeling of rejection, of not being		191 i
\$-PROCESPROB			
	accepted. She was hurt. It was		192 -!-\$
	already late. Dona Flor, who did not		193 i
	like what we had done with the		194 i
	discusiones -- she looked especially		195 i
	uncomfortable throughout the whole		196 i
	thing -- said she was going home. She		197 i
	couldn't stay any longer. Last night		198 i
	had gone until 10:00 and she couldn't		199 i
!-DINAMICA			
	take that. Adriano, Jim and Teresita		200 -!-\$
	decided on a little dinamica to end		201 i
	the evening. Very interesting.		202 i
	Teresita introduced it. Fue una noche		203 i
	un poco tensa, para aliviar la		204 i
	tension, vamos a hacer una dinamica.		205 i
\$-RONFAMILY			
	It was a tight circle. Once again we		206 i-\$
	were close. In the circle there was		207 i i
	one chair less than people. The		208 i i
	person who stood had to say, que se		209 i-\$
	cambien los que llevan zapatos		210 i
	blancos, or whatever. Those people		211 i
	then dashed to change with another		212 i
	person taking their chair. Whoever		213 i

PLEASE NOTE:

Page(s) missing in number only; text follows.
Filmed as received.

U·M·I

was left standing had to do the next	214	i
cambio. It started off a little slow	215	i
but built. I watched the first time	216	i
Ruth was caught out. She was showing	217	i
the strain of the evening. She had	218	i
brought the muchachos, knew them, had	219	i
talked to them about the problem, and	220	i
did not understand why they could not	221	i
be a part of the group. I imagine she	222	i
was tired and upset with the process	223	i
and decision. She got up slow, not	224	i
with her usual energy and smile. She	225	i
gave the command and people went	226	i
running. The dinamica built, gaining	227	i
momentum, the atmosphere was changing.	228	i
You could feel it. There was	229	i
laughter, then lots of laughter. It	230	i
was becoming cathartic, reaffirming.	231	i
The group was still together. Adriano	232	i
laughed so hard he had tears pouring	233	i
out of his eyes. He took his thumbs	234	i
up across the bottom of his eyes and	235	i
flung the tears. Rosario in the	236	i
middle was laughing so hard she	237	i
couldn't give the command. Ma. Teresa	238	i
§-CONFIANZA §-APOYO		
was into it, Ruth was laughing. The	239	i-§
dinámica was doing its thing:	240	i i
creating the group, giving it	241	i i
confianza, apoyo. After about 20	242	i i
minutes it ended. Judy said, ok, la	243	i i
última. And that was it. We started	244	i i
on our ways home. Not nearly as	245	i i
heavy, but still thinking.	246	!-§

Appendix 5 Original Documents

The following pages are original documents used in the thesis, particularly Chapter 11. They are for the most part self-explanatory. The first item, "Informe" contained no identification or other distinguishing features. It was released by American Embassy attache, Michael Herrington, to the YATAMA delegation, documenting, according to him, U.S. money delivered to YATAMA Costa Rica.

INFORME DEL FONDO DE ALIMENTACION

A. Mes de Abril

<u>N° de Factura</u>	<u>Fecha</u>	<u>Concepto</u>	<u>N° de Personas</u>	<u>Cantidad</u>
1904	14-4	Ukuly (familiar)	2	7,200.00
1906	14-4	Eustacio9 (familiar)	5	18,000.00
1908	14-4	Isingni (personal)	1	3,600.00
1910	14-4	Siakua (grupal)	17	61,200.00
1912	14-4	Waklin (familiar)	3	10,800.00
1914	14-4	Waihru (grupal)	15	54,000.00
1916	14-4	Palpa (familiar)	3	10,800.00
2008	14-4	Batana (familiar)	3	10,800.00
1919	14-4	Egrito (familiar)	2	7,200.00
1921	14-4	Condor (familiar)	2	7,200.00
1924	14-4	Ulak (familiar)	3	10,800.00
1926	14-4	Delia (familiar)	3	10,800.00
1928	14-4	Billy (personal)	1	3,600.00
1930	14-4	Angel P. (personal)	1	3,600.00
1932	14-4	René M. (personal)	1	3,600.00
1934	14-4	José López (grupal)	27	97,200.00
1936	14-4	Waynan. (familiar)	3	10,800.00
1938	14-4	Coyote (familiar)	3	10,800.00
1940	14-4	Ukaka (familiar)	4	14,400.00
1942	14-4	Ialvito (personal)	1	3,600.00
1944	14-4	Anicita (familiar)	5	18,000.00
1946	14-4	Maisahana (personal)	1	3,600.00
1948	14-4	Pinta (grupal)	13	46,800.00
1950	14-4	Elena (familiar)	2	7,200.00
2002	14-4	Tilas. (familiar)	6	21,600.00
2004	14-4	Matis (familiar)	2	7,200.00
2006	14-4	Coyote (grupal)	11	39,600.00

Sub-Total... \$504,000.00

B. Mes de Mayo

1905	12-5	Ukuly (familiar)	2	7,200.00
1907	12-5	Eustacio (familiar)	5	18,000.00
1909	12-5	Isingni (personal)	1	3,600.00
1911	12-5	Siakua (grupal)	17	61,200.00

United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520



Dear Ms. Schroeder:

I am writing in response to your letter of December 7 to Secretary Shultz, in which you asked that the Department of State do whatever it can to ensure the safety of John Paul Lederach.

Please be assured that the United States will provide Mr. Lederach with the customary protection afforded Americans abroad by Embassies and Consulates. As soon as he informed us of the threat he had received, the Department informed our Embassies in Managua and San Jose of Mr. Lederach's situation. We have also urged Mr. Lederach to contact these Embassies when he returns to the region and, should he receive any more threats of any kind, to inform them immediately.

I note that you state Mr. Lederach is undertaking his activities on behalf of Yatama. Our understanding of this is somewhat different. Yatama has not collectively negotiated with the Government of Nicaragua, but one of its directors, Mr. Brooklyn Rivera, has independently opened negotiations. We assume this is the effort which Mr. Lederach is assisting.

With best wishes,

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "J. Edward Fox".

J. Edward Fox
Assistant Secretary
Legislative Affairs

The Honorable
Patricia Schroeder,
House of Representatives.



United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

April 6, 1988

Dear Mr. Bohn:

Senator Kassebaum's office has asked that the Department of State respond to the allegation contained in your letter of February 5 concerning the "bribing" of Miskito Indians by officials of the American Embassy in Managua.

This allegation is without foundation. It appears to reflect the claims of Modesto Watson, a Nicaraguan Creole who lives in Costa Rica, that he was offered \$3,000 by US officials to undermine negotiations between the Miskito Indians and the Sandinistas. Mr. Watson's charges, which he made to the press, are false.

The United States has aided the indigenous people of Nicaragua in their struggle against the Sandinistas. We support their efforts to arrive at a settlement which would preserve their cultural heritage and provide them with the opportunity to live under a democratic system of government.

It has always been the policy of the United States to encourage the resolution of the Nicaraguan conflict through negotiations among all parties to the dispute. The difficulty has been to persuade the Sandinistas, by one means or another, to come in good faith to the bargaining table. Their record--in the 1979 agreements with the OAS and their own people, in the Manzanillo and Contadora talks, in earlier talks with Indian leader Brooklyn Rivera and in the current cease-fire negotiations with the Resistance--does not inspire confidence, but we are committed to supporting efforts to find a negotiated solution to the problems of Central America.

With best wishes,

Sincerely,

John P. Leonard
Director

Nicaragua Coordination Office

cc: Nancy Kassebaum

Mr. Stanley Bohn, Executive Secretary
Commission on Home Ministries
Mennonite Church
Box 347
Newton, Kansas 67114-0347

Central Intelligence Agency



Washington, D.C. 20505

2 June 1988

The Honorable Dan Quayle
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Quayle:

This is in response to your letter of 20 April 1988 on behalf of your constituent, Ms. Geraldine Mumaw, who wrote to you about alleged threats made by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) against Mr. John Paul Lederach in Nicaragua.

The allegations made in the magazine article, "The CIA's War" have no basis. The activities of the CIA are governed by legislation, Executive Orders and are subject to close scrutiny by the oversight committees in the United States Congress. Executive Order 12333 specifically prohibits the CIA from taking any actions that violate the laws of the United States. Obviously, the CIA would not engage in kidnapping the child of a U.S. missionary. The Agency's primary responsibility is to collect, evaluate and disseminate foreign intelligence to the national policy makers. The Agency does not make policy nor do we function as a law enforcement organization. The allegations made in the magazine article concerning CIA involvement in plots against Mr. Lederach or his family are utterly false.

As a US citizen, Ms. Mumaw has every right to protest the policies of the US government. I would suggest that she make her thoughts known to policymaking bodies in our government, namely the Department of State, the National Security Council and the US Congress.

Thank you for writing on behalf of Ms. Mumaw, and I appreciate the opportunity to discuss the role of the CIA and set the record straight on these outrageous allegations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "John L. Helgeson".

John L. Helgeson
Director of Congressional Affairs

595-418



