



## The kin-integration system among Caribs

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### Introduction

The modern analysis of kinship may be divided into three major periods. In the first, there was heavy reliance on African data, where there is a strong emphasis on identifying one's ancestors and knowing the genealogical past. The analyses from this period produced what is now known as "Descent Theory" (Radcliffe-Brown 1950; Fortes 1953, 1959). During the second period data was drawn from a broader range of societies and produced what is termed "Alliance Theory" (Lévi-Strauss 1949; Leach 1951, 1954, 1961; Maybury-Lewis 1965).<sup>1</sup> There is no question that the work of these scholars has produced some powerful and sophisticated analyses, and that they have provided valuable insights into the structure and nature of kinship organization in general and into the relations between elementary groups in particular. However, the majority of their ethnographic examples have been drawn from South-East Asia. Alliance theory has proven most satisfactory in explaining the social organization of the Kachin, for example, but it has proven inadequate for the analysis of social organization among the tribes of Lowland Tropical South America.

Lévi-Strauss (1969: 70-71, 83, 459, 479) maintains that dual organization is just as typical among South American tribes as among those of North America and Indonesia, and that this type of structural organization is integrated and maintained by alliance and reciprocity among the two groups, but at the same time he maintains that cognatic ("undifferentiated") systems have nothing to do with elementary structures because they lack a fixed rule of descent.

Those of us who have worked with aboriginal groups in South America have never been entirely satisfied with either of these theoretical perspectives. True,

<sup>1</sup> Although Needham has also written extensively on "Alliance Theory," much of his work, including the dichotomy between "prescriptive" and "preferential" systems has been repudiated by Lévi-Strauss (1969: xxx-xxxv).

different investigators have struggled with a variety of approaches in an attempt to fit the kinship data into one or another coherent theoretical structure. Extensive investigation of Lowland Tropical societies has revealed a widespread pattern of shallow genealogical reckoning, with descent being unimportant. These tribes are typically cognatic and they generally lack dual organization, although a form of dualism is frequently expressed ideologically or symbolically. Thus neither the classic descent model nor the classic alliance model have proven very useful for analyzing kinship and marriage on that continent.

The third period of kinship analysis may be said to have been initiated at the annual meeting of the American Anthropological Association, held in New Orleans in 1973. There, at the all-day symposium "Marriage practices in Lowland South America" a general consensus seemed to emerge that many of us working in that region had encountered similar systems of kinship and marriage, which are distinctive from those described from most other major ethnographic areas. For this reason alone it was felt that there is need for a new terminology to apply to the South American phenomena. A number of distinctive features were identified at that symposium, which appear to characterize the South American systems. These include the following:

1. Marriage must be viewed within the context of kin relations.
2. There are definite and precise rules of choice in marriage and kin relations, but this is tempered by
3. Marked flexibility of behavior, allowing for a considerable range of individual exceptions to the rules.
4. Shallow genealogical reckoning, with kin categories rarely extending beyond the +2 and —2 generations (and sometimes not even that far).
5. Rapid turnover in the formation and re-formation of groups.
6. Marriage is essentially a linkage between groups, and it serves to maintain jural stability between them, even in the face of conjugal instability between individuals.

My own struggles to bring order and meaning to the analysis of Karinya kinship may be taken as an epitome of the wider problems encountered by almost all investigators who have been concerned with the analysis of South American kinship patterns. As I began to investigate the kinship system and residential patterns in the field, my initial impression was that I was dealing with matrilineal descent and organization into matri-sibs. As the data accumulated and I delved further into Karinya social organization, it became apparent that this perception was wholly erroneous. While still in the field I prepared a preliminary paper on Karinya family and marriage. Extrapolating from the bifurcate merging kin terminology with Iroquois cousin terms, I gave greater emphasis to cross cousin marriage than later proved justified. Although order was evident in the residential patterns, there were sufficient variations and exceptions that made it difficult to argue for a definite residential rule. Nevertheless, I concluded that the basic pattern was one of matrilocal compromise kin groups or clans (as defined by Murdock) (Schwerin 1963: 202-203).

By the time I had analyzed the data in sufficient depth to prepare a

monograph, these views had to be modified yet again. The complete census data showed only seven marriages with classificatory cross cousins out of a total of 126 unions (Schwerin 1966: 67).<sup>2</sup> Murdock's (1960) paper on "Cognatic forms of social organization" had come to my attention and his description of the "Quasi-unilineal Carib type" seemed like a better representation of the Karinya structure. Accordingly, I borrowed his term "ramage" to handle the considerable variability in residence among the Karinya and continued to employ the concept of the Murdock clan (Schwerin 1966: 80-93).

In treating the kinship structure, my tendency was to deal with each kin category separately, thus leading to a good deal of puzzlement about generational crossing, equation of ZD with female cross cousins, and a hypothesis that the idea of extending the term *ti<sup>2</sup>wü* ("brother in law") as a generic term for kinsman was borrowed from the Venezuelan "criollo" practice of similarly employing "cuñado" and "compadre" (Schwerin 1966: 60-65). There was also a tendency to read into the +2 generation an "original" bifurcate merging terminology, and to wonder whether the same might not also have existed on the -2 generation; this was primarily because the generational terminology reported for these generations seemed anomalous in what was obviously a predominantly bifurcate merging structure, and this interpretation seemed to be supported by the evidence for a recent trend toward generational terms on other generational levels. In reality, however, the data from different consultants was quite contradictory and very confusing (Schwerin 1966: 60-62, 149-152). It was also noted that "the Karinya are not much interested in their own lineage and genealogy. Some cannot even name their own grandparents" (Schwerin 1966: 155). At the time I assumed this to be an expression of cultural breakdown in response to recent disruptive influences; it never occurred to me that it could be a fundamental feature inherent in the very structure of the kinship system.

Recently, in preparing a paper on the relationship between the denotation of incest categories and changing kinship structure, I was led back to the question of how best to represent the structure of the Karinya kinship system. Although this paper was concerned primarily with exploring a relativistic definition of the incest taboo, it was nonetheless necessary for me to re-examine the Karinya kinship system(s) in order to delineate fully the relationship between different kinship categories and the taboo (Schwerin 1980). This very soon brought me to the realization that the kinship system could be much more fully understood in light of the kin-affine (after Overing Kaplan 1972) or kin-integration model than it could through attempts to accommodate it to any other model so far proposed. Not only does it fit more or less into the model of the kin-affine system; representing it in this way clearly brings out the fact that almost all incestuous categories are kin rather than affines. The only affinal exception is *boxpwü*, the category to which the mother-in-law belongs. Yet the fact remains that this conceptual model exists only in the minds of that community of anthropologists who have worked among

<sup>2</sup> Curiously, I recorded six unions with parallel cousins, one with a classificatory Z, and three with classificatory BD. I still have no good structural explanations for these facts (Schwerin 1966: 67).

Lowland Tropical South American Indians, and in the exchanges of ideas which occur among them. Although bits and pieces of this structure have appeared in print, and in one case a rather full analysis for one specific society, nowhere to my knowledge has there appeared in print a fully elaborated characterization of the model as a generic structure for Lowland South American societies.

### The Dravidian kinship system

Although South American systems of kinship differ significantly from those which prevail in Africa or South-East Asia, scholars have long noted parallels between Lowland South America and the Dravidian peoples of South India, particularly with respect to the occurrence of certain rare and unusual features. Kirchoff (1932: 58-62) pointed out that sister's daughter marriage is almost exclusively restricted to the tribes of Lowland Tropical South America and the Dravidian-speaking tribes and castes of India. In this same paper he describes Makushi nomenclature as representative of one of four "Basic Types" (Grundtypen) of kinship (the type now known as Bifurcate Merging), and one which is widespread among the tribes of Tropical Lowland South America. He is also cognizant that there exists a significant (but far from inevitable) correlation between this kinship type and dual organization, but he concludes that the occurrence of one cannot be explained from the presence of the other (Kirchoff 1932: 52-53).

In 1953 Dumont published a detailed description of Dravidian kinship terminology based on his field research among South Indian castes. During the past decade an increasing number of scholars have concluded that the systems they have encountered in Lowland Tropical South America are either identical with, or represent variations on, the Dravidian system (e.g. Overing Kaplan 1975: 128; Fields and Merrifield 1980: 17; Maybury-Lewis 1965: 221-223).

In any case, the Dravidian system provides a starting point for the analysis of South American systems. The principal characteristics of the Dravidian system include: "classification according to generations, distinction of sex, distinction of two kinds of relatives inside certain generations, distinction of age." An additional structural characteristic is the distinction between parallel cousins and cross cousins, but it would appear that this, in itself, is not important in South America (Dumont 1953a: 34-35).

The Dravidian structure is an expression of a highly classificatory system and the fundamental principles on which it is erected are at considerable variance from our customary way of thinking about kinship. In this system the kinship *classes* or *categories* are of far greater importance than the kin relation between any two individuals. Identification of an Ego as a point of reference, is in fact, incidental to the existence of the structure or the investigator's efforts to understand it (see Fig. 1). The originality of Dumont's approach lies in his attempting to understand the system *as a system* and not in analyzing discrete kinship terms or individual categories independently of their place within the total system.

Dumont (1953a: 39) concludes that Dravidian terminology is based on four

principles of opposition: distinction of generation, distinction of sex, distinction between kin and persons related through alliance (affines), and distinction of age. The third, distinction between kin and affines, lacks any biological base, but it is nonetheless the most important distinction for this type of structure. The whole object of the system is to favor marriage between cross cousins and thereby to maintain permanently the resulting alliance. The result is that all relatives are comprehended in the two categories of kin and affines. Within the Dravidian structure they are both logically complete and exhaustive. There is no necessity for any other category, "the affine of my affine is my brother." Nor is there any need to resort to dual organization to understand this principle. In one sense marriage is the whole of society, which it serves to unite. Yet from the point of view of Ego, marriage separates society into two groups.

### The kin-affine system among the Piaroa

The best exposition to date of a Dravidian system in a South American society is that published by Overing Kaplan (1972: 285-287; 1975: 127-129) in her study of the linguistically independent Piaroa (belonging to the Salivan stock) where she describes it as a "kin-affine system." Examination of Piaroa kinship categories (as described by Overing Kaplan) in Fig. 2 reveals a basically Dravidian system of kinship, albeit somewhat simpler than the original model constructed by Dumont. Except for same-sex affines in Ego's generation and their siblings of opposite sex,<sup>3</sup> where distinct terms are applied to each category, distinction of sex is subsidiary to distinction of generation and differentiation of kin from affine, i.e. for each male category the structurally corresponding female category is identified by merely adding a suffix (-a or -hu) to the root term. There is only one point of major contradiction between Overing Kaplan's model and that of Dumont. This appears in the —1 generation where she shows sister's children as affines (classificatory nephews and nieces), and children of opposite sex affines as kin (classificatory children). This is, of course, the logical outcome of a matrilineal system where sisters will marry male affines, and a male Ego will marry a female (or opposite sex) affine. The apparent contradiction arises from the fact that Dumont is dealing with patrilineal systems, whereas in South America we are dealing with predominantly matrilineal systems.

Several distinctive features emerge from the system, as described by Overing Kaplan, which appear to be inherently characteristic, at least as it is expressed among the Piaroa.

1. *Small local group* (ca. 100). The Piaroa local group contains 14-60 members, and Overing Kaplan (1972: 283, 295) describes the kin-affine system as functioning to maintain an atomistic type of social organization.

<sup>3</sup> Dumont (1953b: 143) argues that strictly speaking the affinal relationship obtains only between individuals of same sex. In South America it is certainly true that the brother-in-law relationship is just as important and sometimes even overshadows that between opposite sex affines. Furthermore it is often the case that the relationship in own generation is not defined directly, but rather in terms of the relationship between *children of affines*.

FIGURE 1  
DRAVIDIAN KINSHIP CLASSES

Generation	Δ	○		Δ	○
Grandfather	A (+ fem. A')				
Father	B	C		D	E
Ego {	> Ego	F	G	H	I
	< Ego	J	K	L	M
Son	N (+ fem. N')			O (+ fem. O')	
Grandson	P (+ fem. P')				

(Modified from Dumont 1953: 36)

FIGURE 2  
PIAROA KINSHIP CATEGORIES

	Kin		Affine	
Generation	Δ	○	Δ	○
+2	A (+ fem. A')			
+1	B	B'	C	C'
0	eKin	D	E	F
	yKin	G		
-1	H (kin)	I (+fem. I') (affine)		H (kin)
-2	J (+ fem. J')			

(After Kaplan 1975: 131).

- A Chad'o(a)
- B Cha'o(hu)
- C Chiminya(hu)
- D Chu'buo(a)
- E Chisapo (m.s.), Chirekwo (f.s.)
- F Chirekwa (m.s.), Chóbiya (f.s.)
- G Chihawa(hu)
- H Chitti(hu) (m.s.), Chuhöhri(hu) (f.s.)
- I Chuhöri(hu) (m.s.), Chitti(hu) (f.s.)
- J Chu'do(a)

2. *Lack of a descent principle and a shallow genealogy.* Overing-Kaplan (1975: 2, 183) several times asserts that the Piaroa have "no principle of descent." There are no clearly defined descent groups, which is supported by the fact that individuals may affiliate themselves expediently with any one of a number of kin groups on the basis of kin ties with parents, spouse's parents, a same-sex sibling, a child, or some other affinal relationship. Furthermore, "an individual's knowledge of his own genealogy will be no more than three or four generations in depth." Rather than maintaining a mental model of his relationships to other members of the community, the individual generally "deduces relationships from those of his parents" (Overing Kaplan 1975: 120-121, 71).

3. *Multiple models of social organization.* Much of Overing Kaplan's analysis is derived from her exposition of at least three distinct emic models of Piaroa social organization. In the *chuwawuwang* or kindred model everyone in Ego's social universe is in some degree or other related to Ego and his spouse (this is what I earlier described as a "conjugal kindred" [Schwerin 1966: 174]).

The primary terminological system is based upon the structural opposition between kin and affines. The teknonym system functions to convert affines into kin and thereby serves to mediate between the other two models (Overing Kaplan 1972; 1975).

4. *Lack of corporate groups.* The Piaroa local group or *itso'de* is in fact described as ideologically possessing a corporate identity based on common residence. However, Overing Kaplan presents little evidence to show that it *behaves* as a corporation, and because of the residential mobility of individuals at marriage and other times, its corporate character can hardly be more than fictive. As we will see below, most Carib societies lack any sort of corporate organization beyond the confines of the nuclear family (Overing Kaplan 1975: 82).

5. *Kindred, or at least cognatic, organization.* The structure and functioning of the *chuwawuwang* or kindred is described in detail by Overing Kaplan (1972: 283-284; 1975: 69-87) who further shows how the boundaries of the kindred group may vary expediently from all genealogically related kinsmen to the first cousin level (or the conjugal kindred), through all members of the local group, to all Piaroa, or even "all people with whom a Piaroa actually engages in peaceful social interaction, whether they be Piaroa or non-Piaroa." When the local group is taken as the referent, all residents are included, even when they have no close consanguineal or affinal ties to the individual. This is done because the ideal image of the local group is as an "endogamous, cognatic kinship group which should be identical in personnel with the close personal kindred."

6. *Endogamy.* At the same time, the local group is ideally endogamous, or in other words, the preferred marriage is with a fellow member of one's personal kindred—one ought to marry a close kinsman. This is not a marriage rule, but rather a cultural value. It is one, however, which is reinforced by a statistical predominance of locally endogamous marriages. Even when the marriage is not endogamous, "the Piaroa always act as if their marriages are endogamous to both the house and the close kindred of birth" (Overing Kaplan 1972: 283-284; 1975: 134, 185, 189).

7. *Structural opposition of kin and affines.* Given that marriage is endogamous within the personal kindred, it is essential that a Piaroa "be able to distinguish within this kinship group between those whom he can and those whom he cannot marry." This is accomplished by means of the Dravidian system of kinship terminology which divides the kinship universe into those who are related as "kin" and those who are related as "affine." In this way all kinsmen of the opposite sex in Ego's generation are divided into "marriageable" and "non-marriageable" categories. Among the Piaroa, however, the affine relationship is ambiguous. In the primary terminological system it represents a fundamental structural feature, where ties of alliance are emphasized. Within the kindred model it is structurally irrelevant; by emphasizing the kindred model the individual can stress the kinship aspect of affinity. It is not that these two models are contradictory; rather they represent alternative models which may be utilized selectively for strategic advantage (Overing Kaplan 1972: 284).

8. *Alliance principle basic.* The Piaroa represent a society that ignores the principles of descent and only emphasizes "alliance as a basic organizing principle." Overing Kaplan contends that "marriage exchange is the crucial institution responsible for both group cohesion and group perpetuation." Although only one exchange is necessary to establish an alliance, the viability of the alliance depends upon the number of exchanges (Overing Kaplan 1975: 2; 1972: 287, 295).

9. *Exchange and alliance kept within the group.* Marriage typically involves exchange of children between two adults who are already affines. Instead of a structure where two groups exchange wives, "the model is that of a group which maintains itself through time as a consanguineal unit by restricting exchange to within itself" (Overing Kaplan 1972: 287; 1975: 2, 133).

10. *Women move in both directions, but no balance is necessary in their exchange.* Again, it is the relationship of alliance which is important, and this is established by a single exchange. Although additional exchanges will strengthen the alliance, this can be accomplished by exchanging only sons, only daughters, or children of both sexes (Overing Kaplan 1972: 287; 1975: 142).

11. *Marriage ceremonies relatively unimportant.* "Most marriages are performed with little to do [sic], as appropriate to marriages between close kinsmen who are by right promised to one another" (Overing Kaplan 1975: 134, 150).

12. *Uxorilocality.* Although the Piaroa are quite flexible in their residence patterns, there is a clear preference for living with the wife's family and/or kin (Overing Kaplan 1975: 120-121, 104).

13. *Teknonymy, which converts affines to kin.* Teknonyms are only used for affines, they are never used for kin. In using a teknonym Ego traces his relationship to a given affine through a descending link (a child) rather than an ascending one. In other words, the category parent-in-law becomes "grandparent of my child," while the category son- or daughter-in-law becomes "parent of my grandchild." In this way: "All affines of Ego in the first ascending and descending generations" are converted over time into kin. Only a sibling-in-law of the same sex (brother-in-law for males, sister-in-law for females) is never converted to kin (Overing Kaplan 1972: 289-290).



14. *Fusion of kin and affines on +2 and -2 generations.* Even though alliance is a basic organizing principle in Piaroa social organization, it remains a fundamentally cognatic society. That is to say that most other Piaroa are treated by Ego as kin, or members of his *chuwawuwang*. It would be impossible to find a marriage partner within the society, however, if everyone were classified as kin. The exclusion of certain individuals from the kin category in the three medial generations evades this difficulty by setting up certain categories of affines, some of which, by definition, are potential spouses. The beauty of this arrangement is that a system has been devised in which affines automatically appear as an inherent structural feature in these generations, while maintenance of the system itself depends upon the denotation of affines at this point. Yet, in the passage of generations the appearance of affines is only a temporary (albeit essential) aberration. It is a rift which appears for the purposes of perpetuating the society, but which heals itself after three generations (see Fig. 3) (Overing Kaplan 1975: 89; 1972: 292).

Given the existence of the structural distinction of affines, and by virtue of the alliances consummated on that basis, the "temporary" differentiation of affines serves to strengthen the ties between individuals and groups and thereby binds the society more tightly together. Is it any wonder that the formation of alliances with affines is actively manipulated by men seeking political advantage? As indicated in the preceding paragraph on teknonymy, once the objectives of establishing alliances and consummating marriages have been accomplished, affinal relationships tend to be converted over time into kin ties. Furthermore, since affinal ties are important for purposes of establishing alliances, especially through marriage, they are of little significance *between* alternate generations (and of no importance whatsoever between more distant generations). Thus the somewhat artificial distinction of kin and affines which prevails in the three medial generations can be relaxed, and the social structure returns to the natural tendency of incorporating all one's relatives into the kindred at the level of the +2 and -2 generations. After all, both sets of grandparents are in reality kin to Ego.

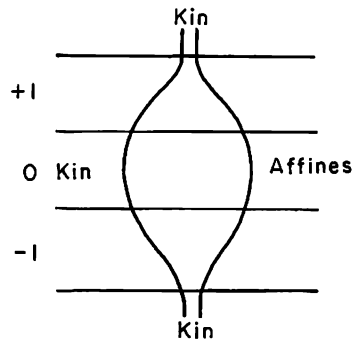


FIGURE 3  
The temporary differentiation of affines

15. *Sibling solidarity.* Ideally sisters prefer to live together within the same local group. In practice this is accomplished three-fourths of the time, taking precedence even over brothers living with brothers. In fact, brothers more often tend to live in the same group as sisters than they do with brothers. Nonetheless, even when brothers are separated, ties between them remain strong and they frequently make an effort to spend much time together. Smaller local groups are generally organized on the basis of an alliance of brothers (Overing Kaplan 1975: 104-106).

16. *Fluidity and flexibility of the system.* Although the Piaroa kinship system is

structured so as to permit and even encourage marital alliances with affines, it is definitely not a rigid structure carved in stone. The Piaroa are not at all averse to marrying in contravention of the marriages prescribed by the system, either through personal predilection, or pragmatically to gain a particular political advantage. When they do this, however, they correct the system by redefining their relationships *as though* the marriage were a proper one. Or they may trace a relationship through any one of a number of alternate channels of kinship. Teknonymy is another mechanism utilized to modify kinship relations. In practice, Piaroa social behavior is characterized by a constant shifting of residence, alliances, and calculation of kin relationships in order to optimize one's political and economic standing within the society. No-one is ever locked into a single set of relationships, and there is no hard and fast kin structure to which one must remain committed. It is impossible to determine one person's relationships from those used by another. Situations change, relationships change, and the social structure is in a continual state of flux (Overing Kaplan 1975: 11, 81, 132, 160, 181; 1972: 295).

17. *Use of the kin-affine system for political advantage.* Men generally contract marriages with an eye toward allying themselves with a powerful local leader (*rwang*). On the other hand, a leader who wishes to enhance his political and religious importance will seek to attract supporters by offering them wives and thereby inducing them to settle in his group. One would expect a man to offer his daughters in this way, but some very effective leaders also make use of sisters, female cousins and nieces —here the principle of sibling unity is utilized in a different way. The same principle may also be applied through the wife. Since she and her sisters ideally live together, a strong leader will be able to garner the support of her brothers-in-law and sometimes even her brothers. Thus the larger and more powerful local groups are based more upon ties between affines, although these may have been made possible through linkages with one or more pre-existing sibling sets (Overing Kaplan 1972: 295; 1975: 109-115, 10).

Overing Kaplan's study is significant in part because it provides strong confirmation for five of the six features identified at the New Orleans symposium as characteristic of South American kinship systems. Only the question of rapid turnover in the formation and re-formation of groups is not clearly documented, but this is a question which she does not treat directly. We might, however, expect to encounter this phenomenon in a society which lacks corporate groups. The Piaroa analysis is particularly important because it clearly identifies so many additional features that appear to be essential for the proper functioning of this type of kinship organization, and it provides a formal analysis for several of these features. It must be stressed, however, that Overing Kaplan's study was directed only to an analysis of the Piaroa system. No attempt was made to generalize about the relevance of this system for other South American societies, or as a fundamental kinship type.

### The "kin-affine" system among the Karinya

In examining the kin-affine system as described for the Piaroa, it became

evident to me that many of the same principles exist in Karinya kinship.

1. However, their local groups definitely average more than 100 members today; some contain as many as 700 inhabitants (compared with the Piaroa local group of 16-50 people). Perhaps large local groups have always been true for the Karinya, although this may also represent artifacts of mission activity, the assignment of land titles to each community by the colonial government, and contemporary receipt of right-of-way payments from the oil companies (Schwerin 1966: 24-25, 99-101, 105).

2. Even though there is a matrilineal bias in their social organization, there is no clear principle of descent. The shallow genealogy was quite evident when I so frequently encountered individuals who could not name their own grandparents.

3. It is less clear that there exist multiple models of social organization, although in an earlier study I did describe local residential groups (comprise kin groups or Murdock "clans"), neighborhoods, political factions, and conjugal kindreds.<sup>4</sup> (These, however, were etic categories and I cannot be certain that they represent emic concepts for the Karinya [Schwerin 1966: 88-95, 101-112, 173-176]). It is worth noting, however, that political factions in Cachama tended to be congruent with neighborhood groupings. On the other hand, Karinya *axsakali*, "related," is applied polysemically to "nuclear family," "kindred," "relatives," all members of the "local community," and "all Karinya."

4. No corporate groups of any kind were encountered among the Karinya.

5. In Mamo conjugal kindreds are salient features of the social organization. Kindred organization in Cachama is somewhat less clear-cut, but close investigation reveals clearly that the kinship is cognatic. Failure to realize this at first, explains my early disorientation when trying to analyze the kinship system.

6. There is a strong tendency for Karinya to marry within their own community, although there are occasional marriages with Karinya from other communities. One must grant, however, that at least during the present century the endogamic preference has been relatively weak. During the past thirty years, as contacts with outsiders have intensified, there has been an increase (although still in the minority) in unions with non-Indians.

7. Examination of traditional Karinya kinship categories in Mamo and Cachama shows a very clear structural opposition between kin and affines (Fig. 4, Fig. 5). There are, however, several points of difference which need to be identified. In the first place the Karinya system, in marked contrast with the classic Dravidian system, includes several categories which cross generational lines. In the traditional system this was limited to affinal categories (principally *tákano*), but in Cachama generational crossing was extended to the kin category of *mwiyi* (yZ, D, BD). Secondly, although the system *exhibits* structural opposition, this does not seem to be a very important principle in *practice*. I found little evidence of conceptual opposition, or a "we-they" distinction anywhere among the Karinya. In the third

<sup>4</sup> Within the more restricted context of the formal kinship system, it is conceivable that the conflicting classifications obtained from consultants of different sex and ages represent multiple kinship models rather than different points along a continuum of culture change.

FIGURE 4  
TRADITIONAL KARINYA KINSHIP CATEGORIES (a)

Generation	Kin				Affines		
	$\Delta$	//	O	//	X	O	$\Delta$
+2	támuru	anotik				támuru	
+1	dümwü	asano	boxpwü		káxtopo		
0	eKin	šeʔwo	baʔwa	tákano		teʔwu	
	yKin	piri	kaʔmi				
-1	úmulu	demwidi	pwárimwi		pwátimwi		
-2	pwari	pwari			pwari		

(a) Incestuous categories are enclosed within heavy line.

FIGURE 5  
KINSHIP CATEGORIES IN CACHAMA(a)

Generation	Kin				Affines		
	$\Delta$	//	O	//	X	O	$\Delta$
+2	támuru	nokti				támuru káxtopo	
+1	dümwü	axsano	boxpi		káxtopo		
0	eKin	ülüi	baʔwa	tákono		tiʔwü	
	yKin	piri	mwiyi				
-1	úmulu	pwarisano		pwátimwi		pwárimwi	
-2	pwari						

(a) Incestuous categories are enclosed within heavy line.

place, even structural opposition has broken down in the more highly acculturated community of Mamo (Fig. 6). This raises a question whether affinity is as central to the functioning of this system as was asserted by Overing Kaplan. If conceptual and/or behavioral opposition between kin and affines is relatively unimportant, it may be a misnomer to term this type a "kin-affine system."

8. Yet the alliance principle survives, at least in attenuated form. Among the most important relatives of an adult man are the categories of *káxtopo* (MB, WF) and *ti<sup>2</sup>wü* (MBS, FZS, WB, secondarily WF). It is not unusual to find a very special and close relationship obtaining between brothers-in-law, even in Mamo.

9. To the extent that endogamy prevails, one may say that exchange and alliance are kept within the group. The community of Cachama is 72% endogamous. However, the significance of this orientation is considerably diminished by the fact that population growth coupled with limited access to land away from the reserves has produced large communities of several hundred inhabitants. Only one marriage in three is endogamous within the neighborhood. Today exchange and alliance seem to be pursued informally.

10. Marriage seems to be contracted on the basis of personal predilection rather than in terms of structural relations or group advantage. "Love" is the explanation most commonly offered by the Karinya as a reason for marriage. Women thus move in all directions (Schwerin 1966: 72, 158).

11. Marriage ceremonies are relatively unimportant among the Karinya: the commonest procedure is merely to set up housekeeping together, thereby establishing a consensual union. Only after living together for several years will a couple sometimes formalize their union by undergoing a religious ceremony, which holds greater prestige (Schwerin 1966: 72, 157-158).

12. Karinya residence is preferentially uxorilocal, but statistically virilocality occurs almost as frequently (Schwerin 1966: 71).

13. Teknonymy is such an important principle in Karinya kinship that it has been formalized into the kin terminology. DH and BDH are classified *pwarímwi* (*pwari* - grandchild, *dümwü* - father) or "father of my grandchild,"<sup>5</sup> while SW and BSW are classified *pwarisano* (*axsano* - mother) or "mother of my grandchild." Likewise, father-in-law is termed *u<sup>2</sup>mwiámuru* (*u<sup>2</sup>mwi* - son, female speaking, *támuru* - grandfather) and mother-in-law *u<sup>2</sup>mwinokti* (*nokti* - grandmother), or "grandparents of my wife's children" (Schwerin 1966: 60-64). Use of the female-speaking root in these terms may have resulted from the common practice of polygyny in an earlier era.

14. In the traditional Karinya system there is clear fusion of kin and affines on the +2 generation, where all males are classified *támuru* (grandfather) and all females *anotik* (grandmother). The same is true of the —2 generation, where all relatives are classified *pwari* (grandchild) (Fig. 4). In Cachama, however, the +2 generation is anomalous in that the opposition of affines is maintained through generational crossing with distinction of MMB as *káxtopo* and FFZ as *boxpi*. I cannot as yet explain these apparent anomalies.

<sup>5</sup> *Pwátimwi* - ZS may have the same derivation.

FIGURE 6  
KINSHIP CATEGORIES IN MAMO(\*)

Generation	Lineal				Collateral				
	Δ	O	//	X	O	Affine //	X Δ	Affine	
+2	abuelo	abuela				abuelo			
+1	padre	madre	tía		tío				
0	eKin	hermano mayor	hermana mayor		prima				
	yKin	hermano menor	hermana menor						primo
-1	hijo	hija	nuera		yerno				
-2	nieto	nieta				nieto			

(\*) Incestuous categories are enclosed within heavy line.

15. Sisters tend to live near each other, and to work together on a daily basis, although this was earlier phrased in terms of matrifocality. Brothers do not seem exceptionally close. In Mamo the conjugal kindred has replaced whatever sibling based grouping might have existed in the past (Schwerin 1966: 80-87, 173-176).

16. There is no doubt, however, that the Karinya system is characterized by a good deal of fluidity and flexibility. Divergent models were obtained from different informants, and there is abundant evidence that the system has changed readily over the past few generations in response to outside influences. Furthermore, consultants provided numerous alternate reference terms for certain kinship categories, particularly in the O and +1 generations, and for affinal categories in the -1 generation.

17. I found no evidence among the Karinya of manipulation of the kinship system for political advantage. The Karinya are quite active politically, but political activity has been attached to the national Venezuelan political system and is to a certain extent dependent upon favor carried there, rather than building up a local cadre of relatives and in-laws. Besides, communities have now grown large enough that one needs the support of more than relatives to be effective politically. Marriage is now contracted on an ad hoc basis, but whether this is cause or effect of the distancing from political affairs, I cannot say.

It is striking that of the 17 features identified as associated with the kin-affine system among the non-Carib-speaking Piaroa, 11 appear strongly in the Karinya

system (Table 1). Six of these (2, 5, 7, 8, 13, 14) would seem to be structurally basic to the system. Others (3, 4, 11, 12, 16) are perhaps epiphenomena of this type of organization. Three features (6, 9, 15) have a weak presence with the Karinya, and only two or three (1, 17, 10) seem not to occur at all. There is abundant evidence that some type of kin-affine system is widespread in Tropical Lowland South America. Yet the Karinya can hardly be considered typical. They have been in direct contact with Europeans for nearly 400 years, and have been under Spanish or Venezuelan control for some 250 years. Today, although they retain a strong sense of ethnic identity, they are highly acculturated. It is all the more striking, therefore, that there is such a strong congruence with the system of the Piara who have been more isolated and less subject to outside influences.

Is the kin-affine system characteristic of Carib speakers generally, or even of most Tropical Forest tribes, regardless of linguistic affiliation? Are all 17 of the features identified in the Piara system inherent to this type of organization, or are some of them peculiar only to the Piara? In an attempt to answer these questions, and to develop a general model of this kin system for South America, I will survey the kinship organization of various tribes and document the frequency of each feature. Because this symposium is concerned with Carib political and social organization, I will restrict the survey to Cariban tribes, although I suspect that comparable patterns would be confirmed for other groups as well.

### The "kin-affine" system among other Carib groups

*Barama River Carib, 1932-1933.* Gillin's description of the Barama River Carib was written long before kinship analysis reached its present state of sophistication, and it is often difficult to determine from his analysis exactly what is being described. As one might expect, however, there are numerous similarities with the Karinya system, including several cognate terms (cf. FZ *wopui*, FZD/MBD/ZD *takano*, grandchild *ipwaru*, ZS *pwatumu*, DH *pwarimye*, SW *parisano*). The pattern of generational crossing appears here also (Gillin 1936: 82-90).

Twelve of the 17 Piara features (1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16) can be clearly identified. The distinction of kin and affines is phrased in terms of parallel cousins and sisters, who are not marriageable ("kin") vs. everyone else who is marriageable (classified as "cross-cousin" *takano* or *iyao*). Due to generational crossing, ZD are included in the category *takano* (m.s.), and MB in the category *iyao* (f.s.), thus making these individuals marriageable. This is, however, an expectable consequence of the kinship structure, rather than the puzzling anomaly it appears to be when treated in isolation. Here instead of it being difficult for individuals to remember their grandparents, as among the Karinya, informants had trouble remembering their grandchildren. Either situation, however, indicates a shallow genealogy with lack of a descent principle (Gillin 1936: 93-96).

Gillin (1936: 92-94) recognizes the "kin-affine" structure of Barama kinship by observing that the terminology in the grandparent's generation and the grandchildren's generation is merged, and that it "distinguishes the maternal and

paternal lines only in the three 'middle' generations." He is puzzled by this structure, which he feels to be unconnected with any kind of sib or dual organization. An attempt is made to explain it as resulting from active practice of the levirate and sororate. Although consultants did provide him with levirate and sororate rules in their description of the kinship system, and he did observe some cases of this type of marriage, he did not determine their actual incidence in the total number of unions. In terms of a kin-affine system, the levirate and sororate are expectable practices, but can hardly be offered as causal factors in bringing the system into existence.

Endogamy (6) is tribal, not local, so that exchange and alliance are not kept within the group (9), while marriage (11) seems to be celebrated with a fair amount of ceremony (Gillin 1936: 94, 75). There is no data on whether the Barama possess multiple models of social organization (3). Nor is there any clear statement about the direction in which women move and whether there is any attempt to maintain balance in their exchange (10) (although this seems unlikely).

Although Gillin treats the Barama as nearly apolitical, he presents circumstantial evidence which suggests that the kinship system, or at least the contracting of marriages, may be used to garner political advantage. In Sawari settlement the headman Miller not only had the largest group of blood relatives settled around him (29 out of the total of 47 for the settlement), but members of his group had married members of three of the other four blood groups in the settlement. He concludes, "It thus appears that both relationships by birth (that is, relationship by blood) and by marriage are important factors in determining the constitution and stability of the settlement." His description of Miller indicates that he was an influential and effective headman (Gillin 1936: 116, 121-122).<sup>6</sup>

*Barama River Carib, 1970-1971.* Forty years after Gillin Barama Carib social organization had been modified considerably through mining activity, modern medical care, linkages to the national commercial system, air transportation, and other external influences. Sibling solidarity (15) had disappeared as households became more independent. Although political activity seems unimportant today, the kin system is utilized for economic advantage (17). Sons and/or sons-in-law frequently settle near a father or father-in-law who might be able to secure them employment in the mines. As in contemporary Mamo the old kin-affine system is disappearing, to be replaced by one in which lineal, collateral and affinal relatives are differentiated. Only six of the 17 Piaroa features can still be identified here (2, 4, 5, 8, 13, 14). Some of these may well represent survivals, rather than vigorous features of contemporary adaptation (Adams 1972: 115, 108, 133).

*Maroni River Caribs.* Kloos' study of the Maroni River Caribs provides evidence for the existence of 12 of the 17 features (2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16). There appears to be preferential endogamy among ethnic Caribs, but it is unclear to what extent marriage is kept within the local group (6) — in fact there is a suggestion that marriages are common between villages (Kloos 1971: 78).

Although almost all local groups exceed 100 inhabitants today (and some may

<sup>6</sup> Adams (n.d.: 6) however, denies that the Barama Carib exercised control over marriageable females as a political strategy. (But see Adams' paper, this symposium. Editorial note).



have as many as 300) this appears to be a recent development. According to data provided by Kloos (1971: 12, Fig. 1) as late as 1937 most Carib villages contained fewer than 100 inhabitants. Although we might on this basis consider this feature (1) as a positive element in our tabulation, the fact remains that it is not valid for the time of the study. Maroni politics are so inchoate, and the local chief so ineffective and impotent that there hardly seems any point to political machinations, and certainly not through manipulating ties of alliance (17). In fact, there seems to be no particular concern with the process of exchange and alliance (9), nor is there any basis for considering the alliance principle itself to be basic (8). Nonetheless, it does appear that the structural and behavioral features of the kinship system have (among other things) contributed toward maintaining the integration of this Carib society at an apparently traditional level of simple "atomistic" groupings lacking significant formal organization (Kloos 1971: 260-263).

*Waiwai.* The Waiwai seem to fit the Piaroa "kin-affine" model fairly well. At least 11 of the characteristic features seem to occur among them. Kin and affines are fused on the -2 generation (14), and male kin and affines are fused on the +2 generation, but +2 females continue to be classified as affines (*chacha* - FZ, WM, FM, MM, etc.). Political organization and activity are characteristically inchoate, weak, and diffuse, but are nonetheless based on the extension of kinship roles through both sons and sons-in-law (17) (Fock 1971). Other features are just not treated. Nonetheless, a majority (twelve) of the features are documented here (Fock 1963).

*Trio.* The Trio offer an interesting case. While they do not fit very well into the model with which we have been dealing, their kinship system seems to apply the same basic *principles* in different ways, to accomplish the same fundamental ends. They seem to offer a parallel of the model so far discussed, rather than an additional expression of it. The Trio system encourages a "form of endogamy which operates to maintain the exclusiveness" and strengthen existent ties within a small kin organized community. Their system is even more casual, flexible, and incoherent than most (Rivière 1972: 279, 270).

The Trio are like the Piaroa in that each individual maintains his own singular classification of relatives, which is invariably inconsistent with that of other individuals. Further, even for a given individual, more distant relationships tend to become inconsistent "because ego adds these piecemeal and as the occasion or need arises... so that the relationships with those distantly related and rarely seen will tend to be confused, illogical, and even vague." Sibling solidarity seems fairly strong among sisters and between sisters and brothers, but is weaker among brothers. This is probably due to the necessity for men sometimes to seek wives from other villages. The Trio also deal with the process of merging affines with consanguines in a distinctive way. It is done more or less across the board in a variety of alternative or ambiguous classifications rather than relying strictly on the march of time through generations. Another means is through the removal of potential affines to proximate genealogical levels, thereby avoiding any disruption of previous status. It is perhaps for these reasons that the use of teknonymy seems to

be unimportant within this society (Rivière 1972: 89-103, 139, 227, 270).

Marriage with kin (particularly ZD) is an important way to maintain economic and affective support within the community, and Rivière also argues that it serves to reinforce important symbolic concepts in Trio culture. Yet these tiny communities hardly seem political in the usual sense, and it is difficult to envisage how marriage with kin serves any "political" end other than those already mentioned.

It is not clear from Rivière's analysis whether there exists a true structural opposition between kin and affines, nor whether the alliance principle is basic in the organization of Trio society. To the extent that these features can be identified, they do not seem very important. It is for these reasons that I am led to conclude that the Trio represent a parallel application of the principles of Carib kinship organization rather than a congruent one.

*Pemon.* The Pemon offer another example of a Carib group which, like the Trio, shares the common objectives and common principles of kin organization, but which achieves them in its own singular way. The principal objective seems to be to maintain integration of the local group and this is achieved by marrying "close." This goal is accomplished by 1) marrying a classificatory or known consanguine (*wa<sup>2</sup>ni mure*); 2) someone from the local group, or if all else fails; 3) converting affines (especially when otherwise unrelated) into consanguines. The Pemon do not accomplish this by merging on the +2 and -2 generations (14) although this does occur, nor by identifying certain categories of consanguines as affines. Thomas asserts that the Pemon-Taurepan terminology recognizes only *one* category of affine: *uyere* (m.s.), *uyeruk* (f.s.) —same sex cross cousin, same sex in-law. According to Thomas, *there is no category for opposite sex cross cousin/in-law or for eligible spouse*. In Pemon terminology these are classified as cross sex siblings. Urbina (this symposium) differs, however, in reporting that the Pemon-Arekuna do have reciprocal cross cousin, eligible spouse terms *wirichi* (m.s.) MBD-FZD and *ukurai* (f.s.) FZS-MBS.

Both sexes are enjoined to marry the child of a woman (*wa<sup>2</sup>ni*) on the +1 generation who is defined as FZ/MBW and thus eventually, spouse's mother. Where marriage is between unrelated individuals their mothers are subsequently classified *wa<sup>2</sup>ni*. Although terminologically Pemon marry a classificatory sibling, from their point of view they are marrying the child of a cross aunt. Eligible spouses are defined in terms of Ego's relationship to +1 generation consanguines. This same principle may be extended to any of Ego's relatives.

As with the Piaroa the tendency is for any two individuals to calculate their relationship on the basis of the categories used by their parents. "Conversion of the more distant into the close in the Pemon system proceeds by asserting common substance not in the generation of Ego's offspring, but in Ego's parental generation." In this way, even genealogically unrelated individuals may classify each other "brother" on the basis that their fathers had called each other "brother" (Thomas 1982: 64-66, 101).

Because relationships are defined in terms of the parental generation, affinal obligations are also strongest between father-in-law and son-in-law; on own

generation the obligations to one's own set of siblings come into conflict with and generally override those to brothers-in-law (15). Allegiances are to individuals rather than groups. After the father-in-law dies, a man and his wife generally reintegrate into a local group containing a core of his siblings (Thomas 1982: 116-117).

Thomas (1982: 84) maintains that "to speak of endogamy and exogamy in a society like the Pemon is simply superfluous and to a large extent misleading, since neither one of the two terms can be attached to any definable unit." On the other hand, the examples which he discusses in the preceding pages indicate a preponderance of statistical endogamy. The ideal seems to be one of local endogamy (6), although, consistent with the Pemon practice of employing situational criteria to override structural considerations (16), individual or pragmatic factors sometimes lead to marriage outside the local group (Thomas 1982: 76-83).

After an initial period of uxorilocal residence (12), adult males increasingly try to return to the vicinity of their parents' local group and re-establish ties with their other male siblings. This suggests that with the Pemon ties among brothers override those among sisters (15); otherwise wives would be more successful in retaining their husbands as members of their own local group. This seems a better explanation than Thomas' (1982: 98) argument that it results from the fact that affinal ties in own generation are weaker than sibling ties, which necessitates a male-biased point of view (since ties between *female* siblings also have to be weak).

Even though the Pemon represent another parallel interpretation of the basic model, Thomas' data indicate an agreement on 14 out of 17 of the fundamental features of kinship organization. They lack teknonymic usages to convert kin to affines (10) and the alliance principle is neither expressed structurally (5) (in fact it is avoided altogether), nor is it basic to the ordering of Pemon kinship (6).

*Ye'kuana*. Although Arvelo-Jiménez speaks of bilateral descent, the data suggest that the Ye'kuana lack a true principle of descent. However, it would appear that they do recognize a somewhat deeper genealogy than most Carib groups, with joint families occasionally encompassing up to four generations, and the kinship terminology extending to the +3 generation (2). Kin and affines are clearly fused on the -2 generation, and apparently so on the +2 generation as well, where there are only two categories denoting male and female (14). Unlike other Carib systems, which seem to fade out beyond the +2 generation, the Ye'kuana continue to apply the principle of opposition between adjacent generations in their treatment of the +3 level where affinal categories from the +1 generation reappear (also see Heinen, this symposium). Nonetheless, it is the case that on this level no distinction is made between kin and affine (*yawo* = MB, any male in the third ascending generation; *waiñe'ne* = FZ, any female in the third ascending generation). The opposition between generations is also evident in the fact that ZD is a prohibited category, outside the class of desirable marriages (Arvelo-Jiménez 1971: 150-154, 136-137).

Although teknonymy is mentioned, there is no information on how it is used, and whether it serves to convert affines to kin (13). Heinen (personal communica-

tion) reports that it is very pervasive. Nor is there information relevant to the phenomenon of sibling solidarity (15). Arvelo-Jiménez denies that the alliance principle is basic in Ye'kuana society (8), and argues instead that it is organized around the distinction between *jöimmä ne'ne* or primary kin, *jöimmä amöincharo-toma* or secondary kin, and *jöimmä* or all Ye'kuana (Arvelo-Jiménez 1971: 150-154, 136-137, 159, 168-169).

Even though the alliance principle itself may not be fundamental, still there is evidence that the kin system is important as a mechanism for ordering social and political relations as well as reinforcing social and affective ties within a relatively small social group. Political and economic claims are based on the closeness of the relationship consummated through the marriage alliance. Thus there are continuous pressures to abandon more distant unions (through divorce) in favor of those with closer consanguines (Arvelo-Jiménez 1977: 106). Village solidarity and the support of a group of close relatives are highly valued and these are achieved through village endogamy (6) and alliance with existing kin. Marriage with affines (cross cousin marriage) "often prevents the dispersal of relatives through out-marriages" (Arvelo-Jiménez 1971: 137).

Of 17 features, the Ye'kuana clearly conform to 11, with four more qualified somewhat (2, 7, 13, 14). For one there is no information (15). Only one is clearly in contradiction (8).

*Western Caribs. Yuko.* A number of small, relict Carib-speaking groups are scattered along the foothills of the Andes from the Japreria in the North to the Carijona in the South. Almost none of these groups has been studied in depth, and what has been published on them rarely touches more than superficially on aspects of social organization. The best information on this subject is to be found in Reichel-Dolmatoff (1945, 1950) who visited two Yuko communities (Maracá in 1945 and Iroka in 1948) on the western slopes of the Sierra de Perijá. At best, however, I can find information on only seven of the features being considered (1, 9, 10, 11, 12). Men are said to take their wives from outside the local group (6), while kin and affines are only merged on the +2 generation (14). Data on the remaining points is lacking. With the limited amount of information available here, it is impossible to determine whether the Yuko fit the general pattern which has been discussed above, or whether they exhibit some alternative type of social organization. It is impossible to say anything about where the Carijona might fit into the picture, as no recent publications deal with their social organization. For a fuller understanding of Carib kinship and social organization there is a critical need for intensive research among these Western Carib groups.

*Tribes of the Upper Xingú. Bacairí.* Numerous Carib-speaking tribes are located in and around the headwaters of the Xingú river. Here problems of analysis are similar to those with the Western Caribs, and for comparable reasons, due to sketchy data and incomplete studies. Oberg's (1953) information on the Bacairí confirms five of the features under consideration (1, 6, 7, 11, 14), but offers no data on the remainder. The material is too scant to draw any useful conclusions. Fortunately, during the past three decades other investigators have been able to carry out much more intensive fieldwork among some of the Carib groups of the

Upper Xingú, and their publications provide us with more useful data relevant to these features of kinship organization.

*Kuikuru.* Dole (1969) reports a much simpler terminology for the Kuikuru, with bifurcate merging terms on the +1 and -1 generations, and generational terms on the +2, -2, and Ego's generation. There is no distinction of relative age. She explains this structure as a recent development in response to population decline, assimilation of individuals from related groups now defunct, and replacement of moiety, sib, or lineage exogamy with local group endogamy. Given the fact that unilineal kin groups are uncommon among Tropical Forest peoples in general and among Carib tribes in particular, we may question whether the Kuikuru ever had a unilineal type of organization. Nonetheless, there is significant evidence of recent pressures for change in the local social system. While the Kuikuru do show some of the features which we have identified as characteristic of the kin-affine system (2, 4, 5, 6, 9, 10, 14, 16, 17), some others seem to occur only in qualified form (7, 15), and some features that deal with alliance principles and structural relations between kin and affines do not seem to appear at all (8). Exchange and alliance (9) are kept within the group primarily because there is only one group, and not because of any inherent principle, while the structural opposition between kin and affines has, if anything, been blurred by recent developments. I therefore conclude that the Kuikuru are not representative of the same kind of kinship system we have been dealing with among the Guayana tribes.<sup>7</sup>

*Kalapalo.* While the Kalapalo seem to represent a closer approximation to the kin-affine system, exhibiting about half the features being considered (1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 10, 13, 14, 15), they still do not fit as well as the tribes North of the Amazon. Marriage ceremonies are described as relatively elaborated (11), the concept of endogamy is said to be meaningless (6), although there is a good deal of exchange and alliance with other groups in the Upper Xingú Basin, while postmarital residence (12) is apparently variable, depending upon the circumstances of each individual case. Teknonymy (13) is used not only to identify parents vis-à-vis their children and vice versa, but may even be used to identify individuals in own generation in terms of their kinship and marital identities (Basso 1975: 219). Although there is some "political" activity among the Kalapalo, there is no evidence that the kinship system is utilized to gain political advantage (17). If anything the relationship works the other way around: kinship ties serve to moderate strong factional tendencies within the community (Basso 1973: 97, 87-88, 123).

Basso's description is more detailed than Dole's for the Kuikuru, and is presented as though it were representative of all Upper Xingú groups, but the two seem to differ on a number of crucial points, and remain silent on several other

<sup>7</sup> Since "Guiana" has commonly been used to refer only to the three European colonies of North-eastern South America, and "Guyana" is the present name of former British Guiana, I am using the Spanish form "Guayana" to refer to that vast South American territory bounded on the North and North-west by the Río Orinoco, on the South-west by the Río Negro, on the South by the Amazon, and on the East by the Atlantic Ocean. This usage has historical precedent dating back to the end of the 16th century.

features which I deem to be important. Even though there does seem to be a clear structural opposition between kin and affines in the Kalapalo system (but denied by Basso 1975: 214), there are sufficient negative features (4, 6, 8, 9, 16 in particular) to make it quite dubious that the Kalapalo should be included with the Carib system of kinship which has emerged from this survey.

If the kinship system of the Upper Xingú Caribs does not belong with that of the Guayana Caribs, might they be sufficiently similar among themselves to represent some sort of Upper Xingú system? Unfortunately, it is impossible to draw any definite conclusions from the data presently available for the three groups Bacairí, Kuikuru and Kalapalo. The sources agree on the occurrence of some features, disagree on the presence of others, but only agree among themselves about the presence of one (14, fusion of kin and affines on the +2 and -2 generations). Were it possible to document the presence or absence of all 17 features in each of these three groups, it might be possible to make a more definitive statement, but there is useful information on only 11 features for the Kuikuru, 12 for the Kalapalo and 5 for the Bacairí. Again it becomes clear that if we are ever to achieve a definitive or even satisfactory understanding of the range of Carib kinship and social organization, it is imperative that thoroughgoing sociological investigations be conducted among the Upper Xingú tribes.

Data relevant to kinship and social organization are poor on most of the Carib groups from the Upper Xingú and in the western region along the Andean slopes, making it difficult to compare them with other Carib tribes. On the basis of what information we do have, however, they do not seem congruent with the Caribs of Guayana.

### The kin-integration system among Caribs

The groups occupying the Guayana territories have received a great deal of ethnographic attention during the past twenty years. Many of the tribes are well documented through intensive field studies and careful and detailed analyses of their economic, social, political and ceremonial organization. Within the delimited sphere of kinship organization which I am considering here, it is impressive to note how complete the available data is. On most of the features being investigated, in almost every case it is possible to determine their presence or absence. In no group are more than four features unreported and only three (3, 10, 13) are unreported in as many as three groups. There is thus a solid basis for determining the extent to which a common system prevails among these societies.

The survey does indicate impressive agreement with respect to the operative features of the kinship system. Nonetheless, there are several surprises with respect to certain features which I initially expected would be central to these systems. Instead they turn out to be weak, rare, or atypical. Among the most striking of my findings is that in these Carib systems the alliance principle (8) seems to be relatively weak. It is important that the kin and/or local group be strongly integrated in one way or another, but this is not necessarily accomplished through alliance. It may be achieved through sibling solidarity (which has a nearly inverse

distribution with the alliance principle), kindred ties, or emphasis on identification with the local group.<sup>8</sup> The weakness of the alliance principle is paralleled by the fact that in most of these societies exchange and alliance (9) are also weak or tend to be diffused beyond the bounds of the local group. Only among the Trio and the Ye'kuana is there a strong inclination to keep exchange and alliance within the local group. The third surprise is how little marriage, alliance, and the kinship system are used to gain political advantage (17). Judging by Overing Kaplan's description the Piaroa are consumed by politics, but by comparison the Caribs seem uninterested. Even when they are, manipulation of kinship ties or the establishment of alliances through exchange of women seems at best to be incidental to political activity.

The three features which are not so well documented are less critical to our understanding of the system, but it seems probable that they actually do occur in most of the cases. Given the nature of these societies, there is no reason to think that women move in one direction only, while the idea of balance is also inconsistent with their general character (10). Teknonymy (13) is something which is easily overlooked, but given the widespread phenomenon of fusion of kin and affines on +2 and -2 generations (14), fully expressed in six of the eight Guayana societies, in all three Xingú societies, and in modified form in the other three, it is probable that this is reinforced by appropriate teknonymic practices. The question of multiple models of social organization (3) is less easily dealt with, but the fact that all Guayana systems are flexible and subject to individual idiosyncratic modification (16) suggests that whether or not there actually exist more than one model of social organization, such phenomenon is not inconsistent for any of these societies.

Loss of local group endogamy (6) seems to be a recent development resulting from increased contact with national society, acculturation, and growth in local group size. As local groups exceed a population of 100 (1) and approach 200 or 300 members, the advantages of local group endogamy are lost within this type of kinship organization. With populations in excess of 100 the tightly integrated local group which can call upon ties of kinship and/or affinity for loyalty, support and mutual assistance begins to weaken. Kinship relations are extremely effective for organizing, binding together and integrating small groups, but even in societies organized differently kinship ties lose their effectiveness as size of the group increases.<sup>9</sup>

The survey reveals that a common system exists among all the Guayana Caribs and that it does not *depend* upon an effective opposition between kin and affines or relationships built upon ties of alliance. These phenomena may occur, and when they do they serve to reinforce the system, but they are not fundamental and their absence seems not to affect the system materially. The following features *do* appear

<sup>8</sup> Unpublished data from the Chibchan-speaking Barí in the Southern Sierra de Perijá suggest that formalized ties of friendship may serve a similar function (Stephen Beckerman, personal communication).

<sup>9</sup> In a seminar paper prepared by one of my students, Bruce Bernstein, he suggests that this may very well explain the development of status distinctions and the emergence of organization by classes in chiefdom societies.

TABLE 1  
FEATURES OF THE KIN-AFFINE SYSTEM AMONG CARIBAN TRIBES

Piaroa features	Karinya Schwerin 1966	Barama Gillin 1936 <sup>a</sup>	Barama Adams 1972	Maroni Kloos 1971	Trio Rivifre 1972	Waiwai Fock 1963	Pemon Thomas 1982	Ye'kuana Arvelo- Jiménez 1971, 1977	Yuko Reichel- Dolmatoff 1950	Bacairí Oberg 1953	Kuikuru Carneiro 1957 Dole 1969	Kalapalo Basso 1973
1. Small local group (100)	No	Yes	No	No 11	Yes 35	Yes 2	Yes 93-94	Yes 1977: 109	Yes 106	Yes 70	No	Yes 4
2. Lack of a descent principle & a shallow genealogy	Yes	Yes 90-94	Yes 36	Yes 136	Yes 193	Yes 192	Yes 61, 63	No?			Yes C 249	Yes 74
3. Multiple models of social organization	Yes	?	?	Yes 132-133	Yes 85-87		Yes 61	Yes 1971: 168-169				Yes 80-81
4. Lacks corporate groups	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes 139	Yes 61	Yes	Yes 99	Yes 1977: 110			Yes D 109	
5. Kindred, or cognatic organization	Yes	Yes 92-94	Yes	Yes 138-139	Yes 62, 119	Yes 194, 203	Yes 60-61	Yes 1977: 106, 109			Yes C 258	Yes 75
6. Endogamy	Weak	Yes	Tribal not local	Ethnic 84	Yes 112	Apparent 199-200	Yes 103, 105	Yes 1977: 106, 112	No 108	Yes 73	Yes D 108	Impossible to specify
7. Structural opposition of kin and affines	Yes	Yes 85-86, 94	No 133	Yes 129, 137	Yes?	Yes 134	No 104-105	Some- times 1971: 158- 159, 169		Yes 114	Blurred	Yes 87
8. Alliance principle basic	Yes	Yes 92, 94	Yes 111-115	No	Uncertain		No	No 1971: 169			No	
9. Exchange & alliance kept	Weak	No 73	No 134	No	Yes 275-276		More or less 105	Yes 1971: 102; 1977: 106	Yes 106- 107		Yes D 109	No 88



10. Women move both directions, but no balance necessary in the exchange	?	?	?	Yes 133-137	Yes 243-244	Yes 135	Yes 77	Yes 1977: 112	Yes 106		Yes	Yes 84, 88
11. Marriage ceremonies unimportant	Yes	No 75		Yes 79-80	Yes 164	Yes 136	Yes 99	Yes 1971: 102	Yes 1945: 68	Yes 74	Relatively	No 97
12. Uxorilocality	Yes	Yes	No 108	Yes 87-93	Tendency 128	Yes 134	Yes 55	Yes 1977: 106	Yes 100		No D 108 (uxori-patrilocal)	No
13. Teknonymy converts affines to kin	Yes	Yes 86	Yes 128	Yes 126			No 105	Yes				Yes 1975: 216-219
14. Fusion of kin & affines	Yes	Yes 87	Yes 128	Yes 133	Yes 68	In part 187-189	Yes 65	Qualified 1971: 150-154	+2 only 103-104	Yes 114	Yes	Yes 78
15. Sibling solidarity	Weak	Yes 97	No 115	Yes 132	Yes 127, 186-191	Yes 194	Yes 85-93				Irregular C 251-252	Yes 83
16. Fluidity & flexibility of the system	Yes	Yes Adams n.d. 4		Yes 84	Yes 63, 89-90	Yes 136, 189-190	Yes 64-69	Yes 1971: 169-170; 1977: 106-107			Yes D 106	
17. Use of kin-affine system	No	Probable	No	No 179-186	Weak 234	Yes Fock 1971	Yes 131-139	Yes 1977: 106, 109			Yes	

\* Numbers following each notation indicate pages.

diagnostic.

Carib societies are organized cognatically with kindreds being common, but there are no corporate groups beyond the nuclear family. Kinship is traced bilaterally, but genealogies are shallow and descent reckoning is non-existent or unimportant.

Although these societies are atomistic, inchoate and generally apolitical, what power, control or prestige does occur is vested in the adult males of the family and the local group. These are married men with children, some of whom are of marriageable age or recently married. If anyone exercises control over marriage, it is these men. If alliances are made, they are generally between these men. Their position is sufficiently central to the society, for kinship relations to be frequently defined in terms of one's relation to or through these men (one's parents). Because of a low life expectancy, few men live long enough to become grandfathers, and in any event older men are too few in number to exercise significant influence, while young men at marriage have rarely developed a broad network of supporting kin and affinal relations. It is clearly advantageous for adult men to encourage local endogamy and this automatically results in exchange and alliance being kept within the local group. Endogamy is of course not a rule, but a preference or a value which occurs often enough to be statistically predominant.

Given preferential endogamy within a small local group, the odds are that one marries a person already known. While residence may technically be uxori-local, this doesn't mean much when one remains within the same local group. Add to this the fact that marriage is controlled by the young couple's parents, and we begin to understand why marriage ceremonies are relatively unimportant or non-existent. The change in status is minimal, and the principal behavioral modification is for the husband to provide fish and game to his wife who reciprocates by providing him with cooked food. Often these actions are the only overt indication that a marriage has taken place.

But lack of rules, or frequent flaunting of the rules is also characteristic. Marriages are often contracted opportunistically or for idiosyncratic reasons. A wife may be taken from another group. When this occurs, the husband tends to live uxori-locally (though again, not invariably), at least at first. In part this may be because the woman's father exercises greater control over her, and by making her available for marriage, puts the husband in a subordinate position. But in part it also reflects the strong bonds among siblings, where women in particular seek to remain close to their sisters. "Improper" marriages, which are not uncommon, represent another flaunting of the rules, but the Caribs deal with this by simply changing the rules—or more precisely, by redefining their kinship relations so as to conform to the rules. In most of the societies examined here this is facilitated by tracing multiple paths of kinship linkage and by the existence of multiple models of social organization. Thus if one kin relationship or one model is inappropriate, the individual merely finds another which will legitimize his behavior. Within the context of these practices it becomes clear that there is no rule nor even any preference for the direction in which women move. This in addition to the small size of these societies, means that it would be nearly impossible to maintain any

kind of balance in the exchange of women. When a woman is exchanged, this establishes an alliance or reinforces one already existent, and it may be used to advantage by the parties involved, but as indicated above, there are other ways of integrating the local group.

Sibling solidarity seems to be particularly important. Women prefer to live near their sisters, while even men may after a few years be drawn back to their sisters' local group, particularly after death of the father-in-law. The tie between brother and sister may sometimes lead to the former exercising control over the latter's marriage. On the other hand it may also lead to a sister giving a daughter as wife to her brother. Ties among brothers are often (though not always) weaker.

Since a primary objective of these societies is to enhance and maintain social integration within a relatively small local group, the natural tendency is to try to make as many kin as possible out of one's daily associates. Thus we encounter broad definitions of "family" or "kinsmen" (cf. Karinya *axsakali*). Yet in order to avoid incest and maintain viable marriage options, not everyone can be categorized as close kin. This is of course most critical in own and adjacent generations where marriage partners are obtained and parents-in-law occur. In more distant (+2 and -2) generations distinctions can be relaxed, and the natural tendency to categorize everyone as kin can be allowed to predominate. This tendency is easily facilitated by teknonymy, and in fact the tensions between parents-in-law and children-in-law can be relieved through emphasizing a fictive kinship through the grandchildren/children respectively.<sup>10</sup> The fact is that through one's children the in-laws do come to be related by blood. The Pemon provide an intriguing example of achieving the same end of integrating the local group, but through alternate means. In the Pemon system everyone belongs to a kin category except for same sex cross cousin who occupies the lone affinal category—even potential wife is classified as Z. This makes it necessary to choose a wife from among the daughters of *father's* affine. In some ways this might be even more effective than the classic Dravidian system.

Regardless of the importance of affinal relations and the relations of alliance in any given Carib group, and regardless of the cavalier way in which any given relationship of kinship or affinity may be redefined, every one of these societies seems to be organized around the idea that social relationships are defined in terms of certain social categories. Individual biological or genealogical relationships are irrelevant. In fact, this explains why the Carib can so readily redefine any particular relationship; it is not the relationship, but the *category* which is important. Thus a Dravidian system is eminently suitable to these societies; but consistent with their pragmatism and unconcern with formal structure, it is not at all surprising to find that each society has, in response to its particular needs and conditions, made its own modification of the basic system. All have a Dravidian system, but no two are exactly alike.

Regardless of the specifics of each individual Carib system, the objective seems to be the same—to integrate as tightly as possible a small group of related

<sup>10</sup> This same process is common in American society, where after the birth of a child, one's parents and parents-in-law are frequently referred to and addressed as "Grandpa" and "Grandma."

individuals without imposing complex formal rules of organization. This can be accomplished only through allowing a maximum of individual flexibility and manipulation of the system to personal advantage. It also depends on recognition of certain categories of relationship, rather than tracing individual genealogical ties. Sometimes the goals can be accomplished through setting apart the categories of affines, but just as often it is possible to achieve the same ends through other means. To designate this a "kin-affine system" appears therefore to be a misnomer. Kinship relations are important, group integration is important, and I therefore prefer to designate this type of system the *Kim-Integration System*.

In conclusion it is important to note that not only is organization on the basis of kinship most effective in small groups, but this particular type of kinship system *only* works in small groups, generally with fewer than 100 members. On that level it appears to be extremely effective. However, if for any reason the population of the local group begins to grow and it expands much beyond 100 members, the system begins to break down. Could it be that in this phenomenon we have another explanation for the classic pattern of continual fissioning among Tropical Forest groups? Or is this an adaptive response to a pre-existent pattern of factionalism and division?

### **Abstract**

*The author summarizes his struggles over a period of years to analyze and understand Karinya kinship and concludes that, in general, problems in analyzing South American kinship systems have been due to the application of inappropriate models derived from other ethnographic areas. However, many features of the Dravidian system seem to be replicated in South American kinship. He reviews Overing Kaplan's analysis within the Dravidian model of the Piaroa system, identifies several distinctive features of social and political organization which emerge from it, and shows how most of these features occur also in Karinya kinship. Other Carib societies are surveyed in order to determine which of these traits are characteristic throughout. The survey reveals that a common system exists among all Guayana Caribs, but it is not confirmed among other Carib groups. This system does not depend upon an effective opposition between kin and affines or relationships built upon ties of alliance. The ultimate objective is to define the majority of the society as kinsmen. The system is extremely effective in integrating small local groups—in fact it only works in small groups, generally with fewer than 100 members. It is probable that the model also applies to many other Lowland South American societies, belonging to other linguistic families.*

### **Resumen**

*El autor resume su esfuerzo de varios años para analizar y comprender el parentesco Kariña; concluye que, en general, los problemas que se presentan al analizar los sistemas de parentesco de América del Sur son la consecuencia del uso de patrones inapropiados, derivados de otras áreas etnográficas. Sin embargo,*

*parece que se reproducen muchos rasgos del sistema Dravidiano en el parentesco de América del Sur. El autor revisa el análisis del sistema Piaroa hecho por J. Overing Kaplan, dentro del patrón Dravidiano. Identifica varios rasgos distintivos de la organización social y política que surgen del mismo sistema, y muestra que la mayoría de estos rasgos ocurren también en el parentesco Kariña. Revisa otras sociedades Caribes con objeto de determinar cuáles de estos rasgos son característicos de todas ellas. La encuesta revela que existe un sistema común de todas las tribus Caribes de Guayana, pero que no se corrobora dentro de los otros grupos Caribes.*

*Este sistema no depende de una oposición vigente entre parientes y afines, ni de relaciones creadas por vínculos de alianza. El objetivo fundamental es definir la mayoría de los miembros de la sociedad como parientes. El sistema es muy eficaz para integrar pequeños grupos locales —de hecho sólo funciona con grupos pequeños, generalmente con menos de 100 miembros. Es probable que el patrón sea también aplicable a muchas otras sociedades de las tierras bajas de América del Sur, sociedades que pertenecen a otras familias lingüísticas.*