History, Kinship and the Ideology of Hierarchy Among the Warao of the Central Orinoco Delta
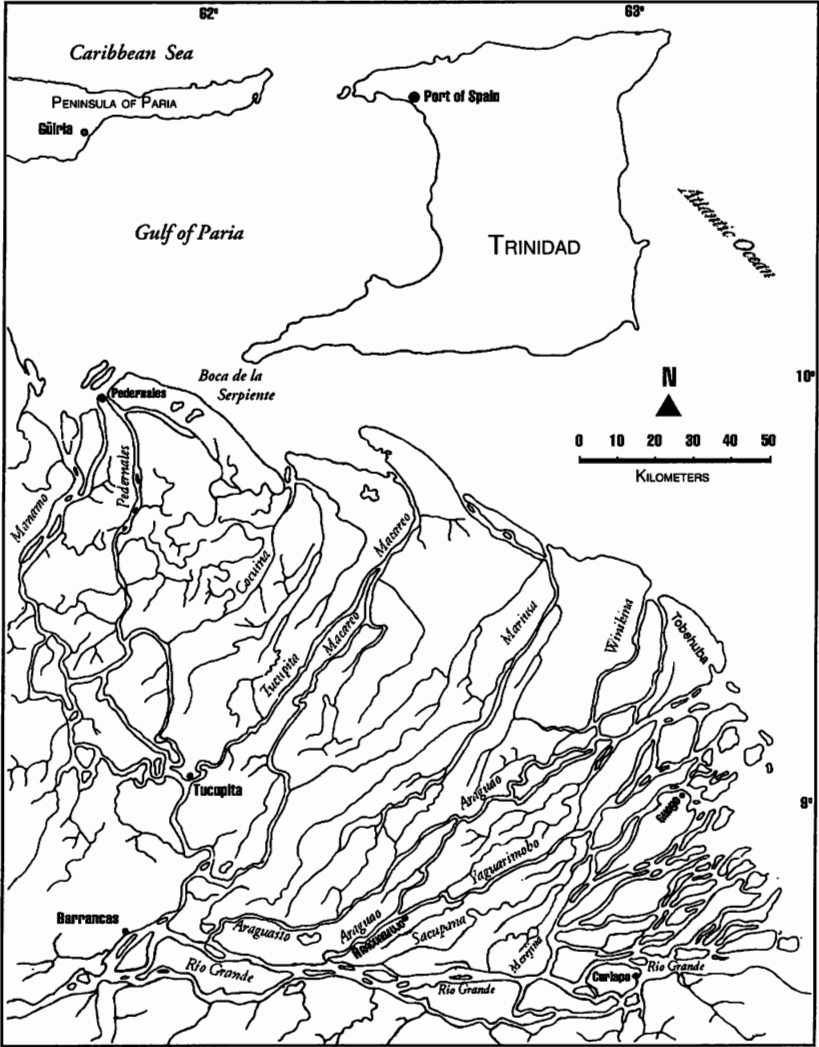
Dieter Heinen & Paul Henley[1]

Introduction

The Warao are an Amerindian people who live amid the complex latticework of rivers and creeks that make up the delta of the Orinoco river, located in the extreme north-eastern corner of Venezuela (Map 1). This has been their homeland since time immemorial. Indeed, there is some archaeological evidence to suggest that ancestors of the Warao were already living there some 7,000 years ago (Wilbert 1996:23). Certainly their presence in exactly the same spot is recorded in the earliest European accounts of the Delta. One of the most celebrated of these is Sir Walter Ralegh's *Discoverie of the Large, Rich and Bewtiful Empyre of Gviana*, first published in 1596 and referring to his journey through the Delta the previous year. Ralegh actually met only the Waraoan speaking Siawani, but he refers to a group of "Wareweetes", living towards the mouth of the Delta. This name is clearly a corruption of *waharaowitu*, which means "true Warao" in the Warao language (Lavandero 1994:23).

At that time, as we shall describe in greater detail below, the region in and around the Delta was inhabited by a number of different

MAP 1
THE ORINOCO DELTA: THE WARAO HOMELAND

indigenous groups, engaged in an extensive network of exchanges involving both trade and warfare. Prominent among these groups were the Arawak-speaking Lokono, of whom there were communities in certain areas of the Delta and the adjacent regions of the Atlantic littoral to the east[2]. Also important were a number of Carib-speaking groups, notably the Kariña of the Mesa de Guanipa immediately to the west of the Delta and in the Serranía de Imataca to the south. In addition, there were a number of groups in the upper Delta and around the Gulf of Paria who appear to have spoken languages closely related to that of the Warao themselves. The most notable of these Waraoan groups were the Siawani, whose villages Ralegh and his lieutenant Keymis visited on the Caño Manamo in 1595 (cf. Whitehead 1988, Dreyfus 1992, Heinen 1992, 1996).

With the arrival of Europeans, inter-ethnic relations in the Delta became even more antagonistic, as slave traders, settlers and missionaries entered the local social and political scene. Coupled with the effects of introduced diseases, which appear to have been particularly dramatic in the course of the eighteenth century, this invasion of the Delta led to the disappearance of many indigenous communities and the breakdown of the earlier network of trading, feasting and warfare. By the time of national independence, in the early nineteenth century, this network had been almost completely dismantled, though many individual Lokono, Kariña and Warao communities continued to exist and to maintain limited contacts with one another (Wilbert 1996:27-46).

Despite subsequent incursions of various extractivist fronts seeking rubber, timber and palm-hearts, and further waves of missionary activity, the Warao, protected by their swampy habitat, have managed to survive where once more-powerful indigenous groups have become extinct or have suffered radical demographic decline. The indigenous census of 1992 estimated the present-day Warao population in Venezuela at 24,005 (OCEI 1994:24-25). When supplemented by those not registered by the census as well as by those said to be living

---

[2]In this paper, we shall adopt the now orthodox practice of using the term "Lokono" to refer to the Arawak communities of the lower Orinoco and coastal regions of the Guianas. Ralegh was but one of the early chroniclers who reported on the regular interaction between Warao and Lokono (cf. Schomburgk 1848), and these contacts have continued down to the present day. There are many Lokono loan-words in the Warao language and vice versa. Among the former are: *ibihi* (medicine), *barawa* (full river), *duruduru* (alligator), *ayari* (barbasco), *himakona* (yams), *yowana* (iguana), *anana* (pineapple), *ure* (ocumo), *bamu* (salt). The criollo speech of the Delta is also littered with Lokono loan-words such as auyama (an edible squash); temiche, moriche, manaca (palms); morocoto, warapa, payara, coporo (fish species); hobo, cocojoro, mora, merey (tree species); lapa (paca, a large rodent); mamure (vine); manare (basketwork sieve); mosori (plant) etc..

in the North West District of the neighbouring Guyana (Edwards & Gibson 1979), the total Warao population probably approaches 30,000. This would make them one of the largest extant Amerindian groups of lowland South America. Moreover this population is expanding rapidly: the 1992 census figure was approximately 25% higher than the 19,573 recorded in 1982, which in turn was more than double the figure of 6-8000 which had been routinely recorded in most earlier publications.

However this population expansion has also coincided with a progressively increasing tempo of cultural change. In the course of this century, the main agents of this change have been the Capuchin Franciscan missions and other non-Indian settlers who began to colonize the central and southeastern Delta from the 1920s on. In recent years, quite a number of Venezuelan Warao have migrated to local towns such as Tucupita, Barrancas and San Félix, all lying close to or just above the apex of the delta, while others live in relatively close proximity to the small town of Pedernales, near the mouth of the Caño Manamo, in the extreme north-west of the delta, which has recently become the focus of an oil boom centering on the neighbouring Gulf of Paria.

Nevertheless, for the most part, the majority of the Warao population continues to live where the European adventurers situated them over four hundred years ago, that is, along the relatively isolated waterways of the lower Delta. Moreover despite all the social and cultural changes that have taken place since the arrival of the Europeans, many traditional aspects of Warao social and cultural life remain intact. From these, it is evident that in comparison with the other contemporary indigenous peoples of Guiana, broadly defined, the Warao are highly distinctive[3]. Although the Warao share many cultural similarities with other Guianese groups, as one would expect given that all these groups form part of the more general cultural inheritance of indigenous lowland South America, there are also some striking differences.

One of the most important of these concerns the form of their system of kinship and marriage. As discussed by Henley in a recent paper (1996), there has been much debate in the general anthropological literature concerning the relationship between two basic types of kinship system, both of which are widely distributed in Amazonia and adjacent regions. Even the labels used to identify these types, let

---

[3]By "Guiana, broadly defined" we refer here to the area known in colonial times as the "Island of Guayana", that is, the whole region lying between the Amazon and Orinoco rivers, including both the Brazilian Guaiana and the Venezuelan Guayana, which in earlier maps were identified as Portuguese and Spanish Guiana respectively, as well as Guyana, Surinam and Guyane, which were previously known as British, Dutch and French Guiana.

alone the formal enumeration of their mutually distinguishing characteristics remain matters of considerable contention. But of the various alternatives, the conventional distinction between the "Iroquois" and "Dravidian" type is perhaps the least bad, if only because it is the one that will be most immediately recognized by the majority of readers. However, being aware of the disadvantages of naming a type after a particular society on account of all the cultural connotations that the use of such a term brings with it, we have preferred to use the adjectival forms "iroquoianate" and "dravidianate" in this article. By this means we aim to underline the fact that any system thereby identified should be considered to be after the manner of the type case system rather than identical in any direct sense.

As we shall show, contrary to earlier reports that they have a dravidianate system in the process of transition into something else, most groups of Warao have a system of kinship and marriage that conforms in most regards to the canonical iroquoianate type. The iroquoianate system of kinship and marriage of the Warao serves to distinguish them very clearly from the great majority of the other extant indigenous groups of the Orinoquia and adjacent regions of the Guiana Highlands. For the most part, these other indigenous groups have dravidianate systems, albeit with many local permutations and combinations (Henley 1983-84, Riviäre 1984).

In considering the nature of the Warao kinship system in this article, we will be concerned to examine the degree to which this case conforms with the hypotheses previously advanced by Henley concerning the historico-genetic relationship between iroquoianate and dravidianate systems in the Amazon region as a whole. In the paper referred to above, Henley questions the frequent tendency to assume that the dravidianate systems of Amazonia represent an original, archetypical form from which the iroquoianate systems have somehow devolved due to acculturation, depopulation or some other historical contingency. Instead, he suggests that dravidianate systems, in that they permit densely reiterative cycles of matrimonial alliance to be built up within a relatively circumscribed network of relatives, could be considered a specialized adaptation to the pattern of low population density and small, scattered communities that is typical of the headwater and some interfluvial regions of Amazonia.

Further, Henley suggests that the iroquoianate systems should not be considered merely degenerate forms of the dravidianate systems. For, being typically associated with the diversification of marriage alliances and a generally greater degree of exogamy than the dravidianate systems, the iroquoianate systems of Amazonia could be considered as well suited to the more open and complex social, political

and commercial networks that have flourished in the relatively populous communities along the major waterways of the region, both in pre-Columbian times and even to some degree to this day. Although the actual distribution of iroquoianate and dravidianate systems suggests that certain cultural factors, among which attitudes towards alterity are particularly important, also play a part in determining the form of kinship arrangements at a local level, Henley claims that, on the whole, the ethnographically attested facts of this distribution tend to confirm the general hypothesis.

As the Warao have been involved, until relatively recently in their history, in a complex multi-ethnic network of exchange since pre-Columbian times, this finding would appear to confirm the general hypothesis suggested above. However, when one looks in greater detail at particular cases, it becomes apparent that although the Warao system, as an iroquoianate system, is not compatible with the same degree of reiterative endogamous alliance as is typical of the canonical dravidianate, under certain conditions it can nevertheless be used to develop a network of exchange relationships within a relatively circumscribed range of relatives, albeit over the course of several generations.

However it is not only with regard to their system of kinship and marriage that the Warao are distinctive within the Guianese cultural context. In contrast to the highly egalitarian ethos that generally characterizes other Guianese groups (cf. Rivière 1984), the Warao place a pronounced emphasis on relationships of hierarchy. This pertains not only to political and economic relationships between living human beings but also to relationships between currently living human beings and the spirits of the supernatural world. For their part, these spirits are conceived of as ancestral spirits in the most literal sense, i.e. as the spirits of particular individual deceased shamans. Moreover, these hierarchical relationships are associated with the offering of tribute from the subservient to the more powerful. These ideas about the hierarchical nature of spirit beings are found in conjunction with a formalized cosmological geography that is unusual within a Guianese context.

Similar points about the cultural distinctiveness of the Warao have been made on a number of occasions over the last forty years by Johannes Wilbert, surely one of the most distinguished of all anthropological chroniclers of Warao society. In his earlier writings, Wilbert tended to trace these elements of hierarchy to exogenous sources, albeit Amerindian ones, variously identifying as possible influences the civilizations of the Andes, Central America and the so-called Circum-caribbean chiefdoms that flourished in the Antilles in

30

the immediate pre-Columbian period (Wilbert 1956:237, see also 1993:8). However in his most recent work he has suggested that many central aspects of Warao religious belief and ritual organization can be ascribed to the effects of contact with early Spanish colonial and mission regimes (Wilbert 1996:225-247).

We would not necessarily dissent from the parallels that Wilbert has drawn with other indigenous traditions elsewhere in the continent, and could agree that they could well have emerged from a common indigenous cultural tradition. In particular, the Siawani boatbuilders could have been part of such a Circum-caribbean tradition. Nor would we want to deny that present-day Warao religious beliefs show some evidence of syncretic accommodation to those of the Hispanic colonizers, though we have our doubts about some of the more specific links he draws with mission regimes. However we would not place such a general emphasis on the exogenous sources of Warao beliefs and practices. Rather we would argue that if the historical circumstances of the Warao are taken into account, there are also more local, endogenous reasons why they should have developed their distinctive social and cultural characteristics.

In brief, our suggestion is that Warao ideas about hierarchy, as with the distinctive features of their system of kinship and marriage, should be interpreted within the context of the more complex social formation that once flourished in the Delta and surrounding regions. Although we would not support some of the more extravagant claims that have been made about the size and social stratification of the indigenous population in the colonial period, there seems little doubt not only that the indigenous communities of the Delta were much larger and more numerous than they are today, but also that the leaders of such communities exercised much greater authority and enjoyed greater privileges than those of the present era (Whitehead 1994). While we would share to some degree the skepticism of those who would question the existence of any simple relationship between social organization and cosmology in lowland South America (cf. Viveiros de Castro 1992:2-3), it seems to us reasonable to speculate that in this particular case, the present-day Warao's hierarchical cosmological ideas represent an ideological transformation of a once more stratified social and political organization.

On the Cultural Distinctiveness of the Warao

The term "Warao" is often mistakenly glossed in the ethnographic literature as "people of the canoe" (including by Heinen up to 1980). In fact, the Warao's ethnographic name is a derivation from the word / *waharao/*, meaning literally "people of the river's edge, the lowlands[5]. In its most general application, this term means simply "person" and as such, it can be used to refer to a person of any ethnic group, indigenous or otherwise. However in more specific contexts, /*waharao/* is contrasted with /*hotarao/*, "people of the raised land", the latter being a term applied to Creoles, i.e. non-Indians.

Some aspects of Warao distinctiveness are relatively trivial. Anyone used to the characteristic reserve of the Carib-speaking people of the Guiana Highlands is likely to be immediately struck by the social openness of the Warao, even with strangers. This is made manifest in the elaborate series of salutations that are considered a necessary feature of every social encounter, even when the parties have met earlier in the same day. However there are also more objective social and cultural indices that serve generally to distinguish the Warao from the peoples of the Guiana Highlands. Most immediately significant is their linguistic affiliation. To date, the Warao language has not been uncontestably associated with any other language grouping. Although it has been classified as "Macro-Chibchan", thereby associating it with a number of languages spoken in the central Colombian Andes and also with Barí in the southern arm of the Sierra de Perijá (Greenberg 1987, Ruhlen 1991), this classification was based on highly tenuous evidence and must be regarded with considerable caution. What is certain however is that the Warao language has no immediate or obvious affinity with any of the extant indigenous languages spoken along the neighbouring stretches of the Caribbean or Atlantic coastline, nor with any of those spoken today in the Guiana Highlands.

There are also a number of features of their settlement and subsistence patterns that serve to differentiate them from the majority of present-day Guianese groups. Warao villages are typically composed of a line of houses strung out along a swampy river bank, set up on heavy wooden piles 2-3 metres high so as to remain clear of the diurnal tides and connected by a bridge-like walkway running between them. Village populations generally oscillate between 25 and 200 people, though around the Capuchin Franciscan missions at Araguaimujo and

[4]It seems to have been Roth who first suggested this gloss (cf. Roth 1970:744, originally published in 1924).

[5]There is no equivalent in English for the Warao concept of *waha*, which can mean "beach", "marshlands", but also "shallows", and "barren", "infertile".

Guayo, they are much larger. The mission at Araguaimujo (Arawaimuhu) in 1992 had a population of 565, mainly made up of Warao, while the mission at Guayo was tallied at 906, including the traditional Osibu Kahunoko sector (OCEI 1994:35, 48).

Away from the missions, the Warao tend to think of their villages as being loosely grouped together, in agglomerations of three or four, usually situated along a stretch of the same river. The total population of such agglomerations generally lies between 600 and 800 people. These agglomerations are largely, in effect, endogamous, though at a more local level, there is a stress on exogamy since there is a prohibition on marriage with all primary relatives up to and including first cousins. This is associated with a rule of permanent post-marital uxorilocal residence with the result that many young men are obliged to leave their own community on marriage and go to live in another village within the loose agglomeration defined above[6].

Although the original gloss was clearly incorrect, the authors who translated "Warao" as "canoe people" may perhaps be forgiven because this served to highlight two of the most distinctive features of modern Warao life, namely the widespread use of the canoe and their expertise in constructing them. In the villages on the major waterways, even the shortest journey requires a canoe. In those villages that do not have walkways, even a visit to the next door neighbour entails the use of a canoe. As a result, children of both sexes become expert canoeists at a very early age: in Winikina today, it is quite normal to see children as young as four or five paddling their own canoes along the river, on their way to school, to visit a relative, or even just to buy a packet of biscuits from the saw-mill store. In later life, expertise in building canoes is a skill greatly admired and regarded as central to the development of a certain form of shamanic status, and in this way can even serve to ensure a successful transition to the after-life[7]. In no other indigenous group in the Guianas is the building of canoes surrounded by such an elaborate array of rituals as among the Warao (Wilbert 1976).

Yet another distinctive feature of the life of the Warao, at least in the central Delta, is the fact that until the 1930s they did not practice horticulture of any kind. Their subsistence was based instead on fishing, a very limited amount of hunting, and the gathering of palm fruits, palm grubs, crabs and other crustacea. These gathered foods

---

[6]We use the term "agglomeration" in the sense proposed by Rivière, i.e. to refer to an aggregation of geographically proximate residential groups in regular social contact with one another (cf. Riviãre 1969:104-140). In previous publications, Heinen has referred to social groupings of this kind as "sub-tribes".

[7]Indeed, whether they are shamans or not, most Winikina Warao are buried in a hollowed-out tree resembling a canoe (cf. Wilbert 1996:128).

were supplemented by *ohidu aru* as it is known in Warao or "yuruma", as it is known in local Creole Spanish. This is the Warao "staff of life" and is derived from starch fibre extracted from the heart of the "moriche" palm (*Mauritia flexuosa*)[8]. This is then processed into flour from which flat, unleavened loaves of bread are baked in a metal vessel or pot of some kind. The Warao do not plant the moriche, but by clearing the mangrove stands for their settlements and discarding the moriche seeds, they help considerably moriche propagation (Heinen et al. 1995).

However the moriche seems not to tolerate salt-water very well because the most abundant natural groves in the central Delta are generally found well back from the banks of the major rivers and creeks affected by the tidal regime. To reach them may often require several hours of difficult trekking through tangled and swampy undergrowth.

Prior to the introduction of horticulture in the central Delta, many Warao communities were located in relatively dry clearings on the edge of these interfluvial groves of moriche. Not only did this permit easy access to the groves, but it also provided some protection from the often unwelcome attentions of non-Indian colonists, missionaries, and in earlier colonial times, of slave-raiders who moved up and down the main rivers. In sharp contrast to the mainstream groups, these "morichalero" groups did not use canoes on a day-to-day basis. Indeed, the eminent Warao shaman, Antonio Lorenzano, who died in 1996, at 83 years of age, told Heinen that he did not even set eyes upon a canoe until he was about 12 years old.

Outside the central Delta, there are communities of Warao who have practised horticulture as long as anyone can remember[10]. Indeed, it is recognized in Warao mythology that even at the beginning of time, there were certain Warao groups who practised horticulture (Wilbert 1993:11 ff.). From the earliest colonial reports and still to this day, there are Warao communities resident along the southern bank of the mainstream of the Orinoco who have practised slash-and-burn horticulture. It has been suggested that this might be the result of the influence of neighbouring communities of Lokono on the lower Orinoco.

[8]In the older literature on the Orinoco Delta and surrounding areas, the palm known scientifically as *Mauritia flexuosa* may be referred to by a number of other terms derived from local indigenous languages. These include *ataguai, kwai* (Carib), ita, *muriti* (Lokono) and *miriti* (Tupi). In some earlier sources, e.g. Appun (1871/1961), the criollo term for the starch extracted from this palm is given as "yaruma" suggesting that it might be derived from *aru*, the Warao term for "bread" (see also Schomburgk 1848:49n).

[9]Where brackish water reaches in the dry season, the moriche loses out to mangroves.

[10]In Guyana, these horticultural Warao refer to their "morichalero" brethren as *inarao*, "beings of the forest" (Williams 1993), a term that also covers wild animals.

There is no doubt that many aspects of Lokono culture have been adopted by the Warao, and these may well include horticultural techniques (cf. Boomert 1984, Williams 1993).

What is certain is that a major change in Warao settlement patterns took place with the introduction of "ocumo chino" (*Colocasia esculenta*), a hardy Asiatic variety of taro that requires minimal husbandry to flourish in swampy conditions. This new crop appears to have been introduced in the 1920s by Warao, or possibly Lokono, returning from the Amacuro region and the then colony of British Guiana. Coupled with the relatively greater security established by the 1940s, as well as with the increasing importance of access to the non-Indian world as a source of steel tools and other industrially-manufactured goods, the new crop created the conditions that encouraged the Warao to gravitate increasingly towards the banks of the major rivers and make their principal settlements there. Today, there are few Warao living permanently in the moriche groves. However they continue to make and consume sago, particularly during festivities, and to this end, they will often go on expeditions to the moriche groves. Some families may even maintain a secondary house there (cf. Heinen, Lizarralde & Gómez 1994-96).

But perhaps the most significant feature distinguishing the Warao from other Guianese groups is the greater degree of formality and hierarchy in Warao perceptions of their universe. This applies both to the social and the geographical universe, and even to their perceptions of the supernatural world. As far as geography are concerned, the cardinal points play a prominent role in defining the Warao's perceptions of the physical environment in which they live. The Naparima mountain, dominating the southern approach to the island of Trinidad is thought to demarcate the most northerly point of their traditional territory. Its modern name is apparently derived from the Warao term *anabarima*, "guardian of the waves". This northern mountain is contrasted with the most southerly point of the Warao world, *wahakarima*, "guardian of the land". This is commonly said to be a mountain in the Serranía de Imataca, a range which runs parallel to the southern shore of the main channel of the Orinoco.

This north-south axis is bisected by the east-west path of the sun, which effectively divides the Warao homeland in the central Delta into four quadrants. In Warao mythological tradition, each of these quadrants is associated with a different kind of human community, each depending on a distinctive mode of subsistence: river fishermen in the northwestern quadrant (who may be identified with the now-extinct Siawani and other groups speaking Waraon languages); Carib-speaking horticulturalists in the southwestern quadrant (the also extinct Wayano, Nepoyo and others); a southeastern quadrant of peccary hunters (inhabitants of the *tierra firme* south of the main Orinoco channel); and finally, amidst the swampland environment of the north-

eastern quadrant, the Warao's own direct ancestors, the *Waharaowitu*, literally the "true Warao", processors of moriche palm starch (see the ethno-economic map in Wilbert 1993:11).

The east-west axis is also associated with the almost daily alternation between the easterly sea breezes that blow during daylight hours and the westerly breezes from the land that blow at night and in the early morning. Within Warao thought generally, the east has more positive connotations, being associated with the supreme spirit, the Bird of Origin (see Wilbert 1993:89-90), while the west is associated with the "place of darkness", an underworld inhabited by *hoebo*, a cannibalistic spirit hungry for human souls. All cardinal points, as well as a zenith directly above the disc of the earth and a nadir directly below, are associated with supernatural entities who are thought to be responsible for causing particular diseases. As Wilbert has described it, this is paralleled by a pattern of shamanic specialization whereby a shaman develops the ability to deal with the supernatural beings associated with particular cardinal points and thus to cure the diseases for which they are responsible (1996:62, see also Wilbert 1993:3-24).

While many of these themes are also encountered in the cosmology of the peoples of the Guiana Highlands, they are generally less systematically and formally elaborated. The same can also be said in relation to Warao ideas about their social universe. Since all activities have a religious or ritual aspect, there is a great number of religious specialists among the Warao. Some of these specialists have very specific competences while others have more general shamanic powers, including the power to heal. Among the former, one of the most common is the *naha arima* (*naha arani* in the unusual case of female practitioners), i.e. the "guardian of the rain" who is thought to be able to control both the coming and going of rains. By this means, a *naha arima* is said to exert influence on the state of the rivers and the reproductive cycle of the moriche palm, and in both these ways ensure the well-being or, alternatively, provoke ill health among the human population. However the *naha arima* does not have any specific therapeutic powers: as Wilbert observes, he is a sorcerer rather than a healer (Wilbert 1996:63, 93 ff.).

A number of other religious specialist roles pertain to the *naha namu*, a sago distribution ritual practised in the central Delta which takes place at the height of the rainy season (Heinen & Ruddle 1974; Lavandero & Heinen 1986). These specialist roles include that of the *daunona arima*, the "guardian of the sacred *daunona*", wooden representations of ancestral beings who preside over the ritual process; the *dokotu arotu* or *dokotu moyotu* who is the "owner of the [most important] ritual songs" and the *isimoi arotu*, the "owner of the sacred trumpets", clarinet-like instruments played during the event. The *isimoi arotu* is also said to be able to control the wind (see Wilbert 1996:146-160).

However the three most important religious specialist statuses among the Warao are those of the *wisidatu*, the *hoarotu* and the *bahanarotu*, as described by Wilbert in a series of publications (including Wilbert 1972, 1996:62 ff.). Holders of these statuses have therapeutic shamanic powers, though each attends to a specific, supernaturally-defined health problem. A given individual may combine two or more specialities and one who combines all three is known as a *kaidoko arotu*[11].

The *wisidatu* heals sickness caused by non-human supernatural entities known as *hebu*. As is the case with all three shamanic offices, the *wisidatu* makes extensive use of tobacco in curing sessions and his distinctive emblem is the very large rattle topped with green parrot feathers, the so-called hebu mataro (literally, "spirit rattle"). The *wisidatu* generally plays a leading role in the *naha namu* sago ritual and will often also be the *kanobo arima*, that is, the "guardian of the kanobo", a rock crystal considered to be an embodiment of the ancestral spirit of the community. This is kept in a special basketry container within a small hut built specifically for this purpose. This hut, which is called *hebu ahanoko*, literally "spirit house", is a two-storey structure, referred to, perhaps somewhat over-ecclesiastically, as a "temple" by Wilbert (cf. 1956:247, 1996:145). Accompanied by various other items of shamanic paraphernalia, the kanobo is kept on the upper floor of the spirit house, hidden from general view by palm leaf walls. It is the responsibility of the *kanobo arima* to keep this structure in good condition and to ensure the appropriate offerings of tobacco smoke and sago starch are made to the *kanobo*. It is on account of these responsibilities that Wilbert refers to the *wisidatu* as a "priest-shaman" (Wilbert 1972:58). The *wisidatu* is generally regarded as benign, though if he or she should neglect his/her duties to the *kanobo*, this can bring illness down on the community, particularly among children[12].

[11]The *wisidatu* office (in Winikina, also *wisatu*, pl. *wisimo*) is sometimes transliterated in the ethnographic literature as *wishiratu* or *wisiratu* since /r/ and /d/ are allophones in Warao (cf. Osborn 1966:110). According to Wilbert (1972:76), *kaidoko* refers to the snare of smoke used by the *hoarotu* shaman to kill his victims.

[12]It has sometimes been asserted that women cannot become *wisimo*. Although cases are rare, they do exist. Indeed, in Warao mythology, the very first *wisidatu* is said to have been a woman. This was *daunarani*, "guardian of forest" (cf. Wilbert 1979:141). In more recent times, a well-known woman shaman was Micolasa from the village of Bamutanoko on the Aruabisi river. She owned a shaman's rattle and was a specialist in curing the illness caused by the dreaded *hebu* known as *Masisikiri*. She was also said to be *kaunasa arani*, "mother of the spirit of the great wind", a reference to her supposed ability to produce strong easterly winds, sometimes of whirlwind or hurricane force. Only older women can become a *wisidatu* because menstruation is thought to be antithetical to shamanic powers.

The *bahanarotu* shaman, on the other hand, specializes in the removal from a patient's body of *hatabu*, invisible magical darts sent by enemy shamans, as well as a number of other pathogenic objects. The *bahanarotu* may also send these pathogenic objects into the bodies of his enemies and is therefore regarded as more potentially malignant than the *wisidatu*. According to Wilbert, the *bahanarotu* is associated with *Mawari*, a spirit normally residing at the celestial zenith and for this reason, Wilbert refers to the *bahanarotu* as the "light shaman". Some bahanarao (sg. *bahanarotu*) are said to keep a wooden mannequin image of Mawari which they can activate in such way as to cause epidemics capable of wiping out entire villages (cf. Wilbert 1996:63). While the *wisidatu* is identified with the *naha namu* ritual, the *bahanarotu* is associated with the *habi sanuka*, the "dance of the little rattles". This is an increase ritual similar in general form to those practiced by Carib-speaking peoples of the Guiana Highlands, notably the Pemon parishara and the Ye'kuana *wasaiy hadi*[13].

The third shamanic office, the *hoarotu*, the "dark shaman" in Wilbert's typology, is the most feared of all. This shamanic office is associated with the *hoebo*, the cannibalistic spirit of the western cardinal point. The emblem of the *hoarotu* is the red-and-blue macaw, *abahera* (*Ara chloroptera*), and he is said to use powers derived from *hoebo* to kill by means of hemorrhagic diseases such as dysentery and pulmonary tuberculosis. The killing is actually carried out by first snaring the victim's spirit in a trap of smoke, the *kaidoko*, and then by taking it to *hoebo* in "the place of darkness" to the west. Because of the supposed great hunger of hoebo for victims, the *hoarotu* is dreaded in all Warao villages. But if a *hoarotu* can kill by means of these hemorrhagic diseases, he is also regarded as an expert in their cure. In contrast to the other two offices, the *hoarotu* shaman works exclusively with songs and does not use a rattle (Wilbert 1972:73, 1996:63, 122-3)[14].

As far as secular authorities are concerned, the Warao distinguish a number of different leadership roles, though these are generally merely laid over the shamanic offices of *wisidatu*, *hoarotu* and *bahanarotu*. The titles given to these secular offices clearly suggest colonial influences. The *kabitana* or "capitán", as he would be known in local Spanish, is the headman of the community and the leader of the

[13]Certain aspects of the Warao ritual appear to have been copied from these Carib groups: *sewei*, the name of the anklet rattle used during the ritual, and *wana*, the name of the flutes played on this occasion in Bonoina and other areas, are without doubt words of Carib origin.

[14]The western location of the bloodthirsty *hoebo* spirit is often associated with the Mesa de Guanipa, inhabited by the Kari'ña, formerly much-feared enemies of the Warao.

strongest faction within it[15]. The *bisikari* is the leader of the second strongest faction and thus second in command in the community. His title derives from the Spanish word "fiscal", which is used locally to denote policemen of relative seniority, though there also appears to be a play on the word *bisi,* the name of one of the trees used for making dugout canoes. The *borisia* (cf. the Spanish term "policia") or *dibatu* (which can be glossed in English as "spokesman" and which is derived from the Warao word *dibakitane,* "to speak") is the title given to the leader of the third group, if there is one. But over and above all these offices is that of *kobenahoro,* derived from the Spanish term "gobernador". In most areas, this is the term used to designate paramount chiefs whose authority extends over a number of communities, though it can also be used to designate the highest rank in particularly large communities, i.e. those of roughly 250 people or more.

More recently, yet another office has been introduced by local government, namely that of "comisario". This is the title given to those who receive political patronage from local government, which takes the form of a small salary. This is given in exchange for support in local elections and supposedly carries certain responsibilities for the maintenance of law and order in the community. In actual practice however, these responsibilities do not appear to amount to very much.

In addition to these individual political roles, there is a system of collective authority based on gerontocratic principles. An assembly of elders, including both men and women, known as *aidamotuma*[16], literally "the old ones" have considerable authority over the so-called *neburatu,* the young unmarried men of the village. Even married men with children may be referred to as *nebu,* sometimes translated as "workers" and, as such, may be obliged to obey the orders of the *aidamotuma.*

These metaphors of hierarchy and formality are also evident in most Warao descriptions of the world of spirit beings, though it must be said that these tend to be highly idiosyncratic, depending greatly on the informant. A recurrent theme is the idea that the world is controlled by a council of such spirit beings, the *kanobotuma,* each of whom is

[15]The early missionaries built on this system but they did not introduce it. Before any missionary had arrived in the Delta, Ralegh observed in 1595 that "... they call themselues Capitaynes, because they perceiue that the chiefest of euery ship is called by that name" (1968:6).

[16]This council of elders had mainly a mediatory and less a decision making function which makes the Warao rather atomistic in comparison with the Pemon and the Ye'kwana. Modern Warao sometimes use the term *aidamotuma* to refer to local or national government, in relation to whom they consider themselves *nebu,* subordinate "workers".

associated with a particular cardinal point, or with the nadir or the zenith. They are presided over by a supreme spirit, the *hebu araobo*, along with his wife and their *coterie*. In some versions of the account, these supreme powers are supplemented by certain lesser powers controlling the rains and the winds, and also associated with the cardinal points. Wilbert has suggested that this model of a supernatural council is the result of a transposition to the world of spirits of the committee structure of criollo local government. We are somewhat skeptical about this argument, but even if this were true insofar as the explicit enumeration of roles is concerned, we would suggest that it nevertheless shows a predisposition to adopt such hierarchical notions on the part of the Warao that is unusual among the indigenous peoples of the Guianas (Wilbert 1996:73-78)[7].

These hierarchical notions are also found in the Warao conceptualization of their relationship with individual spirit beings. However it should be stressed that it is not that Warao conceptions of their relationships with the spirit world represent some sort of radical break with those of other indigenous groups. Here too, the difference is more a question of emphasis. For example, the Warao think of the spirit powers who control the world from their various cardinal points as being ancestors in a very literal sense in that they are thought to be the postmortem spirits of long-dead shamans. In contrast, it is generally the case among other Guianese groups that such spirit beings are thought to be of a different order of being to that of a human being, even if they may assume anthropomorphic forms on occasion[8]. And yet, at the same time, as Eduardo Viveiros de Castro has suggested to us (pers. comm. 1997), the Warao idea that the spirits are ancestral shamans could be considered a particularly developed form of the belief encountered in many parts of Amazonia that shamans have a distinctive postmortem destination.

Similar observations could be made about the offerings that the Warao make to these ancestral spirits. In several Guianese Highland groups, shamans smoke tobacco as a means of entering into communication with spirit familiars. They may even think of themselves as "feeding" this spirit by means of the tobacco smoke. But to describe this process of spirit-feeding as an "offering" would probably be to lay too much stress on the subservience of the shaman. In the

[17]What the Warao may want to express is that their spirit beings do have wealthy criollo type houses with walls and doors.

[18]This the case, for example, among the Ye'kwana who conceive of the world as the locus of a titanic struggle between the forces of order, as represented by the culture hero Wanadi and *odosha*, the forces of disorder. Although Wanadi may once have had the form of a normal human being, he is a wholly exceptional category of being.

Trio case, for example, the shaman refers to his spirit familiars as his "pets" and considers the tobacco smoke with which he feeds them as analogous to the food that he gives his dogs (Peter Rivière, pers. comm. 1998). In contrast, the Warao shaman thinks of the tobacco smoke he presents to the spirit not simply as a form of food, but as an offering to a spirit who might otherwise become angry and take revenge by bringing sickness to the community.

Some Warao offerings are collective. In the largest recurrent festivity in the central Delta, the *naha namu* sago distribution ritual, large quantities of sago are gathered and presented as an offering to Kanobo, the ancestral spirit associated with the east. The sago or yuruma is stored in large containers, known as *naha namu*, from which the name of the ritual is derived. These are placed on the ground floor of a specially constructed "spirit house", while on the upper floor, immediately above, the rock crystal embodiment of Kanobo is kept, along with various other items of ritual paraphernalia. Nor is Kanobo offered merely foodstuffs: on occasion, a Warao offering may take the form of an *aromu*, literally "bird" or "pet", which is in effect a symbolic human victim[19]. This is surely "idolatry" of the kind that fervent missionaries have searched high and low throughout Amazonia to find. These efforts were largely in vain, though it is interesting to note that one community accused of "idolatry" was Aruacay, the large multi-ethnic village which in the early colonial period was situated at the apex of the Delta, north-east of the site of the modern town of Barrancas[20].

The Warao in the Historical Context of the Orinoco Delta

We would argue that in order to understand the reasons for the Warao's distinctiveness, it is necessary to take into account their historical experience. The essential point to grasp here is that the Warao as they have been reported in the ethnographic literature of the twentieth century represent no more than a reliquary branch of a much more complex social world that existed in and around the Orinoco Delta immediately before and even for some time after the European invasion.

---

[19]See the narrative "How the Ancestor Spirit Kanobo came to Winikina" in Heinen 1988:73 which relates how a number of in-married in-laws had to be sacrificially killed in order for the Kanobo to come to the Winikina river and protect the community from illness.

[20]Ralegh (1968:58) refers to this village as "Arowacai", which is the Lokono name Aruakai meaning "jaguar island" (Boomert 1984:134). The site is also referred to by Fernández de Oviedo, somewhat earlier, in 1547, adding the name "Huayapari". He calls the people of Aruacay "idólatras" (1986[1547]:85).

Far from being a hang-over from the pre-Columbian situation, the present isolated circumstances of the Warao are the consequence of the effects of European intrusions into the lower Orinoco from earliest colonial times. This led initially to the re-orientation of the multi-ethnic network that flourished there and subsequently to its decay. Traces of this more complex network were still evident in the nineteenth century and can even be detected today.

It is clear from the reports of the earliest European chroniclers to pass through the Delta that the Warao were but one of a number of peoples of similar characteristics living in and around the region. Ralegh reports that when he passed through, in 1595, the Delta was inhabited by a group known variously to the Spanish as the Tibetibes, Tivitivas, or Tiuitiuas, all of which were terms denoting a particular species of bird. This is the migratory sand-piper (*Tringa flavipes*) which even today is known as the Tigüi-tigüe in Eastern Venezuela (de Schauensee & Phelps 1978:71-72)[21]. According to Ralegh, the Tiuitiuas were subdivided into two mutually hostile subgroups. One of these was the "Waraweetes", i.e. the *waharaowitu*, the "true Warao", whom he locates close the mouth of the Delta in exactly the spot where the Warao continue to live today. Ralegh refers to the other sub-division of the Tiuitiuas as the "Ciawani". This is the same group referred to as "Chaguanes" in Spanish colonial sources and as "Siawani" in more modern texts. Ralegh locates their communities along the Manamo and around the apex of the Delta, describing them as master canoe-builders. The description that he gives of their villages suggests that in general form and lay-out they were very similar to those of the mainstream-dwelling Warao of today.

Other groups of Waraoan-speaking peoples also inhabited the western shores of the Gulf of Paria into which the Manamo flows. These were referred to by a variety of terms including Tiuitiuas, Verotiani and Farautes. In what could be taken as a neat thumbnail sketch of the Warao themselves, the celebrated missionary linguist Tauste, who mostly worked among the Carib-speaking peoples of the Caribbean coast of Venezuela in the late seventeenth century, recorded that the Faraute lived in swampy areas in houses on stilts and made their living from fishing, hunting and the exploitation of the moriche palm (Rionegro 1918:78, Carrocera 1964:199)[22].

[21]In the coastal areas of the Delta, both *Tringa flavipes* and *Tringa melanoleuca* can be observed flying together.

[22]The Warao of the states of Sucre and northern Monagas refer to themselves to this very day as *Waraotu*.

There are grounds for suggesting that the Guayquerí were also a Waraoan-speaking people. In the early colonial period, the Guayquerí mainly inhabited the island of Margarita and adjacent stretches of the Paria peninsula. The great naturalist Alexander von Humboldt reportedly met the Guayquerí in 1799 and they told him that they considered their language to be a dialect of Warao but he fails to provide any linguistic evidence. Despite extensive searches by McCorkle (1965) and others subsequently, no significant corpus of Guayquerí vocabulary has ever been published. However some circumstantial evidence in support of this hypothesis may be found in a well-known feature of the folklore of Margarita and the adjacent coast of the mainland, which is precisely the area conventionally designated as the traditional homeland of the Guayquerí. This is the so-called "baile del guarandol", the dance of the sand-piper bird. This is the very same species (*Tringa flavipes*) with which - via the terms Tivetive, Tiuitiua etc. - the Siawani and the Warao were identified by Ralegh and other sixteenth century sources. Although stripped of any religious significance, the guarandol is also clearly the same dance as that still practised today by the Warao of Osibu Kahunoko area and named after the same species. Indeed the Warao name for this bird,*waharomu*, may even be of the same etymological origin as the name of the Margariteño dance[23].

What is even more intriguing is that the Warao of this area also provided Lavandero with a possible explanation for the identification of the Warao and the Siawani, and possibly the Guayquerí as well, with the sand-piper. Analyzing in detail one of the songs sung during the sand-piper dance, Lavandero discovered a play on words, in which a connection is made between the autonym of the Warao, which as explained above, is derived from *waha-arao*, literally, people (*-arao*) of the river's edge (*waha*) and *waharomu*, the Warao name for the sand-piper which breaks down into bird/small animal/being (*romu*) of the river's edge (*waha*) (Lavandero & Heinen 1986:11).

There is also abundant evidence linking the Warao or Waraoan-speaking peoples with south-central Trinidad. We have already alluded to the importance in Warao cosmology of the Naparima mountain which

---

[23]For a dissenting view from that offered here, see Ayala Lafée (1994-1996). On the basis of extant place names in Margarita, she concludes that the linguistic affiliation of the Guayquerí was Carib. Some further support for this view could be found in the 1620 report by Vázquez de Espinosa (republished in 1948) that the Guayquerí referred to a fire as *guapot*, a word of apparently Carib origin. However all these usages could be the result of the fact that the language of the coastal Caribs (Chaima, Cumanagoto etc.) was a trade language throughout the area. It is therefore conceivable that the Guayquerí were bilingual in their own Waraoan language and in coastal Carib.

dominates the southern approach to the island. Ralegh reports that the Siawani traded their excellent canoes for tobacco produced by the islanders. But there is also more recent historical evidence of a Warao presence there. Trinidadian oral tradition associates the southern Caroni Swamps and the Chaguanas River with an indigenous group known as the "Chaguanes" which, as noted above, was the Spanish colonial rendering of the term "Ciawani" used by Ralegh (see also Naipaul 1969:14). Indeed there are frequent reports of Warao either attacking or making up the membership of Spanish missions on Trinidad from the early seventeenth century onwards. Throughout the nineteenth and into the early twentieth century, there appear to have been Warao groups living on the island or coming for short periods to trade, visit Naparima or participate in a highly syncretic pilgrimage to a miraculous statue in the Catholic Church at Siparia, once the site of a Warao mission. Even today, according to Goldwasser (1994-1996), "a few Warao" still do come to Trinidad, building a hut or a shelter "for a few weeks or a few months" and joining local fishermen on their expeditions.

Although there remain uncertainties about the exact linguistic relationship between all these various fishing and gathering societies living in and around the Delta, it is clear that they had much in common from a cultural point of view. Moreover the colonial sources leave one in no doubt that they were in regular contact with one another. Even if these contacts were hostile on occasion, as suggested by Ralegh's description of the relationship between the Siawani and the Waraowitu, comparative examples from elsewhere in lowland South America indicate that warfare in Amerindian society is often no more than the politics of exchange pursued by other means and as such, may alternate with more peaceful modes of exchange such as trade, mutual feasting and even intermarriage (cf. Lévi-Strauss 1943, Descola 1993). Indeed in present-day Warao mythology, although the Siawani are sometimes represented as cannibals, they are also described as bringers of technical knowledge, including the all-important techniques of moriche palm starch processing (Wilbert 1964:141-143)[24].

Nor were the Waraoan or Warao-like groups the only inhabitants of this area. The early colonial sources also describe how groups of

---

[24]It seems very likely that as the Siawani were dispersed as a result of the effects of slaving and colonization, many would have taken refuge with the *Waharaowitu*, bringing their celebrated canoe-making skills with them. Keymis mentions an example of this, describing the relocation of a Siawani group from the upper Macareo to the mouth of the Arawao (Araguao) channel of the lower Delta (Keymis 1968 [1596]:24-25). Barral (1964: 270) met in the Mariusa area with a group of Warao calling themselves *Moyotu*, "boatbuilders," and with an oral tradition of hailing from the Tucupita (Macareo) river.

Arawak-speaking Lokono and the Carib-speaking Kariña as well as the Nepoyos, of uncertain linguistic affiliation, were all very important players in the social world of the lower Orinoco, often being involved in a struggle with one another and with the Waraon groups for control over the main arteries of trade. For example, after sailing up the main channel of the Orinoco in 1595, Keymis' expedition met a group of Lokono who had recently wrested control of the Manamo river from the Siawani, thereby establishing a trade route through to the Gulf of Paria from their settlement at Uracoa and from Aruacay.

Place names along the Aruabisi (Araguabisi)/Araguao channels, further to the east, suggest that these channels were also once an area of pronounced Lokono settlement. As such, they could have served as a trade route between Trinidad and the Sierra de Imataca where the large village of Sacupana flourished on the southern shore of the principal channel of the Orinoco in the nineteenth century. Not to be confused with the present-day Warao communities of the Sakobana channel, which are close to the mouth of the Orinoco, this village was of mixed criollo and Warao population when it was visited by the German traveller Appun in 1859. However it is very likely that the criollo population would have been of Lokono descent, at least in part (cf. Appun 1961:392,395; Heinen 1992:57,73).

The Warao also had contact with the Kariña, though this was less regular and more hostile than their contact with the Lokono. In addition to their villages along the Guanipa river (Karibo) to the north-west of the Delta (cf. Pelleprat 1965, originally published 1655), the Kariña also inhabited the upper reaches of the Cuyubini and the Serranía de Imataca to the south. From there, they would raid both Lokono and Warao communities, initially for garden produce and later for slaves which they would then sell to the Dutch colonists further to the east in Essequibo. To facilitate this slave trade, they settled an area close to the present site of Curiapo on the Rio Grande, the main channel of the lower Orinoco (cf. Boomert 1984, Whitehead 1988).

In short, the lower Orinoco in the early colonial period was clearly a point of intersection between a number of different ethnic groups engaged in various forms of exchange with one another, peaceful or war-like, permanent or intermittent. In this sense, the lower Orinoco appears to have been similar to a number of other such indigenous nodes of exchange in lowland South America, such as the middle Orinoco prior to the nineteenth century, or further afield, the Vaupés region, the upper Amazon or the upper Xingú to this day. As with the literature pertaining to these more modern examples (Gregor 1977, Gow 1991), the chronicles make many references to trade languages, polyglot individuals and multi-ethnic villages, therefore making the unravelling of the ethnic and linguistic panorama several centuries

later extremely difficult. However the relatively brief overview that we have given here is sufficient to demonstrate that the general situation of the Warao in the twentieth century, mostly isolated at the mouth of the Orinoco, with no more than sporadic contact with other indigenous groups, is not representative of their historical experience in earlier colonial periods, let alone in the pre-Columbian era.

Although their social institutions and systems of belief have no doubt changed to some degree in accordance with these new conditions of relative isolation from other indigenous groups, as well as through contact with non-Indians, it is our contention that in certain other respects, including in their system of kinship and marriage, Warao social life still reflects the social conditions of earlier times.

Kinship, Marriage and Ritual Relationships

Although a number of accounts of Warao kinship already exists in the anthropological literature, none is entirely satisfactory. The first modern account of Warao kinship is to be found in the pioneering study of Johannes Wilbert (1958). However, this was carried out more than forty years ago and is therefore informed by a theoretical orientation which would now be generally regarded as somewhat dated.

Also important has been the study published by Suárez (1971). Unfortunately this was based on fieldwork carried out in villages along the Sakobana (Sacupana) channel which, it has transpired, are atypical of the Warao as a whole in a number of regards. In contrast to most other Warao communities, who disapprove of highly endogamous marriage, the Sakobana people accept not only first cousin marriage but even marriage with a "real" sister's daughter. On the other hand, the Sakobana are less endogamous regarding their agglomeration as a whole than other Warao aggregates such as the Winikina or the Murako Warao, being quite open to inmoving individuals and families.

However, it is not these features which excite most comment from other Warao. Antonio Lorenzano, the recently deceased leader of the Morichi Sanuka settlement on the nearby Winikina river never tired of pointing to the distinctiveness of the Sakobana villages, whom he would refer to as "the people beyond the Arawao river", even though the Sakobanarao village of Diharu Kabanoko is located north of the Arawao where the inhabitants relocated after the death of *kobenahoro* Ricardo Torres. However, it was not so much their tendency to marry close relatives which he regarded as dubious, but rather their lack of a strict mother-in-law avoidance taboo, as well as of a firm rule of post-marital uxorilocal residence.

The Sakobana people can also be distinguished from neighbouring Warao groups on the basis of a mixed array of cultural features,

including such things as styles of dress, the emphasis on their shamanic *duhunoko* stools, the kind of fermented drink that they consume, and certain aspects of their beliefs about the postmortem activities of spirits. They were also the first Warao groups in the central Delta to adopt the cultivation of "ocumo chino[25].

Being apparently unaware of this atypicality of the Sakobana people and comparing her data with those collected among control groups elsewhere, Suárez was led to conclude that in Warao society as a whole, one could detect "a structural change... from a two-section system of symmetric prescriptive alliance towards a cognatic and preferential system" (Suárez 1971:115). Data gathered more widely suggest that Suárez was certainly right that the Warao system of kinship and marriage generally is cognatic, in the sense that kinship ties are traced with equal interest through both male and female links.

It is also preferential, in that while there is no positive rule of marriage, there are nevertheless clear preferences on the part of male Ego as to choice of spouse. However there is no evidence for the existence generally among the Warao of a prior "two-section system of symmetric prescriptive alliance" to use the terminology employed by Suárez, but which in the terms we have chosen to use in this paper, would be described as a system based on the principles of the canonical dravidianate (see above 'Introduction' and Henley 1996).

Given the fact that there is a constant variation in the detail of kinship and marriage arrangements as one moves around from one Warao region to another, it is not possible to say that there is a single, generic Warao system. However much closer to the Warao norm is the system practised by the people of the Winikina and adjacent channels with whom Heinen has been working on a regular basis since 1966.

[25]One can only speculate about the reasons for this atypicality. It may be related to the fact that the communities of the Sakobana channel have strong links with the Amacuro and Río Grande area, with its pronounced contingent of peoples of Lokono descent. These links derive from the fact that part of the Sakobana population migrated from there at the beginning of the twentieth century. Biological and demographic studies have shown that the Sakobana people show a higher incidence than is normal among the Warao of certain blood-groups that are relatively common among the Lokono (see Layrisse & Wilbert 1966, Heinen 1996). There may also have been some Siawani influence on these communities on account of the migrations in the late sixteenth century described by Keymis. However neither Siawani nor Lokono influences would provide any direct explanation for the atypically endogamous marriage alliance arrangements of the Sakobana. On the contrary, the general hypothesis advanced in this article would suggest that contacts with these groups, both of which were or are mainstream dwellers with a complex network of social and political relationships, would have encouraged a more exogamous, iroquoianate system of marriage. The latter is indeed the case, endogamy at the center being the complement of pronounced porousness of subtribal boundaries (cf. Heinen et al. 1980:52).

Heinen has published a number of accounts of Winikina Warao kinship (e.g. Heinen 1980, Heinen & Caballero 1992), but these have been in languages other than English and appear not to have had the necessary circulation among lowland South American specialists.

As a consequence of these various limitations of the first-hand sources, the general picture that emerges of the Warao kinship system in the comparative literature is rather confused. Some authors have attributed the apparently contradictory data to the fact that Warao kinship is in a state of transition from one system to another (e.g. Needham 1974, who had heavily influenced the preceding paper by Suárez), while others have surmised that the ethnographic account is simply incomplete. Others again have been led to draw erroneous comparative conclusions (e.g. Hornborg 1988).

In this section of the article therefore, our immediate objective will be to provide a descriptive account of Warao kinship, based on data gathered by Heinen over a thirty year period in the villages along the Winikina channel. As we shall show, the Winikina Warao practice a highly distinctive form of secondary marriage. But other than this, their norms of kinship and marriage come close to the iroquoianate ideal-type as described, inter alii, by Trautmann & Barnes (in press) and Viveiros de Castro (in press). After this demonstration, we will go on to consider how kinship and marriage relate to alliance strategies generally as well as to ritual relationships, which are also very important in Warao society.

Consanguineal nomenclature

In Figure 1, consanguineal terms are presented for both male and female Ego. From these diagrams, it should be clear that while there is a bifurcate principle operating in G+1, distinguishing Ego's father's siblings from his/her mother's siblings, this is not reproduced in G.0. Here one finds a "generational" or "hawaiian" pattern, i.e. all female consanguineal relatives are classified in the same category as Ego's sister, while all male relatives are classified in the same category as Ego's brother. In this regard, the Warao system deviates from the canonical iroquoianate form in which there is a clear discrimination of cross from parallel relatives in G.0. However in deviating in this way, the Warao system conforms with one of the most common variants on the iroquoianate system, both in North and South America (cf. Henley 1996:26).

In G-1, as far as male Ego is concerned, the offspring of all those classified in the same category as Ego's sister (which includes both parallel and cross female cousins) are referred to by the single term

FIGURE 1A
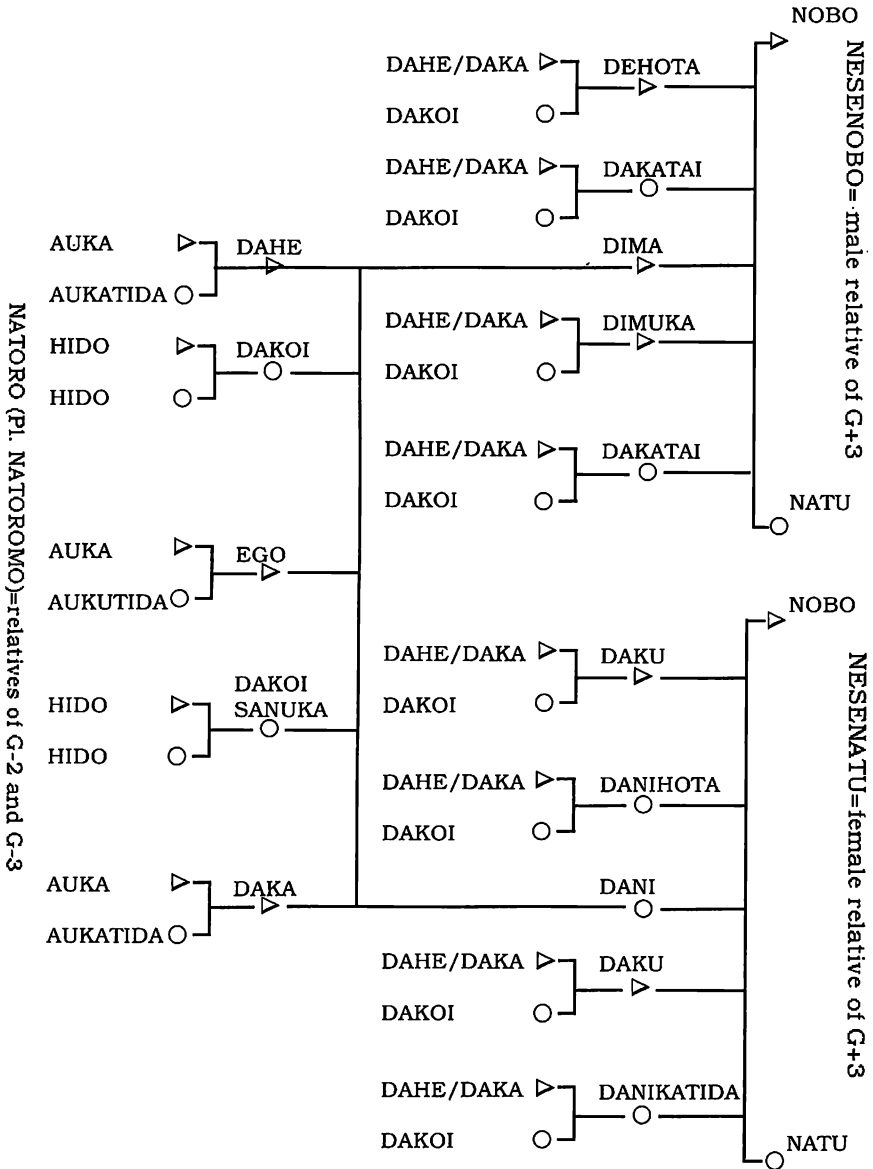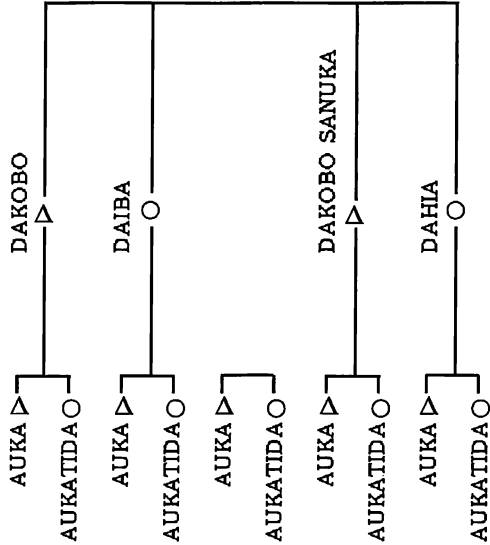## WINIKINA WARAO RELATIONSHIP TERMS, MALE EGO

hido or *hido sanuka*, regardless of sex[26]. By this means, a sister's children are distinguished from the offspring of all those classified in the same category as Ego's brother (also including both parallel and cross male relatives). These children are referred to as *auka*, if male and *aukatida*, if female. In this regard, the Warao terminology conforms to the pattern which was identified, famously, by Lounsbury (1968) as

[26]The use of the term *sanuka*, "little", is not consistent in Winikina Warao relationship terminology. Sometimes it denotes a fixed kinship relationship, as in the term *dami sanuka*, which denotes a wife's brother and which is contrasted with the other brother-in-law relationship, a sister's husband, which is referred to by the term *damitu*. In this case, the *sanuka* suffix is used regardless of relative age of Alter to Ego, or of one brother-in-law to another. In other instances however, *sanuka* does denote relative age statuses. This is the case, for example, with the distinction between *dakoi* and *dakoi sanuka*, denoting elder and younger sister respectively for male Ego. But *sanuka* can also be used in conjunction with another relationship term in an entirely contingent manner to denote relative age when the occasion requires it. Such is the case with this term *hido*, used by male Ego to refer to a sister's children.

the most significant diagnostic feature of the difference between an iroquoianate and a dravidianate system. However, in the case of female Ego, the Warao terminology deviates from the canonical pattern in that she classifies all relatives of G-1 by sex only, as *auka* or *aukatida,* regardless of whether they are offspring of same sex or cross sex siblings.

Another distinctive feature of the Warao system is the importance of elder/younger distinctions. In G.0, same sex siblings and cousins, all of whom are referred to by a single term, are distinguished by both male and female Ego on a relative age basis. To do so, they use four distinct terms: two exclusive to male Ego (*dahe* = elder brother, *daka* = younger brother) And two exclusive to female Ego (*daiba* = elder sister, *dahia* = younger sister). Cross sex siblings and cousins are also distinguished on the basis of relative age but in this case, each sex only has one term, which is qualified in each case by a diminutive, *sanuka*: thus in male Ego's case, *dakoi* designates the elder sister/cousin and *dakoi sanuka,* the younger; while in female Ego's case, *dakobo* designates the elder brother/cousin and *dakobo sanuka* the younger. This is a common enough pattern in Amazonia. Much more unusual is the systematic distinction between parents' same sex siblings on the basis of relative age, though in this case, both male and female Ego use the same terms.

Terms for consanguineal relatives in G+/-2 and G+/-3 are modestly elaborated. In G+2 and G+3, they are distinguished only by sex while in G-2 and G-3, they are referred to by a single term, *natoro,* regardless of sex or lineal relationship with Ego.

Marriage rules

First marriages are regulated by a negative marriage rule which prohibits marriage to a close relative. The exact definition of "close" is often a matter of negotiation, but marriage to a first cousin is certainly regarded as too close. Actual siblings, parents' siblings and the children of siblings as well as first cousins are similarly prohibited, as are any direct lineal relatives in the generations above and below. Despite these restrictions, there is at least one example of a first cross cousin marriage in Winikina. But even now, thirty years after it was contracted, it is still talked about in hushed whispers of disapproval. Nor does it make any difference, in the eyes of local Warao observers, that the respective parents through whom the couple were related as cousins were only half-siblings to one another[27].

---

[27]Another such marriage, equally disapproved of, existed in the downriver Winikina village of "España" (Hebu Wabanoklo).

Under traditional circumstances, arrangements are made by the parents in the case of first marriages[28]. The preferred form of marriage for male Ego is with a woman who lives nearby but who falls outside the circle of prohibited relatives. The chances are that this will be a second cousin, but a more distantly related woman, or indeed one with whom there is no known relationship at all is equally desirable, provided she lives nearby as a member of the same agglomeration. The reason for this preference is simple: the rule of post-marital residence is based on the principle of permanent uxorilocality and, as in so many lowland South American societies, an in-married son-in-law is generally in an unenviable position. Firstly, he is generally very isolated, and is subject to much teasing and ribaldry. This isolation is reflected even in the etymology of the term for son-in-law,*dawa*, which is closely related to *dawana*, meaning literally "without relatives" and which is also the term used to refer to orphans. Secondly, he has to work very hard for his in-laws. To "repay the skin of our daughter" - *kaukatida ahoronobe*, as the Warao say - a son-in-law must provide canoe, house and garden for his in-laws (Kalka 1995). He must also observe various taboos in his relationship with them. The more distant his origin, the worse these are likely to be. Therefore if a man cannot find a woman of the appropriate category within his own village, which is not usually possible, he will make every effort to find one in a village nearby with which his family already has links and within the loose agglomeration to which his own village belongs.

For this reason, men have a strong preference for marrying into a village where an elder brother or cousin has already married and ideally into the same household. Indeed cases of sets of two or more brothers married with sets of sisters are quite common in the genealogies collected by Heinen. There are Warao villages where almost the entire

[28]Following the establishment of boarding schools by the Capuchin missions in the 1920s, first marriages began to be contracted through the auspices of the missionaries rather than those of parents. For many years, it was mission policy not to allow boarders to leave the school and return to live permanently in their communities until they had married. The rationale of this policy was not merely to prevent sinful activities between those who remained unmarried but also, and perhaps more importantly, to ensure the propagation of the Faith through the establishment of fully Christian couples. These marriages often undermined traditional Warao norms both of marriageability and of post-marital affinal obligations, particularly that of post-marital residence. Even so, they could be very durable. One woman related to us how, in order to escape from the mission at Araguaimujo in the 1930s, she was obliged to marry a particular boy whom she did not like, simply because he was the only one left. But by the time the husband died a few years ago, the marriage had lasted for more than fifty years. The missionaries abandoned the policy of enforced marriages in the 1960s and the boarding schools themselves were closed down in the 1970s, except for a few girls staying with the nuns.

male population has married in from a particular neighboring settlement, while most of the male relatives of its women have moved into a third village.

However, although the ideology of exchange associated with Warao marriage thus promotes the re-iteration of previous alliances, it is a re-iteration based on "replication" rather than "reciprocation". That is, while each man in a cohort of brothers marrying into a cohort of sisters replicates the marriage of his brother(s), there is no sense that his wife's brothers then have some sort of priority claim on his sisters. A man is considered indebted to his brother-in-law when he takes his sister as wife, but in Warao society, this is not a debt that can be cancelled by offering a sister or a daughter in return. Instead, it is a debt that should be repaid through offering support in economic, political and ritual endeavours. "Sister-exchange" is not precluded but is regarded as merely a contingent matter that can happen de facto without anyone making a particular issue of it.

In this sense, the Warao system is quite different from the canonical dravidianate which is usually associated with an ideology of reciprocation realized through the intermarriage of mixed sets of siblings in one generation and then reiterated through the effective exchange of their children through first cross cousin marriage in the next (cf. Henley 1996:11). Nevertheless, as we shall see below, when we come to consider particular real-life instances, the Warao system does allow for the development of a series of reciprocal exchanges of matrimonial partners between two or more family lines, albeit not within a single generation but over the course of several.

An important further feature of Warao matrimonial alliance is the practise of polygyny. Despite the opposition of the Capuchin missionaries, it remains common for senior men to have more than one wife. In the past, some men were reputed to have as many as four or five, but, if true, these were very exceptional cases. Polygyny takes several forms among the Warao but the most approved form involves marriage between a man and his wife's brother's daughter. In the ideal case, such marriages take place when the first wife, on getting older, feels she needs help with domestic chores and so therefore asks her brother to provide her with a daughter who will, in effect, become her husband's second wife. The latter is thereafter referred to as tekoro, literally the "helper" of the first wife, whose status remains superior.

As in the case of intermarried sibling sets, this form of second marriage can be said to be reiterative in the sense that it replicates the alliance established when the husband married his first wife. But here too, there is no reciprocal element. That is, this form of secondary marriage is not associated with any notion of reciprocal obligation to the first wife's brother for ceding his daughter. And yet, as we shall see,

over several generations, this form of second marriage can also contribute to the development of a series of reciprocal exchanges between particular family lines. This form of secondary marriage is highly unusual and could not be considered an integral feature of any ideal-typical model of the iroquoianate model. In the Warao system, it operates in tandem with another distinctive feature of the system, namely that a young man looking for a wife should consider first any available widows in his own or neighbouring villages. Until recently, this was a strongly held view; though the older people grumble that the young men of today appear to have no respect for it.

Due to high rates of mortality and also the practice of *tekoro* marriage, in which the wife is usually much younger than the husband, the widows available at any given moment in a village may include those who are still young, in their early twenties, say, and thus of approximately the age at which a man might first think to get married. But as often as not, the available widows will be considerably older than the would-be suitor, possibly even past child-bearing age. In these circumstances, it is considered reasonable for a man to ask his wife to find a *tekoro* second wife for him within a relatively short period of the first marriage. In the ideal case, he will then support both women, but there have been rare cases, when the older wife was already past child-bearing age, that she was abandoned by her husband who then went to live in his new wife's settlement.

Other secondary forms of marriage which occur with a certain frequency are cases of sororal polygyny and of marriage with both mother and daughter. Both forms often arise when a woman has been widowed. If there is no other available man, a woman's sister's husband is under some moral obligation to provide for her economically. This is bound to develop into a full marital relationship. Similarly, a man who marries a widow who has a daughter by her deceased husband is under an obligation to provide for the daughter as well as for the mother. Provided the deceased husband was not a close consanguineal relative of the new husband, the Warao consider there to be no obstacle if latter should choose to take the daughter as well as the mother as a wife. Indeed this is regarded as a perfectly acceptable means of finding a *tekoro* for the first wife.

Affinal nomenclature

As is typical of iroquoianate systems, the Warao system has a relatively elaborate set of terms for affinal relatives. These are given for both male and female Ego in Figure 2. In general, the male terms show greater elaboration. This is probably due to the simple fact that given the norm of permanent uxorilocality, women in Winikina have much

FIGURE 2
WINIKINA AFFINAL TERMS, MALE
EGO REFERENCE TERMS
[VOCATIVE TERMS]
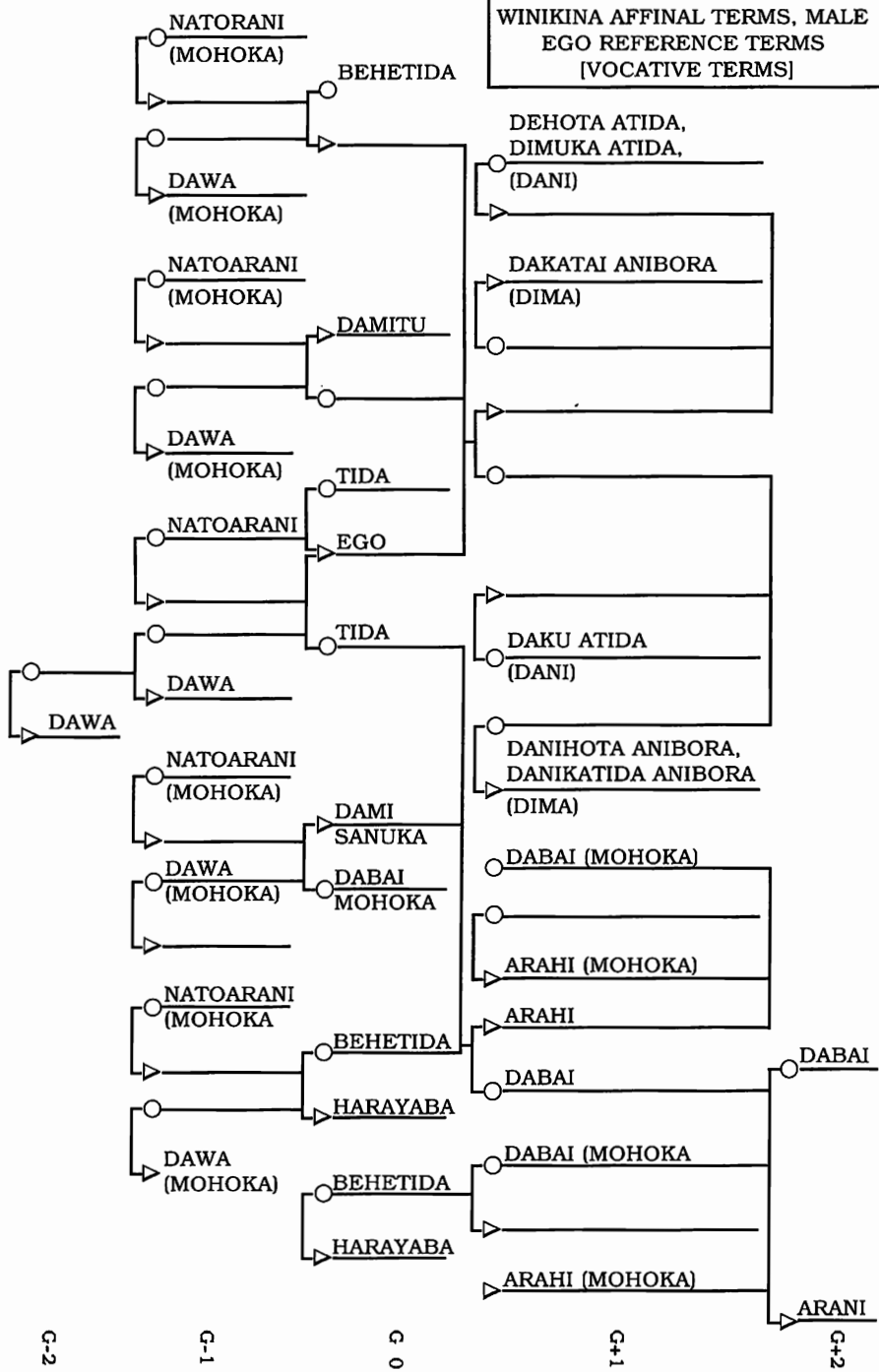
FIGURE 2B
WINIKINA AFFINAL TERMS, FEMALE EGO
REFERENCE TERMS [VOCATIVE TERMS]

G-2   G-1   G₀   G+1

[AUKA]
(MOHOKA)

[AUKATIDA]
(MOHOKA)

BAYARATU

ARAHI
(MOHOKA)

ARAHI

DABAI

DAWA MOHOKA

DABAI
(MOHOKA)

[AUKA]

[AUKATIDA]

DAHI SANUKA

ARAHI
(MOHOKA)

TEKORO

NATORANI

NIBORA

DEHOTA ATIDA,
DIMUKA ATIDA
[DANI]

EGO
HANOKO AROTU

DAWA

DAWA

NATORANI
(MOHOKA)

DAKATAI ANIBORA
[DIMA]

DAHI

DAWA
(MOHOKA)

NATORANI
(MOHOKA)

DAKU ATIDA
[DANI]

BAYARATU

DANIHOTA ANIBORA
DANIKATIDA ANIBORA,
[DIMA]

DAWA
(MOHOKA)
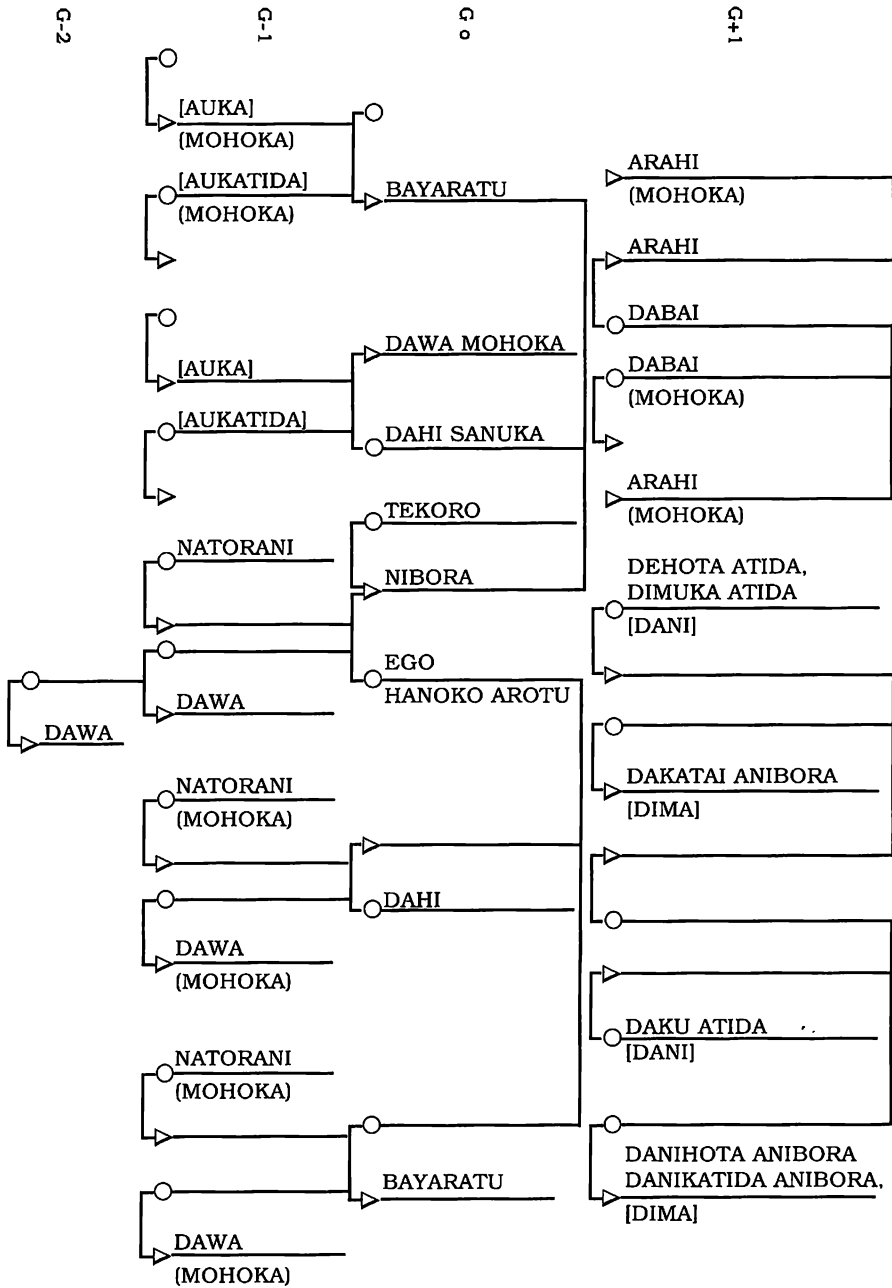
less day-to-day contact with their affines than do men. But other than this difference in degree of elaboration, the two systems of affinal relationship terminology obey much the same general principles. Should any doubt still remain, these affinal terms establish beyond doubt that the Warao system is in no sense dravidianate.

However it is important to point out that affinal nomenclature is used mainly to express more formal relationships of public life. For most day-to-day purposes, consanguineal terms are used whenever possible. Given the "hawaiian" generational pattern in G.0, the system can readily be extended to distant relatives. All siblings and all cousins are referred to by the same "brother" and "sister" terms and they are readily extended to other generations. As one Warao explained: "If my father calls an individual *dahe*, "elder brother", I call him *dehota*, "father's elder brother". In this way, households of uncertain relationship to Ego and even entirely unrelated friends often come to be addressed in daily life by sibling terms.

Nevertheless, for formal purposes, there is a core of affinal terms used both in reference and address, in the latter case generally with the addition of the personal pronoun suffixes /a/ or /ma/. The most important of these are those that refer to a spouse's actual parents and siblings, as well as to a daughter or grand-daughter's husband. In theory, a son's wife is also an Alter to whom an affinal term denoting respect is due but as a result of the rule of permanent post-marital uxorilocality, Ego rarely has contact with an affinal relative of this kind.

In G+1, the terms *arahi* and *dabai* denote father- and mother-in-law respectively. They are clearly distinguished both from the terms for parents' siblings, be they same sex or cross sex, as well as from those used to designate spouses of parental siblings. Thus in complete contrast to the pattern in a dravidianate system, the term for mother's brother is not equated with spouse's father, nor with that for father's sister's husband. Similarly the term for mother's brother's wife is not equated with that for father's sister. All immediate consanguineal relatives of male Ego's parents-in-law, in more senior generations as well as in their own, are referred to by the same father- and mother-in-law terms, i.e. *arahi* and *dabai*, according to sex. These terms may also carry the optional adjectival qualifier *mohoka*, which could be translated as "potential"[29].

---

[29]The connotations of the term *mohoka* are somewhat ambiguous. It is a derivation of the phrase *moho ahoka* which actually means "hidden in the hand". As such, it is also used to refer to the sleight of hand practised by a *bahanarotu* shaman. For this reason, it is never used in the presence of the person to whom it alludes. A nice example of the usage of *mohoka* is provided by that of two co-wives alluding to a third woman with whom their husband was having an extra-marital affair. "*Tai katekoro mohoka*", they said, literally "she is our 'potential co-wife'".

Although the reiterative marriage of sibling sets is a preferred form of alliance, there is no automatic correspondence between the reference terms for father's brother and mother's sister's husband, nor between those for father's brother's wife and mother's sister. Indeed reference terms for all parental siblings' spouses are merely descriptive while in the vocative form, relatives of these categories are generally subsumed into consanguineal categories and addressed by the terms used for father (*dima*) or mother (*dani*), as appropriate according to sex[30].

In G.0, male Ego uses a single term, *behetida*, of all female affines of the same generation as himself, regardless of whether they are wife's sisters or brother's wives. The only exception is wife's brother's wife who, due to the preferred form of secondary marriage to a wife's brother's daughter, is therefore a *dabai mohoka*, a potential mother-in-law.

On the other hand, male Ego differentiates between his brothers-in-law on the basis of his affinal link with them: *damitu* is a sister's husband while *dami sanuka* is a wife's brother. An interesting term used for affines of this generation is *harayaba*, meaning literally, "arms of the same shoot", but which is translated by Warao into Spanish as "concuñado", i.e. co-brother-in-law. This is used among the men married into a given community, who, on account of the rule of permanent uxorilocality, may find themselves as co-residents for most of their adult lives. In the Sakobana villages, where post-marital uxorilocality is less strictly enforced and some women go to live in their husbands' villages, the term may also be used between co-sisters-in-law. In most other villages however, Warao women have very little contact with women other than close consanguines and therefore do not have a use for such a term[31].

By convention, the *harayaba* relationship is a very positive and supportive one. Among men, it is also important in an economic sense, since it is the group of in-married sons-in-law who, in performing bride-service at the behest of their common father-in-law, act as the principal male contributors to the village's subsistence production.

[30]Suárez' contention (1971:86) that FB=MZH, MB=FZH, MZ=FBW and FZ=MBW, which is the pattern of equations typical of a dravidianate system, has been shown by subsequent research to be definitely in error.

[31]Additionally, one might note that *harayaba* has the same etymological root as *kayaba*, meaning "of the same branch" and which is used to refer to relatives of the same sex and generation as Ego. The term kayabauka is sometimes used today to refer to the child of an unknown father and means literally "child of a group of the same branch", i.e. a given group of brothers, real or classificatory. The range of these terms varies considerably from sub-group to sub-group. In some sub-groups, the term *dawayaba* is used instead.

Furthermore, here too one finds a principle, if not of relative seniority, at least of rank order: for the son-in-law married to the oldest daughter (i.e. not necessarily himself the oldest) is referred to as *dawa awahabara*, "principal son-in-law" and he is the one who is supposed to receive instructions from the father-in-law, via his mother-in-law and his wife. He then transmits these to his *harayaba* and ensures that they are carried out.

Outside of the Sakobana communities, there is no female equivalent of the "concuñado" term. There is also a minor difference in comparison to the male Ego terminology in the pattern of terms used by female Ego for spouse's siblings. As in the case of male Ego, cross sex affines of this generation are referred to by a single term. In the female Ego case, this is *bayaratu*, which is used whether Alter be a sister's husband or a husband's brother. But whereas male Ego differentiates same sex affines of G.0 on the basis of "side" (sister's husband, *damitu*, being distinguished from wife's brother, *dami sanuka*), female Ego differentiates her same sex G.0 affines on the basis of relative age. Thus those of the same age or older than Ego are referred to as *dahi*, while those who are younger are referred to as *dahi sanuka*[32].

There is one notable rupture within the generally simple pattern of affinal terms for female Ego in G.0. This pertains to the husband's sister's husband category and again relates to the preferred pattern of secondary marriage by a man to this wife's brother's daughter. As a result of this preference, a husband's sister's husband may marry female Ego's daughter and thereby become her son-in-law. He is therefore referred to as *dawa mohoka*.

In G-1, both male and female Ego tend to address their spouses' siblings' children as if they were their own children. Thus female Ego calls both her husband's brothers' children and her husband's sisters' children, *auka*, if male, and *aukatida*, if female. These are the terms that female Ego uses not only for her own children but also for those of both her brothers and her sisters. For male Ego, the pattern is similar insofar as his wife's sister's children are concerned: boys will be addressed as *auka* and girls as *aukatida*. Due to the rule of permanent uxorilocality, these children are likely be living in the same community as him. Furthermore, they will be the offspring of his *harayaba*, his co-brothers-in-law, with whom he has a conventionally close relationship. It is perhaps not surprising therefore that he should call these children

---

[32]It is not certain whether this usage of *dahi*, denoting a same generation female affine for female Ego is a linguistic cognate of *(a)rahi*, denoting a father-in-law for both male and female Ego or whether it is simply a homonym. Both terms seem to contain the root *dau* (pronounced *dahi* in some areas), tree trunk.

by the same terms as he uses for his own children. Also this usage is obviously the reciprocal of the use of a parental term to address a parent's sibling's spouse.

Otherwise all affinal male relatives in junior generations, i.e. unrelated Alters married to those whom Ego refers to as *aukatida*, "daughter", or even as *natoro*, "(female) grandchild", are referred to simply as dawa, if male. Of course, the corresponding term for affinal female relatives, natoarani, is heard less often due to the uxorilocal residence rule, which means that a son's wife is generally to be found living in another village.

Affinal Relationships and Reiterative Exchange

As we observed above, the structure of Warao relationship terminology does not lend itself immediately to a highly reiterative network of marital alliances such as is characteristic of a dravidianate system. Although one finds a form of bifurcation in both G+1, as expressed in the distinction between mother's siblings and father's siblings, and in G-1, as expressed in the male Ego distinction between own children and sister's children, in neither case is this associated with any automatic principle of affinity. Meanwhile the prohibition on first cousin marriage, including cross as well as parallel cousins, prevents an alliance relationship established in one generation from being passed on to the next. Nevertheless, the detailed examination of genealogies indicates that in practice Warao communities can under modern circumstances sometimes be composed of two or more family lines between which there has been extensive and systematic intermarriage.

In Figure 3, we reproduce the genealogy of a substantial proportion of the village of Morichito on the Winikina river. The initial circumstances of this village were unusual in that the founder generation consisted of two brothers, Estanislao and Silvano Rojas, both from Winikina itself, and of Antonio Lorenzano to whom they had no close consanguineal connection since he had migrated into the area from the Soboroho moriche groves further to the north-west. All these men brought wives whom they had met at the Capuchin mission. The wives had no close consanguineal relationship to one another either, although they had all come originally from the same Sakobana agglomeration.

Having brought outside women into the Winikina agglomeration, the three men found themselves in a slightly suspect situation. They therefore decided to band together and establish a new settlement across the river from the main Winikina village. The name of the village,

FIGURE 3
REITERATIVE ALLIANCE IN MORICHITO
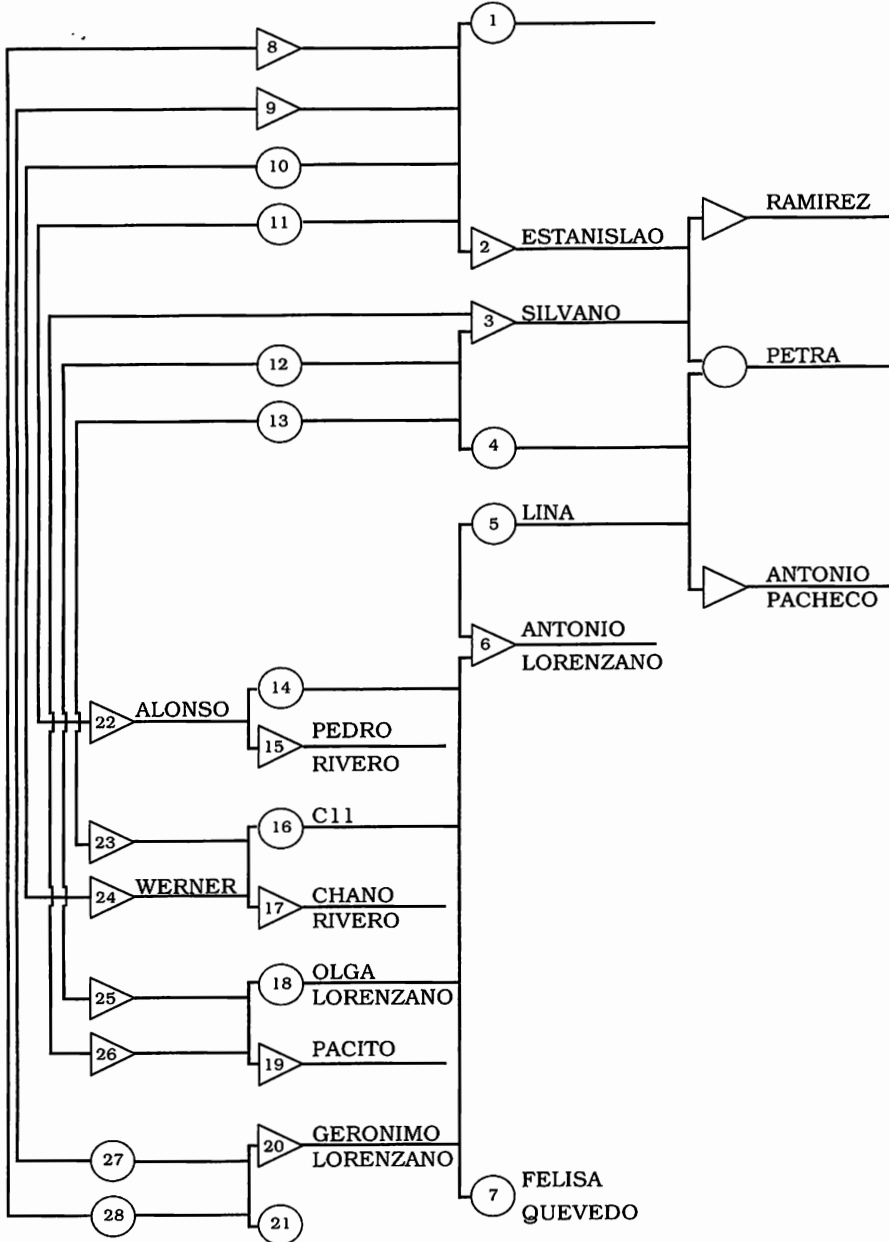
Morichito, which in Warao is Ohidu Sanuka or Morichi Sanuka, was taken from a little moriche palm that stood alone at the site. In order to establish ties within his new neighbourhood, Antonio Lorenzano, a man of great political astuteness, then took a second wife, Lina. Not only was she a daughter of one of the leading men of the main Winikina settlement, but she was also the half sister of Lorenzano's two co-founders, Estanislao and Silvano.

If these marriages had taken place within an already established village, it is quite likely that the founding members would have been more closely related to one another and that this would have inhibited certain marriages in ensuing generations. However, bearing this qualification in mind, the genealogy in Figure 3 shows how the Warao system allows a reiterative pattern of alliances to be built up within a fairly narrowly circumscribed network of relatives, albeit on the basis of replicative rather than reciprocal exchanges. That is, there are no cases of "sister-exchange" nor of cross cousin marriage. Instead one finds several cases of two brothers, real or classificatory, marrying two sisters, real or classificatory. Thus the brothers (8) & (9) have married sisters (27) & (28); the sisters (10) & (11) have married (22) & (24) who being the sons of full sisters are classificatory brothers to one another; (23) & (25) are also classificatory brothers, being the offspring of women who are full sisters to one another, and they have married two women (12) & (13) who are full sisters themselves. Meanwhile (3), the father of these latter two women has taken the sister, (26) of one of their two husbands (25) as a second wife. This last case is the only one in which there might have been some element of reciprocity involved.

Although there are two cases of polygynous marriage in this diagram, neither conforms exactly with the preferred form of marriage with a wife's brother's daughter. In Figure 4, we give a real-life example in order to illustrate how this preferential form can be associated with the re-iteration of alliances within a relatively circumscribed network of kin. However, it should be noted that in contrast with a canonical dravidianate system, this re-iteration requires a minimum of three descent lines in order to work, as this diagram makes clear. In this particular case, (4) took (7), the daughter of the couple (1) & (2), as a second wife. In actual fact, his first wife (3) was not the "real" sister of his second wife's father, as she should have been in the ideal case. In reality, she was a wife brought by (4) from the mission in which they had both been borders as young people, and she was completely unrelated to (2), the second wife's father. Nevertheless, a posteriori, this relationship was construed as a cross sex sibling relationship, thereby conforming it to the ideal. Later, (2) also took on a second marriage, this being with (9), the daughter of the couple (5) & (6). This

FIGURE 4

REITERATIVE ALLIANCE THROUGH SECONDARY MARRIAGE
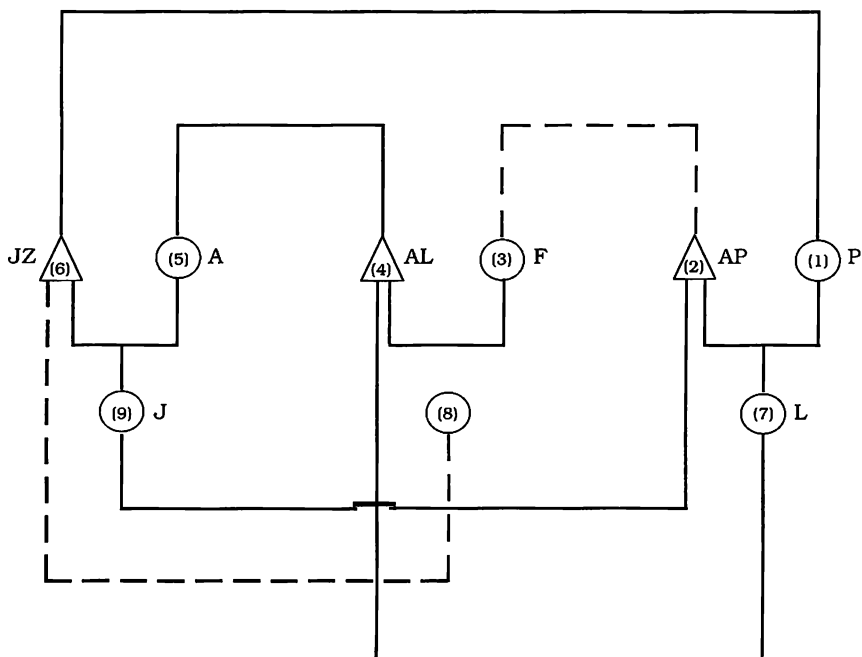
alliance did conform perfectly with the ideal secondary form, since (6), the father of the bride was the half brother of (1), the first wife of (2). At the same time, this union re-iterated the earlier alliance established by the marriage of (4) and (2)'s daughter (7). This was because the mother of (2)'s second wife was the sister of (4). This web of alliances could have been re-inforced further if (6) had taken (4)'s daughter (8) as his second wife, but in fact, he chose not to do so because he was already rather old and had survived three previous wives!

However, it must be said that situations like the ones described in these figures are not common. Nor do they represent an emic ideal model to which the Warao aspire. In effect, the figures merely provide an example of what can occur, given the rules of Warao marriage and post-marital residence. More generally, it remains true that the possibilities for reiterative alliance networks among the Warao are severely constrained by the prohibition on marriage with any Alter within first cousin range in Ego's generation, and on the parents or children of any Alters within that range. This gives the Warao systems of kinship and marriage a decidedly centrifugal character, obliging young men in all but the largest communities to look outside their own

communities for wives and, in accordance with the post-marital residence norms, to become permanently resident there. Although the members of the Morichito community have been able to build up a locally endogamous network of alliances, this has been due to the unusual absence of consanguineous ties between the founding members of the community. In the generations following on from those represented in the diagram, it is very likely that a significant proportion of the young men will need to leave the community in order to marry in accordance with traditional Warao norms. This centrifugality, we would argue, represents an important aspect of a system in which a premium is placed on the diversification and dispersion of alliances between communities.

Ritual Relationships

The links established through kinship and marriage are generally strongly reinforced for any individual Warao by a number of other close ties based on ritual and fictive relationships. These are reminiscent of those reported among the indigenous peoples of central Brazil, where ritual relationships have in some sense displaced kinship relationships as the primary means of reciprocal exchange (cf. Maybury Lewis 1979, Kaplan [Overing] 1981). Indeed for the Warao also, these ritual relationships can often overshadow kinship relationships in day-to-day matters.

Among the Warao, ritual relationships begin at birth. When a child is born, he/she immediately acquires a ritual relationship with the mid-wife who cuts the umbilical cord and bathes the child for the first time. By definition a non-relative, the midwife becomes the child's *manisatu* (in Winikina, literally "the one who took me out") or *manabukatu* (in the Hobure-Guayo area, "the one who cut my umbilical cord") while the child becomes *hoarabita*, "the one bathed". The midwife is regarded as a spiritual mother of the child and in ritual contexts, she is referred to as *hoaratu*[33].

---

[33]In his celebrated dictionary, Padre Barral reverses the meaning of the term when he glosses *nabukatu* as "*ahijado*" (1979:206, 322). This is probably a mistake and elsewhere in the dictionary, he appears to contradict himself (1979:284). We would argue that Barral is also mistaken when he claims (1979:206) that *hoaratu* can be broken down into *hoa awaratu*, literally "the one who chants *hoa* encantations", and for this reason associates the spiritual mother role with witchcraft. For us, *hoaratu* has nothing to do with *hoa* encantations, being derived rather from *ho*, "water" and *a-ratu* "its agent".

A Winikina girl acquires further ritual relatives at the time of her first menstruation. These relatives are known as *ahotarani*, literally "mother of the blood" and *ahotarima*, "father of the blood". While there is generally no more than one woman principal for any individual girl, she will have a number of helpers. Similarly, while one man may act as the girl's principal male ritual relative, he too may have several helpers. These ritual relatives help in the preparations for the ritual associated with menarche which, for the Warao, is much more important than the marriage ceremony. In effect, they act as the ritual sponsors of the girl and in this case too, they are not supposed to have any close family relationship to the girl.

After seclusion for the time of her first period, the girl is seated on a bench or log, with her hands covering her face (*amu mahaya*). She is then bathed and her hair cut short before her head is painted red with onoto. This rite of passage effects the girl's change of status from *anibaka*, "girl" to that of nubile young woman, *iboma*. Once her hair has grown again, the girl can marry. Sometime after the ritual her father or husband makes an offering of moriche bread to the leading *ahotarima* who then distributes it among the others. In return, the *ahotarima* club together and make a return gift of money or beads. After the event, the *ahotarima* must observe a speaking taboo in relation to the girl which is similar to that which characterizes the relationship of a man to his mother-in-law. They refer to each other as *mahotuarima* and *mahotukatida* and will treat each other as *dawa mohoka*, "potential son-in-law" and *dabai mohoka*, "potential mother-in-law" (cf. Turrado Moreno 1945:272; Suárez 1968:207)[34]. A specifically affinal relationship is thus established between the "godparents" and the young woman.

Another form of ritual relationship, now no longer practiced, was based on ritualised wife-lending during the *habi sanuka* festivities. By prior agreement, a man would spend the night dancing and later having sexual intercourse with a woman whom he would refer to as *mamuse*. The following day, he would have to provide a gift to the woman's husband. This gift was known as the *horo amoara*, the "payment of the skin", a phrase which echoes the conventional rationalization for the

[34]This rite has lapsed in the Guayo/Hobure area, as well as in Sakobana. Suárez collected her information about the ritual in Winikina, her 1968 book being a collage of several Warao areas. Heinen has watched such a ceremony in Winikina, but even there, it is today a rather remote memory. Amazingly, it is still practiced by the Warao of the Western Delta in such areas as caño Pedernales, close to the state capital of Tucupita

bride-service duties expected of a son-in-law. In the ideal case, this would form the basis for a life-long friendship between the two men[35].

Finally, one also finds life-long relationships established between a sick person suffering from a serious illness and the shaman who cures her or him. This is another hierarchical relationship in which the patient is considered to be in the debt of the shaman and under an obligation to render various economic services to him, and to support him in political and ritual matters. The relationship is construed as being between an *aidamo*, literally "chief, leader", and *neburatu*, "dependent minor".

Summary and Conclusion

In this paper, we have shown that Warao system of kinship and marriage, at least as it is found in the central Delta, conforms to a great extent to the canonical iroquoianate form. The only major deviations are associated with their distinctive form of secondary marriage to a wife's brother's daughter. While it is true that there are certain features of kinship and marriage in the Sakobana region which might convey the idea of identifying the system there with the dravidianate form, this is not generally typical of the Warao as a whole. Although we have shown that in practice this system can give rise to a network of re-iterative alliances, this normally requires several different descent lines and various forms of intergenerational and secondary marriage. It is thus still true to say that in comparison with the canonical dravidianate systems such as one finds in the neighbouring Guiana Highlands, the emphasis of the Warao system is on exogamy and the diversification of alliances.

As such, we would argue, it is a system that would have been well suited to the more complex social world that formerly flourished in the Delta. By analogy with the extant multi-ethnic exchange networks such as one still finds in the upper Amazon and the upper Xingú (cf. Henley 1996:48-59), it seems reasonable to posit that all groups living in the Delta would have found themselves embroiled in a broader social environment in which there would have been a premium on developing ties with other such groups. On the one hand, they would thereby become involved in trade and ritual exchanges, enriching themselves as

---

[35]This ritual relationship is reminiscent in certain regards to the *apãhi-piha* relationship of the Araweté, as described by Viveiros de Castro (1992:167-178). However in contrast to the Araweté example, there is no necessary mutuality, that is, no exchange of partners between the men involved.

a result; on the other, they would have furnished themselves with allies who might provide some support or protection against the raiding that appears to have been prevalent in the area. The development of such intergroup ties is more likely to be achieved, we would suggest, with a centrifugal iroquioanate system that promotes exogamy, permanent uxorilocality and the diversification of alliances than it would with a centripetal dravidianate system of the kind that one finds in the Guiana Highlands[36].

Participation in this multi-ethnic network in the Delta appears to have been uneven. Some sections of the Warao population withdrew deep into the moriche groves as a means of protection against slave-raiders and disease. Their descendents were still to be found there in the 1920s, before the introduction of ocumo chino made denser settlement on the main channels possible. However, not all Warao groups became "morichaleros" and there is no reason for positing a priori that the latter are more representative than the former of Warao cultural tradition. Moreover, even the "morichaleros" were likely to be involved to some degree in the interethnic network of the Delta, despite their relative isolation.

Finally, we would suggest that the historical experience of the Warao may also account for the distinctively hierarchical ideology that permeates not only their conception of political authority in this world, but also their ideas about the world of the spirits and of their own relationship to it. For, if the archaeologists and ethnohistorians are to be believed, the societies that once flourished on the floodplains of the major rivers of lowland South America, including those of the littoral plains of the Guianas, were not only more populous than the extant indigenous groups of the region of today but also more hierarchical in a social and political sense (Whitehead 1993, Roosevelt 1994). We may have certain reservations about some of the more ambitious claims made in respect of the overall size of the populations living in Orinoquia in pre-Columbian and early colonial times. Nor would we wish to exaggerate the degree of the sway held by the political leaders of that

---

[36]The case of the Vaupés region indicates that it is not impossible to build up a complex multi-ethnic network on the basis of a system of kinship and marriage ordered by dravidianate principles. However Vaupés society is highly unusual within Amazonia in being ordered also by a series of patrilineal descent "constructs" re-inforced by an elaborate ritual relationships as well as by a detailed mythological charter that between them provide a coherent framework for intergroup relationships above the level of the residential group. It is also probably highly significant that in sharp contrast to the multi-ethnic networks of the upper Xingú and upper Amazon, or those of the Middle and lower Orinoco, the ethnic groups involved in the upper Vaupés network are closely related to one another linguistically (cf. Hugh Jones 1993).

era. But there is good reason to suppose that the present form of Warao society is but a shadow of what it once was.

It therefore seems to us unnecessary to posit that these particular features of contemporary Warao society, which serve to distinguish them very clearly from the other present-day indigenous peoples of the Guianas, may be the result of diffusion from elsewhere in South or central America. Rather it seems to us more likely that these hierarchical conceptions have an entirely local origin, being the ideological corollary of a society once more politically stratified and formally organized than the Warao have today. As such, these ideological traces represent the last echo of that complex multi-ethnic universe through which Ralegh and Keymis so fleetingly passed in 1595 and of which they left us no more than a tantalisingly brief glimpse.

Abstract

Previous accounts in the anthropological literature concerning the social organization of the Warao Indians who live amid the rivers and creeks of the Orinoco delta in eastern Venezuela are not entirely satisfactory.

In the last twenty years a revision has taken place regarding the complex multi-ethnic universe that once existed in Orinoquia. Equally under scrutiny are the relationship systems of the Guayana Amerindians.

The present paper examines the history, kinship system and the ideology of hierarchy of these "marshland people" and places them in the context of a once more stratified social and political organization reflecting the social conditions of early colonial times.

Resumen

La organización social de los indígenas Warao del delta del Orinoco ha sido descrita de forma inadecuada en la literatura antropológica anterior.

En los últimos veinte años ha tenido lugar una revisión en cuanto al complejo universo multi-étnico que existió en la Orinoquia en tiempos pre-hispánicos. También bajo escrutinio están los sistemas de parentesco de los indígenas de Guayana.

El presente trabajo examina la etnohistoria, el sistema de parentesco y la ideología de jerarquía de la "gente de las riberas" y los coloca en el contexto de una organización social y política más compleja que prevaleció en tiempos pre-hispánicos y de la temprana colonia.

Appendix A

WARAO RELATIONSHIP TERMINOLOGY

Warao Terms	International Symbol	Warao Description

TERMS FOR CONSANGUINES:

Warao Terms	International Symbol	Warao Description
1) nesenobo	PPF, male relative of G+3	dima anobo, dani anobo
2) nesenatu	PPM, female relative of G+3	dima anatu, dani anatu
3) nobo	PF, male relative of G+2	dima arima, dani arima
4) natu	PM, female relative of G+2	dima arani, dani arani
5) dima	F	dima
6) dehota	FeB	dima arahe[1]
7) dimuka	FyB	dima araka
8) daku	MB dani arakobo sanuka	dani arakobo
9) dani	Mdani	
10) danihota	MeZ	dani araiba[2]
11) danikatida	MyZ	dani arahia
12) dakatai	FZ	dima arakoi dima arakoi sanuka
13) dahe	eB, PGSe (ms)	dahe
14) daka	yB, PGSy (ms)	daka
15) dakoi	eZ, PGDe (ms)	dakoi
16) dakoi sanuka	yZ, PGDy (ms)	dakoi sanuka
17) dakobo	eB, PGSe (ws)	dakobo
18) dakobo sanuka	yB, PGSy (ws)	dakobo sanuka
19) daiba	eZ, PGDe (ws)	daiba
20) dahia	yZ, PGDy (ws)	dahia
21) auka	GS, male relative of G-1 (with the exception of 23)	auka, dahe auka, daka auka dakobo auka, dakobo sanuka auka, daiba auka, dahia auka
22) aukatida	GD, female relative of G-1 (with the exception of 23)	aukatida, dahe aukatida, daka aukatida, dakobo aukatida, dakobo sanuka aukatida, daiba aukatida, dahia aukatida

[1]*Dehota* is solely FeB (*dima arahe*) and not generally, as stated by Suárez (1971:84), FZH or MZH. The same holds for the terms *dimuka* and *daku*.

[2]As stated in footnote 2 for *dehota* etc., *danihota* is solely MeZ and not generally also FBW or MBW. The same holds for the terms *danikatida* and *dakatai*. They are not generally also FBW or MBW.

| 23) hido,
    hido sanuka | ZC (ms) | dakoi auka, dakoi sanuka auka
    dakoi aukatida, dakoi sanuka
    aukatida |
| 24) natoro | CC
relative of G-2, G-3 | auka auka, auka aukatida,
    aukatida auka, aukatida
    aukatida, natoro auka, natoro
    aukatida |

TERMS FOR AFFINES:

25) arahi[3]	WF, HF	tida arima, nibora arima
26) dabai	WM, HM, WBW	tida arani, nibora arani dami sanuka atida
27) nibora	H (ws)	nibora
28) tida, tatu	W, co-W (ms)	tida
29) tekoro	HW (only reference)	hanoko arotu atekoro
30) damitu	ZH (ms)	dakoi anibora dakoi sanuka anibora
31) dami sanuka	WB (ms)	tida arakobo tida arakobo sanuka
32) behetida	WZ, BW (ms)	tida araiba, tida arahia dahe atida, daka atida
33) harayaba	WZH (ms)	behetida anibora[4]
34) dahi	BWe (ws) HeZ (ws)	dakobo atida[5] nibora arakoi
35) dahi sanuka	BWy (ws) HyZ (ws)	dakobo sanuka atida nibora arakoi sanuka
36) bayaratu	HB, ZH (ws)	nibora arahe, nibora araka daiba anibora, dahia anibora
37) dawa	DH, DDH, (SDH), HZH	aukatida anibora, natoro anibora, nibora aramitu
38) natoarani	SW	auka atida[6]
39) dimataha	MH (=/ F)	dani anibora
40) danitaha	FW (=/ M)	dima atida
41) aukataha	ES	tida auka, nibora auka
42) aukatidataha	ED	tida aukatida, nibora aukatida

[3]In Winikina always with the suffix a (3 pers. poss.).

[4]In Sakobana also HBW (ws).

[5]The terms *dahi* and *dahi sanuka* with the meaning of BW (ws) and HZ (ws) are not mentioned by Suárez but are listed in Wilbert (1958) and Vaquero (1965). The term *tekoro* (co-W) was not mentioned in previous publications.

[6]*Natoarani,* literally, "mother of grandchildren."

Bibliography

Appun, Karl Ferdinand
  1961 [1871] *En los trópicos.* Caracas: Universidad Central de Venezuela.

Ayala Lafée, Cecilia
  1994-1996 La etnohistoria prehispánica Guaiquerí. *Antropológica* 82:5-127.

Barral, Basilio de
  1964 *Los indios Guaraúnos y su cancionero: historia, religión y alma lírica. Biblioteca "Missionalia Hispánica",* Vol. 15. Madrid: Concejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Departamento de Misionología Española.

  1979 *Diccionario Warao-Castellano, Castellano-Warao* Caracas: Universidad Católica Andrés Bello.

Boomert, Arie
  1984 The Arawak Indians of Trinidad and coastal Guiana, ca 1500-1650. *The Journal of Caribbean History* 19:123-88.

Descola, Philippe
  1993 Les Affinités sélectives: Alliance, guerre et prédation dans l'ensemble jivaro. In: P. Descola & A.C. Taylor (eds.), La remontée de l'Amazone: Anthropologie et histoire des sociétés amazoniennes. *L'Homme* 126-8: 171-190.

Edwards, W., and K. Gibson
  1979 An Ethnohistory of Amerindians in Guyana. *Ethnohistory* 26(2):161-175.

Carrocera, Fray Buenaventura de
  1964 *Los primeros historiadores Capuchinos de Venezuela. Vol. 69.* Caracas: Biblioteca de la Academia Nacional de Historia.

de Schauensee, Rodolphe Meyer, and William Phelps, Jr.
  1978 *A Guide to the Birds of Venezuela* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Dreyfus, Simone
  1992 Les réseaux politiques indigänes en Guyane occidentale et leurs transformations aux XVIⁱ et XVIIIᵉ siècles. *L'Homme* 122-124: 77-100.

Fernández de Oviedo y Valdés, Gonzalo
  1986 [1547] *Historia general y natural de las Indias: La Provincia de Venezuela* Caracas: Fundación de Promoción Cultural de Venezuela.

Goldwasser, Michele

  1994-1996   Remembrances of the Warao: The Miraculous Statue of
               Siparia, Trinidad. *Antropológica* 84:3-41.

Gow, Peter

  1991   *Of Mixed Blood: Kinship and History in Peruvian Amazonia.*
               Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Greenberg, Joseph

  1987   *Language in the Americas.* Stanford: Stanford University
               Press.

Gregor, Thomas

  1979   *Mehinaku: The Drama of Daily Life in a Brazilian Indian
               Village.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Heinen, H. Dieter

  1980   *Aportes para una etnografía Warao.* Caracas: Instituto
               Caribe de Antropología y Sociología (ICAS), 267 pp.

  (ed.) 1988   *Oko Warao: We are Marshland People.* Münster: Lit Verlag
               (second edition), 131 pp.

  1992   The Early colonization of the Lower Orinoco and its Impact
               on Present Day Indigenous Peoples. *Antropológica* 78:51-
               83.

  1996   *Das multi-ethnische Konglomerat am unteren Orinoco
               während der frühen Kolonialzeit.* In: Heinz Schlüter (ed.),
               Die Anderen: Indianer in Lateinamerika; pp. 180-208.
               Frankfurt: Vervuert Verlag.

Heinen, H. Dieter and Hortensia Caballero

  1992   *Informe sobre los indígenas del Estado Delta Amacuro.*
               IVIC, 99 pp.

Heinen, H. Dieter, Roberto Lizarralde, and Tirso Gómez

  1994-1996   El abandono de un ecosistema: el caso de los Morichales
               del Delta del Orinoco. *Antropológica* 81:3-35.

Heinen, H. Dieter and Kenneth Ruddle

1974   Ecology, Ritual, and Economic Organization in the
               Distribution of Palm Starch among the Warao of the
               Orinoco Delta. *Journal of Anthropological Research* 30:116-
               138.

Heinen, H. Dieter, George Salas, and Miguel Layrisse

  1980   Migration and Cultural Distance: A Comparative Study of
               Five Warao Subtribes. In: Johannes Wilbert & Miguel
               Layrisse (eds.), Demographic and Biological Studies of the

Warao Indians, pp. 48-59. Los Angeles: UCLA Latin American Center Publications, University of California.

Heinen, H. Dieter, José San José, Hortensia Caballero Arias, and Rubén Montes

1995   Subsistence Activities of the Warao Indians and Anthropogenic Changes in the Orinoco Delta Vegetation. In: H. Dieter Heinen, José San José, and Hortensia Caballero Arias (eds.), *Nature and Human Ecology in the Neotropics*, pp. 312-34. Caracas: Scientia Guaianae.

Henley, Paul

1983-1984 Intergenerational Marriage amongst the Carib-speaking Peoples of the Guianas: A Preliminary Survey.*Antropológica* 59-62:155-182.

1996   South Indian Models in the Amazonian Lowlands. *Manchester Papers in Social Anthropology* No.1. Manchester: Department of Social Anthropology, University of Manchester.

Hornborg, Alf

1988   Dualism and Hierarchy in Lowland South America: Trajectories of Indigenous Social Organization. *Uppsala Studies in Cultural Anthropology*9. Stockhom: Almqvist & Wiksell International.

Hugh-Jones, Stephen

1993   Clear Descent or Ambiguous Houses? A Re-examination of Tukanoan Social Organization. In: P. Descola & A.C. Taylor (eds.), La remontée de l'Amazone: Anthropologie et histoire des sociétés amazoniennes.*L'Homme* 126-8: 95-120.

Kalka, Claudia

1995   *Eine Tochter ist ein Haus, ein Boot und ein Garten* Münster: Lit Verlag.

Kaplan, Joanna Overing

1981   Amazonian anthropology.*Journal of Latin American Studies* 13 (1):151-164.

Keymis, Lawrence

1968 [1596] *A relation of the second voyage to Guiana, perfourmed and written in the yeare 1596 (facsimile)* Amsterdam-New York: Da Capo Press.

Lavandero Pérez, Julio

1994   *Uaharaho, ethos narrativo (III)* Caracas: Ediciones Paulinas.

Lavandero, Julio & H. Dieter Heinen

    1986   *Canciones y bailes del ritual de la Nouara* Montalbán 17:199-243.

Layrisse, Miguel & Johannes Wilbert

    1966   *Indian Societies of Venezuela: Their Blood Group Types* Caracas: Fundación La Salle de Ciencias Naturales.

Lévi-Strauss, Claude

    1943   Guerre et commerce chez les indiens de l'Amérique du Sud. *Renaissance* 1:122-139.

Lounsbury, Floyd G.

    1968   *The Structural Analysis of Kinship Semantics. In Kinship and social organization* Edited by Paul Bohannan and John Middleton, pp.125-148. Garden City, New York: The Natural History Press.

Lovera, José Rafael

    1991   *Antonio de Berrío: La obsesión por El Dorado* Caracas: Petroleos de Venezuela S.A.

Maybury-Lewis, David (ed.)

    1979   *Dialectical Societies: The Gê and Bororo of Central Brazil* Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

McCorkle, Thomas

    1965   *Fajardo's people: Cultural adjustment in Venezuela* Los Angeles: UCLA, Latin American Center.

Naipaul, V.S.

    1969   *The loss of El Dorado.* London: Penguin.

Needham, Rodney

    1974   The evolution of social classification: A commentary on the Warao case. *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 130:16-43.

OCEI

    1994   *Censo Indígena de Venezuela 1992 nomenclador de asentamientos.* Tomo II. Caracas: Oficina Central de Estadística e Informática.

Osborn, Henry

    1966   Warao I: Phonology and morphophonemics.*International Journal of American Linguistics* 32:108-23.

Pelleprat, Pierre

   1965 [1655] *Relato de la Misiones de los Padres de la Compañía de Jesús en las Islas y en Tierra Firme de América Meridional* Caracas: Biblioteca de la Academia Nacional de Historia.

Ralegh, Sir Walter

1968 [1596]   *The discoverie of the large, rich and bewtiful Empyre of Gviana (facsimile).* New York: Da Capo Press.

Rionegro, Fray Froylán de

1918   *Relaciones de las Misiones de los PP. Capuchinos* Tomo Primero. Sevilla: Tip. Zarzuela.

Rivière, Peter

1969   *Marriage among the Trio: A Principle of Social Organisation* Oxford: Clarendon Press.

1984   *Individual and Society in Guiana: A Comparative Study of Amerindian Social Organization* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Roosevelt, Anna C.

1994   Amazonian Anthropology: Strategy for a New Synthesis. In: Anna C. Roosevelt (ed.), *Amazonian Indians from Prehistory to the Present: Anthropological Perspectives* pp. 1-29. Tucson: The University of Arizona Press.

Roth, Walter E.

1970 [1924]   *An Introductory Study of the Arts, Crafts, and Customs of the Guiana Indians.* New York: Johnson Reprint Corporation.

1908/1909   *An Inquiry into the Animism and Folk-lore of the Guiana Indians. 30th Annual Report* Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Institution.

Ruhlen, Merritt

1991   *A Guide to the World's Languages.* Vol. 1: *Classification.* Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Schomburgk, Sir Robert Hermann

1848   *Notes to Sir Walter Raleigh, The discoverie of the large, rich and bewtiful empire of Gviana* London: The Hakluyt Society.

Suárez, María M.

1968   *Los Warao: indígenas del Delta del Orinoco* Caracas: IVIC

1971   Terminology, Alliance and Change in Warao Society *Nieuwe West-Indische Gids* 48:56-122.

Trautmann, Thomas and R. H. Barnes

n.d.   'Dravidian', 'Iroquois' and 'Crow-Omaha in North Amazon Perspective. In: T. Trautmann, M. Godelier, and F. Tjon Sie Fat (eds.). *Transformations of Kinship Systems:*

> *Dravidian, Australian, Iroquois and Crow-Omaha*
> Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, in press.

Turrado Moreno, Angel

    1945   *Etnografía de los Indios Guaraúnos* Caracas: Lit. y Tip. Vargas.

Vázquez de Espinosa, Antonio

  1948 [1620] *Compendio y descripción de las Indias Occidentales.* Washington: The Smithsonian Institution.

Viveiros de Castro, Eduardo

    1992   *From the Enemy's Point of View: Humanity and Divinity in an Amazonian Society.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

    n.d.   Dravidian and related kinship systems. In: T. Trautmann, M. Godelier, and F. Tjon Sie Fat (eds.).*Transformations of Kinship Systems: Dravidian, Australian, Iroquois and Crow-Omaha.* Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, in press.

Whitehead, Neil L.

    1988   *Lords of the Tiger Spirit: A History of the Caribs in Colonial Venezuela and Guyana,* 1498-1820. Dordrecht: Foris Publications.

    1993   Ethnic Transformation and Historical Discontinuity in Native Amazonia and Guayana, 1500-1900. In: P. Descola and A.C. Taylor (eds.). La remontée de l'Amazone: Anthropologie et histoire des sociétés amazoniennes. *L'Homme* 126-8: 285-305.

    1994   The Ancient Amerindian Polities of the Amazon, the Orinoco, and the Atlantic Coast: A Preliminary Analysis of their Passage from Antiquity to Extinction. In: Anna C. Roosevelt (ed.). *Amazonian Indians from Prehistory to the Present: Anthropological Perspectives* pp. 33-53. Tucson: The University of Arizona Press.

Wilbert, Johannes

    1956   Rasgos culturales circuncaribes entre los warrau y sus inferencias. *Memoria de la Sociedad de Ciencias Naturales La Salle* 16(45):237-257.

    1958   Die soziale und politische Organisation der Warrau*Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie* 10:272-291.

    1964   *Warao Oral Literature.* Caracas: Fundación La Salle (ICAS).

1972   *Survivors of El Dorado: Four Indian Cultures of South America.* New York: Praeger.

1976   To Become a Maker of Canoes: An Essay in Warao Enculturation. In: Johannes Wilbert (ed.), *Enculturation in Latin America: An Anthology,* pp.303-358. Los Angeles: UCLA Latin American Center Publications.

1993   *Mystic Endowment: Religious Ethnography of the Warao Indians.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

1996   *Mindful of Famine: Religious Climatology of the Warao Indians.* Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press.

Williams, Denis

1993   The Forms of the Shamanic Sign in the Prehistoric Guianas. *Journal of the Walter Roth Museum of Anthropology (Georgetown)* 9:5-23.

H. Deiter Heinen
Departamento de Antropología
Instituto Venezolano de Investigaciones Científicas (IVIC)
Apartado 21827, Caracas 1020-A, Venezuela

Paul Henley
ISCA
51 Banbury Rd
Oxford OX2 6PE
U.K.