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Harry Walker

Introduction

This paper offers a preliminary analysis of the kinship terminology of the Urarina of lowland Peru. Special consideration is given to possible trajectories of historical transformation, and as such the paper engages with recent debates surrounding the directionality of drift in kinship terminologies, and the question of how, if at all, terminologies can be said to evolve (Godelier, Trautmann, and Tjon Sie Fat 1998). The analysis comprises part of a much larger study of Urarina sociality and relatedness (Walker 2009), and as a work in progress, raises as many questions as it attempts to answer. The Urarina terminology is unusual and defies ready classification, yet it has received no attention to date in the anthropological literature. It should nevertheless be of some interest to students of kinship for a number of reasons, presenting as it does an intriguing departure from the two-line prescriptive models that are more common throughout Amazonia, and having the potential to shed some empirical light on some of the more abstract and theoretical models of the evolution of terminologies advanced to date (e.g. Kryukov 1998).

A particular ethnographic puzzle has oriented the analysis from the outset, namely the very great importance attached by Urarina people to the establishment of ties of ritual kinship under a system which resembles that known elsewhere as *compadrazgo*. Urarina routinely create ritual kin ties by one of two possible actions: bestowing a name, or cutting the umbilical cord of a newborn baby. The resulting ties between the adult parties involved are at least as important, if not more so, than the relationship created between the child and his or her new patron (or 'godparent'). Men are particularly fond of turning other (typically co-resident) male affines into ritual co-fathers, and the system in general can be seen as a potent means of transforming affinity into consanguinity (reflected in the fact that, for example, sexual relations between cross-sex ritual co-parents are prohibited and regarded as incestuous). I was interested in ascertaining the extent to which the widespread enthusiasm for creating ritual kinship was a recent innovation and, if so, why it had risen to such prominence.

Given the sheer semantic density of both personal names and umbilical cords in Urarina culture, as well as the existence of some terms in the Urarina language (as well as Spanish) for ritual kin, it seemed likely that something of these institutions predated the Conquest, and therefore exposure to the Iberian variant of the *compadrazgo*. Exactly how and why the institution has been transformed over time, blending indigenous and foreign concepts in complex ways, is not a question I address here in any detail, but it has nevertheless guided at least part of the analysis that follows and is a question to which I shall return in the concluding remarks.

Ethnographic context

The Urarina inhabit the Chambira river and its affluents in the region between the Pastaza and Tigre rivers, including the Uritoyacu, which enters the Marañon.[1] Although no reliable census data exist, I estimate the population at around 4,000, the majority of whom live in settlements accorded official recognition as *Comunidades Nativas* (Native Communities), the formal land-holding unit of Peruvian law. A very sizeable minority nevertheless continues to reside in isolated homesteads or satellite settlements comprising up to three or four houses, or temporary shelters constructed in close proximity to one another. The economy is mostly subsistence-based, structured around hunting and small-scale swidden cultivation, mostly manioc and plantains, and supplemented by casual work for itinerant traders and local entrepreneurs under the system of *habilitación*.

Although Urarina have been erroneously accorded membership of a variety of ethnic and linguistic families since their first documentation in the literature, recent linguistic studies have concluded that the Urarina language is in fact a linguistic isolate, unrelated to any known language (Olawsky n.d.; Cajas Rojas et al. 1987). Other languages traditionally spoken in the vicinity of Urarina territory include Candoshi (usually ascribed to the Jivaroan bloc), Omurana (now extinct, but thought to be either an isolate or a member of the Zaparoan language family), Iquito (Zaparoan), Jebero (Cahuapanan), Cocama (Tupí), and Yameo (Peba-Yaguan family,

[1] The Urarina have also been variously referred to in the literature as Aracuies, Cingacuchuscas, Chambiras and Shimacus, among other names. Urarina themselves use the ethnonym *cacha*, which, as is common elsewhere in the region, carries the meaning 'we real people'. The Urarina were generally distinguished by early chroniclers from the now-defunct Itucale, a possible sub-group who spoke an identical language and to whom they were evidently closely related.

now extinct) (see Olawsky n.d.). Contact with neighbouring indigenous groups today, however, is virtually nil.

Urarina social organisation is characterised by a high degree of fluidity and flexibility. The only marriage rule currently operative is a prohibition on marrying close kin; this is combined with a clear preference for marrying distant kin over complete strangers, which has tended to result in the formation of loose (unnamed) endogamous nexuses, characterised by a higher density of marriage alliances within them than between them. In former times, Big Men or paramount chiefs known as *curaana* wielded influence over wide geographical areas; these are non-existent today, however, and few men exert any authority beyond their own settlement. Postmarital residence is ideally uxorilocal, with brideservice typically lasting around two to five years, usually until the newly married couple has at least one child of their own. Mobility (both intra- and inter-community) remains high, despite a general tendency towards sedentarization, largely due to the introduction of formal schooling. There are no lineal segments, and no corporate groups of any kind other than families and unstable residence groups known as *lauri*, which are discussed further below. Generally speaking, Urarina do not recognise any principle of descent and genealogical memory is extremely shallow, typically limited to two ascendant generations. That said, certain kinds of ritual knowledge, pertaining to the performance of specialised incantations known as *baau*, do appear to be transmitted patrilineally.

The kinship nomenclature

The nomenclature is presented in the tables below. All reference terms and some address terms employ first-person pronouns in either full form (*canu*, as in *canu daca* = 'my wife's brother' [reference]) or cliticised form (*ca-*, e.g. *cadaa* = 'my wife's brother' [address]). Reference terms tend to use the former and address terms the latter. Pronouns are bracketed where usage is optional. The column entitled 'correspondences' directs attention to equations or redundancies between kin categories (denoted by the numbers in the first column).

Table 1. Relationship terminology

No.	Relation	Reference Term	Reference Term	Address term	Address term	Corresp-ondences
		(male ego)	(female ego) (if different)	(male ego)	(female ego) (if different)	
2	Be, PGSe	canu inana, (canu) ichaso	canu coona	ichaso	coona, ichaso	12,14
3	By=PGSy,	canu ocoala		ichaso		12,14
4	Ze, PGDe,	canu bai	canu inanai	cacoai	aoa	13,15
5	Zy=PGDy, FBDy	canu bai	canu ocoasai	cacoai	aoa	
6	M	canu neba		oma	mama	
7	F	canu inaca		baba	ojoa	
8	FB, MZH, FZH	canu ichaine, cachaine	(canu) ichene	cachaine	ichene	
9	FZ, (HFBW), (ZHBW)	cacaun, canu caaunu		cacaun		
10	MB	(canu) tanaa	(canu) nono	catanaa	nono	24
11	MZ, FBW, (FW), MBW	canu nebaene, canemae		canemae		25
12	BS, (FBSS)	canu calaohiriji		ichaso, caichaso	fofa	2,3
13	BD, (HBSW)	canu cacunuriji		aoa	moma	4,5,15,21
14	ZS	cabanujui, canu calaohiriji	canu calaohiriji	banui	ichaso	2,3,12,23
15	ZD	canu cacunuriji		cacano	aoa	4,5,22
16	H	canu lana		(name)		
17	W	canu comasai		(name)		
18	EB, ZH	canu daca		cadaa		
19	EZ, BW, FBSW	canu daca	canu daqui	cadaa	cadaqui	
20	S	canu calaohi		(name)		
21	D	canu cacunu, cacaaunu		(name), aoa		4,5,13,15
22	SW	canu acano		cacano		15
23	DH, (BDH)	canu acana,		banui	cacana	14

		caana				
24	EF, (WFB), (WMB)	canu tanaa	canu nono	tanaa	nono	10
25	EM,	canu tano, caana	canu nebaene, canemae	catano	canemae	11,23
26	CC, GC, PGCC	canu ichoala		carinaja	ichoala	27
27	PF, EPF	canu rinaja		carinaja		26
28	MM, EMM	canu daae		cadaae		
29	FM, (FMZ), EFM	canu aaso		aaso		

Table 2. Kin classification: box diagram

<table>
<tr><td>G+2</td><td colspan="2">FM</td><td colspan="2">FF
MF</td><td colspan="2">MM</td></tr>
<tr><td>G+1</td><td>FZ</td><td>FB</td><td>F</td><td>M</td><td>MZ</td><td>MB
EF</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">G0</td><td colspan="3">Be</td><td colspan="3">Ze</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">By</td><td colspan="3">Zy</td></tr>
<tr><td>G-1</td><td>BD</td><td>BS</td><td>S</td><td>D</td><td>ZD
(a♂SW)</td><td>ZS
(a♂DH)</td></tr>
<tr><td>G-2</td><td colspan="6">CC</td></tr>
</table>

♂ = male Ego only

♀ = female Ego only

a = address term only

From the above tables, it can be seen that the relationship terminology is bifurcate collateral at levels G+1 and G-1, but generational (or Hawaiian) at level G0. The layout of Table 2 groups together patrilateral and matrilateral kin (on the left and right sides respectively), rather than cross and parallel. This may be somewhat arbitrary, and it has the disadvantage of concealing some of the equations between cross and affinal terms, but there is no other obvious way of incorporating the unusual three-way distinction at G+2. The sibling relationship is clearly one of the salient principles of differentiation: given the generational nomenclature at G0, all kin of the same generation are referred to as either 'elder' or 'younger'. Address terms, however, remain the same regardless of relative age, significantly mitigating in practice the potential for hierarchy. Several of these and other vocatives are used only when either the addresser or addressee has not yet come of age: for example, female ego calls her brother *coona* only until he reaches adulthood, from which time she will call him *ichaso*. She will call her father *baba* until the onset of menarche, after which she should call him *ojoa*, 'because she has more responsibility'. Terms for offspring such as *canu calaohi* ('my son') or *canu bere* ('my child') are similarly deemed unsuitable for addressing a grown adult. In any case, these are rarely used in practice because the overwhelming majority of children are addressed by their parents and others simply as *quicha* ('man') or *ene* ('female'); even a young adult male would more likely be called *enamana* ('young man').

The nomenclature for generations other than ego's own is much more complex. The elaboration of exclusively affinal terms is limited, and a number of equations of cross and affinal terms, particularly on the matrilateral side, appear to suggest some sort of regime of matrimonial exchange, presumably two-line prescriptive (i.e. bilateral cross-cousin marriage). However, as already noted there is presently no prescription, and of course the generational terminology at G0 strongly militates against it. Cross-cousin marriage is regarded as incestuous in principle (although the strength of the prohibition varies with genealogical distance, as discussed below). Such cross–affinal equations as do exist are, moreover, partial and irregular: they may hold for either male or female ego, or address terms, only. Classificatory ZD marriage does sometimes occur and, unlike BD marriage, is not considered incestuous provided there is a degree of genealogical distance. This would, of course, be consistent with two-line prescriptive marriage, as would the (also widespread) practices of sister exchange and sororal polygyny. The relative-sex pattern to which the sibling terms are in part reducible is moreover a common feature of many prescriptive systems (e.g. Allen 1975:84-5): there is a clear link between *inana* and *inanai* (producing eGss) and also between *ocoala* and *ocoasai* (yGss), with *-ai* emerging as a female marker (cf. *comasai*, wife).

Yet the Urarina 'crossness calculus', such as it exists, remains somewhat anomalous. Even disregarding the 'hawaiianisation' of terms at G0, there is no clear division between cross and parallel kin as in Dravidian and related terminologies, such as Iroquois or Kariera. In fact, the system most closely resembles the 'two-line' form of the dravidianate when considering purely the address terminology at level G-1, though even here it is far from a perfect match:

Table 3. Canonical dravidianate at G-1 (after Henley 1996: 7)

	//		X	
G-1	S ♂BS ♀ZS	D ♂BD ♀ZD	♂ZS ♀BS DH	♂ZD ♀BD SW

Table 4. Urarina address terminology at G-1

	//	X

G-1	S	♂BS ♀ZS	D ♂BD ♀ZD	♀DH	♂ZS ♂DH	♀BS	♂ZD SW	♀BD

At G+1, there is a clear hint of bifurcate merging in the close similarity between the terms for M and MZ (*canu neba* and *canu nebaene* respectively). In fact, there would even appear to be some bias towards matrilateral cross-cousin marriage, as there is no affinization of patrilateral cross terms. However, MBW is equated with MZ, rather than FZ as one would expect in a two-line scheme. Moreover, it is not only cross-collaterals that are classified as affines, as MZ=HM for female Ego (both address and reference). Fortunately, further light is shed on these issues by two systems of kin classification which effectively split the social field into a number of additional groupings.

Splitting the social field

The hawaiianisation of kin terms in ego's generation is mitigated by the fact that all kin categories are further arranged into two higher-order classifications, the first of which distinguishes between ego's lineal and collateral kin at the three medial levels G+1,G0 and G-1:

Table 5. Higher-order lineal classificatory terminology

	Lineal Kin	Collateral Kin
G+2	canu rinajauru (‘my grandparents’)	
	canu coitucueracuru (‘those who know me’)	
G+1	canu jojiarauru (‘those who raised me’)	canu jojiarauru rijijieein nena (‘those who are like those who raised me’)
G0	canu nejerauru (my siblings)	canu nejerauru rijijieein nena (‘those who are like my siblings’)
G-1	canu berecuru (‘my children’)	canu berecuru rijieein nena (‘those who are like my children’)
G-2	canu ichoalacuru (‘my grandchildren’)	

The term *canu coitucueracuru*, ‘those who know me’, encompasses all kin at levels G+1 and G+2. The category of G+1 collateral kin (*canu jojiarauru rijijieein nena*, ‘those who are like those who raised me’) also subsumes (but is certainly not coextensive with) the category of G+1 affines (*canu tanaanacuru*, ‘my parents-in-law’); similarly, the category of G-1 collateral kin (*canu berecuru rijijieein nena*, ‘those who are like my children’) encompasses the category of G-1 affines (*canu acanocuru*, ‘my descendants’ spouses’). At G0, however, someone classified as *canu nejerauru rijijieein nena*, ‘those who are like my siblings’, is still unlikely to be considered a possible marriage partner. It is pertinent here to note that reference terms for particular collateral kin at G-1 are derived in a similar fashion from lineal kin terms (see Table 5.1). The morpheme *riji*, ‘like’, added to the end of the word, is effectively an abbreviation of *rijijieein nena*, ‘that which is like’; hence *canu calaohiriji* (♂BS) may be glossed as ‘that which is like my son’.

A second set of classificatory terms orders particular kin according to degree of social/genealogical relatedness: *jatain* (‘very’), *raujiain* (‘straightly’), *asaerin* (‘a

little'), and *jatain asaerin* ('very little').[2] There seems little doubt that these classifications are directly related to marriageability. Ron Manus (Manus n.d.), a missionary and linguist from the Summer Institute of Linguistics who has lived intermittently with the Urarina for some decades, claimed that patrilateral (cross and parallel) first cousins are classed as *jatain*, 'very' related, while matrilateral first cousins are classed as only *raujiain*, 'straightly' related. Second cousins on both sides (e.g. PPGCC) are *asaerin*, 'a little' related, and therefore marriageable. The attribution of relatively stronger kinship ties on the patrilateral side, and the ability to grade closeness in such a way as to permit marriage with more distant kin, would lend support to a hypothesis of bilateral cross-cousin marriage but with a possible preference for matrilateral cross cousins over patrilateral. This in turn could be taken to support the view that a clan system, presumably based on patrilineal descent groups, once existed on the Chambira. The continued transmission of ritual knowledge through patrilines, together with the emphasis on paternal substance in filiation, is of course pertinent here.

However, I could not confirm Manus's claim that the distinction between patrilateral and matrilateral kin is systematic in this regard. I found that informants tended to give greater weight to geographical closeness than to actual genealogical connection; hence a matrilateral first (cross or parallel) cousin could just as likely be classified as *jatain,* 'very' related, and a patrilateral cousin as *asaerin*, 'a little' related, if the former was living in closer proximity than the latter. It would appear that, even if there is some bias toward regarding patrilateral kin as 'closer' than matrilateral kin, the system nevertheless admits of considerable flexibility. Needless to say, manipulation of such terms is a principal way in which desired marriage partners may be rendered eligible. Indeed, as a weakly related cousin (*asaerin* or *jatain asaerin*) is probably preferred in practice to non-kin, classifiers of kinship 'intensity' provide a convenient means of negotiating the conflicting demands for endogamy and exogamy.

The residential group

Some remarks on the residential groupings known as *lauri* are apposite here. The term means simply 'group', but it has a range of possible referents, depending on context.

[2] Sometimes the expressions *ichutiariin* ('near') or *jataain ichutiariin* ('very near') are also used to denote closeness.

It may be used to refer to virtually any agglomeration of entities, be they human or non-human, that are perceived to share some form of set membership. In ritual language and myth, *ca lauri,* literally 'our group', encompasses all Urarina and means broadly 'our world', as opposed to the celestial world or the afterlife (a related expression, *lauri cojoanona*, literally '[our] group's epoch', has much the same meaning). But in the context of everyday life, the term is most often used to designate a group of co-residents, generally united around a single man of influence or renown. The composition of such a group may be fluid and variable, strongly affected by mobility patterns (for example, due to brideservice), its boundaries always open to interpretation. Many *lauri* today centre around a senior man, working together with his co-resident son-in-laws and/or sons and their respective families. The groups are generally most visible for the duration of certain shared activities, such as lumbering, which mobilise the entire group and sediment them out, as it were, from a backdrop of wider kin networks. Members of a group are called *laurijera*, literally 'group-fellow', although the term was often translated into Spanish as *vecino* ('neighbour'), indicating the importance placed on co-residence and the spatial dimension. In contrast to the *arai*, or bilateral kindred, the *lauri* does not rely on notions of blood-relatedness or the sharing of physical substance.

The term *lauri* is, however, also used in relation to a number of 'groups', of uncertain size, which persist today only in myths and collective memories. Specific names for such groups include Ajiaojiara, Ajoihano, Arabera, Ujuiri, Lomai and Chaaiche. Beyond a basic familiarity with their names, however, many of which are mentioned in myths, all Urarina with whom I spoke claimed to know nothing of the nature or composition of these named groups. Some appear to be eponymous with a single figure, presumably a real or mythical ancestor, and in at least one case (*viz*. Lomai) a well-known culture hero. Presumably on such grounds, Dean (1995: 38) comments in passing that Urarina society was traditionally composed of clans or sibs, each ascribed an unspecified ritual function. He offers no further evidence in support of this claim, however, admitting that '[t]he descent, localisation and other features of Urarina sibs are at present unclear'. My own questions to informants as to whether these groups were basically exogamous, endogamous, ritual or geographical in origin, or even all of the same general type or order, met with varied and often openly confused responses. Some informants nevertheless thought that the ancient, named *lauri* were considerably more numerous than the present-day solidarity groups

referred to by this term, and others were willing to localise them at certain points along the main course of the Chambira river. I was also told that hostility and even violence between rival *lauri* was relatively commonplace.

The German explorer Tessman (1930), who was the first to produce any ethnographic information on the Urarina, denied outright the existence of clans or sibs, but did note 'a certain particularism' among the inhabitants of the various affluents of the Chambira. This observation does seem to have some validity. Preliminary analyses of a kinship survey conducted in 2006, which included over 500 people, along with anecdotal evidence, suggest the presence of several loosely defined endogamous nexuses operative at the regional level, often roughly coinciding with the Chambira's various tributaries or subcatchments. Although quantitative analysis of this data is still pending, the hypothesis receives a degree of confirmation from linguistic evidence. Olawsky detected the existence of distinct regional dialects of the Urarina language, with differences at the phonological, syntactical and lexical levels (personal communication, 2004). This was subsequently confirmed by several of my informants. Olawsky distinguished the Espejo dialect, named for the affluent on which he worked, from the Chambira dialect and from that of the Pucuna. I also detected differences in popular and idiomatic expressions, such as standard formulae for giving thanks to the Creator following a meal, as well as popular jokes and nonsense expressions. The extent to which dialect regions overlap with endogamous nexuses requires further investigation, though it must be pointed out that these endogamous nexuses are not named, nor are they considered to be *lauri*. However, before considering in greater detail the processes by which the referents of *lauri* may have changed over time, I first wish to examine the significance of uxorilocality for my interpretation of the terminology.

Uxorilocality and gender asymmetry

The potential for asymmetry between patrilateral and matrilateral kin echoes a broader asymmetry between women and men, which in turn seems intimately linked to the practice of uxorilocal post-marital residence. It is interesting to note, in the first instance, that a distinction is made between paternal and maternal grandmothers, but not between grandfathers. While this could be taken to suggest some sort of matrilineal ideology, a more likely explanation would be an emphasis on relations between female consanguines. The term for FM, *aaso*, also means 'bad' or 'foolish',

which might even indicate a kind of devaluation of FM in relation to MM. In practice I could detect no sociologically salient difference between the two. Given the rule of uxorilocal residence, one might expect the MM generally to live in closer proximity to her female descendents. This is not necessarily the case, however, as the vast majority of post-menopausal women are abandoned (or simply neglected) by their husbands in favour of a younger wife, at which time they often return to live with one of their sons. Such widows are known as *jaole*, 'refuse', from the verb *jaoha*, 'to throw [away]'. Often such women, at least until they reach a certain age, resign themselves to a peripatetic lifestyle known as *nelonaa*, moving from one of their children's houses to another.

The reciprocity of address terms between alternate generations is also gendered: a♂♀PF=a♂CC≠a♀CC. In other words, the term is reciprocal only for male ego: a man calls his grandchild 'grandparent', whereas a woman calls him or her simply 'grandchild'. Exactly how this relates to the distinction between FM and MM remains unclear, but it is perhaps significant that equations between members of alternate generations is a common feature of two-line terminologies (Parkin 1997: 168).

Other instances where terms differ according to ego's gender include both patrilateral and matrilateral 'uncles' (but not 'aunts'), and sister-in-law (but not brother-in-law). The term *ichaso* refers only to ♂eB, but is also used as a vocative by both female and male ego for all male kin (be they genealogical cousins or siblings) at G0, and all male *parallel* kin at G-1: ♂♀B=♂BS=♀ZS (though it should be pointed out that *coona* is also commonly used by a female Ego for her 'genuine' brothers, in lieu of *ichaso*). In a similar vein, *aoa* is a vocative for the following female parallel kin: ♀Z=♀ZD=♂BD=♀♂D.

For male ego, of course, such equations effectively reinforce the incestuous nature of BD marriage in relation to ZD marriage. More significantly, however, they highlight the extent to which female consanguines are terminologically homogenised relative to males, or rendered equivalent. This principle is closely connected with the nature of uxorilocality, and it reflects the relative closeness and proximity of females in the residential unit. Although men claim that uxorilocality is the norm because the girl's father 'wants his son-in-law by his side', I suspect that one of the key reasons for uxorilocality is that the women themselves want and demand it. Female consanguines are reluctant to separate, and even the relatively widespread practice of sororal polygyny is often something initiated by the second, usually younger sister. As

Rival (2005: 292) has argued for the Amazonian Huaorani, both sororal polygyny and uxorilocality make sisters structurally equivalent, which may be why the children of sisters are often considered to be 'more the same' than the children of brothers (see also Mathieu 2007). Such a tendency clearly counterbalances any formal emphasis on patrilineal descent.

The same principle also receives spatial expression, especially during public gatherings: women tend to sit closely together in tight-knit groups, often in a single corner of the room or against the back wall, while men place much greater distance between themselves and therefore occupy a far greater area. Women of all ages are often addressed simply as *ene*, 'woman', while adult males (unlike boys) would rarely, if ever, be addressed as *quicha* ('man'). Female personal names, in both Urarina and Spanish, also tend to be more homogenous and repetitive, selected from a smaller stock. This is vastly exaggerated in the case of the latter: while the variety of male names is great, most women are called either Maria or Rosa.

Generally speaking, women appeared to be more conservative than men, and more reluctant to learn new techniques, to try out new foods or activities, or to diversify their practices. They are much more likely than men to be sceptical of a new way of doing something, such as healing the ill through use of western medicines, or immunising their children with vaccinations. Conversely, men are not only more open to such novelties, but much more likely to seek ways of enhancing their power or ability relative to their peers in areas such hunting, spear fishing, healing, flute-playing, or the arts of magic and mystical attack. Men distinguish themselves as leaders by perfecting their oratorical abilities, as well as techniques of diplomacy and dispute resolution. Such knowledge is often inculcated through voluntary subjection to strict dietary and other disciplinary regimes, which typically require a man to reside in virtual isolation for an extended period of time, thereby extricating himself from the countervailing, feminine arts of feeding and nurture which insistently unify and homogenise the residential group.

This broad, gendered contrast is also evident at the level of the body, which is a particularly salient sociological site in the Amazonian context. All Urarina women dress identically, in a highly conventionalised, 'traditional' fashion, rendering them broadly similar in appearance. Men, in contrast, wear a variety of 'western'-style clothes, according to personal taste. Men, and only men, increasingly purchase items from traders which further enhance their differentiation from their peers, such as

watches and other prestige items. Because only men liaise with the outside world, they are more susceptible to the increased avenues for social differentiation it offers.

Such gendered techniques of the body give a dramatic physical expression and salience to subtle, but already extant, bodily as well as cultural and linguistic differences arising from men's divergent places of origin. The distribution of symbolic or discursive forms of knowledge in particular, such as myths, chants and oral-historical accounts, is quite often subject to regional variation, and I found that men hailing from different tributaries of the Chambira were more prone to disagree over matters of history or cosmology. It could, of course, be countered that such forms of knowledge are by their nature individualistic or subject to free variation, but their relative mastery by, or association with, men rather than women only strengthens the general argument.

Ultimately, uxorilocality can and should be understood, at least in part, as a political strategy for domesticating and embedding men in matrifocal residential groups, through which they are progressively turned into kin – i.e. people who share bodily substance with others – through the homogenising agency of female consanguines who are already quintessentially alike. The basic strategy of transforming affinity into consanguinity, or 'making kin out of others' (to use the formulation of Vilaça [2002)]), is widely acknowledged as central to Amazonian sociality (see e.g. Fausto [2007]; Viveiros de Castro [2001]). This principle is also strongly implicated in the rise in importance of ritual kinship following the move away from prescriptive marriage.

Historical trajectories

I now wish to return to the hypothesis raised earlier, namely that an earlier preference for cross-cousin marriage, enabling close reiteration of marriage alliances across generations, has given way to a system favouring a certain degree of local group exogamy, reflected particularly in the hawaiianisation of terms at G0. If earlier matrimonial exchanges tended to be asymmetrical, such that matrilateral cross-cousins were preferred to patrilateral cross-cousins, it might further be possible that a shift has taken place from seeing patrilateral kin as more closely related than matrilateral kin, toward an emphasis on co-residence as the overriding factor conditioning relatedness. Given widespread uxorilocality, this would complement the emphasis on relations between female consanguines discussed above. The decreasing

relevance of descent as an organising principle would, of course, coincide with the gradual disappearance of clans themselves. It should be noted that when I proposed this hypothesis to informants in the field, following a preliminary analysis of the terminology, they generally (though perhaps unsurprisingly) rejected my tentative suggestions of ancient prescriptive marriage. One or two even asserted that change had in fact moved in the other direction: that more people marry their cousins today than in earlier times, when people were more 'respectful' than in the current, decadent era. This is entirely possible, however, assuming marriage with an actual first cousin was relatively rare compared with marriage to a classificatory one at greater genealogical distance.

Of particular relevance to my hypothesis is Taylor's (1998) study of transformations of Jivaro kinship. Several features of the Urarina system are also common to the Jivaro groups, such as bilateral descent reckoning, valorisation of the symmetrical exchange of female consanguines and sororal polygyny. Yet as one moves progressively downstream from the comparatively isolated Shuar and Achuar, living on the upper reaches of tributaries of the Marañon, through the Aguaruna, towards the Candoshi living on the Marañon itself, the marriage rule changes from a positive rule of bilateral cross-cousin marriage amongst the Shuar, through various *de facto* restrictions on close cousin marriage amongst the Achuar and Aguaruna, to an entirely negative rule amongst the Candoshi. This correlates with increasing emphasis on marrying out, increasing population involved in a local network of intermarriage (or endogamous nexuses) and increasing duration of postmarital (uxorilocal) residence, which for the Candoshi is permanent. There is an additional splitting of the social field, from a three-way division comprising consanguines, affines and non-kin or tribal enemies for the Jivaro bloc, to a four-way division for the Candoshi, which much more resembles the Urarina system: close kin (genealogically and spatially), distant kin, non-kin and tribal enemies, combined with a strong distinction between lineal and collateral kin.

Despite several important differences (such as strict local group exogamy and the permanence of uxorilocality), then, the Urarina kinship system most closely resembles that of the Candoshi, which is perhaps unsurprising given that this is the group to whom they were historically in greatest proximity, geographically and socially. Although the Candoshi seem more averse to marriage with even distant kin than Urarina, preferring in principle marriage with the category of 'nonkin

nonenemies', Taylor notes that marriage networks are in practice far less open or expandable than this would suggest, due to genealogical amnesia. She even points to a genealogical study indicating that a high proportion of actual marriages result from a WB-ZH relationship in G+2. Although the final results of my own genealogical survey will doubtless shed further light on actual Urarina marriage practices and permit a more comprehensive analysis, it seems possible that a broadly analogous set of transformations to that which Taylor discerns synchronically for the Jivaro language family as whole has taken place diachronically within the Urarina system.

Similar structural transformations have been observed elsewhere. Focusing on Amazonia as a whole, Henley (1996) attempted to correlate variations in kinship types to culturally specific attitudes to alterity on the one hand, and to historical circumstances on the other, particularly geographical location and concomitant participation in regional trade networks. Groups living in the headwater areas, he argued, generally place greater emphasis on marriages that reinforce previous affinal ties. Prescriptive marriage tends to be replaced by a negative rule excluding close relatives as one moves downstream toward areas which historically favoured external trade relations and an extended social universe.[3] Uxorilocality becomes more permanent among such groups, the cross-parallel distinctions of the dravidianate are blurred, and cousins are classified into the same categories as siblings (hawaiianisation). The ideal marriage partner thus shifts from a close cousin to a distant classificatory 'sibling' to a 'stranger'.

The hypothetical historical trajectory I propose for the Urarina system is also consistent with Kryukov's (1998) global model for the directionality of drift in kinship transformations. Kryukov argued that any fusion of kin terms over time will start at ego's generation, while differentiation of categories will start at the first ascending generation (G+1). The general movement he proposes is from the bifurcate merging type (particularly the Dravidian subvariety) to the lineal type, following either of two possible paths: either via generational types, or via bifurcate collateral types. The Urarina case could in fact be taken to imply both trajectories being followed simultaneously: fusion at G0, and differentiation G+1 and G-1. Such a possibility is not explicitly considered by Kryukov, but I can see no good argument as to why it should not occur.

[3] Gregor (1977) has also written that 'an inclination to extend the category of classificatory "siblings" codifies the encouragement of distant alliances beyond an expansive field of consanguineous kin'.

Henley warned against regarding Dravidian systems as prototypical and/or historically prior in Amazonia, and drew instead particularly on discussions of Tupi-Guarani kinship in deriving his prototypical 'Amazonian type', from which, he argued, the more canonical Dravidian systems, and indeed 'the great majority of extant Amazonian kinship systems' have evolved. This ideal type 'entails neither a positive marriage rule nor a specific category of same generation cross relative' (Henley 1996: 59), and is moreover associated with a relatively elaborated set of exclusively affinal terms. The Urarina system appears to have at least some features in common with Henley's 'Amazonian type'. Particularly germane is his argument correlating this ideal type to short cycles of exchange within and between groups of siblings. I did detect a tendency to build on marriage alliances once they are established, and also observed a number of instances of sister exchange. Marriage between two pairs of siblings is particularly common in myths. It is referred to as *itadaca nejesinajeein*, an expression whose literal translation is 'pure mutual brother-in-law'.

The social and political environment of the Urarina is, moreover, not entirely dissimilar to the Xinguano, Panoan and Arawakan groups, where, as Henley argues, 'a close-knit marital exchange strategy such as that associated with the dravidianate would be against individual communities' interests, leaving them politically vulnerable and isolated from inter-community trade and ritual exchanges' (ibid.: 56).[4] In other words, a shift away from a positive marriage rule could be a partial consequence of strategic and political decision-making at some stage in the group's history, possibly associated with demographic expansion or a shift in the balance of power with neighbouring groups. It should be noted, however, that despite these similarities, the six-way classification of relatives at G+1 in particular makes the Urarina system difficult to incorporate within Henley's general transformational scheme. Analysis of actual marriages, in conjunction with further comparative work, will hopefully allow some of these questions to be resolved more satisfactorily.

In any case, enlargement of the social universe through expansion of strategic alliances seems to me a more likely cause of the transformation of the Urarina kinship terminology than that earlier proposed by Dole (1969), who argued that the shift to a

[4] Taylor (1998) also suggests that the kinship systems of certain Xingu groups, which associate bifurcate generational terminologies with avoidance of first-cousin marriage, belong to the same type as the Candoa (Candoshi) system.

generational terminology among the Kuikuru of central Brazil was primarily the result of severe population decline, and associated with the merging of previously exogamous groups into one endogamous group. As Henley notes, regional endogamy is most common, in Amazonia at least, precisely among those groups living in headwater regions where two-line systems are most predominant.

An important consequence of a shift towards a system allowing for more regionally exogamous marriages, while retaining a preference for uxorilocal residence, would be an increased number of incoming male strangers or non-kin requiring incorporation into the residential group. Such a shift makes uxorilocality a practice of particular significance, and also goes a long way in explaining the current emphasis on ritual co-parenthood discussed at the outset. The construction of ritual co-parents, either through name bestowal or through cutting the umbilical cord of a newborn, is – like uxorilocality – one of the most potent and popular techniques available for transforming and domesticating a potentially threatening affinity.

Conclusion

The Urarina kinship terminology has been analysed in light of the distinctly Amazonian propensity for transforming affines into consanguines, especially through the strong preference for uxorilocal post-marital residence and the emphasis in present-day society on ritual co-parenthood. Some of the anomalies presented by the terminology, especially the disjuncture between a generational nomenclature at G0 and a bifurcate collateral nomenclature at G+1 and G-1, have been addressed through the formulation of an admittedly speculative hypothesis of historical transformation, according to which a bifurcate merging nomenclature, resembling what Henley (1996) has referred to as the prototypical 'Amazonian type', has been subject to a gradual process of fusion of kin terms at G0 and differentiation of kin terms at G+1 and G-1. This receives a degree of support from the possible persistence, in collective memories, of a now-defunct (patrilineal) clan system of social organisation. A pending analysis of actual marriages stands to shed further light on these issues.

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