Abstract: Using literary references and field research data, this article describes and analyses the naming system used by the Pemon and their neighbours living in Venezuela, Brazil and Guyana. The importance of group names and associated meanings in colonial times and the consequent treatment of indigenous peoples is noted. The study shows that we today need to determine exactly how a wide variety of names is used and which levels of structure these denote within a segmentary system of interrelationships. Autodenominations and global nicknames mark the maximal level of ethnic identity. Nicknames also denote a number of regional groups, which are major sub-divisions within the ethnic unity. At the local community level there is a range of environmental terms deriving from prominent topographical features, mountains and navigable rivers being pre-eminent. These levels of structure relate to the ownership of ancestral land and to resource use and they underpin the socio-political, linguistic and cultural relationships between and within a number of different ethnic groups. It is argued that the study of naming systems should be a prime consideration in any attempt to classify the indigenous peoples of Guiana and to understand the basic structures underlying daily life.

Key words: Pemon, naming, identity, structure, autodenomination, nickname, environmental term.

Nomenclatura. Identidad y estructura: Los Pemon

Resumen: A través del uso de referencias literarias y datos de campo de primera mano, éste artículo describe y analiza el sistema nomenclador usado por los Pemón y sus vecinos que habitan Venezuela, Brasil y Guyana. Se subraya aquí la importancia de los nombres étnicos y los significados asociados a los mismos en la época colonial y el tratamiento que deriva de ellos hacia los pueblos indígenas. Este estudio muestra la necesidad actual de determinar con exactitud cómo se usa una amplia variedad de nombres y qué niveles estructurales denotan tales nombres dentro de un sistema segmentario de interrelaciones. Las autodenominaciones y apodos globales marcan el nivel máximo de identidad étnica. Los sobrenombres denotan también un número de grupos regionales que constituyen subdivisiones primordiales dentro de la unidad étnica. Al nivel de la comunidad local se observa un rango de términos ambientales que derivan de rasgos topográficos prominentes, montañas y ríos navegables. Estos niveles de estructura se relacionan a la propiedad de tierras ancestrales y al uso de recursos los cuales consolidan las relaciones socio-políticas, lingüísticas y culturales entre y dentro de un número de diferentes grupos étnicos. Se argumenta que el estudio de sistemas de nomenclaturas debería considerarse primordial en cualquier intento por clasificar a los pueblos indígenas de Guyana así como para entender las estructuras básicas subyacentes en la vida cotidiana.
From the beginning of Old World encounters, of exploration, trade, colonization and settlement, naming was of the utmost importance in the identification and consequent treatment of the New World peoples. In many instances of interactions between the newcomers and the indigenous, naming (with its underlying cultural matrix) was a primary mechanism for framing official policy and governing the interchanges which increasingly occurred. The most prominent instance in the Caribbean Islands and along the Atlantic coast of the continent was the attribution of the name ‘Carib’, which from the earliest contacts became associated with the practice of cannibalism, to the degree where the two terms became synonymous, i.e., caribe = cannibal. Thereby, the seizure of land and the creation of an indigenous labour force were justified. Thus, as Bos (1998: 16) notes:

> It was of importance to identify the Carib, in order to regulate the use of Amerindian labour by the colonists...

A particularly dramatic illustration of this is described by Whitehead (1988: 9-11). He notes that the distinction between ‘carib’ and ‘non-carib’ populations became a serious concern of the Spanish Crown and he quotes the decree of Queen Isabella in 1503 whereby Spanish colonists were permitted to take into slavery any Amerindian considered to be a Carib. In 1518 a judge, Rodrigo de Figueroa, was appointed and empowered to produce a definitive classification of indigenous cultures in territories known to the Spanish. However, as the example of Spanish policy in Trinidad was to indicate, names and their associated identities could be annulled and even restored again when it was politic to do so. In 1511, due to colonists in Santo Domingo requiring an increased labour force, Trinidad was declared by Real Cédula to be ‘carib’. A few years later Figueroa’s classification excluded the indigenous Trinidadians, following the intervention of Bartolomé de Las Casas but also, it has been surmised, because reports of a gold find in the island indicated that a labour force for the mines should be maintained locally. When, eventually, gold did not materialize and permission to colonize the island was granted Antonio Sedeño in 1530, Trinidad’s indigenous population was again, in the same year, declared to be ‘carib’. A major consequence of Spanish manipulation of indigenous names and attributed identities was to affirm even create, a polarization between ‘hostile Carib’ and ‘friendly Arawak’, the two main groups of people first encountered...
in the Caribbean Islands and then along the South American coast of Guiana\(^1\) and on the lower reaches of the rivers (excluding the Warao who lived in the Orinoco Delta and in swampy coastal areas to the east).

However, Dutch policy linked to indigenous identities also had a formidable effect on the peoples of the territories they were settling. The Dutch West India Company in the ‘Three Provinces’ (of Essequibo, Berbice and Demerara) forged a policy which, for pragmatic economic and strategic reasons, forbade the enslavement of the friendly nations within the Company’s territories and sphere of influence. Treaties were made in the 1650s declaring the indigenous people to be inalienably free and, even as late as 1793 a special Ordinance prohibited their enslavement and that of their offspring (Menezes 1979: 161). Those exempt from slavery were named as Arawaks, Caribs, Warao and Akawaio. On the other hand, trade in slaves obtained from outside the Company’s sphere was allowed and the eighteenth century literature describes how the Caribs in particular became notorious for their incursions into Spanish territory in the Orinoco valley, or for their visits to trading partners there, in order to obtain \textit{poitos}, red (indigenous) slaves to sell to the Dutch.

This policy was in several respects advantageous. It allowed for friendly relationships and even alliances whereby the plantations, outlying posts on the main rivers, trading networks and the colonists in general were, in the main, protected from hostile acts from the indigenous people around them. Additionally, the colonists could call on the latter for military assistance in case of revolt or aggression from the thousands of black slaves being imported from Africa to provide labour on the plantations. In contrast, the Dutch in Surinam (today Suriname) could legally have Akawaio Indians as slaves. The Caribs took advantage of this in their perennial hostilities against the Akawaio, whom, whenever opportunity allowed, they enslaved and sold as domestic servants to the Dutch east of the Corentyne River. This identification of Akawaio as potential slaves in Surinam, but not in Berbice, Essequibo and Demerara, may well have led them to abandon the Corentyne valley. Certainly there were Akawaio up the Corentyne when, in April 1597, Thomas Masham arrived in the ‘Coritine’ and at an Arawak ‘town’ which had been raided by ‘Waccawaes that dwell above the falles’ and who had come down a month earlier and slain some 10 people. (Masham 1904: 12) In later times, after Carib raids in the area, the Akawaio ceased to be reported as living up the Corentyne valley, their easternmost territory, and most likely they had considered it prudent to move away from the frontier to join relatives recorded as inhabiting the left bank in the neighbouring Berbice River valley to the west.

\(^1\) Guiana here refers to the geographical region extending along the Atlantic coast from the Orinoco Delta to the mouth of the Amazon, up the Amazon, Rio Negro, Casiquiare Canal and down the Orinoco River. Politically it contains the three modern nation states, Guyana, Guyane (Française) and Suriname, with neighbouring areas of Brazil and Venezuela.
Naming can thus be seen to have had vital political implications and was, in some instances in the earliest days of contact between indigenous Americans and Old World incomers, a matter of freedom and slavery even of life or death. This present article seeks to demonstrate that naming systems, rooted in the pre-Columbian past, remain of very considerable importance in a number of ways and should be subject to up-to-date field investigations, combining literary references where these are available.

My basic premise is that names have a social content, whether they are used to identify individuals, families or a variety of socio-political and cultural unities within and between ethnic unities. The Guiana ethnographic evidence as a whole shows that naming plays important roles and involves every level of indigenous society. They include the naming of individuals, which amongst Pemon and their neighbours the Kapon is a problematic topic of study in the field. Thus, the question ‘Anek a-esik?’, literally translates as ‘Who is your name?’, and it is contrary to etiquette for a stranger to ask this. It may create great unease and even alarm and be considered to have sinister intent. The frequent reply amongst Akawaio Kapon was ‘Awai’pa‘ ‘I don’t know’, or a denial that the individual in question possessed a name. Asking the names of deceased relatives when collecting genealogies often created antagonism, mixed with incomprehension. Amongst both Pemon and Kapon there is a ritual use of naming in a comprehensive system of invocations (taren). The crucial beliefs relating to naming in this latter complex is evident in the work published by the late Revd P. Cesáreo de Armellada, Pemonton Taremuru: Los Tarén de los Indios Pemón, 1972. It is useful to keep in mind a quotation he used to explain the power which naming has been conceived to have had in human communities from ancient times. Thus, he notes that a name not only designates, characterizes and distinguishes its bearer from others, but is also an essential element of his personality; to know a name is to make contact with the bearer, for the name is the double of the person and where the name is, there also is the person; the name can substitute for the person; he who knows the name of a person has power over him and can control him at will (1972: 16). Although Armellada refers to naming directed to individuals, and in taren to the belief in anthropomorphized entities and their qualities, his observations may also be postulated to underlie certain aspects of group naming, notably nicknaming and its accompanying stereotyping. In this naming sector, which is considered below, it is assumed that a name alone, powerful as it might be, will be found to contain specific associations and connotations which it manipulates and communicates and thus expresses an extensive range of interrelationships at a variety of structural levels. These meanings, frequently various, I attempt to unravel utilizing both literary references and my fieldwork data.

The literature referring to the indigenous peoples of the Guiana region
since the time of first encounter or report, is characterized by a confusing welter of names which ethno-historians and ethno-linguists have been grappling with ever since. For example, ‘Some Recoveries in Guiana Indian Ethnohistory’ 1998, by Gerrit Bos, represents a recent, comprehensive attempt to clarify the identity and wider affiliation by language and culture of the various indigenous peoples mentioned in colonial English, Dutch, Portuguese and Spanish documentary sources of the Guiana countries. In his Índice y Mapa de Grupos Etnolingüísticos Autóctonos de América del Sur’ 1993, by Manuel Lizarralde, considering the continent as a whole as well as Guiana, found the problems relating to the names of indigenous groups to be more complex than had been foreseen (1993: 7). The names which these and other scholars have reviewed had been mostly adopted by the incoming colonists and settlers and denoted as those of ‘tribes’, or nations, which were first ‘discovered’ and then, frequently, ‘disappeared’ and were presumed to have died out or to have migrated elsewhere, to reside out of contact.

However, it was not only the earliest settlers who were attempting to identify the indigenous peoples as they first encountered them on the coast and lower rivers of Guiana. Over the centuries, the problem of naming and of identification extended into the interior of Guiana whenever expeditions were mounted and church missions came to be established. As new reports and contacts increased, so the number of names of indigenous groups proliferated. It was later noted that some confusion was caused because the name recorded for any particular group depended on the direction of approach, for an expedition would learn of a name in advance through its use by neighbours of the people about to be visited. These names were likely to be nicknames. By the 1880s systematic attempts were being made to order and classify the names most frequently encountered. The major tool used in this endeavour was linguistic identification and affiliation using collected vocabularies. These word lists were of varying quality, consisting mostly of short, casually collected words, often standardized to cover certain basic nouns to allow for comparison between differently named groups. Where colonists and settlers had a longer association with an indigenous people then quite considerable lists were recorded. For example, W.C. Farabee’s linguistic material on the ‘Macusis’ (Pemon) was derived almost entirely from Christopher Davis, an Englishman from the coast of British Guiana, who had lived in the Rupununi for 15 years, had married a Makusi and fathered three children by her (Farabee 1924: 96-152).

An early, notable attempt at a comprehensive classification of the ‘Indian Tribes’ of British Guiana and neighbouring areas of Brazil and Venezuela was made by Everard im Thurn, in his 1883 work Among the Indians of Guiana, (Chapter VI, 156-174). He drew on an extensive personal experience of indigenous populations gained from many collecting expeditions into the interior of
the country between 1877-9, when he held the post of Curator of the Museum in Georgetown, and during 1882 - 90, when he was Magistrate in the Pomeroon District. He also travelled in adjacent areas of Brazil (the Rio Branco valley) and Venezuela (the upper Cuyuni and the Gran Sabana). Although his main interests were, at the beginning, those of a Natural Scientist, he increasingly developed contacts with well known Anthropologists at Oxford University, where he had been an undergraduate. His propositions and classification are of considerable interest, a number of the named groups he discusses being those which are central to this present work. Although some of his conclusions illustrate the pitfalls which the study of naming and identification has been prone to, he also referred to some of the main features in the indigenous naming system used in the Guiana region. He began by stating the problem:

The aboriginal population of the whole continent of America is made up of an extraordinarily large and disproportionate number of more or less well-defined small groups of so-called Red Indians, which are chiefly distinguishable in that each uses either a peculiar vocabulary, or, in the case of the minor groups, a peculiar dialect of a vocabulary common to several of the larger groups.’ (1883: 156)

He then asserted that the Indians of British Guiana and some settled beyond the frontiers ‘are known by a very large number of different names’. He listed those names known to himself and remarked that many of them were synonymous and he stated:

It will save trouble if we dispose of these unnecessary names at once. The Ackawoi, by a mere variation in pronunciation are also known as Waccawais; and, using neither of these names, these people call themselves Kapohn, which in their language means simply ‘the people’. We shall find that several tribes have both a name for themselves that is, each calls itself in its own language ‘the people’ and a name used by other Indians. (1883: 158)

He additionally noted that the Arawaks called themselves Lokono and that the Caribisi were the same as the so-called Caribs’ and Carinya, or ‘the people’. He then rejected all three names for Caribs and proposed to substitute

\[\text{Thurn, accompanied by the Crown Surveyor H.I. Perkins and with the aid of the ‘Arekoonas’, was the first European to reach the top of Mount Roraima, which had hitherto been regarded as unclimable. This was in Dec. 1884. (Timehri 1885: IV, Pt. 1: 40).}\]

\[\text{Caribisi is an Arawak term meaning ‘a Carib place’. It had been incorrectly adopted by the Colonists as being the proper name for Caribs.}\]
the term ‘True Carib’. He explained (1983: 164) that it might seem natural to use ‘Carinya’, their own name for themselves, but ‘this term has the disadvantage of being unfamiliar to ethnologists’. Other examples of synonymous names which he gave include Arecuna and Arecuma, Paramona and Partamona. He dismissed the ‘Engaricos’, [Inkariko] as being ‘hybrids between Macusis and Arecunas’ and for the same reason the ‘Pshavacos’[Psaugok] and ‘Worumas’, which ‘are also names for hybrids between some two of the better-known tribes’ (1883: 159). In his simplified list of tribes we find the following which are relevant to us here:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ackawoi</th>
<th>Paramona</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arecuna</td>
<td>True Caribs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macusi</td>
<td>Zurumutas</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Referring to this simplified list, im Thurn went on to say that each of these groups has a name for itself, and a name by which it is known by Indians of other groups. Sometimes the esoteric name and the exoteric are the same, sometimes they are different. But, however this may be, the existence of such a name indicates a certain amount of distinctness in the group. (1883: 159)

Although, below, we question the nature and value of im Thurn’s simplified list of names, there is no doubt that he had discovered the existence of indigenous autodenominations as a naming category, even though he seems not to have realized their importance and was prepared to jettison them if they were inconvenient to use. Also, he understood that names automatically express differentiation between indigenous groups. He went on to examine these divisions under the terms race, branch, tribe and family, aiming to apply them as a frame of systematic reference because, he asserted, an indiscriminate use of them could only lead to confusion. In determining affiliations in these stated terms, he uses linguistic criteria (which he refers to as ‘vocabularies’), bodily structure and appearance, and cultural features (‘customs and habits’). Of these, his linguistic criteria are the most convincing and his division of indigenous groups (‘branches’) into Warrau, Arawak and Carib and the fact of their distinct languages, was generally accepted. On the other hand his classification of Wapishana (‘Wapiana’) as a distinct language

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4 im Thurn 1883: 193, footnote 1, describes the Zurumutas as a sub-group in the interior, in some way allied to the Macusis. The name probably refers to the Makushi dwelling in the Surumu River valley, Brazil.
was later corrected when it was ascertained that they were an Arawak-speaking people. im Thurn’s representation of the Tribes and Sub-tribes of the Carib Branch is as follows (1883: 163):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Branch</th>
<th>Tribe</th>
<th>Sub-tribe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>American</td>
<td>Carib</td>
<td>True Carib</td>
<td>Paramona</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ackawoi</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Macusi......</td>
<td>(Pianoghotto5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(Zurumutas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Arecuna</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By the term branch he meant

such a portion of this [American] race as is distinguished
by the use of a vocabulary common and peculiar to that
portion; for example, all members of the Carib branch use,
with more or less dialectic variations, the Carib
vocabulary. (im Thurn 1883: 159)

He defined ‘tribe’ as follows:

By a tribe I mean to express such a portion of a branch as
uses the vocabulary common to that branch, but with
dialectic variations peculiar to itself; for instance, the
Macusis and the True Caribs are different tribes of the
Carib branch. (im Thurn 1883: 160)

In present-day terms, he had effectively recognized the existence of Caribs
(True Carib/Carinya) and Carib-speaking peoples who went under different,
distinct names but who use ‘with more or less dialectic variations, the Carib
vocabulary’. (1883: 159) In a more detailed account of his findings (1883: 165),
he asserted that there were four different dialects of the Carib language,
spoke by the True Caribs: Ackawoi, Macusi, and Arecuna respectively and he
maintained that these dialects had been quite wrongly spoken of as distinct
languages.

The Macusi dialect is very closely similar to the Arecuna,
from which it differs chiefly in the mode of pronunciation;
and a similar dialect, with a few exceptional differences,
principally in the lower numerals, is used by the Ackawoi.
A Macusi, an Arecuna, and an Ackawoi speak quite
intelligibly the one to the other. The remaining dialect of
this language that of the True Caribs is, though the

5 im Thurn (1883: 170) defines the Pianoghotto as a savanna tribe occupying a very isolated position.
relationship is very recognisable, somewhat more distinct ...(im Thurn 1883: 165)

His linguistic classification thus brought to light the problem of what constitutes a distinct language as opposed to a dialectical variation. He himself admitted problems of the existence of single words with a wide extension across different branches and the fact that tribes of the same branch sometimes use distinct words. As an example of divergent pairs of words, he quoted the True Carib use of ‘wotah’ for fire and the Makusi use of ‘apo’. He surmised that this must have resulted from one of the pair having been borrowed (1883: 160).

Although im Thurn’s classification was informed by his observations, by close contacts with the indigenous peoples he met whilst working and travelling in the interior regions and by the linguistic material then available, it nevertheless imposed a non-indigenous view on Amerindian structures and relationships. His discarding of ‘unnecessary names’ did not stop at a rejection of names which he denoted ‘synonyms’ and which derived from variable spellings used by the colonists. He regarded autodenominations, such as ‘Carinya’ (Karinya), in the same light as being superfluous. We can also criticize his category of ‘hybrids’ and dismissal of them. Most important from the point of view of those employing modern methods of anthropological investigation, he, like others before and after him, failed to enquire into exactly how the indigenous people themselves expressed and manipulated their own system of nomenclature and what kinds of structures and interrelationships they were referring to when naming.

An investigation of naming necessarily has to recognize the fact that it is a process whereby an individual, or a group of individuals, is selected and specified by the attribution of a name and is thereby automatically distinguished from and juxtaposed to other, differently named individuals or groups. In other words, the holding of names indicates relativity, since names inevitably express and relate to the wider social system, its parts and their identities. With the arrival of Old World Peoples and colonization, the system of inter-relationships widened to include these and their activities, and so became more diverse. Many of the names used by the indigenous to identify each other’s group affiliations were adopted into current use by the non-indigenous and are recorded in the historical literature. This piecemeal, sometimes fortuitous, absorption of names gave rise to many misconceptions due to problems of language and different levels of meaning and, even up to the present day, to a number of ill-founded assumptions, some of which became entrenched and have been conducive to bad policy-making in the realm of indigenous affairs.

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6 These two words most likely referred to two different ways of making fire. See the section entitled ‘Linguistic Classifications’ below.
In order to exemplify how this process took place and the problems of classification which have arisen from it, I refer to the Pemon in the circum-Roraima region of Guiana, necessarily including their immediate neighbours living on the length of the Pakaraima Mountains and other ethnic groups with which they have had contact. There is a relatively abundant literature on the area due in large part to the magnetic attraction of Mount Roraima and the heights of the Gran Sabana, with its wealth of botanical species, magnificent countryside and table mountains. Its remote peoples, on whom the early visitors necessarily had to rely for food and assistance, also attracted comment by an increasing number of expeditioners and scientists, many of whom put their impressions into print. The names which they recorded during their travels can be set against the meanings, usages and identities as explained today by the indigenous speakers themselves. Through this analysis, we are able to obtain a firm idea of the structures governing the life of their ancestors and which still underlie the many changes which have derived from incorporation in today’s nation states. With this information, we will be able to assess the importance of the naming system both as a part of the traditional conceptual system of the people involved, but also for consideration in their future relationships with the nation states in which they are now politically embedded.

I. Tribe: Nation: People; the Autodenomination

In Guiana the traditional, maximum social unit named is that of a self-defined ethnic group, or people, employing an autodenomination unique to themselves and occupying a recognized territory or territories. Knowledge of these autodenominations, the self-designations used by the various indigenous peoples or nations of Guiana, came relatively late in colonial times. The first literary reference to them with an indication of their significance is probably that of the Revd W.H. Brett, an early Anglican missionary in British Guiana (1843-79) who worked principally with the Coast Indians, the Arawaks, Caribs and Warrau (Warao) in the mission stations of Kabakaburi in the Pomeroon and Waramuri in the Moruca River areas, but also with ‘Acawoios’ coming from the Barama River. He additionally visited Akawaio living up the Demerara River (in 1865 and 1867) and Berbice River (in 1866). Brett published texts and parts of the Bible translated into Arawak and Akawaio and his close friendship with indigenous interpreters over a long period of residence gave him unprecedented access to ethnographic information. Thus, in ‘The Indian Tribes of Guiana’ (1868: 255) he states:

The word Kāpohn (or Kapong) which, like the “Carinya” of the Caribs, in the language of the Acawoios signifies “the people”, is that by which they designate the various branches of their widely-extended and enterprising race.
Then, later, he recounts how an ‘Acawoio’ who knew how to speak some ‘Arawâk’ begged him ‘to speak in the language of the “Lokono”...’ (1868: 261), (Lokono being the autodenomination of the people generally referred to as ‘Coast Arawaks’). It is probable that im Thurn utilised Brett’s findings, his identical spelling ‘Kapohn’ suggesting this. im Thurn additionally forecast that several tribes would be found to have a name for themselves meaning ‘the people’, as well as a name used by other Indians (see above).

It is not generally realized that there is a linguistic tool which frequently leads to the identification of a person’s or group’s autodenomination wherever someone has diligently recorded the term for the number twenty⁸. Among the indigenous peoples of Guiana counting is done in units of five, based on reference to hands and feet, and twenty is frequently described as ‘one person’ (2 hands and 2 feet). For example, Richard Schomburgk recorded that the Makushi of the North Rupununi in Guyana and upper Rio Branco valley in Brazil, used the phrase *Tiwing pemonkong* to mean ‘a person’. However, he calculated that this was 21; that is, ‘one (finger) and person (the fundamental for 20)’. (Richard Schomburgk 1922: II, 260) The Revd James Williams, an Anglican priest working amongst the Makushi of the Rupununi, 1908-13, challenged this in his ‘Makuchi Grammar’ (1932: 136-7) stating, correctly, that the phrase *ti-win pé-mon-gón* ‘signifies “one person”, i.e. both hands and both feet, and so “twenty”.’⁹

However, despite the recording of autodenominations from the mid nineteenth century, and the presumption of im Thurn that they constituted a widely extended usage, the significance of these names seems never to have been fully recognized. As Lizarralde (1993: 8) noted, they have been little utilized in the literature and generally only the specialists know them for the groups in their research area. He also referred to the difficulties in identifying an autodenomination or an adequate common term for each indigenous group. In general, autodenominations have been terms occasionally recorded but not employed by members of the non-indigenous population, who continue referring to, and writing about, the Caribs, Arawaks, Akawaio, Makushi and Arekuna etc., (using a great variety of spellings in each instance.) As related above, im Thurn deliberately discarded autodenominations as being superfluous names. A general non-use of indigenous autodenominations has continued to the present in Guyana and in the Rio Branco area in neighbouring Brazil. In Venezuela, on the other hand, the autodenomination Pemon has been increasingly used since the mid twentieth century. The Capuchin missionaries took the lead in this. Notably P. Cesáreo de Armellada proposed

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⁸ For an application of this methodology see Butt Colson and Morton 1982: 246, Note 39. See also Simpson 1940: 256, who collected from the literature a number of terms for ‘one person’ in Taurepan, Makushi, Akawaio, Cumanagoto and Carib.

⁹ *Tiwing* is the numeral one.
that the word ‘Pemon’ should be used by missionaries and ethnologists on speaking in general of the small tribes, or sub-divisions, or of their language (Armellada 1943: I, 16).

The Autodenomination Pemon

The etymology of autodenominations has been obscured by their everyday usage denoting ‘people’. The name Pemon for example, has been defined by a Pemon informant as ‘a normal human being’ and this is its general level of meaning. However, further research reveals that there is also an intrinsic meaning, an etymology. Unfortunately, this is often difficult to discover for sure Pemon being a case in point.

Pe has a number of cognate meanings relating to a fringe of some kind, including a ridge of a house, the edge of a table or mountain, a border, margin, verge, ledge or rim. (Armellada and Gutiérrez Salazar 1998: 151). These lend themselves to a number of possibilities. One suggestion is that Pemon refers to the noun pewi, meaning a palisade of wooden posts encircling a settlement, a device traditionally used as a protection against enemy attack (Gutiérrez Salazar 19). However, this kind of construction was by no means restricted to the Pemon. It was reported for their Akawaio Kapon neighbours in the upper and middle Mazaruni valley in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, who refer to it as pewoi, ‘the border around’ (Butt Colson 2009: 125). However, the fact that the Pemon make their settlements in open savanna rather than in forest, and sometimes in prominent positions such as hill-tops, might have meant that in the past they used encircling palisades more frequently than did their more forest-orientated neighbours.

P. Cesáreo de Armellada considered that the etymology of the name might refer to those who wore their hair in a fringe, and he quoted the term pe, as describing the part of the hair which, when cut, falls over the forehead. He speculated that the name might refer to a fringe of white feather down stuck onto the skin across the forehead, this having been a former mode of body decoration (personal communication). W. E. Roth (1924: 425) had also remarked on: ‘The feather down on the frontal pigment daub of the Makusi...’ Plate 1 in im Thurn’s ‘Among the Indians of Guiana’ (1883) depicts ‘A Macusi Indian in full dancing dress’ and it is noteworthy that the feather crown he was wearing has a circlet of white down at its base and that this encircles the fringe of hair below, covering its roots.

We have yet to discover exactly what -mon, (-mong) or -mön, meaning ‘root’, refers to. It seems to give a meaning of ‘forehead root’ or ‘fringe root’ and thus to favour the etymology preferred by P. de Armellada.

10 The final ‘n’ in Pemon is the phonetic /ŋ/, which can be rendered ‘ng’ in English, but not in Spanish. This is similarly the case with the autodenomination Kapon (or Kapeng) The Spanish form is used for both terms in this present article.
Via their autodenomination the Pemon identify themselves as a unique group of people, the Pemonton (pl.), speaking a particular, distinctive language, living according to their own, unique set of customs and being ultimately all of the same kind — that is, they are kin, being of the same family. They own and occupy a specific territory, or territories. These criteria are most frequently expressed in the following phrases:
Pemon maimu, (Pemon mayin)\textsuperscript{11} = Pemon word, i.e. the Pemon language
Pemon eseru = Pemon custom, i.e. Pemon culture, way of life
Pemon domba (pl. dombadong) = Pemon family, relative(s)
Pemon nön, Pemon nono = Pemon land, Pemon territory

*Pemon* can also be used to mean people in general when these appear to be like a Pemon, but a suffix, -pe is added, making Pemonpe which gives the meaning of ‘like’, ‘in the manner of’, ‘similar to’, ‘virtual’ (Armellada and Gutiérrez Salazar 1998: 151: see under -pe.)

An autodenomination is the marker for determining the extension of a self-identified grouping of people with unique indigenous affiliation. Concomitantly, it is a marker of boundaries, in that it automatically distinguishes a particular social grouping from others. This is plain to see if we look at the relationships between the Pemon and their neighbours, the Akawaio, who use the autodenomination *Kapon*.

**The Autodenomination Kapon**

*Kak* or *Ka’* means ‘sky’ (on high, high up), while -pong (or -bong) is a plural indicating a group of people who are linked to each other, who together inhabit a certain place. *Kapong* therefore translates as ‘the sky people’ or ‘the high-up people’.

In an extended context this denomination may incorporate an environmental factor, for the early Dutch literature frequently refers to ‘Acuweyen’ as living up the rivers, above the falls, in the higher lands and uplands. However, there is another element, a spiritual component which connects to this. In their conceptual system the sky contains the ultimate source of life, which is the brilliance of sunlight giving the energy and strength (*meruntï*) for life, for living well and happily. The earth below and its inhabitants are poor and imperfect by contrast, all that is good being in the sky, so that ideally, the nearer one lives to the sky the stronger one’s life and concomitant happiness. (Butt Colson and Cesáreo de Armellada 2001: 34-5)

The name *Kapon* identifies a unique grouping, being applied by its individual members exclusively to themselves. Others may recognize this exclusivity and the Pemon of the Gran Sabana occasionally use the term *Kaponokok*, the ‘Kapong people’ to refer to those neighbours whom they more usually call by the nickname ‘Waika’ (see below).

As in the case of *Pemon*, the main criteria for denoting *Kapon* are: speaking the Kapon language and living according to Kapon daily practices and customs.

\textsuperscript{11} Although maimu is understood all over the Gran Sabana as meaning ‘word’, mayin appears to be preferred amongst those living in the southern area (i.e., amongst the Taurepan Pemon).
Kinship locates individuals in Kapon society and defined groupings of Kapon occupy and own specific areas of land. Thus:

- **Kapon maimu** (pl. maimudong) = Kapon word(s), i.e. the Kapon language
- **Kapon eselu** (pl. eseludong) = Kapon custom(s), i.e. Kapon culture (way of living)
- **Kapon tomba** (pl. tombadong) = Kapon family, relatives, people
- **Kapon nöng** (possessive nono) = Kapon land, territory

Like *Pemon*, *Kapon* also can be used to mean ‘people’ if these should be like the Kapon speaker, and for this purpose they too add the suffix -be, (or -pe) making *Kaponbe*.

The two autodenominations Pemon and Kapon have a parallel usage, each within its own structural context. That is, each name marks a specific, socio-political entity which relates to neighbouring ones with their own distinct identity similarly expressed via an autodenomination. An autodenomination thus incorporates the criteria whereby individuals and groups recognize themselves to be of a kind, different from ‘others’ not Akawak (Lokono), or Carib (Kari’na) or Warao, and so on.

Owing to the closeness of the Pemon and Kapon languages and of their society and culture, especially where they are neighbours and have intermarried, it would be impossible to distinguish the degree of difference between the two through a linguistic comparison utilising just a short standard word list. However, this method of comparison is exactly what Loukotka used. Under the classification of ‘Languages of the Pemón Group’ he indiscriminately lists the names of sub-divisions of both the Pemon and Kapon. Then, under the heading of ‘Taurepán Group’ he compares 14 words from Taurepán, Arecuna, Camaracoto, [Pemon by autodenomination], and from Ingarico, Uaica and Acauai [Kapon by autodenomination]. (Loukotka 1968: 209-11)

A primary advantage of a recognition of autodenominations is that they allow us to expand our view of indigenous structures, for they are the names which represent maximum socio-cultural and linguistic groupings as the name-bearers themselves conceive them to be. As I shall show below, they also enable us, in many instances, to trace the maximum territorial extension of each such unity from the time of first report and contact. However, the question arises as to how we are to denote the specific unity which an autodenomination expresses? The Dutch, in the ‘Three Provinces’ of Essequibo Berbice and Demerara, frequently used the term ‘nation’. For example, they referred to the ‘Akawaio nation’ and the ‘Carib nation’. Their British successors

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12 The linguistic similarities between Pemon and Kapong may be noted. There are differences in pronunciation, whereby one hears /p/, /r/, /k/ and /d/ sounds in Pemon and /b/, /l/, /g/ and /t/ in Kapong. Sometimes the vocabulary differs, as exemplified by the preferred use of *mayin* for ‘word’ amongst the Taurepan.
Naming. Identity and structure: The Pemon mostly preferred to employ the word 'tribe. However, these terms, nation and tribe, have frequently been applied haphazardly to named sub-divisions of a different and lesser structural level from that denoted by the autodenomination. An additional problem relating to the use of 'tribe', is that it tends to have a derogatory connotation attached to it in popular usage. Today, we might consider referring to the autodenominational grouping as 'a people’ or ‘ethnic group’. Neither of these terms is without drawbacks. If ‘nation’ were to be used then it is important to note that the unity in question has no apical governance (and never has had to our knowledge). The overall system is acephalous, without a head a nation in the ethnic sense, but not a ‘nation state’. In referring to an ‘ethnic group’, or ‘people’ it has to be remembered that the Pemon and Kapon are very similar in organization, language and culture in general, especially where they have interacted as neighbours by trade, intermarriage and, negatively in the past, through occasional hostilities. More comparative linguistic and ethnographic information in the future might help to draw a firm line between the two, or alternatively it might lead to the conclusion that it would be unwarranted to regard Pemon and Kapong as two separate ethnic groups with distinct languages, but more as parts of an overall segmentary system speaking dialects of but one language. The use of the term ‘people’, although imprecise, has the merit that it replicates the basic meaning of an autodenomination that is, it conveys the intrinsic meaning, which is that the speakers, who claim it for themselves exclusively, thereby automatically indicate that they are the real people, as opposed to others who are not.

II. Attributed Names: Nicknames

Old World peoples on their arrival along the coastal areas of Guiana, immediately adopted the names in current use by the indigenous people themselves to denote each other's affiliations. Additional names were encountered as sporadic exploration of the interior regions took place and reports were received naming even more distant and still uncontacted groups. As a result, a process which began on the coastlands and lower reaches of the main rivers, where the colonists first settled, was repeated in the interior. The names encountered are, in more or less conventionalized forms, still used today in many instances, having been taken into general conversational use and written into the colonial literature, albeit with a great variety of spellings as the writers struggled to represent the unfamiliar sounds.\textsuperscript{13} No-one thought to investigate whether there was more than one type of naming or what the nature was of the one they were adopting. As a consequence, a lot of confusion

\textsuperscript{13} See Salazar Quijada (1970: 25 and 31) who lists a considerable number of spellings for ‘Acaguayo’ and other names applied to them and also to Pemon sub-groups.
entered the literature and little idea of the character of indigenous social structures, of the geographical spaces to which the names were linked, or of the social and cultural differentiation which they expressed.

**The Global Nicknaming System and the Pemon**

Nicknames are attributed names which are used to refer to, or describe, ‘the other’ or ‘others’. Their application bestows a particular identity and expresses a stereotype which is frequently regarded as unpleasant and is rejected by the receiver. In general, a nickname is not directly ascribed to oneself or to one’s own grouping and so is distinct from, and is an outsider’s substitute for, the proper name or self-designation of the entity in question.

It should be noted that the indigenous people of Guiana are not alone in utilizing this kind of naming system. Nicknaming is common practice in and between variously organized societies across the world, including nation states. For example, citizens of the United States of America are frequently referred to as ‘Yanks’, a term which was originally used internally amongst themselves by the ‘Southerners’ for the ‘Northerners’. Reciprocally, the ‘Yanks’ call the British ‘Limeys’. The French are in common parlance sometimes referred to by the British as ‘Frogs’ and reciprocally the British are called ‘Les Rosbifs’, the ‘Roast Beefs’, both using a culinary idiom, the former derived from a supposedly unpleasant or questionable food and the latter from an apparent eating obsession. Although an ancient practice, in recent years, where racial/ethnic relationships are potentially hostile, nicknaming of both individuals and specific groups has sometimes become subject to legal sanctions on the grounds that it is morally unacceptable and that their use is conducive to inter-ethnic violence.14

Formerly in the Guiana region, those to whom a nickname was applied might, or might not, have been aware of its existence. If informed of it, they might enter a state of denial and unequivocally reject the term in question. For example, in the 1950s some of the upper Mazaruni River people, Akawaio by nickname, did not acknowledge this designation. They queried the term when I unwittingly used it early in my fieldwork and indignantly asserted that they were ‘Kapon only’. If not considered to be outright insulting, nicknames are nevertheless ambivalent terms and those to whom they are applied suspect that they are a form of defamation, even if the intrinsic meaning, the etymology, is unclear. Indeed, the etymologies of nicknames are often difficult to discover, and the fact that many are terms of opprobrium or ridicule has meant that the recipients are reluctant to discuss them dispassionately, if at all. Difficulties are also reinforced because these usages go back to a distant past and,

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14 For example, the application of the term ‘Paki’ for a ‘Pakistani’ in Britain now counts as racist abuse.
moreover, were coined by other groups of people, who were not necessarily belonging to the same language family as those they were designating. In some instances one thinks one has arrived at an etymology which is well-founded and then another meaning and derivation is suggested and the enquiry has to begin all over again. It is noteworthy that when an etymology of a nickname is put forward by those whom it designates, then the meaning suggested tends to be a benign one, so creating an acceptable interpretation and public image for themselves by removing any derogatory content. (See below in the case of the nickname Akawaio.) Concomitantly, those applying a nickname which appears to be acceptable to the group in question, may reinterpret it and, playing on the similarity of words, substitute a different vowel or introduce a glottal stop to assign a different meaning one which mocks or ridicules. Pemon and Kapon are great manipulators of language and of the implications of words and they also possess an acute sense of the ridiculous.\textsuperscript{15} Those creatures or people they fear, who are different and dangerous, bear the brunt of their sense of humour. This is obvious, for example, in Pemon tales and songs about the jaguar\textsuperscript{16} and are especially prominent in Akawaio Kapon tales and songs about their former mortal enemies, the Kari’na (Caribs).\textsuperscript{17}

As a consequence of all these factors the derivations and meanings of nicknames are not always immutable, for a meaning may depend on the position and attitudes of informants relative to the person or group being denoted and also on the possibilities for manipulation that a particular word allows.

\textbf{The Complementarity of the terms ‘Arekuna ‘and ‘Waika’}

\textit{Arekuna}

‘Arekuna’ is an assigned nickname which appears in all but the most recent literature relating to the people of the Gran Sabana area. Today, in Venezuela, it has been replaced by the autodenomination \textit{Pemon}, but in Guyana the use of Arekuna persists in both local and official contexts. It appears on maps of indigenous locations, being placed along the north-western border of the upper Mazaruni basin in the Kamarang River area, where a Pemon group has resided from ‘time immemorial’. Arekuna is a name which is thought to refer to a water rat (\textit{are}) and there is a satirical story attributing the origin of the Arekuna group of Pemon to this rat. (Armellada and Gutierrez Salazar 18: see under \textit{Are} and Arekuna.) P. Cesáreo de Armellada (private communication) maintained that it is probably a term which likens the eating

\textsuperscript{15} Richard Schomburgk: II, 257. gives a fascinating account of Makushi (Pemon) humour and satire with respect to personal nicknames.
\textsuperscript{16} For example, there is the story of \textit{The Tiger Inferior to the Frog} (\textit{Kaikuse Ware Dokopairen}). (Armellada 1979).
\textsuperscript{17} A very frequent song relates how a Carib, fishing with bow and arrow, repeatedly hit a rock instead of a fish. This inevitably aroused much satirical laughter on the part of the listening Akawaio.
habits of this group of people to those of *are*. Thus it has been said that, like this rat, the Arekuna people eat with their backs turned away from each other, talking over their shoulders. Regarded by others as uncivilized behaviour, the term is one of opprobrium.\(^1\)

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**PEMON INTERNAL SEGMENTATION**

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<th>GLOBAL NICKNAME [DERIVATION]</th>
<th>REGIONAL GROUP NICKNAME</th>
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<td><strong>Arekuna</strong> (B)Arrinigeto; <em>Kamarakoto</em> Taurepan Esrigito (?) P’assugok (?)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Makushi</strong> [Kapon &amp; N. Pemon term for S. Pemon; Yekusa]</td>
<td><strong>Asesang</strong> Ellang Kinsoko Keseruma Makushi Mersiko Trewia</td>
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<tr>
<td>term for N. &amp; S. Pemon</td>
<td><strong>SOUTH</strong> PEMON</td>
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</tbody>
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* Kamarakoto probably originated as a river group name which was extended by the non-indigenous.

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\(^1\) This mode of eating was occasionally observed amongst the Akawaio of the upper Mazaruni in the 1950s. At communal meals in particular, it was regarded as impolite and rude to stay close to the assembly of food pots and individuals mostly scooped out some of the contents with a piece of cassava bread and retired a few feet away, sometimes squatting or sitting with their backs to those who were eating their share.
It is important to note that the nickname Arekuna has two attributions. One is a specific, regional one (discussed below): the other is a usage which is general and global in that it comprises several sub-groups. In the latter case, the southernmost Pemon, (Makushi), indiscriminately name as Arekuna, all the Pemon regional groupings to their north, not distinguishing the Taurepan of the Roraima area in Brazil and Venezuela from the specific Arekuna group of the north-east Gran Sabana (Venezuela). Migliazza notes that Makushi often refer to both these groups as ‘Jarekuna’ and

they think of themselves as distinct from the Pemon, although their language is almost intelligible with Taurepan and in some villages of the Amajari River area, the Makushi and Taurepan are intermarried. (Migliazza 1980: 130)

A consequence of these attitudes and nomenclature is that all the early explorers, scientists and travellers walking the upper Rio Branco grasslands to get to Mt Roraima, from Robert Schomburk in 1838 and onwards, described the Roraima and Gran Sabana people in general as ‘Arekuna’. They were simply repeating the nickname utilized by their Makushi guides and carriers in the Rupununi and Rio Branco Savannas and which they heard repeated in the Makushi settlements they passed through on their way north.

This was also the case when expeditions reached the Gran Sabana Pemon by other routes, such as those from British Guiana passing via the Potaro River valley of the Patamona (Kapon) or the upper Mazaruni basin of the Akawaio (Kapon). In 1863-4, for example, the German Naturalist, C.F. Appun, travelled the Mazaruni River route to Roraima. From the lower stretch of the river he walked the three-day Kurupung trail up the Pakaraima escarpment, arriving in the upper Mazaruni basin near the confluence of the Kamarang River. He ascended the upper Mazaruni as far as the Kukui River, visiting Akawaio settlements along the route. He then returned down river, entering another major tributary, the Kako. There he took on guides who accompanied him up the Kako, overland across Mount Marima and into the upper Cotingo River (Kwatin) valley in Brazil. Following the river the expedition came to the forest edge and entered the grasslands. Then they turned northwards towards the Gran Sabana, eventually arriving at Roraima.

Appun’s journey is historically significant in that he is considered to be the first non-indigenous person to enter the upper Mazaruni basin and to report on its inhabitants, the Akawaio Kapon. He was the second to mount an expedition to Roraima, after the initial 1838 and 1842 ones of Robert Schomburk. Like Schomburk in his negotiations for Makushi guides and carriers, Appun too had recruitment difficulties with respect to his journey to Roraima. Both the Makushi and the Akawaio considered it to be too dangerous an enterprise. Appun recorded that an Arekuna, who had been travelling part
of the journey with the expedition, had told him that one of the Akawaio had issued a warning that not only would Appun not pay those accompanying him to Roraima, but also that they would risk being killed by the Arekuna on arrival there. This made it difficult to persuade the Kako River Akawaio leader to let any of his people travel into Arekuna territory. En route to Roraima, in the Cotingo valley, Appun described the settlements as ‘Accawai’. He noted the indigenous frontier and, on passing a small house at the edge of forest and grasslands, he observed:

This was the last Accawai house I passed on my way to Roraima because between here and Roraima there are no further settlements and at Roraima Arekuna territory begins.  
(Appun: 1971: II, 221)

Some one hundred years later the upper Mazaruni and Cotingo River Akawaio were still referring to the Pemon in general as ‘Arekuna’. They were passing on this designation to non-indigenous residents and visitors alike, including myself, to the degree where, on a brief, first visit to the heights of the Gran Sabana in 1952, I replied to an enquiry from the inhabitants of Peraitepui de Roraima as to the purpose of my journey saying that I had come to see ‘Arekuna’. Somewhat in the manner of Koch-Grünberg’s experience before me (in 1911), this met with a dignified assertion that the Roraima people were not Arekuna, but were called Taurepan! After some 16 months of field research amongst the Akawaio, this was the first time I had heard this name.

For the Akawaio of the south-west area of the Mazaruni basin Arekuna territory begins, as Appun and others after him recorded, to the north of the uppermost reaches of the Cotingo (Kwatin) River, (Brazil). In the north-west area of the upper Mazaruni basin, in its main tributary valley the Kamarang River, Arekuna territory begins with the Paruima community, with its central village at the confluence of the Paruima River with the Kamarang. The Kamarang rises in the north-east of the Gran Sabana, near the present Pemon village of San Rafael de Kamoiran (Wompamota), and flows eastwards into Guyana to join the upper Mazaruni, a major tributary of the Essequibo. The Kamarang in Guyana is thus a divided river in that the lower reaches are occupied by Akawaio (Kapon), notably in the village of Waramadong and its community of family settlements, whereas the upper reaches near the Venezuelan frontier are occupied by Pemon who extend up to the present national frontier and onto the Gran Sabana. Oral tradition relates that it has always been a mixed area due to intermarriage between the two peoples. This appears to be borne out by Robert Schomburgk’s discovery, in 1842, of an Akawaio village with 22 occupants, on the Savanna near the source of the Kamarang River. He expressed himself as surprised to find a settlement of ‘Akawais’ so far westwards ‘among the Arekunas’. (Richard Schomburgk: 1922: II, 273)
The Seventh-day Adventist Mission on the Kamarang River intensified the Pemon presence in what had always been a mixed area. The Adventists date their mission on the Gran Sabana from 1911, when Pastor O.E. Davis, from the United States but settled in Georgetown, travelled the Cuyuni-Wenamu-upper Kamarang route and southwards across the Savanna to Roraima. He died and was buried there, 31st July 1911. Thereafter, the Adventists, referring to the Pemon as ‘the Davis Indians’ planned to set up a permanent mission in the Gran Sabana. It began in 1927 with the arrival of Alfred and Betty Cott (Cott 1972: 91) but, lacking permission from the Venezuelan government, they were forced to leave in 1931 after they had been discovered working there. In 1932 the Cotts founded Paruima mission station on the British Guiana side of the frontier, aided by Pemon followers from the Savanna and enticing over other Pemon to take up residence in the new centre. Some of these came from as far away as Akuri’ma (Santa Elena), where the Adventists had been resident and teaching. A second mission station was begun, down the Kamarang at Sukabi, near the ancient Akawaio inland village of Waramabia. This was subsequently moved to become today’s Waramadong, on the bank of the Kamarang River. The Paruima community, the village itself and its satellite family settlements, such as that of Attabreau down-stream, is denoted ‘Arekuna’ (Pemon) and this contrasts with the Waramadong village community and its cluster of satellite settlements and family farms down the river, which are denoted ‘Akawaio’ (Kapon). However, owing to an increasing degree of intermarriage between the families in the two communities, there is no absolute separation. Waramadong has some Arekuna (Pemon) inhabitants and Paruima has some Akawaio (Kapon) ones. Both communities practise the customary uxorilocal residence whereby a man is expected to live with, and work for, his wife’s relatives and raise his children amongst them. This inter-mixture has sometimes led the Akawaio of the main upper Mazaruni River to refer to the Kamarang unity, often in uncomplimentary tones, as ‘Arekuna’, regardless of the actual affiliation of individual families to the other sub-groups within the total Pemon unity.

The Arekuna do not figure in the Dutch and early British literature referring to Amerindians of the Essequibo region. This was, no doubt, because they inhabited areas to the west which the colonists knew nothing of. As Robert Schomburgk wrote, they

- inhabit the mountainous regions at the head-waters of the Caroni and Cuyuni. They are a powerful tribe, but are more properly the inhabitants of the Venezuelan territory; about 150 live at the south-western tributaries of the Mazaruni. (Robert Schomburgk 1840: 50)

When the name Arekuna begins to appear from time to time, in nineteenth-century British Guiana, it is in the context of encounters with small indigenous
groups from the mountains of the undetermined western borders of the colony who were travelling to the lowlands of Essequibo, mostly to visit the mission stations down the rivers, to work in the timber-cutting concessions for short periods and to obtain trade goods, and to see something of the reported outside world for themselves. They were often accompanied by Akawaio (Kapon). The best known of these encounters is recorded by the Anglican missionary, W.H. Brett (1868: 267-9 and 1881: 208-9). He relates how, in 1865, about seventy mixed Acawoios and Arecunas visited Waramuri mission (Moruca River), having travelled ‘from the high lands between the heads of the Cuyuni and the Caroni’ and arriving at the mission village via the Waini River, descending from its head. Brett attributed their coming, and that of some ‘Maiong-kongs’ [Ye’kuana], to the ‘extensive intercourse with other tribes’ which the Acawoios held and he considered that the latter ‘held the key of the interior’. He noted that the newcomers were receiving mission teaching from young Acawoio members of his boat crew.

It is clear from the earliest literary accounts of travellers to Roraima, as well as from my own field research in the upper Mazaruni basin, that the nickname Arekuna was, and still is, a general designation for all those Pemon living on the Gran Sabana and in fringe areas, such as the middle Kamarang River. It was, and is, applied to them by both their Makushi (Pemon) neighbours to the south and by their Akawaio (Kapon) neighbours to their east.

However, a similar application of the name is also recorded among those Pemon who live to the west of the Gran Sabana, the communities along the length of the Caroní River and the lower reaches of its major tributary, the Paragua. Thus, G.G. Simpson asserted that

In reality, the name of Arekunas is the one applied by all these Indians to their neighbours and frequently to themselves. The Kamarakotos, for example, use this name for themselves but call the neighbouring people of the Caroni, Arekunas, although this people may be of Kamarakoto descent or may have close kinship with them, naming themselves Kamarakotos. The Kamarakotos also call all the Indians of the Gran Sabana and all the most distant ones of the upper Caroni, Arekunas

(Simpson 1940: 356)

19 Simpson was researching with the Kamarakoto Pemon in the area of Kamarata, from which this group of the north-west Gran Sabana derived their name (see below). In a somewhat convoluted way, he was maintaining that although the Kamara people referred to themselves as Kamarakoto, their neighbours and kin in the Caroni valley named them 'Arekuna'.
Arnellada and Matallana, on their 1940 expedition up the Paragua and its tributaries, also confirmed the categorization of Pemon speakers there as ‘Arecuna’ in its global application. Whilst denoting the communities they met as ‘Indios Pemontones’ and so distinguishing them from the ethnic groups of Sape, Arutani and Shirianá further up the river, they recorded the attribution of Arecuna, stating (1942: 92) that amongst the five languages they encountered was ‘Pemón or Arekuna’ and they observed that

the pemón is nearly identical to the Kamarakoto and the taurepan of the Gran Sabana’ and is a dialect of the carib language.

The use of Arekuna as a global term for the Pemon of Venezuela and immediately adjacent lands in the Rio Branco, Brazil, and Kamarang River, Guyana, was championed by Simpson in his statement that in all the works previous to his own

all the Caribs [Carib-speaking groups] of the south-east of Venezuela that were not Maquiritares [Ye’kuana] were called Arekunas. (Simpson 1940: 355)

Ignoring the autodenomination, he concluded:

I see no reason why we do not return to the usage of the old travellers, sanctioned by the Indians themselves, naming as Arekunas all this incoherent mass of Indians and the language that they speak in common. Here and there appears a nucleus or group more known or better defined, and these can bear the name of the locality or respective region. Up to now, only the Taurepanes and the Kamarakotos, whom I would term two Arekuna tribes that speak two Arekuna dialects, have been conveniently distinguished. The Indians of the North of the Gran Sabana may distinguish themselves as another group of these. Probably the Arekuna vocabulary of Koch-Grünberg represents yet another local group or dialect. (Simpson 1940: 356)

Simpson’s preference for the use of Arekuna as a global name for all the northern Pemon led him into some acid comments, mostly directed against Koch-Grünberg’s findings. Referring to the latter’s division between Arekunas and ‘Taulipanges’ Simpson remarked that the Taurepanes were the only Arekunas that Koch-Grünberg could know by direct contact, and

as he himself [Koch-Grünberg] observed, his Taurepanes are Arekunas even in the indigenous terminology. (Simpson 1940: 355)
Simpson also criticized the Capuchin missionaries of Luepa and Sta Elena for limiting the name Arekuna to those Indians of the north of the Gran Sabana which appears inconvenient in the extreme and contrary to precedent and to both Indigenous and European usage.

(Simpson 1940: 356, footnote 94)

P. Armellada (1943: 13-4) agreed with Simpson that, in accordance with his own experience, Arekuna was indeed a term in widespread use and he himself did not see any significant physical, ethnic or linguistic differences between the various sub-groups of the Gran Sabana, those of the Caroni and of the lower Paragua. However, he commented on the repugnance which people displayed in attributing this name to themselves and so he proposed the use of the self-designation ‘Pemon’.

The problems relating to classification and naming which Simpson was addressing, stem to a considerable degree from his failure to detect the various structural levels in indigenous society and thought as they are expressed through the total naming system. Referring to ‘all this incoherent mass of Indians’, he failed to record and evaluate the autodenomination held in common or to distinguish between nicknames applied globally and nicknames applied to regional sub-divisions. Nevertheless, his research draws attention to the importance of the naming of regional groups and of their relationship to global terminology.

*Waika* (*Waica, Guaica, Guayca*)

‘Waika’ is the term which Pemon living on the Gran Sabana and in the upper Cuyuni valley customarily use to refer to their Kapon neighbours. Just as the nickname ‘Arekuna’ is used as a global term embracing a number of Pemon subdivisions, (today the Taurepan and Kamarakoto, as well as the localized Arekuna group of the north-east Gran Sabana), so also the nickname Waika does not distinguish between two major internal divisions of the Kapon, — the Patamona and the Akawaio who have sometimes been referred to as ‘sister tribes’ in the literature of British Guiana.

Waika (Guaica or Guayca), has the meaning of fierce, warlike, a warrior, killer, or savage. Armellada and Gutiérrez Salazar (1998: 214) state that the ‘Akavado’ (Akawaio) of Guyana derive their name Waika from *euai*, which means ‘yes’. (The Pemon word for ‘yes’ is *inna.*) We may note that this explanation removes any implied opprobrium. The co-authors also state that Waika is a name that is given to various indigenous tribes. Indeed, the attribution of *waika* as warrior, savage, etc., has lent itself to a wider use than that to which the Pemon customarily direct it when they systematically apply the name to their Kapon neighbours. References in the literature can therefore
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sometimes be deceptive, for the name can be applied casually to any person or group of people who might be considered to exhibit warlike behaviour, or to have a reputation for this, as in the case of the Caribs. For example, Pemon say that the Caura River people, the Ye’kuana, refer to the Caribs by this name. It was also, formerly, in general use to denote the warlike Yanomamí of the Territorio Amazonas of Venezuela and in neighbouring Brazil, who rejected this term as offensive, and also to related groups such as the Saníma, (referred to by both Kapon and Pemon as Shirianá, a nickname meaning ‘the people who shoot arrows at you’).\(^{20}\) It was in this context that the name Waïka began to appear in Brazilian literature and this in turn provoked speculation as to how it was that there were two groups of people with this name and whether some of those of the Brazilian - Venezuelan borderlands, the Waïka-Yanomamí, had in past times emigrated north-eastwards to become the Waïka (Akawaio Kapon) referred to by the Arekuna (Pemon) of the Caroní basin.

In Venezuela this term, in the form of Guaica or Guayca, first appears in the mid eighteenth-century documents of the Guayana Mission of the Capuchinos Catalanes. The successful establishment of this Mission dated from 1724 and it lasted until 1817, when nearly all the Padres were assassinated and their Mission destroyed by Republican forces during the Venezuelan Civil War. The first Capuchin villages had been situated along the lower Orinoco flood plain and on the northern slopes of the Sierra de Nuria, which run parallel to the river before turning south-eastwards at the Delta. Mission villages were also sited along the lower Caroní. These first villages were mostly occupied by the local Pariagotos/Guayanos, but there were a few Arawaks (‘Aruacas’) and some Warao (‘Guaraíunos’) from the Delta. Then, in 1733, the Capuchins crossed the watershed and began to found villages on the southern slopes of the Imatacas, and in the grasslands of the Yuruari valley, within the Cuyuni basin. In the mid 1740s they began the painful process of settling Caribs, who inhabited the forested Imataca Mountains to the north of the Cuyuni, extending from the Aguirre and Botanamo (Curumo) valleys eastwards to the Barima and Barama.

The discovery of the Guaica nation came in the late 1730s or early 1740s and is attributed to the missionary Atanasio de Olot, who arrived in Guayana from Spain in November 1737. He resided in the village of Cunuri, situated on a left-bank tributary of the Yuruari River. It began in 1742-3 and was formally founded in 1744. Its inhabitants were a small Carib-speaking group known as Panacayos. Caribs were added later. The following archive extract refers to the work of Padre Atanasio with the Guaicas, whilst he was in Canuri and before his death in January 1748.\(^{21}\)

\(^{20}\) See Zerries 1964.
\(^{21}\) This quotation, from the Memoria de los Religiosos Missioneros de la Provincia de Cataluña y algunos casos particulares, pp. 46-7, was discovered by the late Revd P. Cesáreo de Armellada who communicated it to Butt Colson for publication. (See Butt Colson 1994-96: 36.)
This Father was the first to discover the Guayca Indian nation, and the first who began to catechise and baptize them; and this nation by disposition being very belligerent against others, the said Father imposed peace on them, the Panacayos and Caribes, and remained many years amongst them.

Cunuri, with its 300 inhabitants, was destroyed in a general uprising of mission Caribs in 1750. However, the Guicas are referred to again as inhabitants of the mission village of San José de Leonisa de Ayma (or Aima) which had begun in 1753 and was formally founded in February 1755 with 163 inhabitants. Ayma was situated on a right-bank tributary of the Yuruari, not far from the destroyed Canuri. It was a mixed mission village. The majority of its residents were described as 'Barinagotos', or 'Arinagotos', a name which now began to appear regularly in Capuchin documents. It was equated with 'Camaragoto', that is, Kamarakoto (Pemon). However, in a letter of June 1758 written by the Prefect of the Mission, there is mention of a Guica element in the Barinagoto population of Ayma. Subsequent references to Ayma also mentioned a population of both (B)Arinagotos and Guicas. Interestingly, because the inhabitants of this village were so warlike, the term Guica was sometimes applied to the entire population, as a 1775 mission account by its Superiors noted. From it, we learn that the Indians of Ayma

are barinagotos by nation although the name of guaica is applied to them, which means warlike, because they are extremely so and this nation makes war with others, like the real guicaicas, and these nations abound in the Caroni River, Cuyuni, Mazurini and their mountains and valleys...
(Carrocera: 1979: II, Nº 209, 273-4)

The Guica and (B)Arinagoto population of Ayma was probably that which P. Atanasio had begun to evangelize in the 1740s and which culminated in the first, formal assembly of them there in 1753. The process continued with the attempt to found a wholly Guica (Kapon) village, Avechica, in 1758 with 200 people. However, its Captain and his main assistant were killed in a Carib attack and the incipient village destroyed. Situated to the south of Ayma, Avechica was located on a tributary up the Yuruan River which flows into the Cuyuni where today’s Venezuelan township of El Dorado is located. It was designed to block a Carib slave trade route between the Cuyuni and Caroni Rivers hence the Carib attack to prevent this. Referring to this event, the Prefect of the Mission remarked that the Guicas in the mission villages of the Yuruari were repeatedly demanding to be allowed to take vengeance:

that village [Avechica] now remains lost because on account of that murder the said guaicas have again withdrawn into the wilds, and, as some of the said nation may also be found in the missions of the Yuruario [Yuruari River], they frequently demand to go and take revenge. (Carrocera: 1979: I, Nº 126, 363)

This comment is interesting on two counts. It informs us that there were already some Guaica (Kapon) living in the Yuruari mission settlements by 1758, as well as with the Camaragoto-Guaicas specifically in Ayma. Later documents show that Avechica was refounded in 1783, on a different site, and in the final Report of the Mission in 1816 it was recorded as containing 732 Guaicas and Arinagotos (or Kamarakotos). That is, it had a mixed Kapon and Pemon population. There came to be some eight mission villages containing Guaicas, referred to as a mountain tribe, the majority being associated in them with Barinagotos (or Arinagotos).

A second point of interest is that the hostility between the Guaicas (Akawaio Kapon) and Caribes (Kari’na) in Spanish territory paralleled that in Dutch territory to the east. The Spanish sometimes used this general, perennial hostility between the two peoples to their own advantage. Thus, in their first raid down the Cuyuni River later in 1758, the military were accompanied by ‘the barinagotos and guaicas of P. Tomás’, the missionary resident in Ayma. It was reported that they thought that they should have been allowed to kill all their enemies the Caribs at one blow, but this had not been permitted. (Carrocera: 1979: I, Nº 131, 380).

In the Dutch literature of the period there is a mention of ‘Waykiers’, a name which appears to be a rendering of ‘Waika’. Reporting to the West India Company a Spanish raid on Moruca Post in 1769, the Director-General of Essequibo, Storm van ‘s Gravesande, referred to a report of two Capuchin Fathers, a detachment of soldiers and a large party ‘of armed Waykiers’ (Harris and de Villiers: 1911: II, 606-7) It is very unlikely that the Dutch realized that ‘Waykiers’ were Akawaio from a westernmost extension of their ancestral lands, in areas under Spanish influence. Only later, in the nineteenth-century literature of British Guiana after the destruction of the Capuchin Guayana Mission in 1817, does the term Waika begin to appear on a regular basis.

On the removal and subsequent assassination of the Capuchin Fathers many of the inhabitants of the mission villages, fearing the harsher secular regime and military service, abandoned their villages and dispersed, returning to rejoin relatives in their traditional lands, from which they had been enticed or had been seized. Information recorded by John Princep and James Hamilton

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23 See Butt Colson 2009: 116-128 for further information on the Guaicas (Akawaio) and the Guayana Mission.
on the state of the mission villages which they toured in 1818, the year following the destruction of the Guayana Mission, indicates that the Guaicas had been the first to flee. Their village of Cura was reported as having been totally abandoned, the majority of the population having gone off into the forest that is, to the east, towards Essequibo. (Princep 1975: 38)

The arrival of families of Waikas in the Essequibo forest was noted by explorers. For example, William Hilhouse on his 1830 journey up the Mazaruni River to the foot of the Pakaraima escarpment, recorded that among the ‘Accoway’ of ‘Coorobung’ [the Kurupung River]

there was not the least trace of civilization, except amongst the stragglers from the Missions, who were making haste to forget it. (Hilhouse 1834: 40)

Mission villages in Essequibo for indigenous groups were only just beginning at the time of Hilhouse’s journey. Additionally, we know that the Capuchin P. Mariano de Cervera, priest in charge of Nuestra Señora de los Dolores de Puedpa and subsequently of San Francisco de Altagracia in the Yururai Savannas, had in 1792-3 made an incursion down the Cuyuni, across to the Mazaruni arriving in the area of the Kurupung confluence. There, the expedition seized a total of 35 individuals before proceeding down the river. In all 150 Akawaio (Kapon) were taken on the middle reaches of the Mazaruni and carried back to populate the mission villages, most probably the Guaica village of Cura.24 In the final Mission Report, of October 1816, Cura contained 551 Guaicas.

Robert Schomburgk named as Waika a number of settlements he encountered on his 1841 travels on the upper reaches of the rivers of the north-west area, to the west of the Pomeroon River and near today’s Venezuelan border. They were on the Kaituma, the Manari and above the first falls on the Barima River, on the Barama and the Cuyuni and in the areas between these rivers. He noted the extensive, neat and ordered provision-fields around their settlements, the paths leading through the fields, yams trailed against poles and orange trees growing, the latter seldom seen amongst Indians (Robert Schomburgk 1842: XII, 187). The name Waika, their monogamy and their cultivation practices which Schomburgk found to be highly unusual, all suggest that the people he alluded to had been a part of the Capuchin Mission population in the past.

However, the arrival of the Pemon nickname for their Kapon (Akawaio) neighbours which the refugees from the Spanish Guayana Mission brought back with them, caused a considerable amount of confusion in the British

24 Full accounts of this incursion are published in Armellada 1960: 162-174, and also in Carrocera: 1979: III, N° 276, 114-128.
sphere as to which groups had this name and which had not. Robert Schomburgk referred to the Waikas (and Chaymas)\textsuperscript{25}, as ‘sister tribes of the Wacawais’ (Robert Schomburgk 1842: 196). W.H. Brett referred to ‘Acawoios (or Waikas)’. He maintained that the Acowoios living in the upper Demerara and Berbice rivers were a branch of the ‘Kāpohn’, ‘...called Waika by some, whilst others incorrectly give that name to the entire race’ (Brett 1868: 261, 277). It is possible that some Akawaio (Waika) from the Spanish mission villages had made their way to relatives in the Demerara and Berbice valleys, carrying their nickname with them. More likely in this instance, the name was being used with its basic meaning in mind, since those who had spent many years in the Capuchin villages (during the period from the mid 18th century to 1817) may have judged their fellow Kapon in the forests to be fierce and ‘uncivilized’ by comparison with themselves. Confusion caused by the introduction of this nickname into British Guiana continued into the early twentieth century.

**Akawaio**

As already stated, the Pemon in Venezuela do not normally use the nickname Akawaio to refer to the Kapon people. They employ the term Waika (Guaica). The question thus arises as to the provenance of Akawaio as a name applied in Guyanese territories and in the literature on Guiana to those who use the autodenomination Kapon.

The etymology of the nickname Akawaio has, up to now, remained subject to speculation. The most likely suggestion is that it derives from *akawa* or *wakawa*, which is a Carib (Kari’na) word for a ‘kind of hawk’ (a bird of prey which I have not yet been able to identify). To it has been added the suffix */-yo*, which is a regular ending for Carib ethnic names. *Akawa-yo* (or *Wakawa-yo*) thus appears to have the meaning ‘Hawk people’, attributed by the Kari’na to their old enemies, the Kapon.\textsuperscript{26} This same bird name is listed for Pemon in the Dictionary of Armellada and Gutiérrez Salazar (1998: 216) as wakava with the menacing remark that ‘Su canto dice muerte’ (‘its song means death’).

It was perhaps predictable that when I put this somewhat detrimental hypothesis, to an elderly, educated upper Mazaruni Akawaio he rejected it outright. Instead, he maintained that they thought that the word translated from ‘eke waiguru, ‘big waiguru’. He was referring to the fact that, on ceremonial occasions, Akawaio men wore a very long lap (*waiguru*) whereby the length of cloth was taken between the legs and wound round the waist, some-

\textsuperscript{25} A few Chaymas (Chaimas) from the Capuchin Mission had taken refuge in the north-west area of Essequibo. Their home territory as a distinctively named group was to the north of the Orinoco.

\textsuperscript{26} I am grateful to Professor Sérgio Meira de Santa Cruz Oliveira for drawing my attention to this etymology.
times twice, leaving a front and a back flap of material extending nearly to the ankles. Sometimes one flap might be taken up over the chest and wound round the neck.\textsuperscript{27} This was the explanation I generally encountered during my fieldwork — when, that is, informants hazarded a guess and did not state their complete ignorance of any etymology.

As in the case of nicknames in general, ‘Akawaio’ derives from an unknown indigenous past. It is most likely to have been coined by Caribs as an appropriate term to express the deadly enmity which certainly characterized Akawaio Kapon - Carib relationships in early colonial times and perhaps before then. The first literary reference to the Kapon under this name dates back to 1596, when Laurence Keymis, Sir Walter Ralegh’s lieutenant, was informed of ‘Wacawaios’ on the ‘Lemerare’ (Demerara) River and the ‘Wocowaios’ nation on the ‘Chipanama’ River (the Supenaam, the head of which rises near the lower Cuyuni and flows into the Essequibo estuary). (Keymis 494-5) Thereafter there is regular reference to Akawaio, under a great variety of spellings, in the early literature and throughout the Dutch and subsequent British colonial period to the present day in Guyana.

At the time of first reports and contacts Akawaio were found living in a vast area, being resident in all the main river valleys across western Guiana, above the first falls. They were in the Corentyne River valley on the Suriname border in the east, in the Berbice and Demerara valleys, in the Essequibo and its tributary valleys, the Cuyuni, Mazaruni, Potaro and Siparuni. In Spanish, later Venezuelan territory, they were in the upper Cuyuni basin. They were in the upper Ireng valley and, in Portuguese, later Brazilian, territory, in the upper Rio Branco valley at the head of the Cotinga (Kwatin) River. With the exception of the Corentyne, they still reside in these river valleys and in areas of the North West District of Guyana, north of the Cuyuni River. From north to south, along the whole of their western frontier, were Pemon neighbours who referred to them by using the nickname Waika. As noted above, the Kapon reciprocally referred to these Pemon as ‘Arekuna’. The Dutch and their successors the British, and now the Guyanese, having adopted the nickname Akawaio from the coastal Indians (including the Caribs) have continued to use this term, down the generations to the present. However, the application of the nickname Arekuna by the non-indigenous to denote the northern Pemon neighbours of the Akawaio Kapon, derives from its Akawaio usage and its application by the Makushi southern Pemon by autodenomination.

\textsuperscript{27} This extravagant use of cloth presumably dates from the time of the arrival of Old World peoples and a trade in manufactured cloth. The Akawaio state that they used to make bark-cloth laps. I discovered no tradition of cotton cloth weaving of the kind done by the Waiwai at the headwaters of the Essequibo and in neighbouring Brazil.
Another global term which embraces the entire ethnic unity of the Kapon people is Inkariko’ (Ingario’, Ingario’, Inkarikok). It is a collective term used by the Makushi (southern Pemon) of Brazil for their nearest neighbours to their east, including both Kapong sub-groups (Patamona and Akawaio) in the Pakaraima Mountains, extending northwards from the upper Ireng and upper Cotingo (Kwatin) valleys to the upper Mazaruni basin. As Migliazza (1980: 121) discovered during his fieldwork, ‘Ingariko is only a local Makushi name for Akawaio and Patamona’.

The indigenous pronunciation is Inkarïko’ (or Ingalïgok), meaning ‘the people’ (-ko, -go, or -kok, -gok), ‘belonging to’ (-rï, or -lï), ‘the forested heights’, (inka or inga), referring to the forested area which can be seen to the east of the Rio Branco grasslands. The complementary term is Remonagok (Lemonagok), translating as ‘plains people’, describing those on these lower grasslands west of the Ireng River, who are known as Makushi and, to the north, as Taurepan (both Pemon by autodenomination). Both Inkariko’ and Remonagok are environmental terms by their etymologies.

In neighbouring Guyana and Venezuela the name Ingariko’ is virtually unknown, to the degree that a visitor to a Guyanese coastal Anglican mission village, on describing himself as an ‘Inka’, caused a sensation because it was assumed that he was indeed an Inca a Peruvian. In fact, he was found to be, in Guyanese terms, a Patamona (Kapon), but he had used the Makushi/Brazilian description, with its geographical reference, to identify himself. (Private communication from the late Canon Jack Holden.)

The Global Terms Makushi and Mayonggong

The complexities associated with the nickname Makushi are discussed below, but one dimension, its use as a global term, can be noted here. According to David Thomas the Ye’kuana refer to the Pemon in general as ‘Makuxi’.

The Ye’kuana located at Parupa and Isla Casabe on the Paragua in 1970 referred to the Pemon, and to the Pemon language, as Makuxi, indicating that at least some Yekuana lump the Pemon [i.e. the northern Pemon] and Makuxi into a single category.

There is however a reciprocal term, which Thomas notes as being used by the Pemon for the Ye’kuana. This is the name Mayonggong. The upper Mazaruni

28 Thomas was here using the Brazilian spelling.
Akawaio also employ this, in the form of Maionggong and notably in the context of references to trade in such prestigious items as manioc graters (chimali; sumari in Pemon), and blowpipes (kuraik), which they traditionally obtained from the Ye’kuana to their west. In the 1950s the older Akawaio recalled parties of Maionggong visitors bringing these. This is the name which occasionally appeared in the British Guiana literature. (Brett 1868: 267) Cesáreo de Armellada considered that it was a Pemon name, derived from Muadonkón, meaning ‘those that live in the cultivations’, (mua = ‘conuco’), in contrast to the Pemon themselves whose customary residence site is some elevated piece of savanna (Armellada 1970: 12). This might be a sanitized version of meaning. It might not resonate with the Akawaio Kapon because they too generally cultivate the area around their houses and, after suitable periods of fallow, will return to do so repeatedly, wherever possible.

**Autodenominations and Global Nicknames – a Summary**

The information given above shows that the autodenomination held by an ethnic unity, a people, is accompanied by another name or names. The latter are global nicknames which parallel the autodenomination, but are bestowed by ‘others’ who neighbour them. These neighbours, belonging to different ethnic unities, will each have their own autodenomination and will similarly be referred to by one or more nicknames bestowed on them by others. Thus, using the North Pemon as the central point of reference, we find that they are nicknamed ‘Arekuna’ (by the Kapon) or ‘Makushi’ (by the Ye’kuana). The North Pemon themselves denote the Kapon people ‘Waika’. Both the Kapon and Pemon peoples name the Ye’kuana ‘Mayonggong’. It is noteworthy that although the South Pemon are Pemon by autodenomination they are attributed a different nickname from those in the north. Thus they are generally referred to as ‘Makushi’, both by the northern Pemon who are fellow members of the same ethnic group, as also by the Kapon, whilst according to Thomas, the Ye’kuana assign this name to both the northern and southern Pemon as a unity. The designation of ‘Waika’ used by the North Pemon to describe the Kapon people is replaced by that of ‘Inkariko’, an environmental term applied by the southern Pemon. The nickname ‘Akawaio’, although recognized and now used throughout Guyana and beyond, is not in general use amongst the northern Pemon. It seems to have originated with the Caribs of the coastal regions and was propagated by the Old World colonists and settlers.

A consideration of autodenominations and their equivalent nicknames, within the inter-ethnic structure, is complicated enough. But naming does not stop there. Each ethnic group, marked by its autodenomination and associated nickname(s), has sub-divisions which are also subject to a naming complex.
III. Pemon Regional Groups and Attributed Names

Referring to the Gran Sabana Pemon, David Thomas noted that:

Known in the literature as Arecuna, Kamarakoto, and Taurepan, the Pemon are roughly divisible into three subgroups with those names. (Thomas 1982: 15)

These subdivisions are now generally recognized. References to them can also be found in the historical literature where they have frequently been referred to as ‘tribes’, ‘sub-tribes’, sub-groups or, ‘sister-tribes’. For example, P. Baltazar de Matallana (1937: 27, 64, 67), refers to two Gran Sabana tribes, the Arekunas and the Taurepanes. As ‘regional groups’, they may be defined as structured entities, each with a recognized territory, specific dialect and perceived socio-cultural unity. They are the major sub-divisions of a people, or ethnic unity which is marked by its own, unique, autodenomination.

Arekuna

This attributed nickname has been discussed above in the context of its use as a general, global term denoting the totality of the North Pemon. That is, it is applied to those Pemon residing on the Gran Sabana and immediately neighbouring areas (in the Paruima region of the Kamarang River in Guyana and at the head of the Surumu River in Brazil). It has also, as Simpson noted, been used to describe the Pemon of the Caroni River valley and of its tributary valley, the Paragua. As already stated, at this level of general attribution it is a term which parallels the use of the terms Waika and Akawaio for the Kapon people.

However, Arekuna also has a more restricted usage, being applied specifically to denote a regional group of Pemon whose local communities inhabit the north-east sector of the Gran Sabana and adjacent areas, including the upper and middle Wenamu River valley and the upper Kamarang River valley in the area of Paruima, in Guyana, Notably, on the heights of the Gran Sabana they occupy the Kavanayén area, extending to Parupa, Luepa and Wompamota (San Rafael de Kamoiran) and the lands and settlements to the south as far as the Ka’ma River, which is the traditional frontier between themselves and their neighbours in the Yuruari River valley. These neighbours, also Pemon by autodenomination, are distinguished by being referred to as ‘Taurepan’. To the north-west, Arekuna territory gives way to that of the Kamarakoto regional group of Pemon, there being a three day walk in forest between Kavanayén, an Arekuna central village and mission, and Kamarata, a Kamarakoto central village and mission. The inhabitants of Urimán and those in settlements along the Caroni River are named as Kamarakoto (Thomas 1983: 310). Having decided to apply the name Arekuna globally, to include both the Taurepan and
Kamarakoto regional groups, Simpson was somewhat nonplussed with respect to the attribution of this same name to the indigenous group in the north-east of the Gran Sabana. He stated that only the Taurepanes and the Kamarakotos (‘two tribes of Arekunas’ had been conveniently differentiated. In a footnote he asserted that ‘a good local name’ had not been suggested for these, the north Gran Sabana Indians, and he noted that the Kamarakoto called them ‘Arekunas of Luepa’ because this was the most important place of that region – although a short time previously it was not. He complained that the missionaries of Luepa and Santa Elena tended to limit the name Arekunas to those Indians of the north of the Gran Sabana, ‘which appears inconvenient in the extreme, and contrary to both indigenous and European precedent and custom’. (Simpson 1940: 356, footnote 94.)

Taurepan (Taulipan, Taulipang)

It was the German explorer and ethnologist Theodor Koch-Grünberg who, when visiting the Roraima area of the Gran Sabana in 1911, discovered the term ‘Taulipang’. He noted that the ‘Wapischana’ called this group ‘Yarikuna’ and that the whites followed suit. All the explorers, the Schomburgk brothers, Appun, Brown and others, had called them ‘Arekuná’. Koch-Grünberg stated that at first, in speaking to him, they had referred to themselves as Yarikuna, Arekuná or Alekuná and it was only after a prolonged stay that he realized that ‘the real name of their tribe was Taulipáng’, and that the ‘true Arekuná’ lived only to the west and the north-east of Roraima, especially in the region of the Caroni River.

An incident which Koch-Grünberg relates after this discovery, well illustrates the complications of the indigenous naming system which had for so long been misunderstood by the non-indigenous. Back at the Brazilian cattle ranch of São Marcus, at the confluence of the Takutu with the Rio Branco, he told how he had discovered the real name of the tribe which lived in the Surumu - Roraima area. Sr. Neves who was in charge of the ranch, mocked him:

I have now been ten years living with these ‘yarikunas’ and this German doctor, who has scarcely lived here a few months wants to come to enlighten me. He called one of his men, a Yarikuna deriving from the neighbourhood of Roraima and asked him: “From what tribe are you?”. Reply: “Yarikuna”.

29 The mission village of Luepa was founded by the Capuchin missionaries in the north-east of the Gran Sabana in 1933 and became the centre for the Pemon families of the neighbourhood. It was abandoned in 1942 and succeeded by Kavanayén mission village, founded in the same year.

30 Koch-Grünberg (I, 52) was referring to the first, Schomburgk journeys to Roraima and the Gran Sabana, in 1838 and 1842, which were followed by that of Carl F. Appun in 1864 and of Charles Barrington Brown in 1869.

Taurepan has the meaning of ‘not being able to speak properly’. It derives from taure, a verb meaning ‘to say’, ‘to speak’, with the suffix ‘-puen’, which is a strong negative meaning ‘without’, ‘lacking’ ‘none’ or ‘not’ and which is added to nouns and verbs. (Armellada and Gutiérrez Salazar 1998: 163, under -puen.)

The name refers to dialectical differences and pronunciations between the Pemon to the north, the regional Arekuna, and those to the south, the regional Makushi. Like many nicknames the implied meaning, or simply the suspicion that it has a scurrilous reference, has caused the people of this Pemon grouping to meet enquiries about it with reticence and, if possible, to avoid mentioning the term spontaneously. (Armellada 1943:15)

Koch-Grünberg described the ‘Taulipáng’ as being widely distributed and that they lived in the north part of the Surumu River as far as Roraima and beyond, in the upper Rio Branco and upper Majary (Amajari) as far as the Island of Maracá in the Uraricoera (Koch-Grünberg 1979: I, 52). Their northern frontier in Venezuela today is the Ka’ma River where their lands adjoin those of the Arekuna regional group, thus including the Yuruari River valley people centred on San Francisco de Kumarakapai, the area of Paraitepui de Roraima and southwards to the Arabopo River towards the Kwatin (Cotingo) River Akawaio south of Weitepui Mountain in Brazil. In Venezuela Taurepan also extend westwards along the Kukenan valley to Santa Elena and beyond. To the south of the frontier they still live in Brazil at the head of the Surumu valley, extending down it to mix with the northernmost Makushi and Wapishana.

Kamarakoto (Kamaragoto, Camaragoto)

A third major Pemon grouping comprises the Kamara people, living in tributary and sub-tributary valleys (the Carrao, Akanán and Aichá) of the right bank of the Caroni River, in the lower, north-west region of the Gran Sabana in the neighbourhood of Auyántepui Mountain. Their name connects them to the Kamara River there. The Kamara is a species of fish, similar to the lamprey. It, and the river which contains this fish, have the same name, and so has the principal village, Kamarata, (the place of, -ta, the kamara fish). The addition of -koto (or -gota) adds the meaning of ‘inhabitant’ or ‘dweller’, so that Kamarakoto means the people of the Kamara fish/river, who dwell where the kamara is found. (Armellada and Gutiérrez Salazar 1998: 87, see under Kamara: see also 106 under Koto.)

31 The same negative is found in the Akawaio (Kapon) language, pronounced as bing.
Although their name links this group of Pemon to a particular, relatively restricted, area of occupation, it has also had a much extended usage. It has been attributed to those who live along the middle Caroni River and its tributaries, above and below the Carrao River, those in the region of the Paragua River confluence and up that river. There is also a community of Kamarakoto, that of Santa Maria del Vapor on the banks of the Cuyuni, up river from the Venezuelan township of El Dorado. This lowland forest community is linked to Kamarata via the Akanan and Carrao rivers and a trail crossing the Sierra de Lema to the Chicanan River near the source of the Cuyuni. This is an ancient Kamarakoto trade route, linking the highlands with the forested lowlands of the Cuyuni valley.

As already noted, like the Taurepan this, the Kamarakoto group of Pemon, has also been classified as Arekuna in the global usage of this name. Thus Koch-Grünberg (1979: 1, 53), stated that the true Arekuna lived only to the west and to the north-east of Roraima and especially in the region of the Caroni River. Then he recorded that:

According to what the Sapará of the Uraricoera say they call them Kamarakotó, but according to another version this name refers to a particular subdivision of the Arekuná tribe. (Koch-Grünberg; 1979: I, 53.)

The name Kamarakoto, unlike Arekuna, Taurepan and the nicknames of neighbours, such as Akawaio, appears to have no detrimental connotations, being an environmental designation derived from a specific river and its characteristic fish. Its appearance in the historical literature dates from the mid eighteenth century Capuchin Mission reports at around the time of first contacts with the Guaicas (Kapon) when mission villages began to be founded in the Yuruari basin of the upper Cuyuni. Notably, its use was sporadic and explanatory in that a second name, that of Barinagoto, or Arinagoto, almost invariably took precedence in Mission Reports. In his historical notes Simpson states that the Kamarakotos figure late in the literature. He had found no original information on them between 1804-1838 and, previous to that time, there was only the work of the Franciscan missionary Fray Ramón Bueno who had written, between 1800 and 1804, a description of Guayana. Simpson judged this to be vague in the extreme and was not sure that the ‘Camaracotos’ referred to were really the Kamarakotos he himself was investigating. Had he known of the second name, (B)Arinagoto and of its equation with ‘Camaragotos’, at the time of his research at Kamarata in 1939, it is unlikely
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that he would have written his historical notes in the way that he did (Simpson 1940: 217-222).^{32}

**(B) Arinagoto**

The Barinagotos were first referred to in the Capuchin Guayana Mission records in connection with the mission village San José de Leonisa de Ayma (or Aima), often referred to as ‘Yuruario’ or ‘Yuruari’, the name of a major tributary of the upper Cuyuni near which the village was sited. Ayma began in about 1753 and was formally founded in February 1755. Its founder and first resident missionary Father was Tomás de San Pedro, who had arrived in Guayana from Spain in 1745 (Carrocera 1979: II, Nº 182, 162) The Report of Eugenio de Alvarado April 1755 recorded that Aima, ‘S. José de Leonisa, Yaruario’, was composed of 163 Barinagotos (Carrocera 1979: I, Nº 117, 336).^{33}

A letter dated 9th June 1758 written by the Prefect of the Mission, Benito de La Garriga, referred to the ‘barinagotos of the Yuruario’ who had several times asserted that the Dutch, in Essequibo, had threatened to burn their village because it was impeding a Carib slave route (Carrocera 1979: I, Nº 126, 364).

The composition of Ayma’s residents was more complicated. A 1758 Spanish raid down the Cuyuni, with the objective of destroying a newly-founded Dutch Post and its supporting Caribs, was accomplished with the aid of P. Tomás (of Ayma) and his Barinagotos and Guicas (the latter being Akawaio Kapon). Sometimes, however, the Barinagoto element was simply denoted Guica (for example, in the 1761 Report of the Prefect Fidel de Sautó: see Carrocera 1979: II, Nº 137, 26.) As already noted, this apparent confusion in the use of the term guica stems from its dual usage, as an adjective to describe those who are warlike and as noun which names a specific group given this attribution collectively as in the case of the Akawaio (Kapon). A 1770 Report by the Prefect Bruno de Barcelona specified that

> The Indians of this mission [Ayma] are of the guica nation, camaragotos ...’ (Carrocera: II, Nº 170, 118)

This was repeated in subsequent Capuchin Reports of 1772 but with slightly different terminology as: ‘guica camaragotos by nation’ (Carrocera: II, Nº 182, 156), and under the heading of ‘Nation’: ‘Guicas and Camaragotos’ (Carrocera: II, Nº 183, 166). Finally, in a Report signed by Fray Buenaventura de Sabadell 14th August 1784, the identity of the barinagotos, certainly those of Ayma, was revealed:

P. Buenaventura de Carrocera’s 3 volume work, *Misión de los Capuchinos en Guayana* contains a vast amount of invaluable information on the indigenous population of the Guayana region, notably that of the Yururi savannas and the lower Caroní, between 1682 and 1819.

Eugenio Fernández de Alvarado, member of the Royal Boundary Commission set up in 1750, arrived in Guayana in 1754 with the objective of recording information on the Guayana Mission whilst his fellow Commissioners were preparing for an ascent of the Orinoco River.
In the year of 1767, on 25th of February, all the barinagoto Indians of Ayma or camaragotos, which is the same, who were 400 souls, all fled into the Bush one night, and more than a year passed during which not one could we retake... (Carrocera: 1979: II, Nº 231, 343)

A careful reading of Capuchin documentation relating to Ayma indicates that the initial composition of its population was Barinagoto/Camaragoto (Pemon) with some Guaiacas/Akawaio (Kapon), but sometimes, even as late as in the final Mission Report of 1816, the total population was designated 'guaica' fierce. However, this was not just the case for Ayma. It is noteworthy that in a series of Prefects’ Reports on the state of the Guayana Mission, the designation 'barinagotos' and 'arinagotos' was increasingly displaced by that of 'guaicas' in a number of mission villages (see Carrocera: 1979: III, Nº 247, 20-1 for 1788; Nº 272, 106-7 for 1792; Nº 289, 162-5 for 1797; Nº 323, 314-7 for 1816). Although the missionaries sometimes switched populations between villages and sometimes there were flights and deaths from epidemics leading to replacement families obtained during incursions up the rivers, there is nothing to suggest that, in so many mission villages, there was a definitive disappearance of Barinagotos (Pemon) who were then replaced by Guaiacas (Kapon). A more likely explanation for re-designation is that, as in the case of San José de Leonisa de Ayma, the Capuchins increasingly utilized the designation 'guaica' as a generalized term, thus subsuming both Kapon and Pemon under it. That this practice occurred is indicated by a pertinent comment, made in October 1767, in a letter from the Superiors of the Mission to the King, referring to the new nations then entering the Guayana mission villages:

...they are those of guaias, under whose denomination many are included, as are: guaiacs, barinagotos, arinagotos, etc.,... (Carrocera 1979: II, Nº 155, 64)

The Capuchin classification of two different peoples (or 'nations') under one term, that of guaiac, may have stemmed directly from references made to them by the first established mission Indians of Guayana: that is, from the Guayanos/Pariagotos and Coastal Arawaks (Lokono), who might well have regarded as savages all of those living in the remote, inland forests in the south. Although the term united members of two peoples with different autodenominations, Kapon and Pemon, these were seen to be closely interconnected by trade and linguistically and culturally very similar. Moreover, the missionaries themselves observed practices in common which set them apart from other indigenous groups. Notably, they described their manufacture of
vegetable salts and the chewing of tobacco mixed with charred water weed.\textsuperscript{34} The Barinagoto (Kamarakoto Pemon) resident in Ayma most likely derived from their lowland communities, at the headwaters of the Cuyuni, westwards to the Supamo valley, the Caroní and the Paragua confluence. It was not until 1772 that the Capuchins encountered a far greater extension of ‘Camaragotos’ than had previously been known. The occasion was an expedition which stemmed from a proposal made by the Comandante General of the Province, Manuel Centurión, that the Capuchins should extend their Mission to Parime, (upper Rio Branco, Brazil). The suggestion was at first rejected on grounds of an insufficient number of Padres, but when Centurión planned to send a military detachment over the watershed accompanied by two Franciscans to begin evangelizing there, the Capuchins felt impelled to get there first in order to safeguard their rights to evangelize in a territory which they considered to belong to themselves. Thus, in February 1772 an independent Capuchin expedition set off from San Buenaventura de Auguri (Guri) to ascend the Caroní River. After much difficulty, in a journey of one month and a day on the river, they arrived at the Icabaru confluence. Fray Tomás de Mataró observed:

\begin{quote}
All along this Caroni River, from the mouths of the Paraua [Paragua] to this place, [Icabaru] there are many Indians of the Camaragota nation that are impossible to remove through this river in order to subdue them; only they can be taken out through the Supama, Cama and Avad, all rivers and in the area of the Chibau. (Armellada 1960: 120)\textsuperscript{35}
\end{quote}

The expedition travelled up the ‘Icabaro’ River for a week before crossing into Brazil and Fray Tomás remarked that there were many Indians of the Hipurugota nation there, that they saw many cultivations and very wide paths. Fray Tomás’ companion priest, P. Benito de La Garriga, relating the same experience of the journey, stated that between Paragua mouth and the Mayari River, in Brazil, they had encountered ‘Barinagotos, Cucuicotos, Ipurugotos, Mapisanas, ‘and those without leaving the bank of the Caroni River and Icabaro’.\textsuperscript{36} He additionally remarked that they kill each other a lot and the expedition found empty houses in which were slung hammocks with the bones of dead people and heads broken by clubs. (Armellada 1960: 139)

\textsuperscript{34} See Butt Colson 1994/1996: 39-40 for a more detailed discussion of this practice.
\textsuperscript{35} The area of the Chibau refers to the region of the Caroni and the Paragua confluence (see Armellada 1960: 119)
\textsuperscript{36} Mapisanas, or Wapishanas, (see Farabee 1918: 13 for the various spellings of the name), are normally recorded as living in the Rio Branco valley, Brazil. It is possible that Brazilian incursions from 1740 had, by 1772, caused a movement northwards into the mountains and a crossing of the watershed into the Orinoco basin in a few instances. We might hazard a guess that refugees from Brazil intruding into Pemon territory, might have caused some sporadic conflicts, especially as these particular newcomers were Arawak-speaking and the local groups were Carib-speaking.
It is clear from the numerous Capuchin Mission records of the second half of the eighteenth century that the assigned names of (B) Arinagoto and Camarakoto referred to one and the same people. They were recorded as living in areas where they are found today. These are, in the lowland forest area of the Cuyuni source round to the Paragua confluence, up the lower reaches of the Paragua River and right up the Caroni River valley, with concentrations of population in the Kamarata area of Ayántepui and at Uriman. Confusion has been caused because sometimes those inhabiting the mission villages in the Yuruari savannas and, notably, in the area of the confluence of the Paragua with the Caroni such as San Pedro de las Bocas, were sometimes denoted guaicas because they were regarded as warlike and fierce. Care has therefore to be taken to distinguish them from the Akawaio/Guaica (Kapon) population to the east.

Pemon today intimate that although their Paragua and Caroni communities are referred to as Kamarakoto, this name, properly speaking, belongs to the people who live at Kamarata and in its neighbourhood. They assert that the rest are similarly all Pemon and speak in the same way, that is, in the manner of those from the Kamarata region. Pemon have said that (B)Arinagoto is a name deriving from their word arinï, (pl. Arinïton) which means a mass, horde, crowd, basically indicating a vast number of something. The name Arinï-goto thus translates as ‘a mass of people’. It is certainly the case that the Capuchin missionaries recognized at the beginning of their evangelization of this indigenous grouping that it had a wide extension and an abundant population. Thus, Fidel de Sautó in the 1761 Report of the Prefect of the Mission, noted that Ayma mission village was composed of guaica indians

whose nation is extremely widespread towards the south and very inclined to settle. This would not be difficult if the missionaries had the means to accomplish it, as they are very docile Indians although somewhat fickle, for which reason they customarily desert with frequency. (Carrocera: 1979: II, Nº 137, 26)

At that time, at the beginning of Ayma’s history, we know that this mission village had a majority of Kamarakoto Indians and some ‘real guaicas’ (Akawaio Kapon), but that the entire population was frequently referred to as ‘guaicas’, that is as being warlike and fierce (see above). South of Ayma was the Supamo River area and further on still, the Paragua confluence and the right bank tributaries of the Caroni with its extensive Pemon population in the Ayántepui Mountain area.

However, as is often the case with nicknames, an alternative form and meaning has recently surfaced. It is suggested that the name is Yare’nagoto, meaning ‘Tail people’. Yare’na (with an all-important glottal stop), means ‘tail’ and, in this context, refers to men wearing their traditional lap cloth (waiuku
in Pemon, *waiguru* in Kapon), with the long rear flap reaching to the ankles, in the manner of an animal’s tail. This derivation is reminiscent of the explanation which Akawaio give as the meaning of their nickname, which also refers to the length of the men’s lap.

**Ipïrugoto (Ipurugoto, Purugoto)**

There is a third name associated with the Kamarakoto/(B)Arinagoto Pemon of the Caroni valley area, which is that of *Hipurugoto*, also rendered as *Ipurugoto* or *Purugoto*. Bos (1998: 33, 287, 311-2, 316) discusses this name extensively in association with apparently similar terms, such as Paragoto, Parawagotos, Paramayana and Paragioto, which appear in the literature and as groups scattered all over the Guiana region. However, his findings are an excellent example of how problems of the spellings of indigenous terms down the centuries, combined with lack of basic linguistic knowledge and of naming systems, can derail attempts to identify a whole series of attributed terms with specific ethnic groups and their possible migrations. In this particular case, care needs to be taken not to mix up the indigenous words referring to water, which in the case of the Carib-speaking Pemon and Kapon are words such as *paru* for ‘river’ (water and liquid): *parau* for ‘a big stretch of water’ (including extensive, flooded areas): *parana* for ‘wave’, and other similar terms relating to water conditions.

According to Pemon informants Ipurugoto is a name given to Pemon living in the Icabaru River area, which has the meaning of ‘people of the flood water’ or ‘swamp’. The derivation is from *ipiru* meaning ‘swamp’ and -*goto* meaning ‘a group of people’. The reference is to the river banks where, in rainy seasons, the waters overflow and inundate the forest.²⁷ Ipirugoto is thus an environmental term, attributed in this instance to Pemon living in a boggy region due to the flooding of low land along rivers and streams. Wherever the name is found therefore, it is likely to refer to these particular physical conditions and not necessarily to demarcate a discrete group of people with a specific autodenomination, or even a regional identity within an ethnic unity.

Koch-Grünberg, in the Uraricoera and exploring Maracá Island and the Rio Branco headwaters in 1911-12, employed two brothers of mixed Taulipáng and ‘Purucotó’ ancestry. He was informed that their ‘Purucotó’ father was of a tribe that had been previously numerous in the Maracá region but had become extinct except for five women and some men. He later saw derelict settlement sites which had been abandoned by them and he learnt that there were some living inland from the navigable rivers in order to avoid contact with the whites [Portuguese]. (Koch-Grünberg: I, 76, 161, 163, 166, 168, 172, 196.) With the

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²⁷ I am grateful to Sr. Jerrick Andre, Pemon, for sharing with me his knowledge of the meaning of this name.
aid of a Purukotó woman (wife of a Wayamara), Koch-Grünberg compiled a word list. He concluded that

purukutó is an interesting caribe dialect, a mixture of caribe of the North-Northeast and of the makuschí-taulipáng group. The only indication up to now was the list of words of “Ipurucoto”, which the botanist João Barbosa Rodriguez, who died some years ago, gave in his fanciful work Pacificação dos Chrichanás38 but the majority of the words in this list is completely wrong. Many are pure taulipáng (1979: I, 168).

Koch-Grünberg went on say that the informant might have been a Taulipáng who alleged that he could speak purukotó or he might have been a purukotó who had forgotten the major part of his language and for this reason was using taulipáng, which served as a kind of common language between tribes of distinct languages in those regions. Finally, he remarked that the denomination “Ipurucoto” is suspect, as this is how the Purukotó are called by the Taulipáng.

A firm identification of Purukoto is stated by Migliazza:

In the past, the Taurepan lived as far west as the Uraricaa [Brazil] and Paragua Rivers, where they were called Purucoto and are listed by Loukotka (1968: 209) as a language of the Makushi group. Further investigation is needed here, since the Taurepan of the upper Amajari River maintain that the Purucoto, who are now extinct, were their “relatives” and spoke “almost” the same language. (Migliazza 1980: 129)

In their 1940 expedition up the Paragua River, P. Cesáreo de Armellada and P. Baltasar de Matallana were told of ‘Purukutó’, who were extinct but who had formerly inhabited the Paragua (1942: 69). They also remarked that among the Indians there remained a vague and confused idea of another, disappeared, language and race, the Purukutó (1942: 93). In view of these statements, it seems reasonable to postulate that the ‘people of the swamplands’, whom the 18th century Capuchins encountered in the Icabaru River valley on their way to the Parime River, were also living up the Paragua and one of its main tributaries, the Kurú rain, which was where the two Padres on their 1940 expedition heard of former Purukutó. The headwaters of the Paragua, notably the Kurú, run close to the Icabaru and westernmost Caroni tributaries, stemming from the Sierra Pacaraima. To the south of this mountain range, in

38 In a footnote Koch-Grunberg gives the reference: Rio de Janeiro, 1885, pp. 247-260.
Brazil, are the streams such as the Amajari, which flow into the Uraricoera and the area of Maracá Island with its vast network of waterways. There are several trails in this region, crossing the watershed of the Orinoco - Amazon basins.\(^{39}\)

The Ipurugoto thus appear to have been a Pemon group, with their language denoted that of Taurepang/Kamarakoto/Makushi and an attributed nickname derived from a prominent characteristic of their customary habitat that of periodically flooded forest and swamp. If the name is no longer operative in the Paragua River area then one may conjecture that this is because of a move down river to drier lands, due perhaps, to past pressure from other, non-Pemon peoples such as the Sape and Saníma (Shirianá) migrating into the area. Their nickname being no longer applicable, the descendants of former Purukoto would presumably have been attributed one of the names applied to the Paragua Pemon: that is (B)Arinagoto, Kamarakoto, or Arekuna. What is certain is that the Purukoto must have been Pemon by autodenomination and that, as their distinguishing name indicated, they were found living on either side of the mountains along the Amazon - Orinoco watershed. Whether they had the status of a regional group with a recognized, bounded territory, such as their Taurepan, Kamarakoto and Makushi neighbours possess today, it is difficult to judge from the ethnography, although the Capuchins who first met them, on the Icabaru River in 1772, stated that there were very many of ‘the Hipurugota nation’ (Armellada 1960: 120).

**Makushi (Macusi, Makuchi, Makuxi)**

As already noted, the autodenomination of those referred to in the literature as Makushi, (Makuxi in Brazil), is Pemon. This fact is not generally known, or where known has not been regarded as significant, so that in many instances the Makushi have been denoted a separate people, or tribe. Thus, Gutiérrez Salazar (19) separates Pemón from individuals of other known groups, including ‘Makussí’, Wapishana etc. Loukotka (1968: 208-11) has two separate divisions, one for ‘Languages of the Makusi Group’ and a second for ‘Languages of the Pemón Group’, the latter including the Kapon under their various nicknames. Maps too, show the same separation, as for example Map 1, p. 10 in Whitehead, (1988: 10), and Figure 1, p. 12 in Thomas (1982: 12). However, Thomas (1982: 18) also states:

> The Macuxi, neighbors of the Pemon to the south, also refer to themselves as Pemon, though all neighbouring groups refer to them as Makuxi.

\(^{39}\) Armellada and Matallana (1942: 92) list three routes into Brazil from the Paragua headwaters, the easiest being that linking the Paramichi with the ‘Urarikaará.’
Lizarralde (1993: 78) on the other hand, correctly records that the 'Makushi are really a Pemón sub-group in Brazil'.

The Makushi Pemon in the majority, live in Brazil and Guyana. A few, including some descendants, are to be found in Venezuela, where there has been intermarriage with their Taurepan Pemon neighbours in the Roraima area. The earliest, Portuguese, reference to them is perhaps that deriving from the 1740 expedition of Lourenço Belforte who was sent by the Governor and Captain-General of Pará, João de Abreo Castello Branco, to the Rio Negro in command of a troop to obtain slaves. A detachment entered the Rio Branco, proceeded up the river and into its uppermost reaches, the Uraricoera, sending down Indians to the settlement of Carvoeira at the confluence of the Rio Branco with the Rio Negro. Camping on an island (perhaps Maracá Island), they searched along the river banks for 'the Uapixana and Macuxy tribes whose settlements are close to the mountain ranges which here trend towards the centre of the plains.' They spent a month in the plains area. (Williams 1932: 13-4, note 8)

The Dutch in Essequibo sporadically referred to the Makushi during the latter half of the eighteenth century. Thus, in 1753, a Despatch sent by the Director-General of the Dutch colonies to the Directors of the West India Company, referring to a tribe up the Essequibo named Mapissanoe (Wapishana) who had killed three Dutch traders who were attempting to establish trade with the Portuguese of the Amazon, gave the additional information that this tribe had also murdered some Caribs and 'Macusis', who were their nearest neighbours. (Harris and de Villiers 1911: I, 302-3) A direct and more sustained contact with Makushi began to occur when the Dutch moved their Post Arinda from the confluence of the Siparuni River with the Essequibo, up river to near the Rupununi confluence. The removal was about to begin in 1765 when the Postholder, intending to ascend the Rupununi River, had found the 'Macoussis and Wapissanes, the two tribes living there, at war'. It was not until 1769 that an Arinda Postholder, Jansse, travelled up the 'Ripenowini' (Rupununi). His mission was to locate the Crystal Mine, called the Calikko Mountain, [the Kanuku Mountains]. He first made contact with the 'Macoussis', and then 'hired an interpreter who spoke the language of the Wapissannes, which tribe lives near the Crystal Mine on both sides of the River Maho' (Ireng). Storm van 's Gravesande, Director General of the Three Provinces, categorized both Makushi and Wapishana as 'wild Indians'.

40 For an excellent, detailed account of the Portuguese in the Rio Branco valley see Farage 1991, especially Chapters II and IV.
41 Harris and de Villiers: 1911: II, 616-620. The search was not just for quartz crystals, but for emeralds and other precious stones and metals which were thought to be in such deposits. The name Ireng derives from the Carib-speaking people of the area, Makushi (Pemon) and Patamona (Kapoon) and is used in Guyana. The name Mahu, or Mau, is used in Brazil and probably derives from the Arawak-speaking Wapishana. However, the Dutch sometimes referred to the Takutu River above the Ireng confluence as the Mahu. (See Harris and de Villiers 1911 : II, 616, footnote 1.)
In the nineteenth century, after the British took possession of the Dutch colonies of Essequibo, Berbice and Demerara, effectively from 1803, contact with the Makushi in the North Rupununi Savanna gradually increased, beginning with the expedition of Dr John Hancock (1835: 26,46,58-9) which lasted from Nov. 1810 to July 1811 and had the objective of investigating the slave trade, notably that carried on by the Caribs who had settled in the area of the Rupununi - Essequibo confluent. Handcock was followed by Charles Waterton, a Naturalist whose expedition to the Rupununi took place in 1812. He ascended the Essequibo, entered the Rupununi River and took the trail across the savanna to Pirara and the Ireng River and on to the Portuguese Fort São Joaquim at the confluence of the Takutu with the Rio Branco. His intention was to obtain and test Makushi curare (urari) poison, which was well known for its strength and was widely traded (Waterton 1903: 1-60). Sporadic travellers to the Rupununi met the Makushi during the following years, but it was the travels and investigations of Robert Schomburgk and the accounts of his brother Richard, a Botanist, which provide the most detailed and valuable ethnographic information on them.42 Particularly notable is the exploration which Robert Schomburgk carried out on leaving Roraima, November 1838, to set out on his journey to Esmeralda on the upper Orinoco. He travelled south and then westwards, across the headwaters of the Surumu to the Uraricoera (Rio Branco), duly proceeding past Maracá Island, towards the source of the river. En route he noted Makushi settlements and, additionally, their immediate Carib-speaking neighbours, the Purigotos [Ipirugoto], Zapara [or Sapara], Maiongkongs [Ye’kuana] and Waiyamara (Robert Schomburgk 1841(b): 211-220).

In the course of his various expeditions, Schomburgk had covered most of the territory occupied by the Makushi, from the North Rupununi Savanna and Essequibo forest in the east to the Rio Branco valley and its headwaters in the west, taking in the major tributaries of these. A detailed account of Makushi habitats is given by the Rev. James Williams (1932: 6-12). It incorporates his own experience, based in the Makushi village of Eupukari (Yupukari) in the Rupununi 1908-1913, and that of others, notably of Koch-Grünberg who was, in 1911-2 researching the same areas of Makushi country as Schomburgk in 1838 (that is, from Roraima to the uppermost reaches of the Uraricoera).

**Makushi Naming and Structure**

Given the extensive territory in which the Makushi Pemon have been settled, it is very likely that a naming system operated like that in the northern

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Pemon grouping, expressing different levels of structural relationships. The names which appear in the literature suggest this, although until the relevant detailed research is carried out for these, the southern Pemon, it is not possible to achieve a conclusive study.

As stated above, David Thomas (1982: 18) observed that, although calling themselves Pemon, the neighbouring groups referred to Makuxi. The etymology of this nickname still has to be investigated. The word itself appears to divide up as Maku-chi, the latter component being pronounced also as -shi, -si (-xi in Portuguese) which is quite frequent in Pemon and Kapon words. Maku is reported to be a term in the Arawak family of languages, which refers to those in the lowest stratum of a social unit and ‘were denoted “younger brothers” or “makú” (servants)’ (Vidal 1997: 21). It has sometimes been regarded as the equivalent of the Carib poito, meaning sister’s son, son-in-law, assistant or helper and which appears in eighteenth century literature as ‘slave’, referring to those indigenous captives sold to European settlers. This leads to speculation as to whether Arawak-speaking neighbours, such as the Wapishana or the Manoa to the south, attributed this name to the southern Pemon as a whole, regarding them either as a source of captive servants or as dependent sons-in-law marrying in, or indeed, as individuals in transition from the former status to the latter. Certainly the historical record for the later eighteen century refers to frequent warfare between Wapishana and Makushi in the Rupununi area and also to Carib slave raiding there and across into Portuguese territory Makushi Pemon country.

Whatever the intrinsic meaning, or meanings which need to be investigated for the nickname Makushi, there are firm indications in the literature that a number of other nicknames existed which distinguished several regional groups within the ethnic unity of those Pemon who are today referred to simply as Makushi. Information on these is given by Koch-Grünberg (1982: III, 20) in his data of 1911-2. Referring to the ‘Makuschi tribe’, he noted that they divided themselves in accordance with their localities and dialectical variations into a number of groups which distrusted one another, and he listed the most important ones. Mrs Iris Myers, psychologist and anthropologist, who owned the ranch São José do Takutu in the Rupununi and was conducting her research there from 1933 to 1944, also recorded valuable information on Makushi sub-divisions. She employed a Makushi work-force and observed:

They called themselves Pemongong and were families belonging to the sub-groups of Iliang and Monoiko, and there was one Taulepang. They had relatives and trading partners in villages over the Brazilian border and were frequently visited by people from the Ireng, Surumu and Uraricoera.

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\[\text{44} \] She also spells this ‘Eliang’ (Myers 1993: 6).

\[\text{43} \] For example, paruchi, a man’s younger sister: wïrichi, female cross cousin, girl friend, wife.
Naming. Identity and structure: The Pemon Rivers. Iliang relatives from Maracá Island occasionally visited, where they told me a few were still living, and one man known to me actually made the considerable journey from the Canukus to the Uraricoera to bring back an Iliang wife. (Myers 1993: 54-5)

**Monoiko**

The term Monoiko (Monoi-ko’ or Monoi-kok), means ‘twin people’. According to Koch-Grünberg (1982: III, 20) the name Mo’noikó or Mo’nöiko referred to a group who lived on the lower Cotingo and eastwards in the mountains [the Pakaraimas]. He noted that they were accused of sorcery by the Makushi of the upper Surumu. Mrs Myers was acquainted with several individuals of Monoiko descent living in the Makushi villages of the Kanuku foothills in the Rupununi, and she was told by those who knew them that their language was ‘the same as the Makushi tongue, being pronounced slightly differently’ (Myers 1993: 9).

**Iliang, Eliang**

Mrs Myers (1993: 54, note 66) asserted that, contrary to a statement by Migliazza (1980: 134), the Iliang were not Ireng River Makushi and that she had noted that, in 1944, a small sub-group of them was living on the lower reaches of the Uraricoera (Rio Branco) above São Marcos. Koch-Grünberg had observed that the ‘Makuschi of Maracá’ were called ‘Eliáng’ (1982: III, 20).

**Asepang**

Mrs Myers recorded the name ‘Asepang’, but not their location, noting that they never referred to themselves as ‘assepanggong: the meaning of which was ‘the people prone to revenge’, ‘the avengers’ that is, ‘poisoners’. Some women told her of this group’s method of poisoning fermented manioc drink, offered to their enemies in dance festivals (Myers 1993: 54-5, note 66). Koch-Grünberg (1982: III, 20) had located ‘Asepanggóng’ as ‘Makuschi’ of the banks of the upper Takutu River and stated that they were considered to be ‘very dangerous “Kanaimé”, (assassins and secret witches)’.

**Kenóloko**

Koch-Grünberg (1982: III, 20) recorded this sub-division as living in the region of the sources of the Cotingo River and that they were said to add the particle ‘dzo’ to the majority of their words.

**Teweia**

‘Tewäyá’ were said to be found on the south-east slope of the high Sierra Mairari on the left bank of the middle Surumu and some also in the upper Majary River. (Koch-Grünberg 1982: III, 20)
Keseruma

Keseruma speakers are recorded in the Takutu River area. Interestingly, their word for ‘man’ is listed as being Pemóngó (Loukotka 1968: 208-9)

The Rupununi Makushi

Linguistic differences have been commented on by researchers which suggest a regional segmentation between the Makushi of the north-east Rupununi and those named as inhabitants of the Takutu - Rio Branco area to the west. Fr Cary-Elwes, based at St Ignatius mission village on the Takutu, referring to linguistic material given him by a Rupununi settler living to the north-east, remarked:

I found that a great deal of his Yupokari Makushi could not be understood by our Makushis, and so I revised the whole...
(C. Cary-Elwes Ms., n.d. ‘Extracts from the Gospels’)

This linguistic disjunction has also been remarked on by Migliazza (1980: 138)

The Makushi language before 1968 exhibited two mutually intelligible dialects: an eastern one spoken in the region of the Mau (Ireng) River and eastwards into Guyana, and a western one spoken in the area of the Surumu-Cotingo Rivers and southwest to the Uraricoera River. During the last ten years speakers of both dialects have mixed on the Brazilian side.45

There was a socio-cultural divide also, noted by Mrs Myers for the 1933-44 period, in that English-speaking Makushi under the influence of the Anglican Mission based at Eupukari, seemed to have little contact with the Portuguese-speaking Makushi of the Takutu River where the Jesuit Mission of San Ignatius was situated.

The affiliations of the Takutu River Makushi were mostly with the groups living in the Brazilian Rio Branco area, extending over the Ireng to the Uraricoera in the Northwest of the savannah.... those I was in daily contact with were these Brazilianized Makushi. We were extremely rarely visited by those from the Essequibo basin which was extraordinary, I have now realized! (Myers 1993: 57)

45 The date 1968 refers to the year before the Rupununi Uprising which, on its being rigorously suppressed by the Guyanese military, caused many Rupununi Makushi to flee over the frontier into Brazil to join Pemon to the west and north.
There are thus strong indications that an indigenous regional divide existed between those Pemon living in the Rupununi (Essequibo basin) and those in the Rio Branco (Amazon basin). The invasion and settlement of the Dutch and British to the north-east and of the Portuguese Brazilians in the south and west added colonial factors to the indigenous ones. Thus, it might have been the case that the nickname Makushi had a localized usage, as well as being the global term as we know it today, used by the Ye’kuana and neighbouring groups to refer to all Pemon speakers as Thomas commented. As a regional group name it would have denoted the north-east population in the North Rupununi Savanna and neighbouring forested areas such as the Burro-burro valley, the Quitaro and Rewa valleys, to the banks of the Essequibo. If this were so, then we can view the term Makushi as a parallel case to the use of Arekuna. That is, just as the North Pemon and its component regional groups are known by nickname as ‘Arekuna’, so also the South Pemon, with their component regional groups, would appear similarly to be denoted ‘Makushi’. Both would be global terms but, in certain contexts, each would also specify a regional group with a distinguishable dialect and territory within the ethnic unity denoted by the autodenomination ‘Pemon’.

**Pemon or Pemon-related Groups**

The problem of classification of a series of Carib-speaking groups in the Rio Branco valley to the south of the Gran Sabana stems in large part from the raiding parties, *descimentos*, carried out by Portuguese forces from the mid-eighteenth century, and from the Portuguese policy of creating village settlement under military control during the 1770s, ’80’s and ’90’s. Great numbers of indigenous inhabitants were taken from along the main rivers and deported to settlements and missions to the south, leaving the banks of the Rio Branco denuded of population. Those who escaped these depredations were destabilized and, fearing further attacks or constraints, moved to more distant locations. These included a migration of Makushi Pemon further towards the Essequibo River into the Dutch and then, later, British sphere of influence. There was a movement up the Rio Branco into the Uraricoera to Maraká Island and beyond to the headwaters and river sources in the southern Pakaraima Mountains, as well as up the Mucajai and the Amajari. Even then, settlers eventually arrived, claimed exclusive rights to the land and, in some notorious instances, terrorized the indigenous occupants. (For example, see Koch-Grünberg 1979: I, 160-1.) Thus it was that our major informants, Robert

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Schomburgk in 1838 and Koch-Grünberg in 1911-12, traversing the region of the upper Surumu and the Maracá region of the Uraricoera and its headwaters, found the remains of a variety of ‘tribes’, extinct or nearly extinct, with individuals and families with different name assignations living mixed together.

Any attempt to delineate the full extent of an historic Pemon territory based on the most extensive use of their autodenomination is thus difficult, perhaps now impossible, given the extinction of a number of named Carib-speaking groups which the ethnographers of the mid nineteenth twentieth centuries met and described as remnants. Of these, the Sapara (Zapara) might have been Pemon. Robert Schomburgk (1841(b): 214, 218-9) gives an account of them, finding them in settlements scattered along the banks of the ‘Parima’ (Uraricoera) in the Maraká area although principally inhabiting the mountains of Tupae-eng and Waikamang. He estimated a population of not more than 300. He learnt that the ‘Zaparas’ had ‘arisen from the intermarriage of Macusis and Arécunas’ and he asserted that ‘their language is merely a variety of that of the parent tribes, the Arécuna and Macusi’. Koch-Grünberg (1911-2), who encountered one settlement up the Maracá River, remarked that some isolated ‘Sapará’ still lived, scattered amongst the Taulipang north of the Uraricoera. (Koch-Grünberg 1979: I, 162) We might therefore suppose that, on all these grounds, they were most likely a Pemon group by autodenomination. However, utilizing an elderly Sapara informant and collecting from him the most important words for comparison, Koch-Grünberg concluded that the Sapara language was ‘very distinct from makuschí and its associated dialects’ (Koch-Grünberg 1979: I, 164). We also have to bear in mind that intermarriage along an ethnic frontier does not necessarily determine the perceived identity of the people themselves. A prime example is the intermarriage of Inkarigo’ with Makushi and an assumption that both are Pemon. In fact, the Inkariko firmly denote themselves to be Kapon and this is supported by specific linguistic and cultural criteria.

Another Carib-speaking group, the Wayumara, was encountered by Robert Schomburgk in 1838, in the area of the Uraricoera above the Uruvé confluence. He learnt that their principal settlements were along the Mocajahi (Mucajai) three days’ journey away, and he noted that: ‘Their language in many respects was different from the Makusi’. (Schomburgk 1841(b): 219-220, 264-5) Nevertheless, Loukotka (1968: 209) lists both the Sapara and the Wayumara within his Makusi subdivision of Carib languages.

The fate of a powerful group, the Paravilhana, or Paraviana, who were the southern neighbours and close relatives of the Rio Branco Pemon, if not themselves Pemon, are a prime example of the destruction stemming from Old World colonization.
This name regularly appears in the literature of the region in a variety of forms: Paraviang, Paraviana, Paravilha, Parahans etc. Makushi informants told Mrs Myers that, according to tradition, the Paraviang (Paraviani) were a branch of the Makushi tribe living in the Pacaraima Mountains, who as renowned runners used to run to plant their fields in the Canuku Mountains, returning to their homes on the same day, a feat which seems impossible except in legend. (Myers 1993: 15)

She was additionally informed that Paraviang meant 'great runner'. Uncertain as to the validity of this translation and aware of the problem of 'the meaning of meaning', she noted the Makushi word parawi meaning capybara (chigüire: Hydrochoerus capybara). However, she asserted that 'the idea of running skill seemed to be the first attribute associated with the Paraviang in Makushi minds'. She quoted the American missionary Neil Hawkins who was working in the Surumu valley and who told her in the early 1940s that the Makushi there spoke of the Paraviang from nearby Mt. Marari, 'who were great runners, lion-like men'. In this connection we should also note two words (probably the same but with different pronunciations), listed in the Pemon Dictionary of Armellada and Gutiérrez Salazar, 148. These are Paravián, a plant species to which the gift of agility or skill is attributed, and Parawiyan (Kamarakoto), meaning force or vigour: a remedy applied in the anus which makes one run a lot!

A Taurepan tradition recorded by Koch-Grünberg (1982: III, 104-5) appears to confirm what Myers was later told concerning the residence of Paraviana in the (North) Pakaraima Mountains. It related that a fight occurred between the ‘Kuyálagóg’ and the ‘Palawiyáng’ in the neighbourhood of the Sierra Uaruaikaíma, the Kuyálagóg having been attacked and some killed when they had gone to their farms. In revenge, the Kuyálagóg united to annihilate the Palawiyáng, setting fire by night to their settlement of five houses and clubbing the inhabitants as they attempted to flee. Koch-Grünberg observed that the Kuyálagóg took their name from their settlements on the banks of the Kuyalá, a tributary of the Mazaruni River, and he thought that they belonged to the widely disseminated Akawaio people. They were indicated to be a horde of ‘Ingalikóg’. The Kuyalá River appears to be the Kiara (Kwiará, Kwialá), a tributary of the Kako River which has its sources in the eastern side of the Roraima Range and which flows into the upper Mazaruni River. The Ingaliikóg are the Inkariiko’ or Ingalikog, the name attributed by the southernmost Pemon and Brazilians to the Kapong people (Akawaio and Patamona regional groups) in the North Pakaraima mountains.
Schomburgk had encountered a few and in 1839 had taken three Indians with him on a nine month visit to London, one of them a Makushi and another a ‘Paravilhano’ called Sororeng. In 1842, on their way to the Rupununi, the Schomburgk brothers encountered Sororeng in the Anglican mission village of Waraputa, down the Essequibo, where a number of Rupununi residents had taken refuge from Brazilian depredations (Richard Schomburk 1922: I, 245-6).47

The Taurepan also told Koch-Günberg that the ‘Parawiyáng’ had formerly been a big group living along the banks of the Rio Branco and the Uraricoera as far as the Amajari River, but the white people had carried them all away by force. The earliest literary references support this tradition, for a 1762 Despatch to the Directors of the Dutch West India Company indicates that they acted as an intermediary between the Dutch in Essequibo and the ‘Manoa’s’ (Manaus, Manoa) on the Rio Negro. They were in trading relationships with the Dutch through Arinda Post, when it was situated at the confluence of the Siparuni with the Essequibo. Nicolas Horstman, on his 1739-40 journey up the Essequibo to the Rupununi on his way to the Amazon, encountered ‘a village of the Parahans’ near this Post48 and the expedition spent over four months there on account of low water in the dry season. (Harris and de Villiers 1911: II, 414-5) Known to the Portuguese in the seventeen century, the Rio Branco region was sometimes referred to as Paraviana. From 1740 its inhabitants were subjected to the Portuguese slave-raiding expeditions, which began seriously to depopulate the Rio Branco valley by seizing and transporting its inhabitants to settlements established in the Rio Negro and along the Amazon. In the 1770s there were attempts to confine the indigenous to six specially created villages on the Rio Branco, Uraricoera and Takutu, through which a system of forced labour was established. Amongst those settling were Paravilhana, who occupied two villages. One was Nossa Senhora da Conceição with 372 Indians, Paravilhana but including a few Sapara, situated at the confluence of the Amajari with the Uraricoera. A second village was São Felipe with 209 inhabitants, mostly Paravilhana, situated a short distance up the Takutu from its confluence with the Rio Branco. (Hemming 1990 (b): 314). The harshness of the administration of these villages resulted in revolts and desertions of their inhabitants.

47 This mission village had been founded when the Anglican Mission at Pirara in the North Rupununi Savanna had been seized by the Brazilian military in 1839. Makushi and neighbouring indigenous followers of the Revd Thomas Youd moved to Waraputa for safety. Richard Schomburk 1922: I, Plate opposite p. 224 depicts the three Indians taken to London, one of them being Sororieng.

48 The Dutch established a number of posts on the major river of their three colonies, of Essequibo, Berbice and Demerara. Each was manned by a Postholder and Assistant who were responsible for surveillance of their sector of the interior, for keeping peace and good relationships with the resident Amerindians, for the conduct of trade at the post and, later in the eighteen century, for distributing presents and rewards for policing and capturing runaway negro slaves. The indigenous peoples not only visited, but made settlements in the vicinity of the posts.
indigenous inhabitants in 1781 and 1790. Finally, in 1798, there was a major uprising of the Paraviana and Wapishana against their oppressors. This was put down by a military expedition of 1799, when the Indians resisting were slaughtered on the west bank of the Rio Branco above Lake Arauari, the site becoming known as the Praia do Sangue, ('Beach of Blood'). 'Depopulation of the Rio Branco was now extreme.' 49

The autodenomination of the Paraviana is not recorded, so far as I am aware. It would appear that they were very similar to the Makushi and their regional subdivisions, but whether they were Pemon or had a different ethnic identity, such as that which exists between the Kapon and Pemon groupings for example, is open to question.

*The Taurepan and the Pi'saugok (Pichaukok, Pezacô, Pshvaco)*

Portuguese policy and its outcome in the Rio Branco valley not only led to indigenous depopulation, dispersals and even group extinction, as in the case of the Paraviana, but it also impacted to a lesser degree on the Pemon of the Roraima region, the Taurepan.

The Taurepan, certainly their major population in the Orinoco basin, were not directly subject to Brazilian incursions so far as we can tell, although at least one expedition did arrive in Venezuelan territory, seemingly prospecting for precious stones and metals. This was recorded by Robert Schomburgk, October 1838, when, travelling from the head of the Surumu River, he crossed the watershed into the Kukenan valley and arrived at the Yawaira River, near its confluence with the Wairing (Uairén). Staying at an ‘Arecuna’ settlement he described the view of Roraima and Kukenan mountains and calculated them as being 35 miles distant. His Arekuna hosts took him to see a nearby ‘crystal mountain’ but he was disappointed to find that these quartz crystals were very small, no more than an inch in length.

The Arecunas [Taurepan] say, that formerly there had been some of four or five inches in length, and clear as water; but the Portuguese had carried them all away. (Robert Schomburgk 1841(b): 203)

A dramatic instance of mixed settlements due to Portuguese pressures in the Rio Branco to the south, was recorded by Richard Schomburgk on his way back to the Rupununi from his 1842 visit to Roraima. In the Surumu valley he arrived at the village of Ewaboes. It had almost 200 occupants and they were

49 See Hemming 1990 (a): 2-3 and 1990 (b): 313-322. His maps 1 & 2 of the Rio Branco in the Eighteenth Century show where the indigenous groups were living, including the Paravilhana (1990 (b): 296 and 300).
both 'Macusis' [Carib-speaking] and 'Wapisianas' [Arawak-speaking] and he noted that each tribe had its own chieftain and had built their houses in different styles. He further remarked:

The Wapisanas who previously occupied the Takutu had been so frequently harassed by the slave-raids of the Brazilians, that they had withdrawn to the safe mountain-ranges, and joined the Ewaboes residents. Just as this village was the largest and most populated that I had come across on my journey to Roraima, so was it also the first example of such social life between two tribes. (Richard Schomburgk 1922: II, 229)

Mixed villages of people of Makushi Pemon and Wapishana descent are still today found in the Rio Branco savannas. However, the Taurepang Pemon both south and north of the Amazon - Orinoco divide were also affected, becoming hosts to Pemon families of different regional affiliations and intermarrying with them. The case of the Pi'saugok is a dramatic example of how this process sometimes led to deadly conflicts.

This nickname translates as the 'gourd drinking-cup people'. Pi'sau refers to a gourd cut lengthways to make a cup or ladle and -gok (-kok) means a group of people associated with this. The etymology records a manner of speaking whereby the sounds uttered are said to be of an explosive and gurgling kind, likened to someone drinking noisily from a gourd cup. The upper Mazaruni Akawaio, from whom I first heard the name, maintained that these people could not speak properly. One informant added a story of origin which related how one man only survived a war and how, having no wife, took a gourd and copulated with it. With her he had children and these people were called Pi’sauwigok (gourd drinking cup-belonging-people). The Arekuna ejected them and they went to live in Brazil, south of Roraima.

‘The Santa Elena people are Pötsawugok and they do not know [how] to talk. They make gurgling noises, like people drinking out of a pötsaw, because they originated in a drinking gourd.’ (Butt Colson 1973: 34, 42)

My Akawaio informants gave the impression that the Pötsawugok spoke a different language. They were adamant that these were very bad people all kanaimï, secret killers. They had fought the Arekuna, the Savanna people, and

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50 Danny, my major informant on this subject, had been born in the Kamarang valley in the upper Mazaruni of an Akawaio mother and a Kamarakoto father, and this story was probably passed down to him by the latter.

51 This mode of engendering offspring is recounted in a prominent Pemon myth relating the adventures of the hero Maichapué and is published in Armellada 1964: 87-100: see section III.
Naming. Identity and structure: The Pemon

had intermarried with them, but still called themselves Pötsawugok. Later, on the Gran Sabana, Pemon told me that these people were a Pemon-speaking group and some had peacefully settled in the Kukenan valley near Roraima. Then they quarrelled with the local Taurepan and fighting broke out resulting in many dead.

Koch-Grünberg recorded a more detailed oral tradition. He noted (1979: I, 170-2) that this ‘legendary Kanaimé tribe’ consisted of insidious assassins, mortal enemies of the Taulipáng and Arekuná who attributed nearly all deaths to their black magic and believed that they wished to eliminate all Taulipáng in order to take over their land. He was told that there were Pischaukó living in the area of the Sierra de Töpeking (Tupequen) in Brazil, that this was their principal area of occupation and that they spoke a dialect of Makuschi. He was also told that there were two sub-tribes with which the Töpeking Pischaukó maintained contact; one was in the Serra Uraukaima in the area of the right bank of the upper Surumu, the other in a high mountain range in the distant Takutu River area. This dispersal occurred when, after an initial period of friendship between the Taulipáng and incoming Pischaukó, they came to fight over women and the Pischaukó were accused of several assassinations. The Taulipáng, led by their war leader, attacked the Pischaukó settlement, setting fire to it and clubbing the inhabitants. The survivors fled further into the Uraukaima Mountains, to Töpeking and to the Mountains of the Moon in the Takutu. (Koch-Grünberg 1982: III, 99-103)

Koch-Grünberg considered that the Pischaukó no longer existed as a tribe, having been destroyed a long time ago by the inhabitants of the region the Taulipáng, but he encountered a Pischaukó family at the head of the Surumu, who were

some of the few surviving descendants of these traditional enemies of the Taulipáng. At the present-day they speak only taulipáng and are considered as belonging to this tribe. (Koch-Grünberg 1979: I, 130)

Commenting on a physical difference perceived between the Taulipáng to the west and those nearer to Roraima in the east, he thought that this might be due to a differing degree of intermarriage with the Pischaukó, and he considered that over time the Taulipáng had absorbed a number of extraneous tribes, weaker than themselves.

The history of the southern Pemon suggests that their regional groups, or subdivisions, were seriously affected when Portuguese incursions invaded the

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52 Loukotka 208, notes that ‘Pezacó’ was spoken on the Takutu to the south of the Eliang and Assepáng — and therefore right up this
Rio Branco valley from 1740 onwards. This process began with the capture and removal of large numbers of the indigenous population to colonial settlements to the south. Then followed, from the 1770's to 1799 the seizure of land, resources and the commandeering of labour with the indigenous people being pressed into specially created villages governed by military personnel. Koch-Grünberg records the consequences of these processes of colonization and settlement, whereby some groups split and migrated into the southern forests and mountains of the upper Takutu whilst others sought refuge in the mountains and headwaters to the north. Certainly some Wapishana (Arawak-speaking) and Paraviana (Carib-speaking) moved northwards and the Paraviana and the Sapara were amongst those destroyed as functioning unities. Surviving individuals and small family groups were absorbed by intermarriage and Koch-Grünberg quotes a number of instances involving the union with the Taurepan of the last few members of several named groups. Through his data and with the aid of present research into Pemon oral history, we can begin to piece together the history of the Pi'saugok as a named subdivision or regional group, most probably southern Pemon, whose movement northwards impacted on their North Pemon neighbours, the Taurepan. Eventually absorbed into the Taurepan, their name is nevertheless not forgotten and individuals are able to trace descent from Pi'saugok ancestors. What is intriguing is the fact that both nicknames, Taurepan and Pi'saugok, refer to people who, according to other Pemon, do not know how to speak properly.

**IV. Naming and the Environment**

Accounts of expeditions to the Gran Sabana and circum-Roraima area from 1838 onwards, show its inhabitants to have been intimately aware of their natural environment and its potentials, from which they obtained their daily living and derived the raw materials for their technological needs, including the fabrication of goods for exchange in a network of trade with neighbours. Their physical environment was, and still is, named in detail in their own languages (Pemon and Kapon). These are names which travellers learnt from their guides and informants and recorded, often without knowing their meaning and not realizing the significance they might also have in the structure of inter-relationships. Many of them now cover the maps of the circum-Roraima region at large. They frequently have stories attached, of mythical times and origins, but also they refer to ecological relationships which the indigenous

53 Dr Iokiñe Rodriguez is researching the oral history of the Yuruari River group of Taurepan and she, with this community, will be able to shed much more light on Pi'saugok history and their near mythical status on the Gran Sabana.
communities observed and interpreted and passed on to their descendants down the generations.

Names deriving from topographical features, which abound in both the Kapon and Pemon languages, relate to several levels of structure and are used to identify and define a variety of group relationships. Unlike the many nicknames used to denote a regional level, environmental names are informative but not in themselves insulting or culturally ambiguous, so that those to whom they are attributed feel no shame or annoyance on acknowledging them and using them. The terms in question customarily have the suffix -gok or -kok attached, and this can sometimes be heard with a glottal stop instead of /k/, (-go' or -ko'). This gives the meaning of inhabitant or dweller. Sometimes the longer form is used: -goto or -koto which, possibly, gives a meaning of attachment.

Environmental Terms Relating to Ethnic and Regional Groups

Names used globally in that they denote an ethnic unity, may sometimes have an environmental connotation. A case in point, discussed above, is the Makushi (South Pemon) term of Inkarïko', meaning people of the forests of the Pakaraima Montains and referring to both regional groups of Kapon (Akawaio and Patamona) indiscriminately. Sometimes complementary environmental terms are paired and contrasted with each other. Thus, Remonagok (Lemonagok) meaning ‘plains’ (remon) people (-gok) describes those living on the low grasslands west of the Ireng River, who are today denoted Makushi, Pemon. On the other hand, the global name Waika, meaning fierce and warlike, used by the North Pemon for their Kapong neighbours (both Akawaio and Patamona), is essentially a reference to a cultural trait.

An environmental term in regular use among the upper Mazaruni Akawaio Kapon and the Pemon of the middle reaches of the Kamarang River is Teigok, (Deigok). This term translates as savanna (tei or dei), inhabitants (-gok). It expresses the fact that these people live on the heights of the open grasslands of the Gran Sabana in contrast to the inhabitants of the predominantly forested area of the adjacent upper Mazaruni basin, with only occasional patches of grassland, and further east those of the unbroken tropical forest of the Essequibo lowlands. The Gran Sabana Pemon themselves frequently refer to mountains, which constitute striking features dominating their landscape. They denote their land as ‘a place of mountains’ (wïk-ta) and they refer to the Taurepan Pemon who live at the sources of the Caroni River in the Kukenan valley, in the area of Mount Roraima, as the Roroimagok, the Roraima (Roroima) people. In particular, this today includes those belonging to the communities of Peraitepui, San Francisco de Yuruani (Kumarakapai) and neighbouring villages such as Mapauri, where this mountain is held in great regard even affection. In contrast, the upper Mazaruni people refer to themselves as
A’murugok, which means ‘people of the headwaters’ and the term identifies them as Akawaio Kapon occupying the sources and tributaries of the upper Mazaruni. In particular, this term distinguishes them from those Akawaio Kapon, relatives, who dwell on the middle and lower reaches of the Mazaruni River, below the Pakaraima escarpment.

River Group Names

For Pemon and Kapon, rivers have traditionally been more than features of geographical impact. They have denoted recognized territorial divisions within the regional unities of the ethnic group and they have ordered sets of interrelationships and their accompanying rights and values at the local community level. Notably, they have designated community landholdings of villages and family settlements within their valleys and have consequently delineated resource ownership and rights of exploitation by their inhabitants. An Akawaio leader defined a river group, stating:

All the people living on a big creek are called by its name.
They are also called by this name by those who live in other, named, river areas. (The Captain of Wïï village, Ataro River, upper Mazaruni.)

The suffix -gok is not added to the names of the shallow, winding streams meandering through forest or savanna, often partially blocked by rocks, fallen trees, mud and sand.

The upper Mazaruni inhabitants recognize two major river groups, that of the upper Mazaruni River and its inhabitants as a whole, the ‘Mazalinigok, and that of its main tributary, the Kamarang, the ‘Kamalanigok’, with a mixed population of Akawaio (Kapon) and ‘Arekuna’ (Pemon). The settlements on the main tributaries and sub-tributaries of both of these rivers also constitute named river groups, notably the Attabrau and Meruwan groups within the Kamarang unity and the Kako, Kukui and the sub-tributaries of these, within the Mazaruni unity. There is reference to the people of the Cuyuni and Wenamu River groups, and to the upper Cotingo River people (Kwatinmïgok), outside the Mazaruni River area. The nearest Patamona (Kapon) neighbours to the upper Mazaruni Akawaio are often referred to by their river valley name as the Ileimïgok, Ireng River people.

Referring to their own river groups, the Pemon speak of the Apongwaugok, the people of the Apangwao River, the Yuruanigok, the Yuruani people, and Kamaragok (or Kamarakoto) of the Kamara River (see above), amongst others.

54 The river groups and their territories in the upper Mazaruni are treated in detail in Butt Colson 2009: Chapter 8.
In heavily forested areas, which include most of the upper Mazaruni basin, rivers are the prime points of geographical orientation and location. The mountains which dominate the landscape of high grasslands are, in forested country, frequently hidden by the mass of tall trees. Although settlements and rivers are linked by forest trails, the main rivers and their tributaries are natural highways and the use of boats offers the easiest mode of travel over long distances, especially if a quantity of baggage is carried. These advantages are not always present in grassland areas such as the heights of the Gran Sabana, where many streams have their sources, may disappear in the dry seasons or are too small and shallow for navigation, so that land trails predominate. In recent times at least, the Pemon seem more likely to refer to the people of a named village or local community rather than to the fact that they live in a particular river area. A detailed study would be worthwhile in order to compare the naming of Pemon communities at the local level in forested country as opposed to the open grassland areas where the fluvial system has a lesser impact on communications. At the same time, the effects on traditional, named structures of the major changes of the last half century and of regional government administrations in particular, need to be investigated in detail. They include the creation of relatively large mission villages with their church, central health and educational facilities, and of the paved road which traverses the Gran Sabana from north to south into Roraima State in Brazil. A comparison might then be made with the form of segmentation which has been overt in the upper Mazaruni communities, where each named river group is part of a system of river groups, each segment defining and relating itself to other similar segments within the totality of this particular regional group of Kapon.

**Pemon Structures**

A study of the Pemon ethnic unity (signalled by their autodenomination held in common), and of its constituent parts (delineated in nicknames and a variety of environmental and cultural terms defining regional and local community groupings), immediately raises the question of the kinds of relationships which the people of these perceived structures have traditionally maintained with each other. Both oral traditions and the relevant literature adequately answer this question. They can be itemized as relationships of trade and exchange: mutual hospitality, visiting and feasting, including the ritual celebrations of Alleluia since the formation of this and related syncretisms in the 1880s and the tours of prophet leaders and their followers. Intermarriage,

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55 On long-distance exchange and trade involving the Pemon, see Coppens 1971; Thomas 1972; Butt Colson 1973.
56 Butt Colson 1985 gives details of Alleluia and the interconnections of Kapon and Pemon prophets and their followings and of the passage of knowledge between these two peoples.
with uxori-matrilocal residence as a key factor,\textsuperscript{57} has been important both in the process of cementing relationships between families within the local unity and also across structural boundaries.

On the other hand, hostility and suspicion expressed in mutual accusations of sorcery (\textit{kanaimi}) and of cursing invocations (\textit{bad taren}) mark the boundaries of the discrete groups of the sementary system (Butt Colson 2001: Chapter 11). In the past, there were occasional active hostilities, raids and, rarely, outright battles. Such hostilities are recorded as having occurred between river groups and regional groups both within and between the ethnic unities. Active warfare sometimes stemmed from the encroachment on the land rights and resources of one river group area by members of another, without previous notice and agreement between the two. Sometimes the fear has been expressed that a neighbouring group is trying to take possession of the land of another. Thus, oral tradition of the Kamarang River people relates that there was formerly a state of war between the Arekuna (Pemon) up the river and the Akawaio/Waika (Kapon) down the river, in the course of which the Arekuna discovered and attacked the inland village of Waramabia, causing the Akawaio inhabitants to abandon it as unsafe until peace was restored. Underlying hostility in the Kamarang valley in the 1950s took the form of accusations of sorcery (\textit{kanaimi}), of cursing (\textit{bad tareng}) and of shaman attack through the manipulation of spirit forces. When therefore, a ‘flu epidemic swept into the upper Mazaruni from the west it was pinpointed as having been sent by the Arekuna on the upper Kamarang and Gran Sabana. The motive was considered to be an intention to kill off the Akawaio inhabitants by sending sickness, so that the Arekuna could take possession of their lands. These were especially fertile in comparison with the open and relatively barren, wind-swept heights of the Gran Sabana. The Arekuna response was to let it be known that they too were suffering from influenza and that this had come from further over - from the Kamarakoto people! Although personal and family disputes might escalate to cause conflict, any close study of inter-group relationships needs also to take account of the land and resource rights of the social units involved and of their expression through the various levels of the naming system in use.

Although the presence is recorded of ‘big men’ who are renowned leaders with an influence which extended beyond their own immediate communities, of shamans and prophets (‘wise men’) and of war leaders, there is no indication of the existence of a centralized institutionalized office with an incumbant

\textsuperscript{57} Uxori-matrilocal residence refers to a man living in his wife’s settlement with her parents or nearest kin, his father-in-law having similarly taken up residence with his wife’s family. This practice, down the generations, favours the creation of a female line associated with a local territory, into which males marry and from which their sons exit if they are unable to find a suitable spouse within their natal community. We may consider whether the traditional myth of the Amazon women is a metaphor for this system. Butt Colson 2009: 225-9 describes the Pemon affiliations of the Danny family of the Kamarang valley as an example.
uniting a regional group, let alone the ethnic unity. A river group, or an environmentally named regional community such as the Roroimagok, might contain more than one village community but there was no necessary hierarchy or unitary governmental system to encompass them or to ensure a common policy. Only at the local level of a village community, was there an active and persistent political organization and process. The traditional, indigenous system of both the Pemon and Kapon unities was therefore of an acephalous nature within its maximal structures headless and not recognizing a central authority binding together any unit larger than that of a village settlement (sometimes dispersed). Loose alliances between settlements, bound by kinship in common for defence and for the pursuit of mutual interests, might transcend the local unity and there appear to have developed on an ad hominum basis the occasional predominance of a forceful and charismatic leader (sometimes combining shaman practice and a reputation for wisdom).

In these circumstances, the indigenous society can be perceived to have been organized as a segmentary one, but without any unifying clan or lineage system formulating the structure and interrelationships between segments, as in the case of the classic segmentary systems of much of Africa. A localized nexus of cognatic kin, with a matrifocal bias due to the custom of uxorilocal residence, is the core constitution of both the Pemon and Kapon settlements. David Thomas entitled his book *Order Without Government*, appropriately and with good reason.

Thus the indigenous naming system of the Pemon and their Kapon neighbours gives expression to a series of interacting unities a system of interlocking segments, each with its land resource base, a kin nexus and prestigious leaders, but traditionally unaccompanied by any form of centralized or sovereign entity overarching these. A segmentary system, as opposed to a centralized, hierarchical one, does not preclude secular and ritual order in social relationships and this is true of a community organization as a whole and the management of its land holdings and their use.

**Linguistic Classifications**

Classification of the indigenous peoples of Guiana, often within the context of an overall comparison of linguistic groupings covering the entirety of South America, has frequently been by language alone. The earliest attempts incorporated short word lists which, from the latter part of the nineteenth century became a more or less standardized, short set of basic terms which could then be compared with other similar lists in order to gauge affiliations.

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58 In some areas of the Gran Sabana Pemon, there were no centralized villages, but a scatter of family holdings relating to the homestead of a senior man, a recognized leader. Thomas 1982: Chapter III well describes the scattered nature of Pemon settlements in his area of research, Uonkén.
between their speakers. Valuable as such lists are to us, particularly those collected from groups which are today judged to be extinct, there were drawbacks in this methodology. It was noted that there were

... many cases of word lists collected in the past, which looked different in the transcription and in language designation but turned out to have been collected from the same village but by different field workers or explorers.

(Migliazza 1980: 122)

Modes of spelling are but one problem, arising where the data are written by members of different nationalities, English-Guyanese, Portuguese-Brazilian, Spanish-Venezuelan, and at different periods of time. Unfamiliar sounds in the indigenous language, such as the co-ordination of /p/ and /b/: /l/ and /r/: /k/ and /g/: /t/ and /d/: /sh/, /ch/, /s/ and /z/, cause problems in the formation of an alphabet.59 The vowels especially, have sometimes caused havoc in both assumptions and comparisons, the Ipîrugoto versus Parugoto or Purugoto being a prime case in point. Then there are the pronoun affixes, possessive suffixes, and a variety of insertions and attachments, such as -wa in Pemon and Kapon, indicating something extraordinary. Possessive forms of nouns sometimes differ completely (eg. in Pemon and Kapon autï is a square house: yeuïk is a possessed house). Moreover words given may have an exact sense which escapes the investigator. Thus the word for ‘fire’ is apok in Pemon and Kapon and it infers that it was fire originally obtained by friction. However woto is sometimes listed which is the term for fire obtained by percussion.60

To classify meaningfully and accurately by linguistic criteria alone is extremely difficult and requires all the means available to modern, professional linguists engaged in intensive field research. However, there is then the question of what constitutes closely related, but separate, languages as opposed to their being but one language with dialects and sub-dialects. Marshall Durbin, for example, excludes dialects in his Table of ‘Internal Relations Among the Carib Languages’, section D, and brackets together as possible subgroupings the Makusi, Purucoto, Pemong (Taulipang), Patamona, Akawaio and Arinagoto (Durbin 1977: 35). We may argue that, leaving linguis-

59 There is a phonetic variation as one moves from east to west across Kapon territory in the upper Mazaruni to Pemon territory to the west. The indigenous peoples themselves often find it difficult to agree on a ‘correct’ spelling. For example, in 2002 a literacy programme gave rise to considerable discussion and dispute in San Martin de Turumban, a mixed village at the Wenamu-Cuyuni confluence. Akawaio (Kapon) inhabitants wanted to adopt the letters /l/ and /b/. The ‘Arekuna’ (Pemon) wanted /t/ and /p/.

60 J. H. Rowe gives a graphic account of *Linguistic Classification Problems in South America* (1974: 43-50). His map *Indian Tribes of South America*, 1973, does not use the autodenominations Pemon and Kapon, but only nicknames. This is also the case in the relevant section of Loukotka’s map *Ethno-Linguistic Distribution of South American Indians* (1967) in his *Classification of South American Indian Languages* (1968).
tic evidence aside, the naming system suggests an identification of just two languages, Pemon and Kapon, each with sub-group dialects spoken by their component regional groups as named by each other.

Even if there is a recognition of a close linguistic identity and of the possibility that two or more languages might be considered to be the dialects of just one, and even if there has also been intermarriage down the generations between speakers of them, the investigator can be derailed by sentiments due to hostile stereotyping expressed by the people themselves. A prime example of this seems to be a division distinguishing Makushi from other Pemon, that has persisted in the literary records down to the present day. Despite intermarriage and an acknowledgement by the Taurepan that they have a closer affiliation linguistically with the Makushi to their south than to the Arekuna to their north, at the inter-group level they often express a very considerable degree of mutual dislike. As Robert Schomburgk discovered when he was recruiting Makushi carriers from the Rupununi to accompany him north to ‘Arekuna’ [Taurepan] country at Roraima in 1838, it proved very difficult to do so because the Macusis ‘had been for years at war with the Arécunas, who inhabit the regions about Roraima’ (Robert Schomburgk 1841(b): 195). A great deal of fear and distrust prevailed between these two Pemon regional segments which were to persist into the future even to the present.

Similarly, there are Taurepan oral traditions which corroborate accounts in the literature of hostilities between Taurepan and incoming Pi’saugok, who were suspected to be trying to take possession of Taurepan land (Koch-Grünberg 1979: I, 170). Despite intermarriage and apparent integration over a number of generations, the Pi’saugok are still referred to as if they were a distinct people, speaking unintelligibly and, as an entire group, often regarded with even more distaste than the Makushi. (Personal communication from Dr Iokiñe Rodriguez.)

That segments of a society made up of Carib-speaking ethnic groups and their internal sub-divisions have been customarily marked by sorcery accusations (that is, by accusations of secret killing and malpractice), is clear from the literature. This is exemplified in a statement made by a ‘Majonggóng’ [Ye’kuana] who told Koch-Grünberg (1979: I, 109) that there was no Kanaimé in his country, but that the Arekuná of the Caroni made Kanaimé, as well as the Ingarikó, the Seregóng [upper Mazaruni Akawaio, Kapon] and the Pischaukó.

To allow reputation to affect classification can therefore lead to very misleading conclusions. One has to keep in mind the fact that, at ethnic, inter-regional and river group levels, there is the general practice of distancing one’s own group from those of another group - primarily via accusations of malpractice, often accompanied by the use of derogatory nicknaming.

Despite the many changes that increasing contact with their respective
national societies has wrought, an understanding of the indigenous structures and of interrelationships, past, present and future, can be best achieved by adding to the linguistic and cultural criteria a study also of the naming system. The nature of segmentation, its territorial basis and all the implications of these for ordering group interrelationships, can be better clarified if we listen carefully to what the people themselves are saying through their naming system, with all its many implications.

The Importance of Naming

1. The Spatial Dimension

The plurality of names describing different structural levels (ethnic, regional and local), with their environmental and cultural content, has masked the territorial extension of the overall ethnic unity of the Pemon as ‘a people’, which their autodenomination expresses. When the southernmost Pemon, who are today referred to as Makushi (living principally in the Rio Branco valley in Brazil and in the Rupununi-Essequibo area in Guyana), are joined to the Pemon in Venezuela, (on the Gran Sabana, in the Caroní, Paragua and upper Cuyuni River valleys), and to those on the middle Kamarang River in Guyana, then we are better able to appreciate the vast region which was theirs historically and which constitutes their ancestral homeland. Similarly, their Kapon neighbours, under a variety of names but predominantly known as ‘Akawaio’, ‘Waika’ or Inkariko’, occupied another vast area. This extended from the Corentyne River westwards, across the major river valleys of Guyana above the first falls, to the upper Ireng and the upper Cotingo valley in Brazil and the upper Cuyuni valley where it skirts the Sierra de Lema in Venezuela.

There is no indication that either ethnic unity was ever governed by a centralized authority. Their system of organization was via sets of interacting segments, each grounded (literally) by occupation of a specific, generally recognized territory, expressed in terms of major river valleys, and a community life in settlements composed of a close kin nexus and tailored by the operation of an uxori-matrilocal form of residence. Proximate segments related to each other in a variety of ways, notably by visiting of kin held in common, trade and exchange and ritualized dance festivals. Mutual accusations of kanaimi (in Kapon: itoto), and cursing invocations, general distrust and, in the past, occasional hostilities, marked the boundaries, both within and between the two peoples and extending beyond them to others, Carib and non-Carib-speaking.

2. The Time Dimension and Identity

A knowledge of the naming system frequently assists us in the identification and location of Pemon and Kapon groupings down the centuries. It can
Naming. Identity and structure: The Pemon

therefore, indicate continuity of occupation or, concomitantly, it can signal migrations and the merging of populations and help reveal the reasons for the latter. In this respect, the names explained by the indigenous people today, tracked also in oral tradition and in some instances encountered in the literary record, can, when taken together, reveal much more than does the use of just one mode of study. For example, the ‘Ipurugotos’ in Venezuela were first contacted, on the Icabaru River in the course of the 1772 Capuchin reconnaissance expedition up the Caroní, over the Southern Pakaraima Mountains to the Amajari River in the Uaricoera (Rio Branco) valley (Armellada 1960: 130-3). As stated above, Pemon today report that ipíru means ‘swamp’ and that the ‘people of the swamp’ is a name referring to a specific Pemon population.61 Similarly, there is mention in Capuchin documents of the 1770s of ‘asirigotos’, some of whom were in the process of being used to populate a new mission village, up-river from San Pedro de la Boca de la Paragua, but who ended up assassinating their missionary father during an incursion in the upper reaches of that river (Armellada 1960: 130, 133-4). Kasirigoto (Cachirigoto) is a nickname meaning ‘kasiri (casiri or cachiri) people’. It refers to a fermented drink made from bitter manioc pulp, which was common amongst both Pemon and Kapon, being drunk on a daily basis and in large quantities at festival times. One supposes that the (C)Asirigoto were a group of well-known Pemon brewers of kasiri, perhaps famous for the amount they drank or the drinking festivals they hosted. A Pemon oral tradition states that they are the same as the Kamarakoto, who, as already stated, were mostly referred to as (B)Arinagotos in the Guayana Mission documents. All three groups, Ipirugoto, Kasirigoto and (B)Arinagoto, were Pemon groups in the Paragua valley and neighbouring tributaries of the upper Caroní, under a variety of nicknames and environmental designations which are still recalled today-despite the more frequent application of the name Arekuna or Kamarakoto.

A study of the Kapon naming system similarly affords a time depth and pinpoints identities. A knowledge of the meaning and use of the name Guaica/Waika by the northern Pemon solves the problem as to the relationships between those of the Yanomamí group and those of the Kapon, both having shared this nickname. It also explains the appearance of this name in nineteenth century British Guiana and the seemingly erratic attributions of it recorded in the literature.

Perhaps most striking is the term ‘Seregong’ (Seregong, Serrakong, Cerekons, Soerikongs etc.), a name which the upper Mazaruni Akawaio (Kapon) acknowledge as their own. Its composition appears to be sere, meaning

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61 Reports of this swampy region, caused by the overflowing of the rivers on either side of the Amazon-Orinoco watershed in the wet seasons, in addition to the lake-like expanse in the Pirara River area in the North Rupununi, are implicated in the search for Lake Manoa and El Dorado.
‘this’, or ‘this one here’, translating as ‘the group of people (-gong, -kong) here’ (i.e., the local inhabitants). However, there is a less benign translation related by members of the Patamona regional group to a Pemon informant, whereby it refers to these Akawaio as being ‘stupid’ people in that they do things in a contrary and backward way. In this latter instance, Seregong appears as a scurrilous nickname applied by one regional group to another within the same ethnic unity.

When Robert Schomburgk was in the Kukenan valley at Roraima in 1838 he encountered ‘a Sarrakong, from the Mazaruni’. Again, in 1842, there is reference to ‘the Serekongs, a tribe occupying the district around the sources of the Mazaruni’ who were visiting the Arekuna at Roraima. (Robert Schomburgk 1841(b): 204-5 and Richard Schomburgk 1922: II, 187). However, we can trace this name further back to March 1769, when the Assistant Postholder at the Dutch post of Arinda together with Carib allies reported to the Director-General in Essequibo that the ‘Cerekons’ were staying near the ‘Acuways’ below the post. 62 They were described by the Carib leader as ‘a tribe dwelling in Oronoque’ and he asserted that the ‘Spaniards of Oronoque’ had sent Maripurma the Chief of the Cerekongs, with his people, in order to rob or slay the Caribs. He also reported that the Cerekons had already met and killed the Postholder and the Caribs with him an assertion which later proved false. (Harris and de Villiers 1911: II, 609-10) There is probably an even earlier reference to Serekong, to be found in Major John Scott’s The Description of Guyana (1669?) 63 where he mentions the ‘Semicorals’ as one of the great powerful nations living in the uplands of Guiana

and Cover a vast Tract of Land beginning at ye mountaines of
the Sun on the West and north, and extending them selves to
Rio Negroe 500 miles south, and East, a famous River there
(which) emtries itselte into the great Amazone. (Scott 1924:
137-8)

This report, derived by Scott from a naval Captain-Pilot, Matthias Matteson of Guant, who for 22 years had traded for the Spanish from San Tomé on the Orinoco, suggests a reference to the the area of Weitepui, Sun Mountain, which is immediately south of Mt. Roraima and on the present Brazilian-Venezuelan

62 The Essequibo post, Arinda, had just been moved from Siparuni mouth up the Essequibo to near the Rupununi confluence. The dominant population at the previous site had been Akawaio. The Caribs were challenging this dominance at the new site and were raiding for Makushi slaves obtained in the Rupununi and westwards to sell them in Surinam in the east.

63 Major John Scott, Geographer to King Charles II of England, whose manuscript dates around 1668-9. The original is contained in the Sloane Mss. 3662, ff. 37b-42b, in the British Library, London.
Present-day Akawaio, the upper Cotingo (Kwatin) River group, live immediately south of Weitepui mountain. To its north-east is the upper Kukui River group, whose members still claim to be Serekong. Taken all together, information on the designation Serekong indicates that the people referred to are the Akawaio Kapong at the headwaters of the Mazaruni. The name can for certain be traced back to 1769 and, if ‘Semicoral’ is, as we think, a rendering of Serekong, then the earliest literary mention would be around 1669. This historical record, traced through research into the naming process, indicates that assertions that the Serekong were formerly upper Mazaruni people invaded by Akawaio are false. There is no indication whatsoever, that the Serekong have ever been a separate ethnic unity from that of the Akawaio Kapon, or have been an invading force. The two names are synonymous for the inhabitants of the area in question. The assignation Serekong identifies the upper Mazaruni District Akawaio as a particular entity, a regional group within the Kapon ethnic unity which, in historic times, spread across territories extending from the Corentyne River in the east to the Rio Branco and upper Cuyuni in the west where they bordered the Pemon.

A striking example of how a number of names may be used for different segments of the same ethnic group is recorded in the manuscript papers of Fr Cary-Elwes. In a ‘note about tribes’ he remarked that, according to a Patamona of the Ireng River area

> the people of Amokokupai [Kukui River area] are not Akawaios but Serikong, and the people of the Mazaruni are Waikas and only the people of the Kuating [upper Cotingo] are real Akawaios. (n.d.)

However, Fr Cary-Elwes had found that ‘they all speak the same language and are always spoken of collectively as Akawaios.’ All these nicknames, applied variously to specify ethnic, regional, river group and village entities, can ultimately be subsumed under one autodenomination, that of the Kapon unity, including the Patamona informant himself!

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64 This is also suggested by his mention of ‘Shahones’, thought to be (Wapi)shanas, and of ‘Sepoyes’, probably the Sapoya, Sapara (or Zapara), all of whom encountered later living in the upper Rio Branco (Uraricoera) valley. (Scott: 1924, 130)

65 For example, see Fournier 1979: 104-5.

66 Fr Cuthbert Cary-Elwes, a Jesuit, was based in the Rupununi at St Ignatius Mission, from the time of its foundation in 1909 until his illness in 1923. He visited the ‘Arekuna’ at Roraima on six occasions, the first in 1911, and made two visits to Amokokupai village, in the Kukui River area of the upper Mazaruni, in 1917 and 1921. He achieved a considerable knowledge and fluency in the Makushi language and left translations of parts of the Bible and of Christian prayers. For full accounts of his work with the Makushi and Arekuna (Pemon) and the upper Mazaruni Akawaio (Kapon), see Bridges 1985 and Butt Colson 1998.
3. The Territorial Dimension

The intrinsic meanings of names are difficult to discover and more research on them is required. However, these etymologies are vitally significant in that they do not only express ethnic and structural identities. They frequently have environmental references attached which link the named communities to their geographical base and thus automatically endow them with a particular territorial identity. In other words, the very names in use often designate the traditional lands of the group of people being referred to. The perceived communal right to their ancestral lands has been a perennial problem in the relationships between Old World and New World peoples, so that naming, with its underlying territorial implications, is a very important component of it and can be part of the solution.

Pemon themselves say that ‘people take on the name of the place where they live’. Connecting a major topographic feature to a group of people living in the area, they name communities by the river valleys they inhabit, whether they live in grasslands or forest, on high ground or in the low plains, or near a prominent mountain such as Roraima. Speculations on the nature of a name such as *Inkariko* (Ingarigo etc.) is a good example of how such designations have been misunderstood. Im Thurn dismissed the ‘Engaricos’ as being ‘hybrids between Macusis and Arecunas’ (1883: 159), but, as already stated, the name itself is a topographical one meaning ‘the people belonging to the forested heights’, referring to the Pakaramaima Mountains as they can be seen by those living on the low grasslands west of the Ireng River, who are the *Remonagok* or *Lemonagok*, translating as ‘plains people’. Although the Ireng valley is an ethnic frontier, where Patamona (southern Kapon) border the northern Makushi (Pemon) and intermarriage occurs between them, the name *Inkariko* is a collective term used by Makushi for their nearest Kapong neighbours and which has been adopted by the Brazilians of the region. It is a name which is applied to Patamona Kapon and extends to the Cotingo River Akawaio Kapon (the Kwatinmïgok) at the head of that river. It is also extended to designate the Akawaio in the upper Mazaruni basin, notably those of the Kukui River group and upper Kako, on its westernmost side. Thus, just as the Pemon to the north of the Makushi are referred to globally as Arekuna, so also Makushi use the name Inkariko to refer to those Kapon who are neighbouring them to the east and north-east. Both terms are comparable in their structural application to the northern Pemon use of Waika to denote Kapon (both the Akawaio and Patamona regional groups indiscriminately). However, it should be noted that Ingariko is an environmental term by its etymology, whereas Arekuna and Waika, and perhaps Makushi, are terms referring to a perception of prominent cultural characteristics as stereotypes.
Like im Thurn, W.H. Brett also traced some tribal origins to intermarriage. In 1851, utilizing information from the works of Robert Schomburgk, he stated (1851: 297-8)

The ARECUNAS ...inhabit the high table-land, from among which the mountain Roraima rises 8,000 feet above the sea. The SOERIKONGS are a tribe which have sprung from the intermarriages of the Arecunas with the Wacawoios. They are, like the latter, a predatory tribe, frequently committing depredations on the Macusis.

Despite intermarriage leading to a degree of movement of individuals between the different segments of the society at large, both between those of different autodenominations (as between Pemon and Kapon) and between those of different regional groups and river areas within an ethnic unity, these structured entities with their recognized boundaries have persisted down the centuries, as the historical record and the naming system witness. The salient factors in this continuity are a core of cognatic kin in joint ownership and occupation of a specific homeland territory, which is believed to be sacred in that it was given by ancestral culture heroes (or today, by God). A fear of others and of their motives accompanied by a traditional concept that sickness and death ultimately derive from outsiders, combined with a lack of any central political authority imposing unity, reinforce a perception of distance and separation between social entities.

It is, nevertheless, important to recognize that, like other social forms, segmentary systems are not static. In particular, the cultural markers, notably those intrinsic in nicknames, also enable us to keep track in the literature of the movements of particular populations and of any displacements or amalgamations to which these may lead. The Pï'saugok, referred to above, are an interesting case in point. They appear to have originated as a group of Pemon speakers in the Rio Branco-Uraricoera area, displaced by Portuguese slave raiders and perhaps also by Carib slave raiders who were operating in the Rupununi during the latter part of the eighteenth century and selling their captives to the Dutch in Surinam. According to Koch-Grünberg they split into three groups, one going to live in a high mountain range in the Takutu River area in the far south, the others in the Sierra de Töpeking and Serra Uraukaima in the north. Oral tradition of the Taurepang of Roraima relates that 'Pischauko' came into their territory and it was agreed that the newcomers could settle. In due course however, a dispute resulted in outright war and a

67 For example, Karinambo, a well-known cattle ranch, giant otter reserve and tourist resort in the North Rupununi, is a name which commemorates a battle between Caribs (Karî'na) and Makushi.
battle in which many were killed and the settlement broken up. Today, Pemon
tell of ‘Pischauko’ descendants living in various areas of the Gran Sabana.
Their group reputation in oral tradition is still encapsulated in their name, as
referring to a very evil people.

4. The Structural Dimension

As already demonstrated, names recorded for the Pemon and Kapon are
confusing in their numbers, variety and seeming contradictions. However, a
study of naming is not just a means of making sense of the historical record.
Any comprehensive study of the Pemon people and of their immediate
neighbours the Kapon, needs to establish their exact identity, to ensure that
we know who we are referring to and what structural level in their social
system their names denote. This process also depicts the kind of relationships
which exist between the name givers and the name receivers, and it should be
pointed out that each entity is both a name giver to others and also a name
receiver although plainly in the latter case often an extremely unwilling one.

A study of the naming system therefore enables us to identify inter-group
relationships within a system of segmentation ranging from a maximum level
of inter-ethnic recognition, through regional interactions to those of local
communities which, most frequently, are grouped and denoted by geographical
features, notably by the fluvial system.

In this continuity of segmentary levels it is important to take note of the
territorial unity, which I have described as the ‘regional group’ in order to avoid
the assignation ‘tribe’ with its variety of applications, having often included
river groups and local communities as well as regional agglomerations and
even the ethnic unity itself. Each regional group is recognized as a discrete
entity in that it has a name applied to it by those who belong to other, similar
but differently named, regional groups. So, amongst the Pemon of the Gran
Sabana and Caroni basin at large, we encounter the terms Taurepan, Arekuna,
Kamarakoto and, in the past, Arinagoto and perhaps others such as Ipirugoto.
Similarly, amongst the southern Pemon, several sub-division names are
recorded, such as Eliang and Monoiko, which appear to refer to regional
groups. Where these names are assigned by others and are derogatory in
meaning, they are rejected (or unwillingly repeated) by those so designated.
Kamarakoto, which by etymology is a river group name, appears to be
something of an exception, having been extended to an area far greater than
the small valley it refers to. What is puzzling is this general lack of a self-
designation at the regional level of structure. There is the use of the ethnic
autodenomination, Pemon, at the maximal end of the scale and, at the minimal
levels, reference to topographical features and river areas and to their
component village communities and family settlements within recognized
landholdings. This apparent discrepancy, the lack of a regional autonym, requires more research, my own informants finding themselves as mystified as myself when contemplating it. The answer might be found through further enquiry into the conceptualization of the regional group and of its role as a structure which is intermediary between the total ethnic unity expressed via its autodenomination and the local community unities, named by environmental factors and dominated by family groupings in active occupation and immediate use of its land resources. Any enquiry should bear in mind that the lack of a self-designation by members of a regional group has not meant a lack of commonality, taking the form of a recognition of a unique territory with defined boundaries, held in common, which, in the past was actively defended from incursion by others. Moreover, a closer kinship, linguistic and general cultural unity, mutual understanding and specific oral traditions exist within each regional group whilst accusations of bad intent of various kinds have marked the social boundaries with other similar groupings, as the literature makes clear. Nevertheless, the regional group, often referred to as a ‘tribe’ in the literature, may in fact have been a more flexible unit than first appears to be the case. Under certain circumstances, social or environmental, its constituent local communities may expand, contract, merge or migrate, so re-creating new unities of regional significance. If the data are available, then the formulation of Makushi dominance in the southern Pemon groupings might afford important insights into such a process. However, as the information available on the Paraviana and the Pi'saugok indicate, the incursions originating in colonial rule and settlement appear to have been the dominant factors in a dramatic re-ordering of inter-group relationships, rather than any intrinsic instability at any level of structure.

Conclusion

Where the existance of several different names for the same group of people has been recognized, a customary reaction by an investigator has been to select one and subsume under it, or ignore, all the alternatives, considering them as being synonymous in the sense of being what im Thurn denoted ‘unnecessary terms’. For all the reasons discussed above, I consider this to be a great mistake. Each name not only has an etymology, the basic, internal meaning within itself, but also a socio-cultural one in its mode of application and its significance. Thus, the fact that the etymology and socio-cultural meaning may be adjusted by the givers and the receivers of a name, either to impart a derogatory assignation or to neutralize one, is itself an indicative expression of particular sets of relationship. This is emphasized when an accompanying myth or story of origin is related as well. Thus a name refers to a social segment, a part of a wider structure, which is geographically sited (sometimes
explicitly so) and to a stereotype which sums up what the users think about the people being identified. Those identified react accordingly, acknowledging and accepting favourable or neutral terms, such as those of place, and rejecting forcibly (sometimes accepting with resignation) names which insult or ridicule them.

It is therefore in the nature of this kind of social system that the names attributed will vary according to the position which the speaker and his own grouping occupy relative to those constituting other segments. They will also vary according to the structural level referred to, whether ethnic and inter-ethnic, a regional grouping, or that of local communities in a particular environment (as a river group) or identified by a culturally specific custom. The exact term used, in a particular set of relationships will therefore depend on where one is relative to the total system of segmentation within the knowledge of the individuals concerned.

Since it is impractical to list all the various references used to denote any particular unity (to say nothing of the variety of spellings to be generally agreed for each), it is expedient to use the autodenomination as the major reference. This will not be possible where the autodenomination remains unknown for those groups referred to in the literature but are no longer in existence. Nevertheless, when using a known autodenomination such as Pemon or Kapon, we should not forget the other names, — regional, environmental and cultural, or how they are attributed, by whom and to whom, in which circumstances and to what end. Nor should we ignore the sense which each different name and its interpretation conveys.

Taken all together, modes of naming are a rich source for the understanding of indigenous identities, structures and interrelationships, being an expression of total systems of relationships incorporating concepts of separation and of unity at different levels of corporate life. Extended to social entities across vast areas of Guiana in the past, names help us understand the indigenous present and will no doubt persist to underpin the structures and social life of the future.

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