

# An Amazonian Iroquois system: Enawene-Nawe kinship and alliance

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**ABSTRACT**

Iroquois kinship vocabularies are one of the most long-standing topics in social anthropology. This article resumes this long tradition. Based on first-hand ethnographic data, the text analyses the kinship classifications of the Enawene-Nawe, an Arawak-speaking people located in Meridional Amazonia. As is typical in such vocabularies, the Enawene-Nawe system does not express a prescriptive rule of marriage. Native discourse only formulates two interdictions: unions between people from the same clan and unions between kin with close genealogical ties. On the other hand, the Enawene-Nawe indicate a virtuous formula of matrimonial alliance that manifests in concepts and practices: direct exchange between two families, without repetition in subsequent generations.

**KEYWORDS**

Kinship terminology, Iroquois systems, alliance schemes, Amerindian peoples, Enawene-Nawe.

**UM SISTEMA IROQUÊS AMAZÔNICO: PARENTESCO E ALIANÇA ENAWENE-NAWE**

**RESUMO** Vocabulários de parentesco iroqueses são um dos temas mais longevos da antropologia social. Este artigo retoma esta longa tradição. Baseado em dados etnográficos de primeira mão, o texto a seguir oferece uma análise das classificações de parentesco de um povo de língua aruaque da Amazônia meridional, os Enawene-Nawe. Como é típico desses vocabulários, o caso em questão não expressa uma regra prescritiva de casamento. O discurso nativo formula apenas duas interdições: uniões entre pessoas do mesmo clã e entre parentes genealogicamente próximos. Por outro lado, os Enawene-Nawe apontam uma fórmula virtuosa de união matrimonial que se manifesta nos planos dos conceitos e das práticas: a troca direta entre duas famílias, vedada a repetição nas gerações seguintes.

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE**

Vocabulário de Parentesco, sistemas iroqueses, regime de aliança, povos ameríndios, Enawene-Nawe

## THE PROBLEM

Iroquois vocabularies are one of the most long-standing topics in social anthropology.<sup>1</sup> Morgan first introduced these phenomena to the discipline's theoretical agenda in *Systems of Consanguinity and Affinity of the Human Family*, published in 1871, and they have remained a topic of considerable interest and debate ever since. However, the questions posed by these phenomena have an even longer history, as shown by Father Joseph-François Lafitau's careful description, published in 1724, in his work *Moeurs des Sauvages Américains, Comparées avec Moeurs des Premiers Temps* (vol. I: 552 ss.). In the first half of the twentieth century, authors like Kroeber (1909), Lowie (1928), Radcliffe-Brown (1941), Murdock (1949) and many others returned to the theme and, at the turn of the millennium, Coelho de Souza (1995), Viveiros de Castro (1996; 1998), Trautmann & Barnes (1998), Taylor (1998), Parkin (1998) and more recently Trautmann (2012) have revealed previously unexplored angles of these phenomena.

Morgan's pioneering model (1871) distinguishes two types of vocabularies: "descriptive systems," like those of the European tradition, and "classificatory systems", of which the Iroquois vocabularies provide exemplary cases. The mainstay of the former type of system, Morgan argues, is the distinction made between *linear* kin (parents, children, grandparents, grandchildren etc.) and *collateral* kin (uncles and aunts, nephews and nieces, cousins etc.). Classificatory systems, on the other hand, divide the universe of kin into two groups based on crossness (sexual identity or difference of the connecting relative(s)): *parallel kin* (siblings, father's brothers' children and mother's sisters' children, etc.) and *cross kin* (father's sister, mother's brother, as well as the children and grandchildren of these relatives, etc.).<sup>2</sup>

At the beginning of the twentieth century, Lowie (1928) subdivided Morgan's dichotomy into four types, based on the classification of kin in the first ascending generation (G+1), combining the principles of lineality and crossness, which may be either present (+) or absent (-) in each case:<sup>3</sup>

**Table 1:** From Morgan to Lowie.  
Source: Author (2021)

<i>Morgan 1871</i>	<i>Lowie 1928</i>	<i>Principles</i>
<b>Descriptive</b>	<b>Lineal</b> F ≠ FB = MB, M ≠ MZ = FZ	+ Lineality, - Crossness
	<b>Bifurcate Collateral</b> F ≠ FB ≠ MB, M ≠ MZ ≠ FZ	+ Lineality, + Crossness

**1** | Those interested in this lengthy history can find a panoramic account of its development in an earlier text published by the author (Silva, 2010).

**2** | Morgan (1871) provides a detailed list of properties distinguishing the two types. Here I select those that seem most important.

**3** | Here I adopt the standard notational system for genealogical positions: "father" F, "mother" M, "parents" P (or Pa), "brother" B, "sister" Z, "siblings" G (or Sb), "son" S, "daughter" D, "children" Ch, "husband" H, "wife" W, "spouse" Sp, "man" ♂, "woman" ♀, "same sex" =, "opposite sex" ≠, "elder" e, and "younger" y. Thus, for example, FBeS signifies "father's brother's elder son," FeBS "father's elder brother's son," Pa≠GCh "parents' cross-sex siblings' children" – that is, all first-degree cross cousins.

<b>Classificatory</b>	<b>Generational</b> F = FB = MB, M = MZ = FZ	- Lineality, - Crossness
	<b>Bifurcate Merging</b> F = FB ≠ MB, M = MZ ≠ FZ	- Lineality, + Crossness

In the mid-twentieth century, Murdock (1949: v223-4) returned to the problem, this time focusing attention on the classification of kin from Ego's generation (GO), assigning ethnic labels to each of the terminological types and expanding the set of bifurcate merging systems previously defined by Lowie (1928) into three subsets: Iroquois, Crow and Omaha, based on the classification of matrilineal and patrilineal cross cousins. In the Iroquois type, these kin are identical (FZCh = MBCh). The Crow and Omaha types distinguish (≠) these cross cousins through generational skewing, either identifying them with kin from the children's generation (G-1), or with kin from the parents' generation (G+1), as shown in the following table:

Table 2. From Lowie to Murdock  
Source: Author (2021)

<i>Lowie 1928</i>	<i>Murdock 1949</i>	<i>Principles</i>
<b>Lineal</b>	<b>Eskimo</b> B ≠ (MZCh = FBCh = MBCh = FZCh)	+ Lineality, - Crossness
<b>Bifurcate Collateral</b>	<b>Sudanese</b> B ≠ (MZCh = FBCh) ≠ (MBCh = FZCh)	+ Lineality, + Crossness
<b>Generational</b>	<b>Hawaiian</b> B = MZCh = FBCh = MBCh = FZCh	- Lineality, - Crossness
<b>Bifurcate Merging</b>	<b>Iroquois</b> (B = MZCh = FBCh) ≠ (MBCh = FZCh)	- Lineality, + Crossness
	<b>Crow</b> (B = MZCh = FBCh) ≠ MBCh ≠ FZCh FZD = FZ e/ou MBD = BD <b>Omaha</b> (B = MZCh = FBCh) ≠ MBCh ≠ FZCh FZD = ZD and/or MBD = MZ	

Lounsbury (1964) subsequently drew attention to an important nuance in the class of isogenerational bifurcate merging systems, until then generically denominated Iroquois (B = MZCh = FBCh) ≠ (MBCh = FZCh), a feature not explored by Lowie and Murdock, though it had already been pointed out by Morgan (1871: 391, 486).<sup>4</sup> This nuance is manifested precisely in the calculation of Iroquois and Dravidian crossness

4 | On the distinction between Dravidian (Tamil-India) and Iroquois (Seneca-North America), Morgan 1871 states the following: "It is a little singular that the children of my male cousin, *Ego* a male, should be my nephews and nieces, instead of my sons

of more distant kin, such as the children of cross cousins, for example. We can summarize the contribution of Lounsbury (1964) as follows: all bifurcate merging systems correspond to classificatory structures defined by a set of traits [-Lineality, +Crossness]. This set generates rules equating same-sex siblings:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{♂B...} \rightarrow \text{♂...} &\equiv \text{...♂B} \rightarrow \text{...♂} \\ \text{♀Z...} \rightarrow \text{♀...} &\equiv \text{...♀Z} \rightarrow \text{...♀}^5 \end{aligned}$$

These rules stipulate that a person's same-sex siblings (♂B..., ♀Z...), taken as connecting relatives or as Alter, are equivalent (→) to the person, as connecting relatives (♂..., ♀...); reciprocally (≡), same-sex siblings of the connecting relative (...♂B, ...♀Z) are equivalent (→) to these connecting relatives (...♂, ...♀).

In addition to these rules, common to all bifurcate merging systems, Dravidian systems incorporate something else: a positive rule of marriage between bilateral cross cousins. In sum, Dravidian and Iroquois systems share a common characteristic since they are structured by a principle that renders same-sex siblings identical for the purposes of kinship calculation. But a fundamental difference also exists between them. Only the Dravidian systems identify cross kin (uncles/aunts, cousins and nephews/nieces) with affinal kin (parents-in-law, spouses, siblings-in-law, children-in-law). Meanwhile, Iroquois regimes systematically distinguish these two series of kin (MB ≠ SpF, FZ ≠ SpM etc.). As Lounsbury (1964) explains, this difference has important classificatory consequences. The table below summarizes the Dravidian/Iroquois distinction (P “parallel” X “cross” = “same sex” ≠ “opposite sex”). Thus, for example, in Dravidian systems, the children of a same-sex parallel relative are parallel kin, and so on.

Table 3. Dravidian and Iroquois.  
Source: Author (2021)

Dravidian				Iroquois					
Generation +1	P=	P≠	X=	X≠	Generation+1	P=	P≠	X=	X≠
Generation O	P	X	X	P	Generation O	P	X	P	X

We observe that, in the Dravidian calculation, the two variables – degree of crossness (P, X) and sex of the connecting relative (= ≠) – are taken into consideration in determining the degree of crossness of kin in the next generation. In the Iroquois calculation, however, only the sex of the connecting relative is taken into account. The degree of crossness is irrelevant. Thus, in Iroquois systems the children of same-sex cross cousins are equivalent to Ego's children and to the children of same-sex siblings, while the children of opposite-sex cross cousins are equivalent to the children of

and daughters, and that the children of my female cousins should be my sons and daughters instead of my nephews and nieces, as required by the analogies of the system. It is the only particular in which it [the Dravidian system] differs materially from the Seneca-Iroquois form; and in this the Seneca is more in logical accordance with the principles of the system than the Tamilian. It is difficult to find any explanation of the variance" (Morgan, 1871: 391). However, Morgan does not give up. In the conclusion of his book, he outlines a sociological interpretation of the variance: "Unless I *cohabit* with all my female cousins, and am excluded from *cohabitation* with the wives of all my male cousins, these relationships cannot be explained from the nature of descents. In the Ganowanian [Iroquois] family this classification is reversed..." (Morgan, 1871: 486, my emphasis). *Cohabitation*, of course, means *marriage* or *possible marriage*. In sum, Iroquois and Dravidian systems are basically identical [-Lineality, + Crossness (MBC = FZCh)]. But, for Morgan, the Dravidian type has something extra: the rule of cousin *cohabitation*.

5 | The notational conventions used in this text were proposed by Lounsbury (1964). The presence or absence of the ellipsis “...” is essential to the formulization of the rules. Thus, for example, “♂B” signifies “brother (of a man) taken as linking kin or as Alter (designated kin)”; “♂B...” signifies “brother (of a man) as linking kin” and “...♂B” signifies “a brother of a linking kin (of a man) as linking kin or as Alter.”

opposite-sex siblings.

Before proceeding, it should be emphasized that while Iroquois and Dravidian systems are distinct at the level of the model, this does not preclude them from alternating in the same ethnographic landscape. Indeed, this alternation occurs in North America among the Ojibwa (Hallowell, 1937), for example, and in South America among the Jivaro-Candoshi (Taylor, 1998) and the peoples of the Upper Xingu (Coelho de Souza, 1995).

Trautmann and Barnes (1998) identify four variants in the Iroquois set, based on the way in which the crossness calculation is manifested in the designation of kin in the medial generations (+1, 0 and -1). These variants are: (1) crossness fully maintained in Generations +1, 0 and -1, as among the Dakota; (2) crossness partially lost in Generations +1 and -1, as among the Delaware; (3) crossness fully lost in Generation 0, as among the Cheyenne; and (4) crossness partially lost in Generations +1 and -1 and fully lost in Generation 0, as among the Munsee.

Faced with the Iroquois variants identified by Trautmann and Barnes (1998), it may initially appear that variant 1 comprises the Iroquois “canonical form,” given that only in this case the principle of crossness – the mainstay of the Iroquois calculation – is expressed in the three medial generations. The other three variants may seem to comprise incomplete manifestations of this terminological type. However, recent arguments of Trautmann (2012: 40-1) dispel this initial impression. As the author shows, the neutralization of the cross/parallel opposition corresponds to a structural phenomenon operative in all Iroquois systems. In variant 1, this affects only the connecting relatives, since the parallel/cross distinction is manifested fully in the set of designated relatives (Alter). Meanwhile, in variant 3, its application is generalized, affecting not just the connecting relatives but also the designated relatives.

In addition to this, the author suggests that the neutralization of the parallel/cross opposition may correspond to an attribute of the Iroquois systems that occupies the place of the cousin marriage rule characteristic of the Dravidian systems. They can be seen, therefore, as equipollent principles located on the same analytic level. Here we reach the current state of the classification:

<b>Dravidian</b>	→	same-sex sibling equation rule	+	positive bilateral cross-cousin marriage rule
<b>Iroquois</b>	→	same-sex sibling equation rule	+	parallel/cross neutralization rule

Trautmann (2012) also highlights the fact that the neutralization of the parallel/cross opposition in the Iroquois systems is never absolute. Its application is always limited to certain genealogical contexts, affecting specific regions of the structure. We should, therefore, avoid muddling the classificatory labels, confusing these manifestations with those baptized as “Hawaiian” by Murdock (1949) or “generational” by Lowie (1928), in which the parallel/cross opposition is entirely non-existent. Hence, notions

such as “Hawaiianization”, “Hawaiian drift” and so on, often used to refer to this structural aspect of the Iroquois vocabularies, are deceptive.

## THE ENAWENE-NAWE CASE

The Enawene-Nawe kinship vocabulary combines two terminological subsets, one composed of 25 synthetic terms and the other composed of 10 analytic terms. The first subset allows us to identify the Enawene case with the classificatory systems of Morgan (1871), the bifurcate merging systems of Lowie (1928) and the Iroquois system of Murdock (1949) and Lounsbury (1964). Its most salient features are as follows:

In the 1<sup>st</sup> ascending generation: F = FB ≠ MB; M = MZ ≠ FZ

In ♀ Ego's generation: B = FBS = MZS = FZS = MBS; Z = FBD = MZD = FZD = MBD

In ♂ Ego's generation: B = FBS = MZS ≠ FZS = MBS; Z = FBD = MZD = FZD = MBD

In the 1<sup>st</sup> descending generation: S, D = ♂BCh, ♂FBSCh, ♂FZSCh, ♂MZSCh, ♂MBSCh, ♀ZCh, ♀FBDCh, ♀FZDCh, ♀MZDCh, ♀MBDCh

More precisely, the Enawene-Nawe case is identified with *type-B* crossness (Trautmann & Barnes, 1998) with different *variants* according to sex. For female Ego, the system corresponds to what the authors define as *variant 3*, with crossness fully lost in generation 0 but maintained in generations +1 and -1. For male Ego, however, this is true only in relation to opposite-sex kin, since a man's female cross cousins are classified in the same manner as his parallel cousins and sisters. Meanwhile, for same-sex kin, the system operates as *variant 1*, maintaining crossness in the three medial generations (+1, 0 and -1). The table below presents the Enawene-Nawe reference vocabulary, shown in the first person singular:

**Table 4.** Synthetic terms.  
Source: Author (2021)

### A. Synthetic Terms (reference vocabulary)

- |                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| (1) <i>ato-re</i>  | FF, MF, etc. (any male kin, generation +2 and above)   |
| (2) <i>ahi-ro</i>  | FM, MM, etc. (any female kin, generation +2 and above) |
| (3) <i>haha-re</i> | F, FB, etc. (any parallel male kin, generation +1)     |
| (4) <i>mama-lo</i> | M, MZ, etc. (any parallel female kin, generation +1)   |
| (5) <i>koko-re</i> | MB, FWB, etc. (any cross male kin, generation +1)      |
| (6) <i>keke-ro</i> | FZ, MHZ, etc. (any cross female kin, generation +1)    |

(7) <i>yaya-re</i>	eB, eMZS, eFBS, etc. (any parallel kin, generation 0, elder) eMBS♀, eFZS♀, etc. (any cross kin, generation 0, elder, for female Ego)
(8) <i>yaya-lo</i>	eZ, eMZD, eFBD, etc. (any parallel kin, generation 0, elder) eMBD♀, eFZD♀, etc. (any cross kin, generation 0, elder, for female Ego)
(9) <i>yowa-re</i>	yB, yMZS, yFBS, etc. (any parallel kin, generation 0, younger) yMBS♀, yFZS♀, etc. (any cross kin, generation 0, younger, for female Ego)
(10) <i>yowa-lo</i>	yZ, yMZD, yFBD, etc. (any parallel kin, generation 0, younger) yMBD♀, yFZD♀, etc. (any cross kin, generation 0, older, for female Ego)
(11) <i>noheroĩ</i>	MBS♂, FZS♂, etc. (any cross kin from generation 0, for male Ego)
(12) <i>hanuĩ</i>	Fiancés (promised in marriage)
(13) <i>nerani</i>	H♀, HB♀, ZH♀, etc. (husband, brother-in-law, for female Ego)
(14) <i>neraneto</i>	W♂, WZ♂, BW♂, etc. (wife, sister-in-law, for male Ego)
(15) <i>nowato-re</i>	ZH♂, WB♂, etc. (brother-in-law, for male Ego)
(16) <i>nowato-lo</i>	BW♀, HZ♀, etc. (brother-in-law, for female Ego)
(17) <i>nonatonawene</i>	ChSpF (co-father-in-law)
(18) <i>nonatonawene-ro</i>	ChSpM (co-mother-in-law)
(19) <i>netai</i>	S, D, BCh♂, FBCh♂, FZSCh♂, MZSCh♂, MBCh♂, etc., ZCh♀, FBCh♀, FZDCh♀, MZDCh♀, MBDCh♀, etc.
(20) <i>nodai-se</i>	ZS♂, FBDS♂, FZDS♂, MZDS♂, MBDS♂, etc.
(21) <i>nodai-xo</i>	ZD♂, FBDD♂, FZDD♂, MZDD♂, MBDD♂, etc.
(22) <i>tawi-hi</i>	BS♀, FBSS♀, FZSS♀, MZSS♀, MBSS♀, etc.
(23) <i>tawi-ro</i>	BD♀, FBSD♀, FZSD♀, MZSD♀, MBSD♀, etc.
(24) <i>noxi-wete</i>	SS, DS, etc. (any male kin, generation -2 and below)
(25) <i>noxi-weto</i>	SD, DD, etc. (any female kin, generation -2 and below)

Before examining the analytic terms, we should note the occurrence of allomorphs among the referential and vocative series, as well as within the referential series itself, with the pronominal variation. Thus, for example, the referential term, common to both sexes, for “my son” or “my daughter,” is *netai* (19) but its vocative correspondents are the male form *hare*, “son,” and the female form *malo*, “daughter.” Meanwhile, “my maternal uncle” is *koko-re* (5), but “his maternal uncle” is *ekokwe*, as in the expression *netai-ekokwe* “maternal uncle’s child.” The table below lists some of the most salient allomorphs.

**Table 5.** Allomorphs.  
Source: Author (2021)

Vocative	Referential (first person)	Referential (third person)
(1) <i>ato</i>	<i>ato-re</i>	<i>enatokwe</i>
(2) <i>ahi</i>	<i>ahi-ro</i>	<i>enaserõ</i>
(5) <i>koko</i>	<i>koko-re</i>	<i>enekokwe</i>
(6) <i>keke</i>	<i>keke-ro</i>	<i>enakero</i>
(7, 8) <i>yaya</i>	<i>yaya-re</i>	<i>enaninani</i>
	<i>yaya-lo</i>	<i>enahalo</i>
(9, 10) <i>yowa</i>	<i>yowa-re</i>	<i>ediñoarene</i>
	<i>yowa-lo</i>	<i>ediñoalone</i>
(14) <i>ene</i>	<i>nerani</i>	
(19) <i>hare</i>	<i>netai</i>	
(19) <i>malo</i>	<i>netai</i>	

It should also be noted that in everyday speech, the reference vocabulary may be accompanied by the modifiers *kaxata* and *kixixi*, “very” and “little” respectively, indicating the person's genealogical proximity or distance. Thus, the relation with someone classified as *yowa-re* (9), “younger brother,” can be qualified as *kaxata yowa* or *kixixi yowa*, when, for example, the speaker wishes to distinguish a yB from a yMMZDS. Genealogical distinctions of this type may also be accompanied by supplementary genealogical information, such as *hatuita heto*, “same mother,” *hatalota heto*, “other mother,” and so on.

The method of classification of first-generation descending kin is what allows an Iroquois system to be differentiated from other bifurcate merging systems (Lounsbury, 1964). In the case in question, we observe that, for both sexes, the children of same-sex cross cousins are classified in the same manner as Ego's children (19) and the children of opposite-sex cross cousins in the same form as the children of an opposite-sex sibling (20, 21, 22, 23).

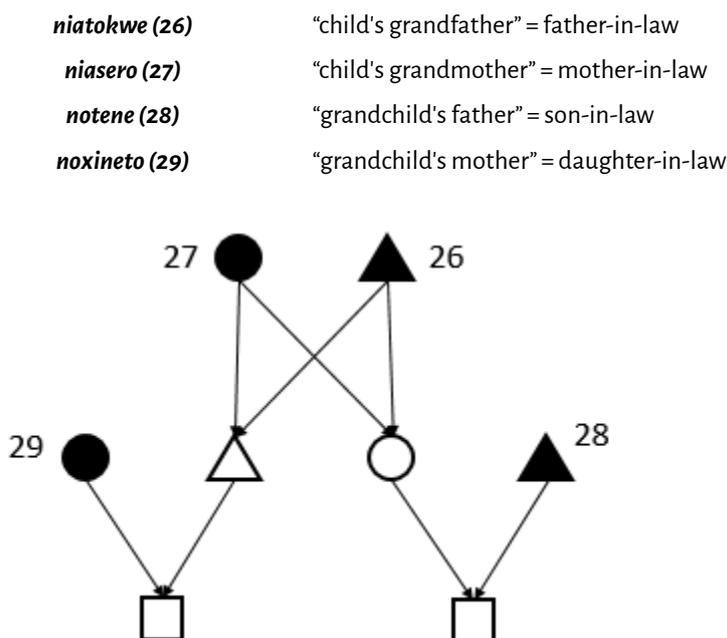
Finally, we should mention the terms directly involved in marriage: *hanuĩ* (12), fiancés, promised in marriage, of both sexes; *nerani* (13), husband; *neranetõ* (14), wife; *nowatore* (15), brother-in-law; and *nowatolo* (16), sister-in-law, the two latter terms used only among relatives of the same sex. The terms for husband and wife also cover the positions of an opposite-sex sibling-in-law. Finally, the system defines the terms *natunawene* (17) and *naturawenerõ* (18), co-father-in-law and co-mother-in-law, who, according to the native model, are the agents of matrimonial exchange. We can translate these positions as “contractual affines,” that is, those who negotiate the marriage of their children. In other words, what the Lévi-Straussian theory denominates “sister exchange”, the Enawene-Nawe model defines as “children exchange”.

## B. Analytic Terms

The analytic terms (or “descriptive” terms, Morgan would say) of the Enawene-Nawe system are all teknonyms focused on the sphere of affinity and are essentially organised into three subsets:

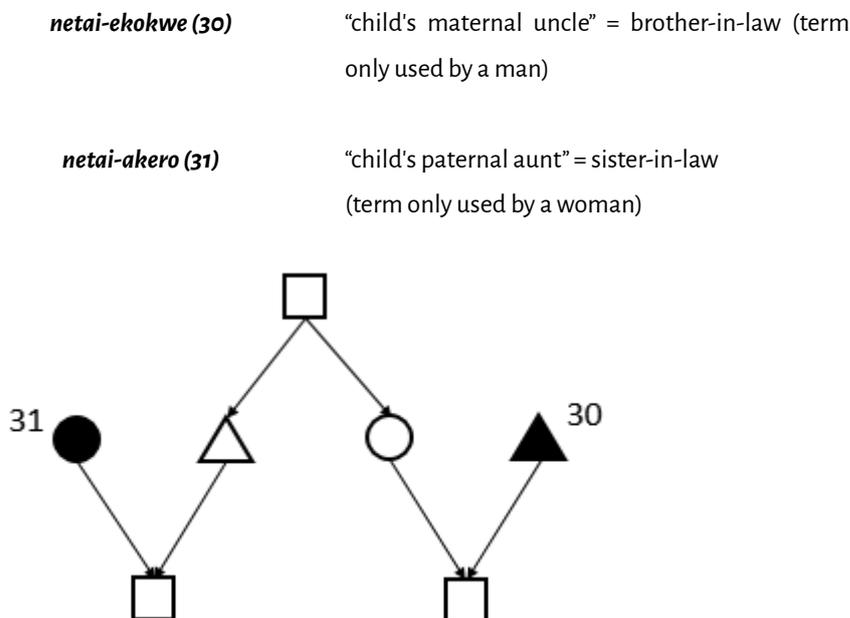
One of these subsets encompasses expressions that terminologically transform a relation of affinity into a double relation of consanguinity. This corresponds to a terminological phenomenon relatively widespread in South America and which has been interpreted as a mechanism for masking affinity. Thus, for example, “*father-in-law*” is denominated “*child's grandfather*,” “*son-in-law*” is “*grandchild's father*” and so on. As would be expected, a father (3) cannot be denominated in this way, although he may also be a child's grandfather. In the same way, a son (19) is never called “*grandchild's father*.” These teknonyms are:

**Figure 1.** Affines as consanguines of consanguines.  
Source: Author's elaboration (2021)



There are also expressions that transform an immediate affine, like a brother-in-law (15), into a genealogical affine, “*child's maternal uncle*”, and so on. Expressions (30) and (31) are equivalent to the terms *nowatore* (15), brother-in-law, and *nowatolo* (16), sister-in-law, mentioned above. Or *almost* equivalent, since (15) and (16) do not distinguish giving and receiving siblings-in-law. Meanwhile, teknonyms (30) and (31) describe only the positions of spouse-givers.

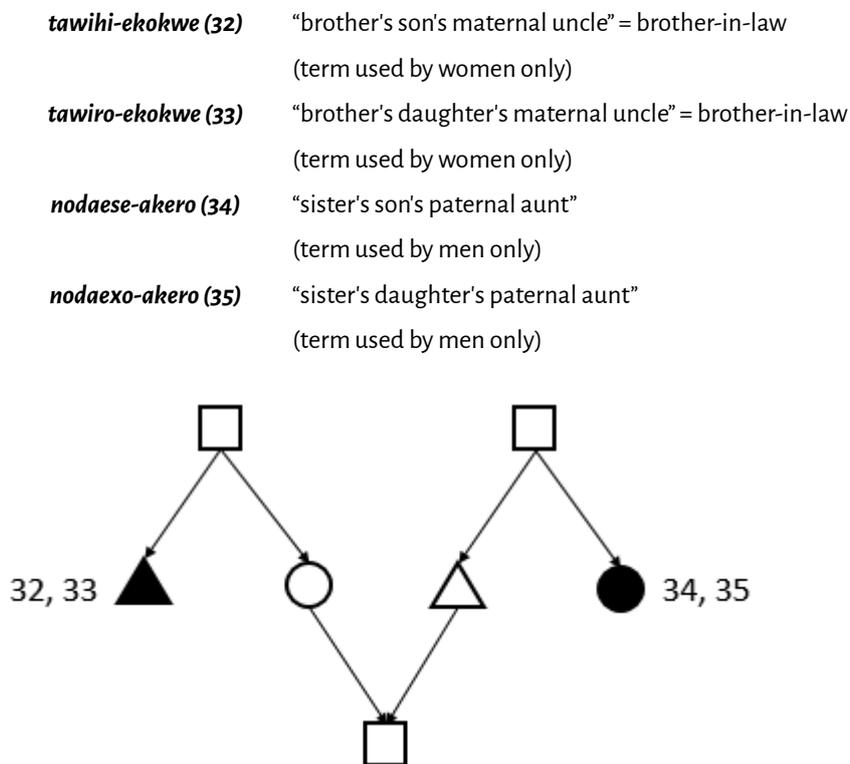
**Figure 2.** Immediate affines as cross relatives (genealogical affines) of consanguineal kin.  
Source: Author's elaboration (2021)



The third subset of analytic terms reveals a sinuous and somewhat rare classificatory method, as far as I know. As seen above, a woman's brothers-in-law, just like a man's sisters-in-law, are classified in the same way as their husbands and wives: *neranetō* (14) and *nerani* (13), respectively. According to the Enawene-Nawe, however, referring to these relatives directly in this way can be embarrassing. In the Enawene terminology, two pairs of teknonyms are offered as alternatives: instead of immediate opposite-sex affines, these relatives are terminologically transformed into genealogical affines of genealogical affines: "brother's child's maternal uncle", *tawiyi(ro)-ekokwe* (32, 33), and "sister's child's paternal aunt", *nodaese(xo)-akerō* (34, 35). As can be observed, these classifications only make sense when used among people of the opposite sex. Among people of the same sex, these teknonyms describe paradoxical situations since, for a man, the maternal uncle of his sister's children may be himself. The same applies to the paternal aunt of a woman's brother's daughters.

This latter subset of teknonyms reveals a fundamental aspect of the Enawene-Nawe kinship system. In an alliance regime organised by symmetrical exchange, the maternal uncle of a woman's brother's children tends to be the brother's wife's brother – or, in other words, he corresponds to a preferential spouse, just like a man's sister's children's paternal aunt, that is, the sister's husband's sister.

**Figure 3.** Immediate affines as genealogical affines of genealogical affines  
Source: Author's elaboration



These teknonyms can be interpreted as the transformation of a relation of immediate affinity into a conjugation of relations of genealogical affinity. In an Iroquois structure, featuring sister exchange and a preclusion of cousin marriage, as verified among the Enawene-Nawe, these two modalities of affinity (genealogical and immediate) do not comprise two sides of the same coin, in contrast to what Dumont (1975) identifies for Dravidian systems, since the mother’s brother is not a father-in-law, the brother-in-law is not a cross-cousin, and so on. Moreover, it should be emphasised that what the Lévi-Straussian kinship theory calls sister exchange – and what the Enawene-Nawe model conceives as the exchange of opposite-sex children – is not only a frequent practice but also a virtuous formula to which a native concept is dedicated: *emamanenase* (Silva, 2017).

By contrast, cross-cousin marriage, that is, the repetition of matrimonial exchange across consecutive generations, is explicitly avoided. Again it is worth emphasizing that opposite-sex cross cousins are identified with siblings. In sum, the series of teknonyms presented in Figures 1, 2 and 3 describes an operational device of marriage alliance *in Iroquois fashion*.

When a young couple becomes classified as “*fiancé/fiancée*” *hanuĩ* (12), their future parents-in-law – and this is a curious aspect – will classify them as *notene* (28) and *noxineto* (29), respectively, “*grandchild’s father and mother*,” well before the couple

has their first child. Reciprocally, the future parents-in-law will be classified by them as *niaserō* (27) “child’s grandmother” and *niatokwe* (26), “child’s grandfather.” Curiously, while these relations are terminologically anticipated – since, at this moment, the young couple is yet to have children and does not even live together – the relations between the co-parents-in-law (17, 18), parents of the future spouses, seem to await a more appropriate moment. People say that it is necessary to wait for the birth of the grandchildren for these relations to effectively exist. In sum, it is the birth of grandchildren that seems to marry the children from the perspective of the exchanging agents (contractual affines), the *fiancés’/fiancées’* parents. Before proceeding, it will be useful to organise the data presented so far into schemas that enable a global apprehension of the terminological structure and facilitate comparison of the case in question:

### Consanguinity

Table 6a: Conceptual Structure of Enawene-Nawe kinship **Male Ego**  
Source: Author (2021)

Generation	Man		Woman	
	Cross	Parallel		Cross
<b>G+2</b>	<b>Atore</b>		<b>Ahiro</b>	
<b>G+1</b>	<b>Kokore</b>	<b>Hahare</b>	<b>Mamalo</b>	<b>Kekero</b>
<b>G0</b>	<b>Noheroĩ</b>	<b>Yayare&gt; Yoware&lt;</b>	<b>Yayalo&gt; Yowalo&lt;</b>	
<b>G-1</b>	<b>Nodaise</b>	<b>Etaĩ</b>		<b>Nodaixo</b>
<b>G-2</b>	<b>Noxiwete</b>		<b>Noxiwetõ</b>	

Table 6b: Conceptual structure of Enawene-Nawe kinship **Female Ego**  
Source: Author (2021)

Generation	Man		Woman	
	Cross	Parallel		Cross
<b>G+2</b>	<b>Atore</b>		<b>Ahiro</b>	
<b>G+1</b>	<b>Kokore</b>	<b>Hahare</b>	<b>Mamalo</b>	<b>Kekero</b>
<b>G0</b>	<b>Yayare&gt; Yoware&lt;</b>		<b>Yayalo&gt; Yowalo&lt;</b>	
<b>G-1</b>	<b>Tawihĩ</b>	<b>Etaĩ</b>		<b>Tawiro</b>
<b>G-2</b>	<b>Noxiwete</b>		<b>Noxiwetõ</b>	

### Affinity

**Table 7.** Conceptual structure of Enawene-Nawe kinship  
Source: Author (2021)

<i>Male Ego</i>			<i>Female Ego</i>		
<i>Generation</i>			<i>Generation</i>		
	<i>Man</i>	<i>Woman</i>		<i>Man</i>	<i>Woman</i>
<b>G+1</b>	<b>Niatokwe</b> “father-in-law”	<b>Niaserô</b> “mother-in-law”	<b>G+1</b>	<b>Niatokwe</b> “father-in-law”	<b>Niaserô</b> “mother-in-law”
	<b>Hanuĩ</b> “fiancés”			<b>Hanuĩ</b> “fiancées”	
	<b>Natonawene</b> “co-father-in-law”	<b>Natonawenerô</b> “co-mother-in-law”		<b>Natonawene</b> “co-father-in-law”	<b>Natonawenerô</b> “co-mother-in-law”
	<b>Nowatore</b> “brother-in-law”	<b>Nerametô</b> “wife, sister-in-law”		<b>Nerani</b> “husband, brother-in-law”	<b>Nowatolo</b> “sister-in-law”
		<b>Netaĩ-akerô</b> “son’s paternal aunt, sister-in-law”		<b>Netaĩ-ekokwe</b> “son’s maternal uncle, brother-in-law”	
<b>Go</b>		<b>Nodaese-akerô</b> “sister’s son’s paternal aunt, sister-in-law”	<b>Go</b>	<b>Tawihi-ekokwe</b> “brother’s son’s maternal uncle, brother-in-law”	
		<b>Nodaexo-akerô</b> “sister’s daughter’s paternal aunt, sister-in-law”		<b>Tawiro-ekokwe</b> “brother’s daughter’s maternal uncle, brother-in-law”	
<b>G-1</b>	<b>Notene</b> “grandchild’s father”	<b>Noxinetô</b> “grandchild’s mother”	<b>G-1</b>	<b>Notene</b> “grandchild’s father”	<b>Noxinetô</b> “grandchild’s mother”

### AN IROQUOIS ALLIANCE REGIME

A kinship vocabulary, by definition, “acts as operating agent to a system of matrimonial exchanges within the community” (Lévi-Strauss, 1966: 14). Its function

“is to generate marriage possibilities or impossibilities” (ibid). As emphasized earlier, this aspect is manifested transparently in Dravidian vocabularies since these systems identify cross kin with affines and classify the children of opposite-sex cross cousins as their own children. As we have known for a long time, such characteristics are absent in Iroquois vocabularies. This being the case, how can we approach these vocabularies, in the same sense, as operators of matrimonial exchange structures?

We may recall that among the Enawene-Nawe, opposite-sex cross cousins are identical to opposite-sex siblings and parallel cousins, just as the children of same-sex cross cousins are in relation to one's own children (Tables 6a, 6b). We can also recall that the case in question defines a specific set of descriptive terms for relations of affinity (Table 7), which are distinguished from the terms for cross kin (Tables 6a, 6b).

The Enawene-Nawe emphasize the reiteration of the matrimonial exchange of children, effected between two couples, as the ideal marriage formula, the only one to which they dedicate a native concept (*emamanenase*). A marriage not only produces a new family, it also allies two pairs of co-parents-in-law and generates an expectation of the alliance's reiteration – or, to employ the native terminology, an expectation of the production of new marriages between those who, thanks to the first matrimonial exchange, become “maternal uncles or paternal aunts of nephews and nieces” (Figure 3). What cannot happen, the Enawene-Nawe warn – and, indeed, does not happen – is the repetition of this formula in subsequent generations, involving the same partner families.

This aspect allows us to return to the model of Iroquois alliance tentatively formulated by Viveiros de Castro (1996: 51-5). As the author suggests, second-degree cross cousins, ♂MMBSD, ♂FFZDD, ♂MFZSD and ♂FMBDD, may be theoretically marriable in a concentric regime of deferred symmetric exchange, composed by four groups – that is, an exchange regime effected in non-consecutive generations with intervals of two generations. While the Enawene-Nawe data do not confirm these matrimonial possibilities, it is worth adding that, in the *corpus* of data that I collected, which documents one hundred and seventy marriages, only eight unions involving consanguine relatives occur. Five of these describe unions between third-degree cross cousins, according to the Iroquois calculus: three marriages with ♂MMFBDSD and two with ♂FMFBDDD, which may suggest an exchange formula manifested in intervals of three generations.

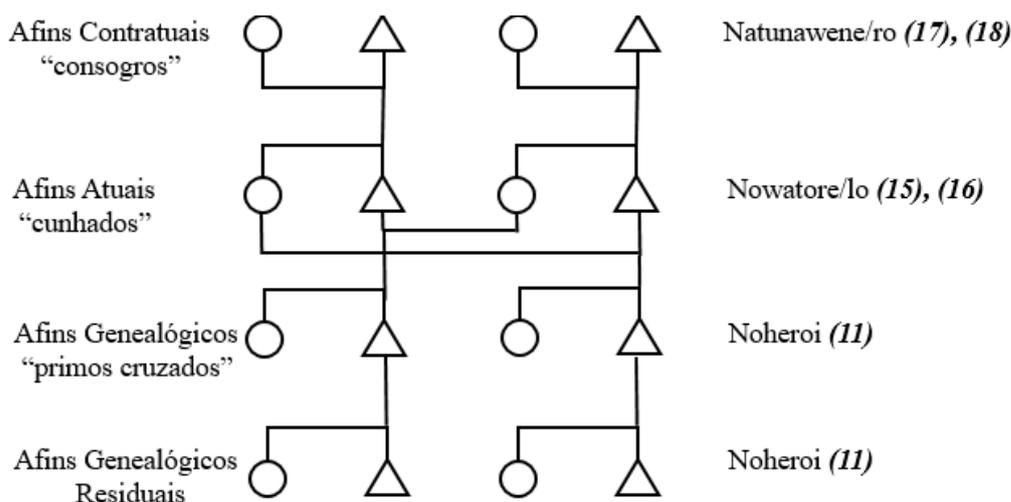
In any case, it should be emphasized that Viveiros de Castro's hypothesis (1996) converges with the ethnographic data presented here, insofar as the evidence gravitates towards “sister exchange” as a basic conceptual model.

In an article on the kinship systems of modern communities of the Central Andes, Earls (1971) describes an alliance regime that shares some interesting aspects with the Enawene-Nawe case. According to Earls, the *Vicosinos* cannot repeat the father's marriage; they also practice the preferential exchange of sisters. For the Andean case,

Earls suggests a model of alliance with four groups and consanguineal closures every five generations. This conjecture, later explored by H eritier (1981: 145), coincides with another hypothetical model – this time, native – which an Enawene man once tried to explain to me in an interview. Unfortunately, the genealogical data that I collected does not allow the empirical reality of this ingenious model to be confirmed.

Curiously, this hypothetical native model echoes the proposal elaborated by Gell (1975) for the Umeda of New Guinea. There too a semi-complex regime coexists with the exchange of sisters that is not repeated in subsequent generations. Broadly speaking, over the generations, the Umeda system transforms immediate allies into genealogical allies, genealogical allies into residual allies, residual allies into marriable people and, closing the circuit, marriable people into immediate allies. The adaptation of this schema in the South American landscape may require some adjustments: in the Enawene-Nawe case, we begin with a pair of couples who, after successful negotiations, treat each other as co-parents-in-law, contractual affines. In the layer below them are the actual (immediate) affines, who are the spouses and siblings-in-law. In the next layer, the genealogical affines, first-degree cross cousins, and, finally, the residual genealogical affines, second-degree cross cousins, who are related via a common great-grandparent.

**Figure 4.** A native model of matrimonial circulation  
Source: Author's elaboration (2021)



According to my interlocutor – and this is the key point – residual genealogical affines may arrange the marriage of their children. If the arrangement prospers, these residual affines become contractual affines. It must be stressed, however, that I lack the empirical data to confirm the matrimonial closure of this model in intervals of

three generations. Tentatively, though, a hypothesis may be advanced: the common ancestors of these residual affines would certainly be dead and, consequently, should be forgotten, along with the relations that they maintained with each other. If such is the case, the closure of the cycle may indeed occur.

Thesetofargumentsabovecanbesummarizedasfollows:IroquoisandDravidian systems share a rule of equation of same-sex siblings, which produces the distinction between parallel and cross cousins. This is the *basis* of the opposition between the two terminological types. Only Dravidian systems operate a positive rule of cross-cousin marriage. On the other hand, Iroquois systems operate a rule of neutralization (partial, never absolute) of the parallel/cross distinction. This is the *principle* of the opposition. The Dravidian and Iroquois types do not define an exclusive opposition, based on the presence or absence of a positive rule of alliance, but an equipollent opposition: one of the poles occupied by the marriage of cousins (Dravidian), the other by the partial neutralization of crossness (Iroquois). The Enawene-Nawe “*rich variant*” (Taylor, 1998) articulates an elementary regime of *inclusive* restricted exchange (Viveiros de Castro, 1998) that operates on the horizon of a complex structure, which defines only matrimonial prohibitions.

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