

# MARRIAGE AND INHERITANCE IN A MEDITERRANEAN FISHING COMMUNITY

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A virtual absence of cousin marriage appears in a small community of fishermen in eastern Spain in conjunction with a high percentage of intralocal marriage. In other areas of the Mediterranean where a similar percentage of intralocal marriage is observed, cousin marriage is relatively frequent. This is generally in contexts in which both sexes transmit and receive goods by inheritance and marriage. Two features would seem to offer an explanation for the local peculiarity: (1) renewal of links on the limit of kinship, which multiply the diversity of links and the persons with whom they are established; and (2) the effect of the system of inheritance of fishing rights on matrimonial strategy. A theoretical, statistical and probabilistic model is constructed as an attempt to discover the extent to which the inheritance of fishing rights affects the presence or absence of marriage between first cousins. The model does not reflect any empirical situation: it is simply an abstraction of general patterns. Computer simulation was used to exhaust the logical possibilities of the model, and to appreciate the character of relationship between inheritance and matrimonial strategies.

The aim of this article is to analyse the virtual absence of marriage between cousins in a small community of fisherfolk, in eastern Spain, which nonetheless has a high percentage of intralocal unions. In other areas of Spain and the Mediterranean where a similar percentage of intralocal marriage is observed, marriage between cousins is relatively frequent. This is generally in contexts in which both the man and the woman transmit and receive goods by inheritance and marriage. In such a situation, cousin marriage has been considered a favourable matrimonial strategy, since it avoids the dispersion of family assets and fortifies certain kinship groupings. The difference requires some explanation, since the area studied in this article is situated in a region in which the most widespread inheritance system involves an equal division between all children without distinction of sex. Two main features would seem to offer an explanation of the local peculiarity: first, the renewal of links on the limits of kinship, multiplying the diversity of links and persons with whom they are established; and second the effect of the system of inheritance of fishing rights on matrimonial strategy. Obviously, the specific nature of the phenomenon depends on overall historical and structural conditioning factors. The present study merely attempts to discover the extent to which the inheritance of fishing rights affects the presence or absence of marriage between first cousins. Thus its objective is limited to an analysis of the effect of a single variable on another, within the general framework of contextual conditions.

A model is constructed to approach the problem. The model is theoretical,

statistical and probabilistic, and is simplified (one set of possibilities in its permutations is represented graphically so as to facilitate understanding), with the intention of reflecting not all the real conditioning factors affecting marriage but rather the minimum of general conditions expressed by the structure of matrimonial unions, taking account of the statistical frequency of the behaviour analysed and inheritance rules prevailing in the community. It does not therefore reflect any empirical situation: it is simply an abstraction of general patterns. Furthermore, no attempt is made to predict conduct, but rather by use of computer simulation to reproduce artificially all the possible combinations compatible with the general conditions of the model, so as to exhaust its logical possibilities and, on the basis of a simple final quantification, to appreciate the character or type of relationship between inheritance and matrimonial strategies.

The community is situated on a small island in the lake of La Albufera, near Valencia (Spain). The inhabitants live mainly from fishing in the lake (eels, labrax and such) during autumn and winter, and from the cultivation of rice and vegetables during spring and summer<sup>1</sup>. This means that they fish for half the year, and cultivate the land for the other half. The cycle of fish migration and that of rice growth follow each other with almost mathematical precision in this area.

The cultivated lands are the result of artificial reclamation at the margins of the lake. They were created at the beginning of the century by people transporting mud and sludge from the channels that drained into the lake to the shore areas to be reclaimed. Moved by demographic pressure, a desire to improve the health of the environment and to prevent the expansion of landowners from other villages, fathers and sons united their efforts in the long, hard task of converting the swampy, reed-covered shores into promising rice fields. Those who had no sons were obliged to contract others to create their own fields, or else had to renounce the land. This gave rise to the local saying, 'Every father who has a son has a field; he who has daughters has nothing'.

Preference for sons is also shown in cases of adoption, in their designation as heirs to fishing rights, and in the fact that they are selected to live with and look after their parents until the end of their lives. It is the sons who fish and till the land, and it is also they who discuss and agree on solutions in the autonomous settlement of both internal and external public affairs, without reference to the administrative organisation of the state.

Both resources, fishing areas and land, and more specifically the exclusive fishing technique of the most productive zone of the lake, are the result of a long and continued competitive struggle (that still continues in many senses) against the pretensions of neighbouring localities, landowners in the nearby city, and different communities of fishermen. They have also meant negotiations or protests, petitions to the authorities or the non-payment of taxes, in opposition to the political authority which owns title to the waters of the lake. Local history is full of lawsuits, affrays and little battles settled with a few blows in the middle of the lake. The need to ensure utilisation of resources and ensure work has led to the creation of a solid collective organisation, the antecedents of which go back to the thirteenth century.

This organisation is nowadays embodied in the 'Community of Fishermen of El Palmar', to which only Fishermen's sons may belong. They may join from the age of twenty-four years onwards, or before if they are married. To join they have to pay a fee and demonstrate that they possess the fishing tackle necessary to practise this activity (a boat and different quantities of various nets). The father of the new member provides the fee and the cost of acquiring the tackle, unless the candidate inherits the *redolí* of one of his grandfathers. *Redolí* in this context means the boat, nets, joining fee and distinctive sign of each fisherman, to which has to be added or subtracted a positive or negative balance corresponding to the grandfather's position in relation to the Community of Fishermen. Thus, any son of a fisherman can, if he so wishes, join the Community, though some on joining cause a series of costs to their fathers (informants state that to obtain the sum of money to pay the entry fee they found themselves 'up to their necks'), while those who inherit a *redolí* join at no cost, unless any debts are outstanding. Once members are admitted, they all have the same rights and duties, and the same right to speak and vote at meetings.

Not all families in the village are of fisherfolk, but the vast majority are. In practice the communal institution of the fishermen has permanently fulfilled the functions of a town council, professional guild, religious brotherhood and court of justice, based on rules approved by a majority of votes, and managed by a committee elected in the same manner. At the end of the last century and throughout the present one it is this committee that has represented the fishermen in negotiation for legal authorisations to reclaim part of the lake. Once necessary permission was obtained, the Community of Fishermen itself assigned a portion by lot to each member. Then each member with his sons proceeded to reclaim and materially create the land. The way in which the fields were created and their slight difference of level in relation to the lake, with no individual access channel for irrigation, allow easy irrigation by means of flooding, by closing the channels draining the lake into the sea and allowing the waters of the lake to overflow. This has led to the creation of groupings of farmers to coordinate irrigation, and administer the waters while covering the cost of maintaining pumps and equipment.

The need to irrigate or drain the waters from the fields at the same time, together with the irregular rainfall of the area (Burriel 1971), make it essential to sow, transplant, weed and irrigate the rice very quickly, within the brief periods set by the local ecology. For this purpose men resort to team work and to employing those with smaller areas of land, while larger landowners employ outsiders who come to the area during the appropriate periods to earn a wage.

Fishing also requires team work and co-operation, but no workers are taken on. The most profitable types of fishing require the co-operation of several fishermen. Fishing from fixed points along the channels or near the points where the lake drains into the sea can be the work of from two to a hundred men, according to the site. The number taking part is decided by an annual agreement of the Community, and the assignment of posts is by lots drawn each year before the beginning of the season. Other types of collective fishing require the formation of teams of from twenty to thirty men, two in each boat; here there is no employment of others nor drawing of lots, but a simple agreement between

all taking part. In both cases the results of fishing are divided equally among the participants.

The technical need to work together, their co-operation on a basis of equality, their democratic organisation and the equal distribution of profits leads people to idealise the egalitarian and communal nature of their historic institution. They affirm that, 'If there is anything that is a community in this world, I think that the Fishing Community of El Palmar is the most communist, the most *community*, that could exist, because in the Community of Fishermen of El Palmar nobody is considered superior to anyone else . . . at the time of the distribution everyone was equal'.

Behind the idealisation is a need to diversify relationships and to extend networks of personal links, so making it easier to reach agreements at the meetings of the Community of Fishermen, and guaranteeing a pool of potential loyalties on which to draw for help. The community aspect does not exclude but rather implies mutual dependence. Furthermore, though when each new area reclaimed from the lake is distributed equally by lot between the fishermen for cultivation, subsequent sales and hereditary transmission mean that the original equality is slowly altered.

### *Women and inheritance*

Tackle on the island remained almost unchanged until the early 1960's, something not unusual in small fishing communities (Jorion 1976: 4). However, in the sixties, nylon began to be introduced for the nets. Formerly, nets used to break before the end of the season due to damp and to use. Making and mending the nets has been the traditional task of women on the island, while until the seventies the men were absent six days a week during the season fishing on the lake, sleeping on the small boats (without a keel and propelled by a pole) or in the shelters owned by the Community near the fixed fishing points, keeping an eye on the nocturnal movements of the fish. Since the introduction of nylon the work of the women has been reduced considerably but has not disappeared completely. This is because the size of the mesh and the shape and size of the nets do not always correspond to those offered in the external market, since they have to be in accordance with the decisions taken annually by the Community, aimed at standardising equipment because the fishing is a collective activity.

Apart from this, the house and children occupy most of the women's time. Occasionally they work at harvest, spreading the rice grains in the sun, harvesting the products of the smallholding, or selling in nearby markets (until the 1950's) the husband's share of the fish catch. Since then the Community as such has been responsible for marketing all fish. In the opinion of those questioned, it is dishonourable for a man without sons to have to demand a greater degree of co-operation from his wife and daughters on the land, in selling or other non-domestic activities. Fishing is an exclusively masculine activity. Not even a widow can fish for herself. As beneficiary of the usufruct of her late husband's *redolí*, she can only ask another fisherman, normally a close relative, to fish her husband's *redolí*, and they split the profits between them. This continues until the heir to the *redolí* attains an age to work it, that is, until he

meets the requirements to join the Community of Fishermen. Women never join the Community, but they can inherit a *redolí* in the absence of male heirs. In these cases a woman is recognised as heiress on the explicit condition that she cedes the *redolí* to her future husband, who must be the son of a fisherman and not yet have joined the Community; he cannot already own a *redolí* because it is only possible to own one *redolí*.

The preferential heir to a *redolí* is said to be the eldest grandson of the deceased owner. This is supported by the frequency of such devolutions registered in the Minutes Book of the Community of Fishermen. Whether or not a fisherman names an heir to his *redolí*, in most cases his eldest grandson finally receives it, as the son either of one of the fisherman's sons or of one of his daughters, though the heir must always himself be the son of a fisherman. This means that a *redolí* can be inherited from either a paternal or a maternal grandfather, as long as the grandson is the son of a fisherman. However, if the eldest grandson does not wait to receive his inheritance, and decides to join the Community on reaching twenty-four or on marrying, financed by his father, or even if he decides not to join, the second eldest grandson becomes the preferential heir. In other words, the order of birth is followed between brothers and paternal first cousins, with regard to the *redolí* of the paternal grandfather, and between them and their maternal first cousins in respect of the *redolí* of the maternal grandfather.

If one grandson is the eldest grandson of both grandfathers, as he cannot inherit both *redolins* he has to choose between them. Whatever his choice, it will benefit some and do harm to others in the order of birth with regard to the two grandfathers. His decision will always affect his brothers and either his paternal or maternal first cousins. The problem of choice also arises when, though a man is the eldest grandson of only one of his grandfathers, his wife contributes a *redolí*, or if a grandson inherits a *redolí* from a brother who has died without heirs, or from an uncle with no sons who names him heir. In all these situations the family council intervenes to ensure that the choice creates as few problems as possible between the families involved. This council consists of the parents of the deceased and the parents of the widow, if they are still living, and if they are not, their siblings. This same family council also acts when a fisherman dies without appointing an heir. In all cases, there is a fisherman who dies or retires, a young man who applies for the *redolí*, a family council that considers, weighs up and decides upon the application, and possibly a third party who will argue that he has more right to the *redolí* than the applicant, or that another decision would be more appropriate in view of the different family situations involved. A problem of choice can also arise if a fisherman dies with sons who qualify to join, but without any grandsons. Normally the widow will enjoy the usufruct of the *redolí* while she still supports children under legal age, but when this is no longer the case and the children have all formed their own families, this *redolí* can be added to those available at the moment of choice. In any case, in the discussion of the inheritance, the reciprocal roles of the actors to one another within the youngest generation involved are those of brothers or first cousins, in the first ascending generation those of brothers-in-law, and in the second ascending generation those of parents-in-law to each other's children. That is to say, the dispute is always between members of the same generation who stand on equal

terms but who belong to different families. It is the members of the two most senior of these three generations that make up the family council, and their consent is required before a *redolí* is formally transferred.

The appointment of the eldest grandson as heir in the vast majority of cases means that fishing tackle is used to the maximum, without delay, and ensures that transmission coincides with the rhythm of substitution of active members of the Community. Since the retirement age is seventy-five, the age of joining is twenty-four, and the average age for male marriage is twenty-eight, it is unlikely that grandfathers and grandsons will coincide in activity, but fathers and sons will do so. Thus, sons are unable to make use of the fishing tackle used by their fathers. Furthermore, the limitation of one *redolí* per fisherman avoids economic subordination between fishermen, guarantees equality as a point of departure in their co-operative system, gives each family equal opportunities, permits each fisherman to have access to a single fishing point amongst those drawn by lot, and tends to keep the proportion between resources and work-force under control by means of filiation.

With regard to other assets, children of both sexes receive an equal portion of their parents' land, with a slight bias in favour of the last male offspring, consisting of 'the right to receive rented land or the house', this being considered as compensation 'for looking after the parents'. As they say locally, 'it has been the custom for the youngest to stay on [in his parents' home]. The youngest son and the daughter-in-law'. However, the transmission of goods does not take place at one particular moment, but is spread over the length of the domestic cycle. It is customary for both a man and a woman to receive a plot of land from their respective families at the time of marriage. This is given as an advance on their inheritance and may be increased as they begin to have children. An individual's share of his parents' property is only transmitted fully and definitively on their death.

### *Marriage*

The high proportion of intra-local marriages is undoubtedly affected by the relative isolation of the place, the fact that both partners are often neighbours, the closeness of lands owned by those living in the locality, and the use of filiation as a criterion for entry into the Community of Fishermen and in the system of inheritance. On the island it is not infrequent for a bachelor to justify his situation by saying that he is not the son of a fisherman, and it is not uncommon for adult women to confess to having received family advice about the convenience of marrying the son of a fisherman. 'Tell him no, that he is not a fisherman', is common advice in the face of advances by outsiders or simple farmers, while 'if the lad is a fisherman' the parents think it a 'very good idea'.

The village considers itself to be a fishing community. In fact fishing is more profitable than growing rice. Both for this reason and for its history, the community's identity is centred on fishing. The expression, 'He is a stranger, he is not a fisherman', is an example of this attitude. In the village they say of strangers, 'He who comes from outside to court, comes to cheat or to be cheated'. This means that marriage preferences point towards residents in the

village, and even more specifically towards fishermen, and this coincides with matrimonial behaviour. The same happens in the case of the male, who prefers a local woman who knows the art of preparing nets, and in union with whom he can accede to possession of the land that accompanies her. On the other hand, 70 per cent. of women from outside the village do not contribute any asset to the marriage, except their wardrobe, and with only a few exceptions they marry men with few possessions.

There is a clear tendency for men and women of a similar economic level to marry. If the family of origin of the spouses, local and outsider, are grouped by wealth (from lower to higher), it can be seen that the wealth level of the family of origin of one of the spouses never exceeds that of the other by more than a third. The following table shows the percentage difference of wealth, and in favour of which of the spouses' family of origin.

TABLE I Difference in wealth in favour of the family of origin

| Year | Wealth level |         |            |
|------|--------------|---------|------------|
|      | I            | II      | III        |
| 1958 | 20% male     | 7% male | 10% female |
| 1977 | 28% female   | 3% male | 34% male   |

But these preferences for intralocal marriage within the same economic level exist together with a rejection of marriage between cousins. On the few occasions when a boy has wished to marry his cousin, family opposition was clear: 'Cousins are not for marrying'. The fact is that this attitude occurs in a context where, as the actors say, 'Here we are all cousins of someone', or 'We are one family here'.

It is certainly true that a few surnames are repeated to such an extent that it becomes difficult to identify individuals and to establish their kinship links. Evidently these difficulties do not arise for the actors, who make scarcely any use of surnames, preferring local nicknames. Furthermore, the density of their kinship relationships does not prevent them from distinguishing clearly between their first and second cousins and non-relatives. However, they do recognise clear similarities between brothers and sisters and first cousins, who in many cases 'were brought up like brothers and sisters', or as others put it, 'They lived almost like brothers and sisters'. These expressions refer to situations that were frequent fifty years ago, when the cost of housing and joint working of the land that had still not been divided by inheritance led to a type of patrilocal residence. The parental house was extended or subdivided, according to its size, as the children married, and therefore the table and roof were shared by first cousins. This type of residence has continued in the case of the youngest son. The local explanation for the absence of marriages between cousins is based on 'respect for the family'. Marriages between 'first cousins are not so common. . . . As they lived all together, the family was respected a great deal. That is the reason, respect for the family. Because as both brothers lived together, the

members of both families lived a common life as though they were brothers and sisters, in the same house.' Indeed marriage between first cousins is considered exceptional on the island. The few married cousins themselves were surprised, asking, 'What! Do cousins marry?'

Table 2 summarises data on matrimonial behaviour that will be the subject of comment in the remainder of this article.

TABLE 2 Matrimonial behaviour

| Period 1930-1976                    | % intra-local marriages    | 65.34                 |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| No of marriages 458                 | % first cousin marriages   | 0.31                  |
| Annual average of marriages         | % second cousin marriages  | 1.25                  |
| 10.41 } 6.75 intra-local            | % local wife + outsider    | 17.9                  |
| 3.66 inter-local                    | % local husband + outsider | 15.93                 |
|                                     | % both outsiders           | 0.83                  |
|                                     |                            |                       |
|                                     | Intra-local marriages      | Inter-local marriages |
| Average age of marriage:            |                            |                       |
| groom                               | 29                         | 28.18                 |
| bride                               | 25.7                       | 24.36                 |
| Average marriage age difference     | 3.3                        | 3.82                  |
| Range of variation                  | 5                          | 20                    |
| Standard deviation                  | 2.66                       | 3.88                  |
| % marriages same age                | 5.26                       | 0.87                  |
| % marriages bride's age > husband's | 1.75                       | 1.16                  |
| Average intergenetic age difference | 3.63                       |                       |

The period studied is longer than that represented in table 2, covering the period from 1887 to 1976. However, the different sources here are incomplete due to the fact that documents were burnt during the Spanish Civil War, and I have therefore summarised the data for the period when the various sources and the field data coincide, which makes a period of 44 years. In previous times, the percentage of intra-local marriages seems to have been higher, while that of cousin marriage was apparently practically the same.

The sample studied includes 229 men and 229 women resident at El Palmar. The figure of 0.83 per cent. corresponding to marriages between outsiders reflects the presence of immigrants since the war, who found some sort of livelihood on the island and continue to live there.

Residence is patrilocal in the case of the marriage of the youngest son and also in the case of a daughter who has no brothers. For sons of fishermen residence is virilocal. In inter-local marriages both spouses receive assets from their families, and the place of residence depends, as elsewhere in the region, on which of the

families of origin offers the greatest wealth or possibilities of work (see Mira 1974). There is no pre-established norm for interchange between specific groups, but rather strategic behaviour based on the greater economic possibilities for the new family.

Perhaps the most significant difference between intra- and inter-local marriages lies in the greater variability of behaviour in the case of the latter, as emerges from the higher standard deviation of their marriage age difference. This difference may express how the factors affecting each type of marriage are more homogenous in intra-local marriages than in inter-local ones. In other words, the factors affecting matrimonial strategy maintain intra-local marriage within narrower limits. We have already noticed that poorer families are most likely to decide on inter-local marriage, thus finding a matrimonial solution outside the locality. The same strategy can be observed throughout local history, under other forms. It would take too long to give detailed comments on this phenomenon here, but it can be examined in connexion with demographic trends during the period.

Apart from the population increase after the Civil War (with the economic situation favoured by rice exports during the second world war, and the elimination of malaria that had traditionally affected the area), a series of factors arose leading to a fall in population (table 3). After the Civil War the political

TABLE 3. Demographic evolution.

| Year                              | 1930 | 1940                                  | 1950                      | 1955                                                      | 1960 | 1965                                                                                         | 1970 |
|-----------------------------------|------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| Inhabitants                       | 1410 | 1539                                  | 1543                      | 1063                                                      | 1040 | 886                                                                                          | 943  |
| Average no of children per family |      |                                       |                           | 3.07                                                      |      |                                                                                              | 2.6  |
| Contextual factors                |      | Immigration/El<br>mination of malaria | Expulsion of<br>tenants.  | Emigration to<br>Seville, North<br>Africa and<br>Valencia |      | Beginning of<br>ecological crisis<br>in the lake.<br>Trickle of<br>emigration to<br>the city |      |
|                                   |      |                                       | Favourable rice<br>market | Fall in rice<br>market.                                   |      |                                                                                              |      |

situation permitted the expulsion of some tenants, and the effects of this together with a fall in the price of rice, encouraged the less well-off to seek new alternatives away from the island. For those who remained, the situation was saved by fishing, but this went into decline towards the end of the 1960's, when the country's economic development began to pollute the waters of the lake. At the same time, the increasing availability of jobs in cities favoured a trickle of emigration to urban areas.

*Cousin marriage*

In general terms, the situation of El Palmar is not radically different from that of other parts of the Valencia region, except in terms of fishing and cousin marriage. Regions with poor communications and an inheritance system that divides land in equal parts among the children favours intra-local marriage. This is the most widespread system of inheritance in the Valencian Region, and is present on the island in respect of land. Mira (1976: 52, 53) mentions that 'a system of this type automatically creates a direct link with the land in all the offspring and heirs', at the same time as 'a reduction in the properties remaining for the children'. The same author stresses the relationship between demography and matrimonial strategy, pointing out that this type of hereditary system 'in periods of demographic stability or very slow growth, does not lead to a substantial change in the situation in the long term, since properties are reintegrated by means of matrimonial strategy' (Mira 1974: 56). With growing populations, it is only possible to maintain the proportion resources/family if the former are increased. This is what happens in Valencia, and in our specific case as a result of the creation of fields around the lake. In the cases studied by Mira (1974: 43, 138), a similar percentage of intra-local marriage is observed, but whereas there is also a preference for cousin marriage, at El Palmar the opposite is true. Examples of this former pattern may be found in areas of Galicia (Lisón 1971) and Andalusia (Luque 1974). In this respect, Tillion goes so far as to say that 'taking it in its etymological sense of "marriage with a very close relation belonging to the same lineage", it may be affirmed that "incestuous marriage" is considered the ideal marriage throughout the Mediterranean' (1967: 30). Even when this affirmation is understood as a manner of stressing the relative frequency of this type of union, a problem arises with misuse of the term 'lineage' in Mediterranean peasant communities, as Peters justly commented (Peristiany 1976: 32).

Yet further parallels may be observed between El Palmar and other areas of the Mediterranean. Cresswell, writing on the Maronites, mentions how they could bring 'more and more land under cultivation . . . practising lineage endogamy . . . The same remark could be made about the traditional system of land tenure in the Syrian plains: *mushā'a*. Here only the community as a whole owned the land, rights to cultivate it being decided periodically by drawing lots. . . The lineage with the largest number of constituent families acquires more potential wealth and keeps it in the lineage by practising lineage endogamy' (Peristiany 1976: 111, 112). In a similar way, Goody points out that 'the marriage of cousins . . . is often justified in terms of the retention of property or other relatively exclusive rights by near kin' (1976: 15). Something similar occurs in our case, where fishermen bring more and more land under cultivation by draining the shores of the lake, and each year draw by lots the fixed points for fishing. However, in the present case the lineage structure is absent and, properly speaking, there is no cousin marriage.

Marriage on the island is invariably canonical, and though the Church prohibits marriage between cousins, the canonical prohibition is only relative, given the ease with which dispensations are granted. Though doubtless the

prohibition had some effect, it does not seem to be the principal cause, since it is also a fact that in the other areas of Spain already mentioned, equally Catholic, it has not proved a major obstacle to cousin marriage. Other factors must have been at work. In the Archdiocesan archive the request for a dispensation is almost invariably given as the poverty of the parties.

The results, in this case, seem to be the opposite of what might be expected in view of the ethnography of Spain and other areas of the Mediterranean. However they do not entirely invalidate the hypothesis, since, despite the apparent paradox, it is not a case of an exception confirming the rule but rather of similar principles underlying a different structure, created and maintained by different strategies. It still seems true that 'there can be no single sociological explanation of this kind of marriage . . . [which] can be found in diverse social systems with diverse combinations of factors' (Cohen 1965: 120 n. 1.).

Barth and Murphy, according to Bourdieu (1977: 32), both 'admit that parallel-cousin marriage cannot be explained within the pure logic of matrimonial exchange system, and that any explanation must refer to external economic or political functions'. The same is mentioned by Pitt-Rivers in respect of so-called 'Mediterranean endogamy' (1979: 247). In the same way, then, the absence of one type of matrimony should be explained with reference to the same factors. An alternative course would be to attempt to introduce these factors into the model, and then analyse its internal logic, whether the mentioned factors are internal or external, since their origin does not imply that they are external to the model.

It has often been said that cousin marriage is a means of avoiding the dispersal of property. But this is no more than a manner of covering political and economic goals on the basis of a type of rights (to property) and a specific system of work organisation (based on the family and the kinship group). In the present case, the fact that the new plots of land were originally drawn by lot meant that it could not be assumed that relatives would have adjoining parcels; this in turn meant that marriage between cousins would not necessarily be the best means of increasing or reorganising landed property, or forming more profitable agricultural holdings. Even so, and apart from the question of property, it is undoubtedly the first cousins who have lived together in earlier periods of the domestic cycle, or their children, the second cousins, who help one another financially (at home) and politically (at meetings of the Community, or against external forces). In turn it is between them that offers of work are shared out and substitution in the fishing team is undertaken. Their need for internal cohesion against continuous external threats, their collective work system and the distribution by lot of places in the fishing teams require solid yet flexible correspondence between community institutions and the overall social structure.

In our case there is no lineage structure. Moreover, if cousin marriage became more common, it would favour, if not such a structure, at least a structure of more and more closed family groups with fewer relationships between one another. The absence of this type of marriage tends rather to favour the creation of links between different families. This means a tendency to diversify matrimonial alliances, uniting all with all, within the limits of homogamy. In this

respect it is the absence rather than the presence of this type of marriage which encourages group solidarity, not among relatives but within the community as a whole. Furthermore, intra-local marriage together with the absence of cousin marriage (in the first and second degree recognised on the island), results in a strategy that permits the marriage of descendants of a common ancestor only every five generations. Taking the proportion of the sexes and the average of three children per family as theoretically constant, in the fifth generation each individual has, from amongst these descendants of a common ancestor, 67.5 per cent. of non-relatives as possible spouses. Thus the tendency for intra-local marriage to become as extended as possible in the community is stressed, serving both as a basis for internal co-operation and for cohesion against the outside world.

Khuri points out that parallel cousin marriage 'does not create conflict of roles as marriage within the same nuclear family would do, nor does it create affinal but tense relationships associated with out-marriage' (1970: 607). However, it should be remembered that conflicts do not depend on the attributes of the roles. If my uncle becomes my father-in-law when I marry my cousin, not for this reason will the affinal tensions disappear, since, as Nadel (1966) stressed, the conflicts are not derived from the roles.<sup>2</sup> Nadel's whole text expounds the need for dispensing with the qualitative analysis of roles in understanding social structure. Tensions are not avoided by adding the affinal roles to those of the consanguineous relations, since they are derived from the different strategies practised in transmission of property, values and principles. Separating or adding these roles are only different strategies, the difference lying in whether or not we diversify the persons with whom we are related in different ways. This diversification is another constant feature of the social life of the island, a variation on the principle of flexibility in investment in social relationships within the small community. By this means, links are multiplied, relationships diversified, and with them mutual confidence, rights and duties. The range of possible alternatives is thereby increased in a context of a difficult coexistence between equality on the lake and inequality on land.

While the reasoning followed up to this point may help to explain the absence of marriage between both first and second cousins, in the case of first cousins there is an additional factor in the system of inheritance of fishing rights.

The bias in favour of the youngest son and the transmission of the *redolí* to the eldest grandson seriously compromises the principle of equality among heirs. Second sons get the worst of it and they are the ones, when there is scope for choosing a *redolí* or deciding to whom it is to be awarded in the family council, who compete with their cousins and brothers. One way to mitigate inequality is to divide the expenses of the new *redolí* between the heir and his cousin. Of course, *redolí* ownership, as it implies a membership, cannot be divided; yet the expenses of buying a new *redolí* can be shared. Thus, a fisherman speaks in this way of his *redolí*: 'May it be for the son of my daughter and the son of my son', that is to say, for the first cousins. And this is with the intention of 'seeing whether they keep united, and take half each'. Even when it is clear that the grandfather wished to give his children equal treatment in respect of the

inheritance and expenses of the *redolí* of the respective grandsons, this is not the strategy that is most frequently followed.

An alternative manner of maintaining equality between both families would be to permit marriage between cousins, but in both cases these solutions would favour equality between relatives and reinforce their interdependence, instead of extending the network of relationships. The community is inclined to this latter policy, not permitting the division of the inherited *redolí* and avoiding cousin marriage. Furthermore, it is the cousins who, since they have a common grandfather, diminish one another's opportunities for inheritance, since the greater probability of some cousins inheriting is only produced at the expense of the others. Consequently, if cousins marry, it is more likely that families who have benefited from inheriting the *redolí* will be united with families which have not so benefited<sup>3</sup>. In this respect, as far as the fishing is concerned, homogamy proves easier between non-relations. In this way, the inequality produced by the inheritance system is consolidated and reproduced in homogamy.

By this I do not mean to say that the manner in which the *redolí* is transmitted fully explains the absence of marriage between first cousins, since matrimonial strategy does not depend on this alone. Rather it is my intention to point out that the incidence of this variable seems negative in so far as this type of marriage is concerned. The analysis of specific cases, though more vivid as a description, is incapable of isolating the basic structural constants, and this is why I have constructed a model. Though this model is based on the empirical frequency of behaviour, it is made up merely of proportions, statistical frequencies, probabilities and combinations, that is, it is an abstraction of general patterns selected with the purpose of interpreting reality rather than copying it. The manner in which we attempt to make the model represent reality is consciously hypothetical, since it selects specific factors affecting matrimonial strategy, and establishes them for the purpose of the model as general and constant. This is done so that, by means of computer simulation that exhausts the logical possibilities of the conditions set in the model, the interplay of the variables under study can be clarified.

Gilbert and Hammel (1966) used the same technique for a similar problem, but their model was based mainly on rules of matrimony and residence, without introducing any specific consideration of the inheritance system, always forming couples by random selection within the conditions of the model expressing these rules. In our case, the model is based not only on inheritance rules but also on empirically-observed conduct and in accordance with its real frequency.

On the mathematical analysis of matrimonial systems based on rules, Buchler and Selby note, 'The resultant models [of these analyses] fail to reckon with criterial anthropological problems. They have relatively low information value for the social anthropologist.' In view of this they think that

rather than assuming that jural rules operate as absolute constraints on behaviour, or, in the case of marriage systems, have prescriptive entailments, we assume that jural formulations are essentially probability statements, that they do not operate as absolute constraints on behaviour . . . [and therefore] it is of considerable importance to distinguish between ground rules that structure the basic cultural framework within which decision making occurs and strategy rules that allow individuals to operate within the options provided by the ground rules. Although these

[ground] rules certainly have mathematical implications, it may be more productive from the viewpoint of ethnological theory to simulate the type of strategy rules that might have operated in a society with [a concrete type of] ground rules (1968: 158).

This is what we attempt with our model.

### *The model*

The model presented here has an intermediate character between a faithful representation of empirical reality and a pure system of interplay between established ground rules. Together with these rules, it reflects that part of the observed behaviour that makes specific reference to the rules as a whole. The model observes the rules of inheritance and marriage: the inheritance of the *redolí* by the grandson from the grandfather (a single family being unable to inherit more than one), the need to be the son of a fisherman in order to qualify for such inheritance, the preference for intra-local marriage between non-relatives, and the establishment of not more than one matrimonial link between any two families. It also operates the rules in accordance with the empirically-observed percentage for intra- and inter-local marriage. The proportions of kinship links, potential heirs and *redolins* available for inheritance are also in accordance with observed fact, taking as a basis the probability of inheriting in the context, intergenetic age, overall number of children per family, and marriage age difference. With a model designed in this way, an attempt is made to simulate matrimonial strategy in accordance with the observed percentages and homogamy, uniting families of a similar economic status, and with the sons and daughters of the poorer families marrying outsiders. This simulation also includes disputes over inheritances and possible decisions in favour of one first cousin or another, calculating the different economic effects arising if the first cousins do not marry each other and if they do. Calculations are carried out in all possible combinations permitted by the model.

The model does not take into account the effect of external conditioning features of migratory movements, nor the variations in birthrate that correspond to them. The model generalises the most frequent internal conditions, maintaining the others as constants, so as to make a comparison between the simulation of strategies and the conditioning character of the basic rules, and thus emphasise the effects of the inheritance of the *redolí* on marriage between first cousins. The character of the model is synchronic not diachronic.

Of the different groupings of actors that could prove representative of the situation which the community faces in matrimonial decisions, the smallest has been selected, for the sake of simplicity and to facilitate presentation. For this reason, to represent the model graphically, we take the annual average of marriages, ten, of which seven are intra-local and three inter-local.<sup>4</sup> Naturally, each actor has more than ten possible partners. But we take this number in order to reduce the model's complexity to a minimum. Given its empirical origin, this means that such a number of unions is always possible, taking into account the difference of age, sex and parentage links. Of the three outsiders, two are men and one a woman, to reflect the different proportions in which men and

women marry outside. Outsiders are considered as not sons of fishermen, and as not transmitting *redolí*, but their marriages affect the overall strategy.

The individual members of the third generation, in which the marriages are to take place, appear grouped into families three by three, since this is the average number of children per family in the community that the model generalises for the studied period. Outsiders, though they also number three, are not grouped into a single family, since they may proceed from different places and families. In order to standardise the incidence of the unequal sexual composition of the families, the sexes have been alternatively distributed in each family. In this way, the sexual composition of each family always follows the pattern of two children of one sex and one of the other. In the second generation, we establish two brother links to reflect the number of cousins of an age suitable for marriage. The number of cousins of marriageable age has been taken to depend on the average age difference between the partners (three years) and the time between births (three years also), both periods in accordance with statistical data collected on the island. The following steps indicate our subsequent procedure.

Given the family structures, the next step is to calculate all the possible combinations, two by two, in order to see in each combination who will be the cousin of whom. Thus, for example, the offspring of family A can have as cousins those of families B, D or G  $\bigcirc \quad \Delta \quad \bigcirc$ , or those of C or E  $\Delta \quad \bigcirc \quad \Delta$ . In their turn, those of family B can have for cousins those of families D, G, C or E, and so on successively.

The relative order of positions is then set as the order of birth, with a space of three years between brothers in both generations, second and third. All the mentioned combinations have been grouped in four cases depending on the space between births and the age difference between the partners among the members of the second generation, i.e. the parents of those who will be cousins in the third generation. (1) Some of the cousins are of the same age, where a mother is three years younger than her brother, since his wife will be of her age, considering that marriage age and intergenetic age differences practically coincide in the island. (2) Cousins are separated by three years of difference, where the mother of some of them is six years younger than her brother, since she will reach the average marriage age three years later than her brother and, in principle, their respective children will be separated by three years of difference. The same applies for the different combinations possible between parallel instead of crossed cousins if the age difference between their respective parents were three years. (3) Cousins are separated by six years; if full siblings of the same sex are separated by six years, this will be the age difference between their respective offspring, i.e. between the parallel cousins. (4) Cousins are separated by nine years: if the full siblings of different sexes are separated by six years, their respective offspring (the crossed cousins) will be separated by nine years.

In each group of cases all the possible combinations have been calculated, as well as the proportion of possible marriages between them according to age. From the resulting combinations, the proportion of possible marriages between cousins is 16.69 per cent. which, transferred to the model, supposes two links between brothers. As a result of these, there are a number of cousins in the model, the combination of which represents the number of marriages possible

between first cousins. That is to say, all the individuals present in the model could marry, with regard to their age and the appropriate proportion of parentage links, with no more limitations than the particular conditions of the model.

The number of *redolins* to be inherited is represented by the grandfathers in the first generation. In the model we have eliminated those parentage links which would suppose a number of relations incompatible with possibilities of marriage. As a result, not all the grandfathers can be in the model. The first cousins absent from the model, due to their excessive age difference, could hardly compete for same inheritance, and were they to do so, the inheritance dispute in such cases could not affect matrimonial decision. Second cousins do not appear in the model either, since there is no ground for disputing the inheritance of the *redolí* with them. Consequently, though each grandchild has two grandfathers and each grandfather has three children and nine grandchildren, the number of *redolins* to be inherited in the model is that corresponding to the probability of inheriting  $2/9$ , given the number of children in each family and generation, and the possibility of transmitting the *redolí* in both lines, paternal and maternal. Transferring this probability to the model results in four *redolins*.

Figure 1 represents one of the possible situations, with a specific family configuration in the third generation, and with a specific position of the *redolins* to be inherited, which can serve as an illustration. The development of the simulation means calculating all the situations, thus exhausting the logical possibilities.

In the first generation the four *redolins* can be distributed in all the possible combinations of the ten gaps corresponding to the grandfathers, which makes  $\binom{10}{4} = 210$  different possibilities. For each specific position of the four *redolins*, the subsequent calculations change. In each position it is necessary to determine the direction of the inheritance, which in fig 1 is represented by the oblique dotted lines going from the grandfathers to the grandsons.

To evaluate the effect of the inheritance of *redolí* and the economic status of the family, we weight with one point the families in the second generation for each male child in the third and, if one of the sons inherits, a further point is added. This is a way of expressing the family's level of possessions, on the basis of which homogamy can be established. Once the weighting of each family has been calculated, each of the children represents one-third of this wealth. Thus, for example, in the case of the family with a three weighting, each child represents three thirds.

In our model we wish to compare the different results arising from a marriage between cousins from the situation where cousins do not marry. For this reason we establish one cousin marriage between families with the highest weighting, so that the marriage proves advantageous or appropriate. With the simulation we attempt to establish whether such marriages are disadvantageous or inappropriate for the overall group in the majority of cases. In this way we begin with the worst situation for the working hypothesis, such that if it is confirmed it would also apply in the other cases, since if the maximum situation is proved the minimum is also proved.

There are no cases of families being united twice by the marriage of their

children. In some cases established by the simulation the same family has two children married to outsiders, but the condition is still observed since the outsiders come from different families. In so far as is compatible with the other conditions of the model, we have tended to unite in matrimony those families with similar weighting, so as to reflect the homogamy. Only if there are several equivalent alternatives is a random choice made. In accordance with this, the outsiders marry into families with lower weighting.

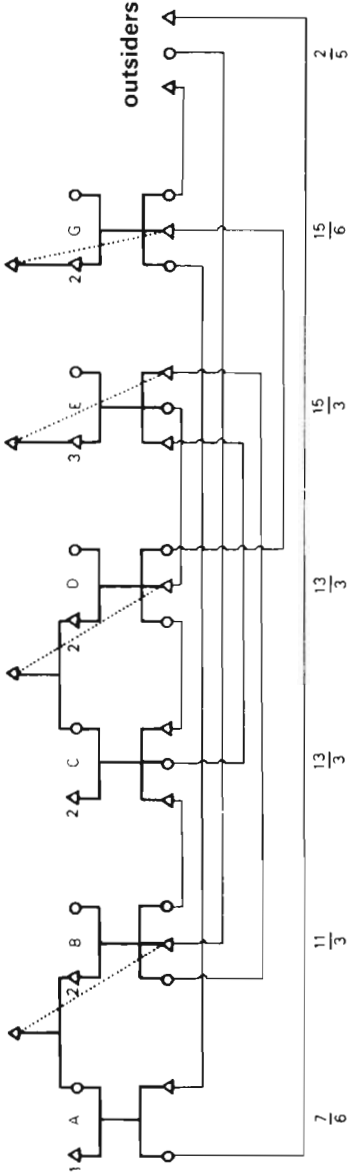
Once all the marriages have been settled, the families are again weighted to reflect the points obtained by the marriage of their offspring. This weighting is obtained by adding the weighting of each child and each spouse, so that the family total is that of all the children and their respective spouses. The female outsider is given a zero weighting, to express the fact that though her sons can enter the Fishing Community, since her husband is a fisherman, they can inherit only from their paternal grandfather. If a son marries a female outsider, his family only adds on the weighting of the son and his brother and sister and their spouses, but nothing for the outsider since her weighting is zero. Male outsiders are weighted negatively since their sons cannot enter the Fishing Community nor inherit a *redolí*. If a daughter marries a male outsider, the family subtracts instead of adding the weighting of the daughter. The resulting figures express the new weightings of the families as a result of their matrimonial strategy, that is, what they have added to their initial weighting due to the marriage of their children. Subsequently, the entire process is repeated, but without establishing any marriage between cousins. All this is repeated for each position of the *redolins* to be inherited for each direction of the inheritance and for each configuration of the family in the third generation.

For the same direction of the inheritance and the same configuration of the third generation, two final weightings are obtained after the marriage of the individuals of the third generation: one showing the case of a marriage between cousins and the other the case where there is no such marriage.

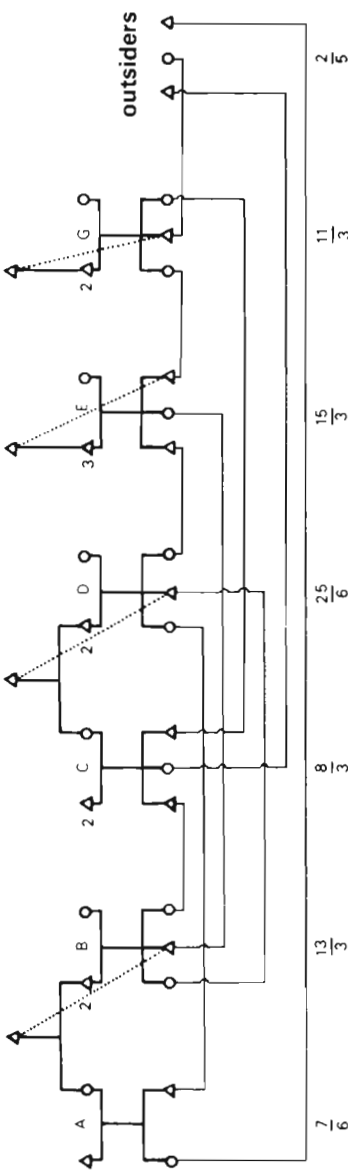
Subtracting these final weightings, family by family, two further pieces of data are obtained: the relative improvement or disadvantage resulting when the cousins do not marry, for the six families of the model, and the number of families which improve their position or see it made worse. Both data are important. While the first shows the advantage or disadvantage of such types of marriage for the community, the second expresses the number of actors who would be interested in such a marriage taking place or not within the community. Even while those who improve their situation are not always the families of the cousins, the strategies of these families and those of the cousins are mutually related, reducing their possibilities, so that the actions of some of them are never indifferent to the others. Naturally, these are not empirical data. Since they depend on the structural properties of the model as it has been devised, their character is no less structural. But it is precisely this type of structural result that we are seeking.

The next step consists in repeating the whole process, changing only the direction of the inheritance between cousins. This means that for each family configuration in the third generation and for the same position of the *redolins* to be inherited, the direction of the inheritance is changed in all its possible forms.

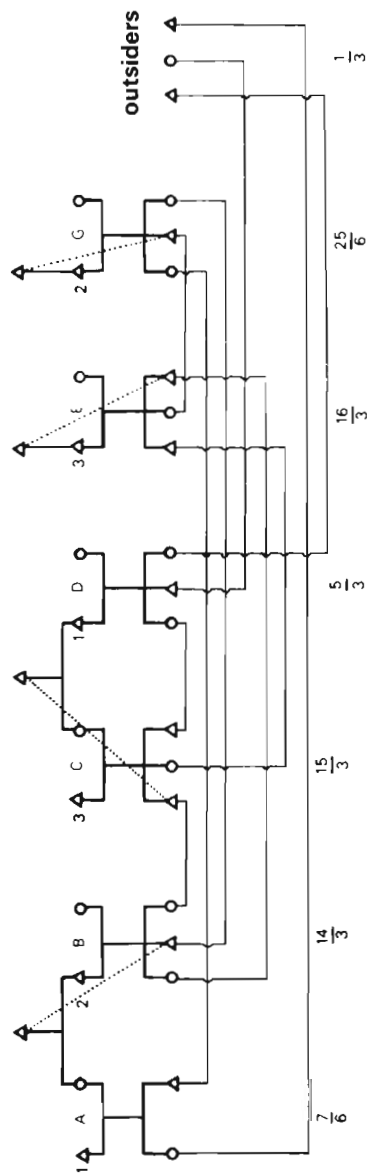
A. Cousins marry with one direction of the inheritance



B. Cousins do not marry with the same direction of inheritance



C. Cousins marry with a change in the direction of the inheritance



D. Cousins do not marry with the same change in direction

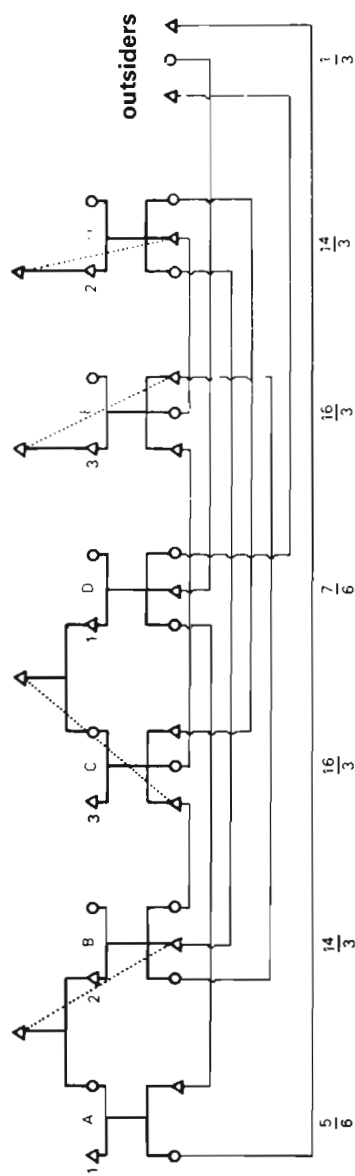


FIGURE 1: Possibilities represented in the model of matrimonial and inheritance strategy

In fig. 1, the inheritance due to the son of D passes, after the dispute, to the son of C. As a result the weightings of the second generation change, as well as the matrimonial alliances. The final weightings are also different, as well as the data on relative improvement or worsening and on the number of families whose position improves or declines according to whether or not the cousins marry. These calculations have to be made for each of the possible changes in the direction of the inheritance, comparing the results of the data obtained (improvement or decline plus the number of families which improve minus the number of families which worsen their situation) in groups of four, since there are four alternatives for the actors:

- A. That the cousins marry with one direction of the inheritance.
- B. That they do not marry with the same direction of the inheritance.
- C. That they marry with a change in the direction of the inheritance.
- D. That they do not marry with the same change in direction.

From this comparison it is possible to see which is the most advantageous alternative, measured by the highest sum of the relative advantage plus the difference between the number of families which improve or worsen their situations. In this way it is possible to accumulate the number of cases in which it is better for the community that cousins marry, the number of cases in which it would be better for the community that they do not marry, and the number of cases in which there is no difference between one alternative and another for the community. When all the cases have been tested, the percentage corresponding to each of these three possibilities is calculated.

The computer simulation consists of two phases. In the first, no account is taken of possible change in the direction of inheritance between first cousins. In the second, the analysis is repeated, but taking into account the changes resulting from the different possibilities arising out of a discussion and alteration of the direction of inheritance. The purpose of this exercise was precisely to take into account the influence of this variable, inheritance strategy, in matrimonial strategy as such. This means that instead of making comparisons in each case in groups of two, according to whether the cousins marry or do not marry, the comparison has been made four by four, taking into account possible change in the direction of the inheritance. In the first stage of the simulation, 24 per cent of cases resulted favourable to cousin marriage, 28 per cent. unfavourable, and the remaining 48 per cent showed no preference either way. The averages of these percentages for the sixty family configurations coincide with the total percentages, which is an indication of their limited variation. The average of the differences between the percentages in favour of marriages between cousins and against them is 4, and the standard deviation is 11.94, in the sixty family configurations. This means that, though for the overall community represented in the model it seems clearly advantageous that cousins should not marry, the advantage is only of 4 per cent. (28-24), if inheritance strategy is not considered as combined with matrimonial strategy.

From the second stage of the simulation only 23 per cent. of cases appear favourable to cousin marriage, 41 per cent. of cases are unfavourable, and in 35 per cent. of cases there is no advantage either way for the community. The averages again coincide with the total percentages, and so does the average of the

differences between the different percentages for the sixty configurations. The standard deviation of these differences is now 2.34, much lower than in the previous phase, which indicates the low dispersion of these differences, i.e. throughout the sixty configurations and in their different possibilities; the proportion of cases in favour of each alternative remains constant and very close to the average. In other words, the effect of inheritance strategy on matrimonial strategy is constant. Thus the results are not due to the greater weight of this effect in a limited number of cases, but rather it acts in a uniform manner to condition matrimonial strategy. Furthermore, in comparison with the previous percentages, it is clear that it is precisely the inheritance strategy that makes the results more significant, being unfavourable to marriage between first cousins, despite analysis having started out from the worst point for the hypothesis.

In view of the results, it is fair to conclude that the strategy for inheritance of *redolí*, within the framework of the rules on inheritance and matrimony, has a negative effect on cousin marriage, affecting matrimonial strategy uniformly. In other words, the following out of the logical possibilities contained in the structure of the model show that cousin marriage is clearly unlikely.

Comparing the percentages of cases that, as a result of all the possible comparisons in each family configuration (in the second stage of the simulation), prove favourable to cousin marriage or in favour of the cousins not marrying each other, there is only one family configuration in which it would be favourable to the community for cousins to marry. This means that out of the total comparisons made in accordance with this family configuration, there would be a small number of hypothetical situations in which it would be more likely for the community that cousins get married, in accordance with the logical play implied by the structure of the model. Thus the synchronic development of the model permits the appearance of this type of marriage, even though in overall terms its absence is more likely.

Evidently, there is no reason why the proportion of cousin marriages possible in accordance with the model should have occurred empirically. The model has not been constructed to predict conduct, but to discover the effects of one strategy on another. The proportions obtained from the simulation express probabilities on the basis of all the logically possible combinations, within a synchronic model in which one conditioning factor of matrimonial behaviour, the inheritance of the *redolí*, is selected to evaluate its effect. Perhaps the method of analysis may be considered taking a sledge-hammer to crack a nut, but the process of defining and limiting variables can contribute to a more exact appreciation of the nature of these same variables.

The absence of marriages between first and second cousins gives a specific shape to the social structure as a result of the search for expanded kinship relationships that favour the opening up of the family through links with non-relatives. This contributes to the singular cohesion of a community where people say of strangers, 'He is a stranger, he is not a fisherman'. However, though this multiplication and diversification of relationships helps to explain the absence of these specific types of marriage, in the case of first cousins the inheritance of the *redolí* should also be included as a negative conditioning factor.

Comparing the context of the island with that of other areas of the Mediterranean, cousin marriage cannot be taken to be economically advantageous as a general rule. It is simply an alternative depending on a collection of rules and strategies, by which a community controls access to basic material resources and to the human resources implied in the relationships between its members and with the outside world.

## NOTES

I am grateful for kind comments on some parts of this article by E. Goody, A. Macfarlane and E. Peters. The translation of the model to APL and its carrying out was done by A. Llagüe. To him, and to the Centro de Cálculo de la Universidad Complutense de Madrid, which gave me access to its computer, my most sincere thanks.

<sup>1</sup> This article will not take into account the social changes that have taken place during the later seventies. A fuller analysis of fishing and agricultural activities, the domestic cycle, the organisation of the Fishing Community, local history and social and cultural changes, is given in my study, 'La Albufera y sus hombres: un estudio de antropología social en Valencia', Madrid, Akal, awaiting publication.

<sup>2</sup> In any case, such conflicts are those which define the roles (Nadel 1966: 202).

<sup>3</sup> If each grandfather has 9 grandchildren and each grandchild 2 grandfathers, the probability that by marrying non-relatives families with heirs will be united to families without heirs, is of 0.6273432, while this probability increases to 0.9364426 if two first cousins marry.

<sup>4</sup> Since the elements of fig. 1 correspond to numbers in finite differences, we use 10, 7 and 3 instead of the real percentages of 10.41, 6.75 and 3.66. The same is true of the other elements, but not of the subsequent calculations in which, since it was not necessary to represent them graphically, it was possible to preserve the exact proportions.

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