

CHAPTER VIII

Biba un Bida Drechi: Living a Respectable Life

The previous Chapter addressed the daily economic life of Afro-Curaçaoans in order to draw attention to their resilience in the face of the hardships they encountered. Through necessity, Afro-Curaçaoan women in particular participated actively in a wide range of economic activities, thus putting their shoulders to the wheel to help provide for their families.

Caribbean family structures and relationships have received much attention from scholars (Clarke 1957; Barrow 1996). For Curaçao, one pioneering study has been that of Abraham-van der Mark (1973), focusing on relationships between the sexes and the different types of union formed in the twentieth century. The author shows an interest in the pattern of development of non-legal unions among Afro-Curaçaoans and the matrifocal family structure, suggesting a general male marginality. She looks at matrifocality as the type of household in which a woman lives alone with her children – and sometimes grandchildren – without the presence of a male, or with a male who does not provide for his family (Abraham-van der Mark 1973:38). In 1965 and 1966 A.F. Marks (1973) also researched family life on Curaçao, focusing on Afro-Curaçaoan matrifocal families in the twentieth century.

To date few studies have looked at how families developed during slavery and after emancipation. It was commonly thought that slaves lacked stable family values and therefore a durable family life. However, a study by Han Jordaan (1999:474) shows that a variety of family constructs were upheld. Apart from the female-headed household there were individuals sharing the same roof with couples and/or nuclear family units, consisting of father, mother and children. Studies in Jamaica on family organizations show that the nuclear form of family was also present among many Jamaican slaves in the early part of the nineteenth century, deriving from monogamous practices which were, however, different from those in the metropole. In the Caribbean there was a pattern of sequential monogamy, implying that slaves usually spent their adult life in several successive relationships (Beckles and Shepherd 1991:209-21).

Following emancipation, the State and particularly the Roman Catholic Church, increased efforts to influence relationships between the sexes and family life of Afro-Curaçaoans. The term 'bida drechi' was introduced by Catholic authorities, introducing set values regarding proper family relationships. It was the opposite of the *biba den piká* (living in sin). One had, for example, to regulate one's sexual life through marriage. A man and a woman cohabiting thus had to marry in the eyes of the law and of the Church so

that they could form a respectable nuclear family. 'Bida drechi' was also applicable to single people still living with their parents: it gave an ideal image of the relationship between a man and a woman.

The findings by Jordaan dismissed the idea put forward in many studies on family life, namely that the enslaved did not know and appreciate the nuclear family pattern as a family form. Most studies focused on the contrast between the idealized but uncommon nuclear family relationship between a man and a woman and the dominant female-headed household (Abraham-van der Mark 1973; Marks 1973).

The aforementioned author Abraham-van der Mark concluded that Afro-Curaçaoans had internalized and idealized the value of a nuclear family pattern and that they considered those not living accordingly a common failure (1973). The scholars Linda Terpstra and Anke van Dijk (1987) reject this position and claim that many Afro-Curaçaoan women preferred the position as the pivotal member of the family. In that way they were not dependent on a man who might fail to take care of his family due to social circumstances or sometimes out of choice.

Abraham-van der Mark records two terms which she states were used to describe the male-female relationship on Curaçao: 1) *kompaná*, where a man and a woman cohabit, and 2) *bibá*, where a couple lives separately and the man visits the woman from time to time. Although in interviews elderly people would refer to 'bibá' or 'kompaná' as the same form of cohabitation, the term 'bibá' is a direct description of the couple's living arrangement and therefore not considered a word suitable to use in public. It was therefore masked by the more indirect term 'kompaná', thus a way of masking that a couple was living without being married. It was also used to mask the relationship between a man and a woman where the man would visit his partner occasionally, maybe because he was already married. Using the term 'kompaná' instead of 'bibá' underscores the idea that it was not considered a respectable way of life. Indirectly it sustains Abraham-van der Mark's perception of marriage as the idealized form of male-female relationships.

People would manifest their preference for marital relationships in other ways as well. According to Brenneker, in the neighbourhood called Seru Fortuna, there were cases where people were chased away when they were found cohabiting (1961:35). An incident in 1890 led to a court case: a man called Koeiman was taken to court after he had gone to the home of Maria Rosalie on the afternoon of Sunday 8 June 1890 and being angry, had broken down the roof of her house after having shouted that he did not want her to continue living in an unlawful relationship with a certain Leon on his land.¹

The Papiamentu proverb 'Mihó un bon bibá ku un mal kasá' (It is better to live in a good concubine than in a bad marriage) clearly throws a different light on the value attributed to marriage and cohabiting than the concept of *bida drechi*.² The following banderita also gives further insight into these matters:

Dalia bo ta bai
Dalia bo a hasi bon di bai
Karpinté a traha dos porta
*pa sali un malu dreña bon.*³

Dalia (my love) you are going
You did well to go
The carpenter made two doors
so when the bad leaves, the good enters.

The Church and the Afro-Curaçaoan people clearly had different views regarding the structure of marital relationships. These behavioral paradoxes show the complexity of male-female relations and bring us to the question: what did family life really represent for Afro-Curaçaoans after emancipation? How did they interpret what was meant by *bida drechi* and how did this manifest itself in their daily family lives?

Gender Roles

The organization of the family was expected to revolve around the concept of 'bida drechi', a respectable life. This seems to imply that *bida drechi* and the values it upheld concur with what Peter Wilson (1973) called respectability. Wilson sees respectability as the moral force behind the coercive power of colonialism and neo-colonialism, which is dominated by the value system of the Church. Respectability is exemplified by the island's small middle class and by women of all social classes, for whom the Church is the principal social domain. Men being less devout than women were in the main excluded from this social platform (1973:102).

Living a *bida drechi*, however, implied much more than marrying and attending Church. The Roman Catholic clergy recognized that considerable effort was required to attain a *bida drechi* and tried in many ways to influence this, including through the introduction of guidelines outlining how men, and especially women, should behave as individuals and as a married couple. For women the Church preached a cult of domesticity, respectability and pureness, which it attempted to instill from an early age. In this way it worked towards institutionalizing the subordinate position of women, thus realizing patriarchal dominance within the family. Men's perceptions of the correct behaviour of women would determine the way in which they behaved towards them. The assignment of land by the government reaffirmed women's subordinate position. In 1885 and 1889 regulations were imposed stating that unmarried women were not entitled to purchase land.⁴ An overview of requests by unmarried women reveals that they were denied land for building homes based on the argument that they lived with their parents and were therefore not in need of their own home. For example, two women, Plantin and Selina, both unmarried and without children, were denied the two acres of land each had requested. The reason given for this was that the land was too large for single women. These plots were reserved for men with large families.⁵

This indicates that the State also cultivated the idea that decent women should remain under the control of their parents until they married. Nevertheless, married women were also denied land as such requests could only be carried out by their husbands. Some women refused to accept this and repeatedly applied for land.⁶ Yet their position was increasingly undermined due to the State institutionalizing the male as head of the family and the Church preaching this middle class value as necessary for building a new Curaçaoan society.

The following story expresses a cultural assumption of how women should behave in a relationship with a man. In this story the relationship is treated metaphorically with animal figures as protagonists. It is to be noted that it was remembered by a female informant.

Warawara tin masha rabia riba galiña, pasó galiña a nèk e. E tabata kasá ku galiña. Awó galiña tabata hasi su trabounan mashá bon, ma despues a drent' é un mal ehèmpel. A bin bira ku e no ta hasi trabou di kas mas. Tur dia tin balia na kas di Koma kalakuna. E ta bai balia. Or' e bini su kurpa ta kansá, e no por hasi trabou. E ora ei warawara ta haña duele, pasó e ta bisa warawara ku e tin doló di kabes, e n' por a hasi trabou. Warawara pober ta bini, e mes ta kushiná. Awor kompa chuchubi ta su amigu. Kompa chuchubi a mira e kos ei, e di: 'Awèl mi tin ku bisa kompa warawara e kos ei.' Awor un dia, nèt ora kompa warawara ta den kunuku ta chapí, kompa chuchubi a para riba un palu anto el a kanta: 'Kompa warawara, bo di bo señoira tin doló di kabes, pero bai kas di koma kalakuna bai mira kiko e ta hasi ayá.' Warawara a skucha anto e di: 'Nò, ta kiko esei?' El a keda studia un ratu. Despues el a benta su chapí abou, el a disidí di bai kas. Ora el a yega kas e no a haña koma galiña den kas. Buska buska tur kaminda, el a disidí di bai kas di koma kalakuna. Ora el a yega ayá, ai el a bin haña koma galiña no, mort' i fuma den brasa di un kalakuna-gai ta balia, ta benta garganta atras, bon bistí, tur na sinta. El a para wak nan bon, el a bini kas. Asina koma galiña a dreñta, el a duna koma galiña un bon halá di sota... Koma galiña a keda tur kèns bentá abou. El a haña asina un rabia, ku el a kom' é. Wèl for di e dia ei, warawara no por a mira galiña mas. Unda ku e mira un galiña e ta kom' é, asina tantu rabia el a haña riba galiña. I asina tambe e kuenta a kaba.⁷

Warawara (crested caracara) hates chickens, because he was cheated by one of them. He was married to a hen. At first the hen used to do her work very well, but suddenly she became lazy and stopped doing her house chores. Every day there was a dancing party at the home of Mrs. Turkey. She used to go dancing there. When she returns home, she is so tired that she cannot do any chores. Warawara pitied her, as she used to tell him that she had a headache, and she had not been able to do any work. Poor warawara, he himself had to cook. Now chuchubi is the friend of warawara and he saw what was happening. He said: 'I have to tell mr. warawara about this.' Now one day when warawara was hoeing his land, chuchubi went on top of a tree and said: 'Kompa⁸ warawara, you say that your wife has a headache, but go and look at the home of Mrs. Turkey and you will see what is happening.' Warawara listened and said: 'No, what are you talking about?' He contemplated for a while. Afterwards he threw down his hoe and decided to go home. When he arrived home, he did not find his wife, Mrs. Hen there. He looked everywhere. He then decided to go to Mrs. Turkey's house. When he arrived there, he found Mrs. Hen as drunk as a fiddler, dancing in the arms of a young turkey. She was nicely dressed with all types of ribbons and kept throwing her head backwards. He stood there and watched, then he went home and waited. As soon as Mrs. Hen entered he gave her a good beating. Mrs. Hen remained on the floor out of her senses. He hated her so intensely, that he ate her. Well, as from that day, he could not see a chicken anymore. Wherever he saw a chicken he had to eat it. That much he had hated Mrs. Hen. And that is the end of this story.

A woman was judged within society by the ways she was able to satisfy the basic needs of her husband. In the following narrative the woman again failed to accomplish this, and even though her motive was of a religious nature, it was condemned.

Un dia un hòmber a bini kas, e no a haña su kuminda. E muhé ta gusta su rosario i su misa. Ma e hòmber sí no ta gusta su misa. E ke haña su kuminda kome. El a yega kas un dia, e no a haña su kuminda, el a bati e muhé. E muhé a

One day a man came home and did not find his food ready. His wife liked to pray the rosary and attend Church. But the man did not like to go to Church. He wanted to have his food ready when he came home. Once he came home and did not

*kore bai mondi. Un mondi grandi masha sera.*⁹ *find his food ready, he beat his wife. His wife ran inside the wood, a very dense wood.*

Both stories demonstrate what kind of behaviour was expected of a female. They also address the punishment for female misbehaviour: the men resort to domestic violence. Following emancipation, women were likely to be subjected to violence by their husband or by the man they were cohabiting with. Court records show that ill-treatment of female partners or wives was deemed unacceptable.¹⁰ In these cases men would usually state their motives for this ill-treatment, thus indirectly giving an insight into what expectations they had of women. There is, for example, the court case of Simon, who kicked to death the three year old daughter of Maria Louisa, with whom he cohabited on plantation Asiento. Simon continually ill-treated Maria Louisa and on that particular day had become very angry because his dinner was not prepared when he arrived home from town.¹¹

Sometimes women could not accept this victimization and sought help through the courts. For example, Zoila, a 19 year old straw hat maker cohabiting with a man named Ilario, took him to court after he had badly beaten her when she complained about his late return from a dance.¹² Most of these court cases dealt with women living in town. Virtually no records were found relating to domestic violence in the kunuku. There, the matter was likely to be settled within the community, by someone with authority. The priest Brenneker was informed by a lady born in 1868 that her father had told her about a place on the plantation of San Juan which had come to be known as *Ninga Mari* (Refused partner) based on the fact that a man called Buchi Wan used to ill-treat his 'woman' at that place. Members of the community chased him away, denying him further access.¹³

It was very important for a woman to uphold an image of respectability. Court records show that some women would use the courts when they felt they were dishonoured verbally. These cases were mostly the result of quarrels, where a woman would be slandered about her alleged sexual behaviour. A woman named Helena, for example, requested the district master to forbid a man visiting her home as he was spreading the rumour that he had had intercourse with her. Despite this prohibition he did visit her, entering her home and sitting in her chair. When she tried to get him to leave, he called her a whore and claimed that he had had sex with her and also wanted to beat her. The next day he repeated this from the hill top in the neighbourhood and the next Sunday again in front of the church.¹⁴ Inevitably, these public slanders would taint the respectability of a woman.

Another case was that of Isabelita who took Rudolph to court, a man spreading a slanderous rumour claiming that he had had the opportunity to have sex with her, but had declined this to have sex with her sister instead.¹⁵ In 1907 a woman named Mathilda took another woman, named Claricienne, to court, as she had slandered her by calling her a whore and accusing her of 'pretending to be a fine lady, when in fact she was cohabiting with a man by the name of Winkel'.¹⁶ By mentioning the man's name the slanderer claimed to have some knowledge of the behaviour of the woman. In this case the name would indicate that he was a member of the higher class.

It was not only women taking men to court. A certain Wim took Carmelita to court after she had told him not to bother with her affairs but to concern himself with his wife's instead, who she claimed was committing adultery with a certain Juan, son of Djina.¹⁷

Again the name of the person is mentioned. In a case where a woman was accused of theft, she was also labelled a whore.¹⁸ These cases reveal people's perceptions of respectability. For a woman this revolved around her sexuality: retaining her virginity or remaining faithful.

Songs were also important as a medium for questioning respectability. For example, songs dealing with extramarital relations placed much emphasis on the respectability of the woman. The wife and the lover of a man are each other's *kombles* (rival). This is manifest in the following song, where the wife labels her rival 'kombles'¹⁹, thus categorizing her as a promiscuous woman and comparing her with a woman of the street (a whore). The singer stresses the lack of her rights as opposed to a married woman.

*Ajera m'a mira mi kombles
E ta bin ta tira puña pa mi
e ta bini largami sabi
ta kom mi ta sintimi awor
ku dalia a bai largami
ningun contesta mi no a dune
mi kacho ke responde
mi di kune larga e sol ladra kaya
pasobra e ku kaya ta igual
Mi kacho ta mihor kune
pasombra e tin derechi, e tin banchi.²⁰*

*Yesterday, I saw my kombles
She came and threw words at me
asking me how I feel now
that my man has left me
I gave her no answer
my dog wanted to answer
I told it to leave the street
barking only to my kombles
because she and the street are one of a kind
my dog is better off than she is
because it has rights, it has a penning.*

The following song relates to a woman's extramarital relations. It concerns a woman called Chikita who lived together with a man named Djodjo, but rumour suggested she had a child with the overseer. Once again, the woman is portrayed as someone behaving immorally.

*N'yèyèyè, n'yèyè,
Ta yu di bomba ku Djodjo.
Parandero Yè.
Chikita, ata yu ta yora
Parandero Yè
Ta yu di bomba ku Djodjo
Ta yu di bomba ku Djodjo.
Parandero Yè.²¹*

*N'yèyèyè, n'yèyè,
It is the child of the overseer and Djodjo
Revellers Yè.
Chikita, the child is crying
Revellers Yè
It is the child of the overseer and Djodjo
It is the child of the overseer and Djodjo
Revellers Yè.*

As an alternative to court action, *tambú* songs were composed by women themselves in an attempt to salvage their respectability. For example, in the following *tambú* song, the woman-singer recalls with regret that the affair ended with the man sending her back to her mother when she became pregnant. In these songs relating to sexual conduct, metaphors were used. The male informant who sung it to me believed it to be a true story which he had heard during a *tambú* celebration on the plantation in Banda Bou where he lived at the beginning of the twentieth century.²² By singing it in public and communally, the woman gave her own side of the story, in doing so curtailing the gossip and the rumours stemming from this event.²³ It could also be a way of warning other women about

the dangers of illicit sexual relationships, including ruining any marriage prospects, thus indirectly sustaining the Catholic clergy's concept of *bida drechi*. This coincides with the proverb 'Un hòmber ta kai den lodo, lanta sagudí su kurpa, e ta keda hòmber' (A man would fall in the mud, would stand up, shake his body and will still remain a respectable man).²⁴ Although women had no such luxury, they would express themselves in order to draw attention to their particular situation.

Three variants have been found of this song, thus revealing a recurrence of this type of relationship, in which women experienced a form of exploitation by men.

<i>Tur hende a papia un ko'</i>	<i>Everybody said something</i>
<i>Ta kon mi so n' papia nada?</i>	<i>Why did I not say anything?</i>
<i>Pasó m'a hasi un negoshi</i>	<i>I did a business</i>
<i>m'a e negoshi n' kumbiními</i>	<i>but the business was inconvenient</i>
<i>M'a hasi negoshi</i>	<i>I did a business</i>
<i>Ma negoshi a sali malu</i>	<i>But the business went bad</i>
<i>M'a kumpra un barí di suku pretu</i>	<i>I bought a barrel of brown sugar</i>
<i>M'a vende, m'a perdè ariba</i>	<i>I sold it at a loss</i>
<i>Shonnan, el a pidimi rosa mondi</i>	<i>People, he asked me to clear the land for sowing</i>
<i>El a pidimi kima sushi</i>	<i>He asked me to burn the trash</i>
<i>Awó ku bòshi ta na ranka</i>	<i>Now that there is a fruit on the vine</i>
<i>el a mandami pa mi mama.</i> ²⁵	<i>He sent me to my mother.</i>

The following variant of the same song collected by Brenneker and Juliana expresses anger about the situation and in this case is more direct in accusing the male. Again the singer improvises her anger to the inspiration of the moment, using the well-tried motif of the *tambú*.

<i>Zimulai, Zimulai,</i>	<i>Forgiveness, forgiveness²⁷</i>
<i>Zimulai na de dòntru</i>	<i>Forgiveness to hell</i>
<i>Ku mi sambarku di shete sribu</i>	<i>With my seven strapped sandals</i>
<i>m'a yudabo, traha kunuku</i>	<i>I helped you to farm</i>
<i>Awó ku pampuna ta na ranka</i>	<i>Now that there is a pumpkin on the vine</i>
<i>b'a mandami pa mi mama</i>	<i>you have sent me to my mother</i>
<i>Zimulai, Zimulai,</i>	<i>Forgiveness, forgiveness</i>
<i>Zimulai na de dòntru.</i> ²⁶	<i>Forgiveness to hell.</i>

The third variant using a rhythm was carried back by labourers returning from Cuba and also focuses on this theme:

<i>M'a yudabo rosa mondi</i>	<i>I helped you clear the land for sowing,</i>
<i>kibra sumpiña den mi dede</i>	<i>had cactus thorns pierce my fingers</i>
<i>p'awe ku pampuna ta na ranka</i>	<i>and now there's a pumpkin on the vine</i>
<i>bo mandami pa mi mama...</i>	<i>you sent me to my mother...</i>
<i>Tu kabritu keje keje,</i>	<i>Keje keje goat that you are,</i>

*kon binibo na baranka?
Tu kabritu keje keje,
kon binibo na baranka?²⁸*

*how come you took to the rocks?
keje keje goat that you are,
how come you took to the rocks?*

As previously stated, according to Wilson, respectability is exemplified by the middle class on the island and also by women of all social classes, who are notably more devout than men (1973:102). For the male culture he used the concept of ‘reputation’, a clear distinction from the way women were judged. According to Wilson men mostly hang out on the street, its adjunct. They would gather at the rum shop at every opportunity to drink, play games and above all talk (1973:149-50). This notion is applicable to Curaçaoan male society as well. The Church often complained that it was only marginally successful in imbuing a moral code in Afro-Curaçaoan males and that their manners were less attuned to the Roman Catholic values. Popularly such a man was called *muchu hòmber parandero*: a ‘reveller’, unwilling to settle down.

The following *tambú* song – which I collected from a male informant – seems to comply with this. The main character reassures his mother that she should not be afraid to lose him as a consequence of marriage. He likens himself with a cockroach who knows how to fool a hen. Here an element of play and trickery is also present. The song portrays the relationship between a mother and her son. The same woman who has been protective of her daughter, allows her son a lot more freedom. She expects her daughter to marry, but her son, who would support the family financially, she would rather hold on to.

*Hendenan tur yega serka
Mi ta bai kontabu mi pasashi
ma kaweta ta na porta
i ta bai bisa ku t’ami di
Ai mama, mir’è ta yora
ku e ta bai pèrdè su yu baron
Mama, bo no yora
t’ami ta e kakalaka
ku ta dual galiña bula bai.²⁹*

*People come and draw close
I am going to tell you my story
But gossip is at the door
And will say that I have said
Oh mother, look at her crying
Because she is going to lose her son
Mama, don’t you cry
I am the cockroach
to fool the hens and fly away.*

This song coincides with the following extract from a narrative recorded by Juliana, in which a man named Carlitu Martina, born in 1905, discusses fishing at sea off the northern coast of the island. He compared the sea there, with its almost constant heavy waves, to a man who on seeing a woman becomes very agitated. In this sense the sea represents manhood and therefore strength and power.

C.M.: *Laman di nòrt no por mira muhé ku wowo.*

E.J.: *Ta bèrdat e kos ei?*

C.M.: *Sí. E no por mira muhé ku wowo, ta laman machu esei.*

E.J.: *E no por mira muhé.³⁰*

C.M.: *The sea at the northern part of the island cannot stand the sight of women.*

E.J.: *Is that true?*

C.M.: *Yes. It cannot stand the sight of women. It is a male sea.*

E.J.: *It cannot stand the sight of women.*

People had a conception of what represented a good man: someone who provided for his woman and children. He had to be a *hòmber trahadó*, a hard-working man. Elsie Solassa, for example, refers to the expectations of his mother's family with regard to any prospective husband: 'E mester ta hende serio, i e mester ta trahadó tambe, paso ora bo kasa bo tin ku traha' (The man had to be a serious person and a hard-working man, because when you get married you have to work).³¹ Another example is the following saying, which reinforces the expectation that good men earn money: 'Loke un bon hòmber ta trese na kas ku man, tin muhé ta tira afó ku kuchara' (A spendthrift woman will squander what a good man has earned).³² One of the questions the girl's family would ask a man wanting to propose was whether he had been able to build his own hut, since this was also an indication of whether he could provide for a woman. Following are some of the additional questions asked when someone proposed, told by Rosa Isabela, born in 1900.

*Buchi Jobe a bai puntra pa kasa ku Katrina. Buchi Jobe a kana yega na kas di mama di Katrina. E ta bisa: 'Kon bai Ma?' E mama ta respondé: 'Kon bai Buchi Jobe. Buchi Jobe, no ta drenta?' 'Sí, Ma.' 'Kiko ta Buchi Jobe su respondi.' 'Ma, mi a bin puntra Ma pa Katrina.' 'Buchi Jobe tur kos ta kla?' 'Sí Ma, mi tin un mangasina yen di maishi chikí. Anto mi tin seis galiña rondó di kas. Anto Ma, mi tin buriku machu mará na palu. Anto mi tin kalbas, ku ta karga dies dos kana di mangusá, pa hende di trabou tempu di kunuku.' 'Buchi Jobe, Bo tin karson pa bai afó.' 'Sí. Mi tin dos karson pa bai afó. Un di nan Katrina mester lapi.'*³³

Buchi Jobe came to propose marriage to Katrina. He walked and reached the home of the mother of Katrina. He said: 'How are you, Ma?' The mother answered: 'How are you, Buchi Jobe? Do you want to come inside the house?' 'Yes, Ma.' 'What did you come for, Buchi Jobe?' 'I came to ask Ma's permission to marry Katrina.' 'Buchi Jobe, do you have everything ready in place?' 'Yes, Ma. My storehouse is full of millet. And I have six hens walking in my yard. I also have a male donkey tied to a tree. And I have some calabashes which can carry twelve litres of mangusa (food made of millet, beans and peanuts), for when the people come to help to harvest.' 'Buchi Jobe, do you have pants to wear for travelling?' 'Yes, I have two pairs of pants to wear for travelling. One pair needs to be mended by Katrina.'

Also a man with whom one was cohabiting, was judged against these expectations. For example, when Johannes was stabbed to death by a 35 year old former slave called Chevalier on Christmas Eve 1877, Petronia, with whom the deceased had a visiting relationship, lamented the fact now the man who took good care of her and her children, was dead.³⁴

Poverty and its Impact on the Bida Drechi

Poverty was an ever present constraint on family life. After emancipation, the socio-economic situation for a large group of Afro-Curaçaoans was very bad, with many living in extreme poverty. Crops often failed for several consecutive years, resulting in people having next to nothing to eat (Renkema 1981a). Each year the colonial report would record rainfall patterns. It also reported whether there were other types of livelihood available and would give an overview of these.

In many court cases hunger was given as a motive for stealing food or breaking the rules with respect to the amount of produce transported and the required permit. These court cases would increase in a drought year – a bad year, *mal aña* – resulting in no harvest at all. Children would then stay home from school, or receive biscuits at school. Family members would even fight over food.³⁵ The newspaper *La Union* of 13 April 1889 wrote that poverty had increased and that there was a lack of work; even begging had become difficult. Begging was a common feature in the life of Afro-Curaçaoans, as expressed in the proverb ‘Kaminda buriku trapa, tofolika ta bebe awa (Where the donkey steps, the bird tofolika will drink water, in other words: poor people must receive from the rich). On 11 February 1903 *La Cruz* described how poor people would go and collect the bread that the warships had thrown into the sea and would let these pieces dry so that they could eat them. In the same year the district master wrote that he saw people, formerly in a good position, starving, with nothing but herbal tea to drink.³⁶

Popularly these years were called ‘aña di tene muraya’ (the year(s) to hold the wall(s), due to people becoming so weak that they needed to lean on the walls while walking). Poverty meant being unable to pay the land rent (resulting in requests for dispensation from the government) and a lack of food, water and proper clothing, which especially affected children.³⁷ Hunger was referred to euphemistically as ‘awe krus ta abou’ (today the cross is down) or ‘Wancitu a subi mesa’ (Juancito has climbed on the table). Nevertheless, starvation was a common reason cited for stealing. For example, Hose, a former slave who in 1879 was 66 years old, received five years imprisonment for stealing a sheep. His argument was that he had become too weak to work and that the money he earned was not sufficient to live on.³⁸ An extreme example of poverty was the case of a twenty year old female straw hat maker who in 1874 tried to kill her child by pushing a stone down its throat. The mother cited destitution as the main provocation for her action.³⁹

People would sometimes resign themselves to poverty with certain expressions, such as: ‘Nos t’ei na mundu pa biba kontentu pasó hende mester biba kontentu, sea barika yen, barika bashí, kontentu ta spar bo’ (We are in this world to live happily. Because people have to live happily, whether you are sated with food, or have an empty stomach. Happiness will save your life).⁴⁰ The agony of hunger was expressed in all forms of oral tradition. Many stories and songs concerning poverty focus in particular on its effect on family life. For example, food was a recurring theme in many Nanzi stories. The trickster Nanzi would steal food from shon Arei, who had an abundant supply. The rationale for his action was that his wife Shi Maria and their children were starving. In the stories, however, Nanzi did not always share the food with his family and sometimes behaved irresponsibly. This was not approved of.

In most stories and songs concerning hunger, children were the focus, being the most vulnerable. The aforementioned Boeke described how the bellies of young children would be swollen due to hunger while their bodies remained very thin (1907:52). Dekker’s study (1982) revealed a high incidence of child mortality before the age of one.

The following song related to me in 1984 by an 84 year old interviewee who had learnt it from his father, focuses on the plight of a starving family, a father and mother with four children. There is no work. One of the children sings in a child-like way and states that he is hungry. He tells his father and mother that he has pain in his belly. They have nothing

to feed him and the child gets angry and throws his plate on the floor. The plate falls and makes the sound *vayo plinin*. One of the greatest challenges of family life was to feed one's children.

Ami tin djolo, bayayo
Ami tin djo vayo plinin
Pega kandela djolo
Vayo plinin
*Zea nun de, vayo plinin.*⁴²

*I have pain, bayayo*⁴¹
I have pain, vayo plinin
Put on the fire, pain
Vayo plinin
*Zea nun de, vayo plinin*⁴³

The same motive is present in the following story. Again it presents a recurring challenge: how can the family survive in the face of these economic difficulties? Here it is apparent that poverty also impedes children's education. The story revolves around whether the child can attend school while being hungry.

*Un dia tabatin un mama i su kasá. Un yu so nan tabatin. Nan tabatin un bida mashá penoso ku otro. E tata ta bai mondi bai piki palu seku, mara, bin kòrta bin bende na porta di kas pa kuida kas. Nan ta sinta riba un piedra o riba un barí, asina pover nan tabata. E mucha a keda te na ora e mester a bai skol. Awor e tata ta deseá pa e bai skol, ma e no tin moda pa e mucha bai skol. E mama di: 'Laga nos buska un manera pa e bai skol.' E tata di: 'Ta ki nos por hasi... Anto no tin nada... Tin mainta n' tin ni kòfi ni te.' E mama di: 'Laga e mucha bai skol den nòmber di Dios.'*⁴⁴

Once upon a time there was a mother and her husband. They had only one child. Their life together was very pitiful. The father would go to the bushes to pick dry pieces of wood, tie them together, then cut them and sell them in order to maintain his family. They were so poor, that they had to sit on a stone or on a drum. Now it was time for the child to go to school. The father wanted him to go to school, but there was no money to send him. The mother said: 'Let us find a way for him to go to school.' The father said: 'What can we do... And there is nothing... Sometimes in the morning there is neither coffee nor tea.' The mother said: 'Let the child go to school in the name of God.'

The following statement given to Brenneker by a woman who had experienced this type of hardship clarifies what it meant to live in poverty. It shows how creative a mother had to be in order to feed her family. What is important in this statement is the informant's idea about marriage and her contribution to keeping the marriage together despite economic difficulties.

Den mi bida di matrimonio..., mi a tene mi matrimonio. Mi a sòru pa mi lugá, manera tempu tabata. Mi kasá tabata gana tres (énfasis) yotin ku un riá òf ku dòriá pa siman. Kada un aña i dos luna mi tabatin yu. Te mi a haña 17 yu. Mi a lucha ku matrimonio te ora m'a fustan kon tin di hasi ora bo ta den e bida ei. Kasá ta gana tres yotin ku dòriá pa siman. Ora

In my marriage..., I kept my marriage alive. I took care of my home, according to how the situation was. My husband used to earn 1.65 guilders or 1.80 a week. Every one year and two months I gave birth to a child. I got 17 children. I struggled with my marriage and learned how to manage while in such a life. My husband earned 1.80 a week. At the end of the week, he

siman yega, e mester tuma un riá pa tabako. Anto ta keda ku tres yotin ku un riá. Pastor, e sèn no ta yega pa kria kas yu, yu chikí den kas. Pastor, mi ta mara mi kabes, mi ta kue mi kaminda. Despues ku mi a bira brutu den e bida, mi ta faha mi lomba, kue mondi. Buta yunan den kas, duna nan kos, buta nan sinta riba stul, sera kas. Mi ta kue te mondi di Papaya, na sùit di seru di Papaya. Ora mi yega den mondi, mi ta kue shimaruku, yena maku-tu, yena otro tas na mi man. Mi ta yega kas, traha papa pa mi yunan. Anto mi ta bai bisti mi paña i mi ta kue kaminda di bai Punda. Na Punda mi ta bende shimaruku. Shimaruku akí, shimaruku ayá, pa mi haña sèn pa kumpra kuminda hiba kas. Mi so riba kaminda pa bai kas. Banda di 8'or di anochi mi ta na e lugá ku yama Jandoret, banda di Samí. Ei mi ta para mira mi kas si tin lus. Lugá no tin lus. Yega haña mi yunan tur di k Kemp k Kemp banda di otro, huntu ku kasá, paso kasá no tin pa duna. Pastor sa ken a lucha ku bida di matrimonio? Ta p'esei mi ta tur mankaron. di matrimonio? Ta p'esei mi ta tur mankaron.⁴⁵

would take 15 cents for tobacco. And there would remain 1.65 guilder. Pastor, you know, the money was not sufficient to keep a home, take care of the children, small children. Pastor, I used to tie my head with a scarf and go. Afterwards when I became hardened by life, I would buckle up my back and set off for the bushes of Papaya, south of Papaya hill. I would leave my children at home, give them some food, put them to sit on a chair and close the house. In the bushes I would pick shimaruku cherries and fill the basket and bag I carried. I would then go home, make some porridge for my children. Then I would get dressed and set off to town. In town I would sell the cherries. Walk and sell the cherries, so that I could get enough money to buy food and bring home. I would return home all by myself. At 8 o'clock in the evening I would reach the place called Jandoret, near Samí. I would stand and look at my house to see if there was any light. There would be no light. I would reach home and find my children clutched to each other, together with my husband. Because my husband did not have anything to give. Pastor, you know who has struggled with marital life? That is why I am all crippled now.

The Extended Family and Bida Drechi

Bolland (2002) states that following emancipation, many people in the Caribbean left the plantations in order to reunite with family members they were separated from during slavery; this relocation often resulted in new communities being created. Studies have shown that Afro-Caribbean families tend to be large and complex, with third and fourth generation family members playing important roles in the psychological and economic support of the group (Bolland 2002; Barrow and Reddock 2002).

During enslavement families of two or three generations were likely to be living on the same plantation (Jordaan 1999:488). After emancipation, families residing on a piece of land for a long period would often send a petition to the authorities, requesting a legalization of their position. They would strengthen their claim by stating that the land on which they had grown up had been handed down to them by their parents, who in turn had received it from their parents.

Even when people decided to leave the plantation where they lived – which often meant leaving some family members behind – the main consideration in selecting a plot of land would be the proximity of other family members. For example, Mathias Apostel abandoned his plan to continue looking for land after the district master told him that he could

only get a plot far from the plantation where his family still lived.⁴⁶ In another case Saxen, a former slave who had been chased from the plantation where he stayed after emancipation, lodging with his mother and sister, went to live on a neighbouring plantation, where his father, Bomba Nanja, was the overseer.⁴⁷ In order to accommodate his son, the overseer had asked the district master for permission to chop wood in order to repair his huts, claiming that he was building a kitchen and a storage room. The district master recorded that Bomba Nanja was instead building a third hut for family members from a neighbouring plantation.⁴⁸

Another example is Andries, who soon after emancipation broke his contract with the plantation owner to go and live with his father Jose on his land. In this case both father and son were punished as a deterrent to others.⁴⁹ These actions show that in one way or another, family members helped each other in order to become truly free. For many years this living pattern based on multigenerational family unions continued to exist in the kunuku. Several groups of the same family would live close to each other, sometimes on the same land, which had originally been given out to an ancestor. In the countryside one would find a collection of mudstone houses built over the years, as the family expanded.

Kinship was important as it determined one's identity. People were sometimes referred to by the name of their ancestors as well, long after these had died. For example, a man would be known by the name *Wan di defuntu Maria*: Wan, the son of the late Maria. This extended name was also used in official letters. Or sometimes one would even include three generations, as in the case of *Wan di Maria di Federica*: Wan, the son of Maria, daughter of Federica. The name could include male ancestors but this was less common.

Women in particular instilled in their children the importance of family relationships and passed on information about their relatives. In their stories they would remember those who had preceded them, the *avochi* (the ancestors). An informant states how she continued this tradition taught by her mother. In her account she also remarks that this custom was disappearing in the twentieth century.

*Mi mama tabata konta nos tur kos. Di nos famianan leu, leu. Mi yunan ta hari mashá ora mi buska pa sa famia di hende. Asina mi mama asiñami.*⁵⁰

My mother used to tell us everything. About our very distant families. My children laugh at me, when I try to find out about the families of other people. I have been taught this by my mother.

The emphasis on solid family relations is also found in the following narrative, in which a father teaches his children how to stay together as a family:

Mi tata a bisa nos: 'Mi yunan, boso ta krese. No buska nunka plaka, pasó si bo buska plaka bo ta pèrdè bida. Ma si bo buska hende lo bo tin bida largu.' Un tata tabatin shete yu. El a manda e yunan bai kòrta shete bara. Ora e baranan a bini, e di ku un di e yunan: 'Buta nan huntu anto kibra nan.' E yu a pone nan huntu. E di: 'Papa, mi no bo kibra nan.' E tata

Our father has told us: 'My children, you are growing up. Never seek money, because if you seek money, you will lose life. But if you seek people, you will have a long life.' A father had seven children and he sent them to cut wood and bring seven twigs. When they came with the twigs, he told one of them: 'Put them together and try to break them.' The child put

*di: 'Lòs nan awor, buta abou.' E di: 'Kibra awor.' E yu a kue nan unu unu, el a kibra nan. E tata di: 'Awor sí. Asina ta ku ora boso plama for di otro, ora bosonan n' ta uní ku otro mas, ta fásil pa boso kibra.'*²⁵¹

them together and said: 'Papa, I cannot break them.' Then the father said: 'Separate them and put them on the floor.' He continued: 'Break them now.' The child took the seven twigs, one by one and broke them. The father said: 'Now you can break them. You see, once you break the bond of being united you can easily be broken.'

The complexity of kinship is best illustrated in the array of names denoting family members, as highlighted in the following overview.

Table 8.1 Family Organization by Name and Nature of Relationship (Based on Oral Interviews)

Generation	Papiamentu	Standard English meaning	Nature of relationship
fourth ascending	tatarawela	mother or father of one's great-grandparents	consanguinity
third ascending	bisawela (wela grandi)	(great-grandparents) great-grandfather/mother	consanguinity
second ascending Tawela	wela grandfather	grandmother consanguinity	consanguinity
first ascending	mama	mother	consanguinity
	mama di kriansa	foster mother	marital, member of a community
	madrasa	stepmother	marital
	tata	father	consanguinity
	tata di kriansa	foster father	
	padraso	stepfather	
	tanta di parti di mama	aunt (on the mother's side)	consanguinity
	tio di parti di mama	uncle (on the mother's side)	consanguinity
	tanta di parti di tata	aunt (on the father's side)	consanguinity
	tio di parti di tata	uncle (on the father's side)	consanguinity
	aktu-primu	second cousin	consanguinity
	suegru/suegu	mother/father in law	marital
	kuñá	sister/brother in law	marital
	madrina/pepe	godmother	ritual kinship
	padrinu/padrino	godfather	ritual kinship
	padrinu tras di porta	godfather (in case of a child born out of wedlock)	ritual kinship
	yaya	nanny; also an elderly woman who carried the child at baptism	ritual kinship, social relationship

	menchi	a woman paid to breastfeed someone else's baby	member of a community/labour
ego's	ruman	brother/sister	consanguinity
	primu	cousin	consanguinity
	primu-ruman	the children of two sisters or two brothers are 'first cousins'	consanguinity
	ruman djafó	brother/sister born out of wedlock	consanguinity
	ruman di kriansa	foster brother/sister	community, consanguinity
	ruman parti di tata	brother/sister on the father's side	consanguinity
	ruman parti di mama	brother/sister on the mother's side	consanguinity
	kasá	wife/husband	marital
	bibá/kompañero di bida	common law wife/husband	common law
	kombles	rival of the wife	extramarital relationship
	ruman di lechi	boy/girl breastfed by the same woman	Work-relationship
first descending	yu	child	consanguinity
	yu di kas	child born in wedlock	consanguinity
	yu di kriansa	foster child	community
	entená	son or daughter of one of the persons forming a couple, accepted as a fully fledged child of that couple	marital relationship
	yu djafó	child born out of wedlock	consanguinity
	ihá	godchild	ritual kinship
second descending	nietu/ñetu	grandchild	consanguinity
third descending	nietu tuma nietu	grandchild in the third generation	consanguinity
fourth descending	kabai a skop e	grandchild in the fourth generation	consanguinity

This overview indicates that in the extended family system descent can easily be traced back to the third and fourth generations. There is a strong sense of consanguinity, especially on the mother's side. In most cases these blood or birth relationships would be referred to as *famia yegá*, the immediate family. But the distinction between the *famia yegá* and the *famia djaleu* (the further family) was very subjective.

People were related by the usual blood and marital ties or in some cases also by extramarital ties. In addition, rituals and work could determine relations. Blood relations were not always solely the result of a conjugal relationship. A cohabiting couple's offspring were also included in the kinship system, as were the offspring of extramarital relationships. The term *yu djafô* refers to a child born out of wedlock. In the female headed household with sequential monogamous relationships the brothers and sisters were called *ruman parti di mama* (brother or sister on the mother's side). Sometimes cousins of the same generation grew up as brothers and sisters. In this case they were called *primu-ruman* (cousin/sister-brother).

The prime value of family relationships lay in their capacity for support. Social problems in particular put in action the networks of interdependence within families. In many cases relatives would turn to each other for help in childrearing, when for example a mother had died during childbirth. The concept of *kriansa* manifested in the term *mama di krijansa* (foster mother), *yu di krijansa* (foster child) and *ruman di krijansa* (foster brother/sister) reflects the role of care in this situation. Sometimes the *yu di krijansa* was taken care of by women engaged in a same-sex relationship. Although this was an issue not much talked about openly, it was mentioned as a state existing among both men and women. The *kambrada*, where women lived together, often occurred due to the gender imbalance in society as men would emigrate in large numbers to look for work elsewhere or they would work as sailors on ships. These cohabiting women would adopt children from people who were unable to financially support their own children.

The network of help also became apparent in caring for a sick or elderly family member. It provided a shelter for those who had been given the 'ora di porta' by the plantation owner or who had been chased away from the plantation. The extended family proved useful and often provided help when necessary. Important events such as harvest, marriage, birth, first communion and death were shared within these relationships.

However, many people due to various reasons still found themselves outside these large family communities. For instance, the master of the fifth district mentions the case of a woman who had nobody to take care of her ill children.⁵² There was also the case of a family living in Santa Rosa: with the mother having fallen ill and the father being in prison, there was no one to care for the children: five year old John and three year old Jozef, an adopted orphan. The district master had to act as an intermediary placing these children for a fee of two guilders and fifty cents per month with a midwife, who had been recommended by the priest of Santa Rosa.⁵³

Another example was the case of Marcelina, who died in September 1908, leaving a nine month old baby in the care of a distant family member who had taken care of the child when the mother was ill and continued to do so for a few months after she had died. When the woman needed to go to town to look for work, she could no longer care for the child. Neither the sister of the deceased nor the grandfather could look after the child. Finally the woman took the baby to the district master in the hope that he would find a family willing to look after it.⁵⁴

One of the customs in this context was that of ritual kinship, such as created at baptism, first communion and marriage. At baptism the parents would chose as godparents people who had attained a position of prominence and respect within the community.

This could be based on their level of education or their financial position. Baptismal godparents played an important role in the life of the child. They shared financial responsibility, as the godmother (*madrina*) had to provide for the layette (the garments for the baby), while at the first communion she would also be responsible for the child's outfit. The godfather was expected to cover some of the expenses incurred at these ceremonies, which were usually accompanied by exuberant celebrations; also he would give the godmother a present. The *madrina-ihá* (godmother and godchild) relationship was very important, as the godmother was considered a second mother to the child. She had to give her approval to important life choices and in case of the mother's death she became responsible for the child. Godmothers in particular were chosen for their high moral standards.

*Madrina i padrino ta skohé pa wela. Nan mester ta hende di bon famia i ta biba un bida drechi. E madrina mester ta 'señorita'. E no tabatin mag di tin yu ni ta bibá ku niun hende. E mester tabata saká for di kas di su mayornan. E padrino sí por tabata un tiki mas bieu i por tabata un hende kasá kaba. Ta importante ku e padrino tabatin un bon trabou. Esei ta pa kubri e gastunan di boutismo i sigui duna e ihá regalo i sèn. E madrina tambe mester a haña regalo serka e padrino.*⁵⁵

The grandmother chose the godparents. They had to be people of a good family and had to live a respectable life. The godmother had to be a virgin. She must not have any child, nor be living with anyone. She had to be taken from the house of her parents (by her prospective husband). The godfather could be older and could be married. It was important that he had a good job. That is to cover the expenses of baptism and to continue to give the godchild presents and money. The godmother also had to receive a present from him.

The terms *commere/compere* and *commadre/compadre* were used as terms of address for the godmother and godfather at baptism. It imbued in them an important position in the family system. The *padrino* and *madrina di kasamentu* (patron and matron of honour) were assigned during the marriage in Church. They accompanied the married couple during the Church service and the couple could turn to them in the event of marital problems.

Conclusion

In this Chapter I have described social relations within the private realm. I elaborated on this by using the concept of 'bida drechi' introduced by the Catholic Church to pinpoint what was seen as proper family life: a monogamous relationship between a man and a woman sanctioned by civil but principally religious marriage. In the male-oriented ideology of the Catholic Church the concept of 'bida drechi' upheld patriarchy as proper family life and perpetuated gender inequality in the family. Women were considered unequal to men as they had to maintain passive and reproductive roles within the family. They were primarily seen as wives and mothers.

In a sense people embraced this value system. Civil and religious marriage was considered respectable, unlike the common cohabiting practice of the 'bibá' and the 'kompaná'. When legal marriage was financially possible, it was celebrated and performed as a means of gaining prestige. It was also an important determinant of what was seen as being a good

Catholic and carried with it social advantages for the couple and for their future children, who could attend Catholic schools. Children coming from 'bon famia' – a formally married couple – were given preferential treatment by nuns and priests at school.

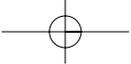
The local male-dominated ideology is also evident in the male perception of the correct behaviour of women and determined the ways in which men behaved towards women. Women were therefore doubly subjugated; first by the social system and, in family life, by their own partner or husband.

Yet poverty made it difficult for people to maintain the moral code of the *bida drechi*. Due to poverty, people migrated within and beyond the shores of the island, which affected how well couples could and would live up to this model of family life. While the men were absent, women could display their autonomous roles more clearly within the norms of respectability set for married life.

Notes

- 1 NatAr, Archief van het Gouvernement, Rol van Strafzaken 1890, Procesverbaal no. 32.
- 2 NatAr, Archief van het Gouvernement, Rol van Strafzaken 1878, Procesverbaal no. 24.
- 3 Interview Helena Koeks (born 1903), Jeanne Henriquez/Allen, July 1992 (NatAr). Oral History Project in preparation of the documentary 'Bosnan skondi' (Hidden Voices), by Jeanne Henriquez and Rose Mary Allen, July 1992, Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology of the Netherlands Antilles and Centre for the Development of Women (SEDA).
- 4 NatAr, Archief van het Gouvernement, Ingekomen stukken, 3e district, inv. no. 42, 18-1-1889/42.
- 5 NatAr, Archief van het Gouvernement, Administratie van Financiën, 1892, 31-12-1897/611, 524.
- 6 NatAr, Archief van het Gouvernement, Administratie van Financiën, 1892, 4-6-1895/59.
- 7 Interview Chita Martina (born 21-5-1911), Brenneker/Juliana, 29-7-1982 (T 82, Fundashon Biblioteca Públika Kòrsou).
- 8 'Kompa' is a common term for a very close male friend.
- 9 Interview Gerardo Rosario (born 1877, living in Banda Riba (Zikinzá-collection, T 759 and T 761, NatAr).
- 10 NatAr, Archief van het Gouvernement, Rol van Strafzaken 1872, Procesverbaal no. 37, 30; Rol van Strafzaken 1881, Procesverbaal no. 13.
- 11 NatAr, Archief van het Gouvernement, Rol van Strafzaken 1881, Procesverbaal no. 13.
- 12 NatAr, Archief van het Gouvernement, Rol van Strafzaken 1871, Procesverbaal no. 12.
- 13 Story told by Virginia Meulens (born 1869; Zikinzá-collection, T 438, NatAr).
- 14 NatAr, Archief van het Gouvernement, Rol van Strafzaken, Criminele en Correctionele Teregtzitting 10-11-1871, Procesverbaal no. 43.
- 15 NatAr, Archief van het Gouvernement, Rol van Strafzaken 1907, Procesverbaal no. 69, 74.
- 16 NatAr, Archief van het Gouvernement, Rol van Strafzaken 1907, Procesverbaal no. 10.
- 17 NatAr, Archief van het Gouvernement, Rol van Strafzaken 1905, Procesverbaal no. 18.
- 18 See for example the court case in which Rosita was accused of calling Betsy in public (in front of her home) a stinking whore and a shameless thief because she had failed to make the brims for the straw hats on payment as they had agreed upon five days earlier, arguing that her child was ill. Rosita had asked Betsy to return her wooden crown, but she had failed to do so (NatAr, Archief van het Gouvernement, Rol van Strafzaken, Criminele en Correctionele Teregtzitting 1872, Procesverbaal no. 31).
- 19 The mistress of the husband.

- 20 Brenneker 1970:1804.
- 21 Sung by Michi Rosina, born 1926 (Zikinzá-collection, T 1022, NatAr).
- 22 The songs for women were categorized as follows: religion, children, love, satire and work. Moreover, through lullabies (*kantika pa hasi mucha drumi*) mothers interacted with their babies. Other songs were sung communally, such as those forming part of storytelling and ring-game activities.
- 23 See also the story by Juliana about Anita, who lived in the town area (Monte Verde). In the year her daughter Rosa started cohabiting with a busdriver in Pietermaai she sang ‘shonnan, m’a perde mi rosa, yor’e’ (People I have lost my rose, help me cry). Juliana 1981:18.
- 24 Even animal calls could be interpreted as a sign that a woman was pregnant without being married. The typical scream of an owl, for example, warned a mother that her daughter was pregnant (Brenneker 1966:23).
- 25 Interview Didi Sluis (born 1904), Allen/Ernest Gaari, 14-4-1984 (NatAr).
- 26 Interview Eligio Maduro (born 1886), Brenneker/Juliana, 1959 (Zikinzá-collection, T 1066, NatAr).
- 27 Zimalai is a Guene word, translated by Martinus as ‘forgiveness’ (1997:199).
- 28 Interview Gerardo Rosario (born 1877), Brenneker/Juliana, 1958 (Zikinzá-collection, T 318, NatAr).
- 29 Interview Nicolaas Petronia (born 1898), Allen, 9-6-1986 (NatAr).
- 30 Interview Carlitu Martina (born 1905), Brenneker/Juliana, 25-4-1984 (T 101, Fundashon Biblioteka Públiko Kòrsou’).
- 31 Interview Elsie Solassa (born 1938), Allen, 15-3-2000 (NatAr). His grandmother, who was born in 1887, used to tell him many narratives.
- 32 Hendrikse-Rigaud 1994:248.
- 33 Interview Rosa Isabela (born 1900), Brenneker/Juliana, 1959 (Zikinzá-collection, T 579, NatAr).
- 34 NatAr, Archief van het Gouvernement, Rol van Strafzaken 1878, Procesverbaal no. 24.
- 35 NatAr, Archief van het Gouvernement, Brievenboeken 5 district, inv. no. 127, 16-4-1867.
- 36 Idem, Archief van het Gouvernement, Brievenboeken 2e district, inv. no. 138, 31-7-1903/121.
- 37 Kerstgeschenk 1883:215.
- 38 NatAr, Archief van het Gouvernement, Rol van Strafzaken 1879, Procesverbaal no. 4. Hose had been allowed to remain on his former plantation to weave baskets which he sold to the owner.
- 39 NatAr, Archief van het Gouvernement, Rol van Strafzaken 1874, Procesverbaal no. 2.
- 40 Interview Felix Martina (born 21-2-1894), Brenneker/Juliana, 28-3-1978 (T 62, Fundashon Biblioteka Públiko Kòrsou).
- 41 Unable to translate.
- 42 Interview Eduardo Tokaai (born 1899), Allen, 12-9-1984 (NatAr).
- 43 Unable to translate.
- 44 Interview Lodewijk Hooi (born 1879), Brenneker/Juliana, 1959 (Zikinzá-collection, T 470, NatAr).
- 45 Interview Nana Demalia (born 1873), Brenneker/Juliana, 1958 (Zikinzá-collection, T 473, NatAr).
- 46 NatAr, Archief van het Gouvernement, Brievenboeken, 2e district, inv. no. 132, 4-12-1874/49.
- 47 NA, Ministerie van Koloniën, 1850-1900, inv. no. 6740, 12-6-1865/337.
- 48 NatAr, Archief van het Gouvernement, Brievenboeken 5e district, inv. no. 125, 23-5-1863/5, inv. no. 126, 9-6-1865/76 and inv. no. 127, 30-10-1866/164 ; NA, Ministerie van Koloniën, 1850-1900, inv. no. 6740, 12-6-1865/337.
- 49 NatAr, Archief van het Gouvernement, Brievenboeken 5e district, inv. No. 127, 26-4-1866/45, zie ook NatAr, Archief van het Gouvernement, Brievenboeken 5e district, inv. no 127, 28-4-1866.
- 50 Interview Altagracia Regina (born 2-5-1910), by Brenneker/Juliana, 6-6-1985 (T 110, Fundashon Biblioteka Públiko Kòrsou).
- 51 Interview Maria Pieters (born 1878), Brenneker/Juliana, 1958 (Zikinzá-collection, T 516, NatAr).



- 52 NatAr, Archief van het Gouvernement, Brievenboeken 5e district, inv. no. 125, 25-7-1863/35.
- 53 Idem, inv. no. 131, 28-3-1869/35, 12.
- 54 Idem, inv. no. 164, 9-11-1908/348.
- 55 Interview Virginia Meulens (born 1869), Brenneker/Juliana, 1959 (Zikinzá-collection, T 440, NatAr).

