



HAL
open science

Kinship Predicaments in Rapa Nui (Easter Island): Autochthony, Foreign and Substantial Identities

Diego Muñoz

► **To cite this version:**

Diego Muñoz. Kinship Predicaments in Rapa Nui (Easter Island): Autochthony, Foreign and Substantial Identities. *Rapa Nui Journal*, 2014, 28 (2), pp.25-34. hal-01081944

HAL Id: hal-01081944

<https://hal.science/hal-01081944>

Submitted on 12 Nov 2014

HAL is a multi-disciplinary open access archive for the deposit and dissemination of scientific research documents, whether they are published or not. The documents may come from teaching and research institutions in France or abroad, or from public or private research centers.

L'archive ouverte pluridisciplinaire **HAL**, est destinée au dépôt et à la diffusion de documents scientifiques de niveau recherche, publiés ou non, émanant des établissements d'enseignement et de recherche français ou étrangers, des laboratoires publics ou privés.

Kinship predicaments in Rapa Nui (Easter Island): Autochthony, foreign and substantial identities

Diego Muñoz

In this paper, I analyze adaptations of the Rapanui kinship system to a series of social changes that have occurred in the last 40 years. First, I will study the local terms of hua‘ai and haka‘ara, concepts used to describe the relationship of kinship that are fundamental in the construction of the group of relatives. Second, I analyze the influence that migration, a tourism-oriented economy, and the application of a particular legislation for indigenous people have on Rapanui kinship. I propose that today, Rapanui society cannot be analyzed without considering these aspects, since they have been instrumental in changing the definitions of kinship. In this process of adaptation to social changes, kinship is the main criterion used to define Rapanui identities in terms of what or who is considered foreign or autochthonous.

En este artículo analizo las adaptaciones del sistema de parentesco en Rapa Nui a una serie de cambios sociales acontecidos durante los últimos 40 años. En primer lugar, estudiaré los términos locales de hua‘ai y haka‘ara, conceptos que describen los vínculos de parentesco que construyen una noción de grupos de parientes. En segundo lugar, analizaré la influencia de las migraciones, de la economía orientada al turismo y la aplicación de una legislación particular para pueblos indígenas, en el parentesco rapanui. Propongo que en la actualidad, la sociedad rapanui no puede ser analizada sin contemplar estos tres aspectos, dado que éstos han modificado las definiciones del parentesco. En este proceso de adaptación a los cambios sociales, el parentesco actúa como el principal criterio que los rapanui utilizan para definir las identidades, en términos de extranjero y autóctono.

Introduction: ‘A Tatou Ta‘ato‘a he Hua‘ai or the Place of Kinship in Rapa Nui

Recent anthropological analyses of Rapanui contemporary society have developed an understanding of its historical relationship with the Chilean State (*cf.* Delsing 2009; Young 2011; Cristino & Fuentes 2011; Fuentes 2013), in addition to identity construction discourses (Andreassen 2008). All of them coincide in that kinship relations have a transverse position in social life. However, apart from Santa Coloma’s demographic work (1998, 2011) and Zurob’s anthropological research (2011), little is known about the adaptive process of the kinship system in the new insular social context. The most important studies on Rapanui kinship have been Grant McCall’s (1976, 1980) works. The world and Rapanui island life have changed significantly in the last 40 years (*cf.* Porteous 1981; Cristino et al.; Delsing 2009); however, the analysis of kinship relationships has not been revised.

How do kinship systems change over time? This question has been addressed by Godelier (2010). In this regard, Godelier explains that kinship changes have

always been related to, and sometimes determined by, other social relations that have little to do with kinship. Thus, descent, filiation, or specific terminologies are always related to the spheres of power and economy, as well as ideology and the vagaries of history.

On Rapa Nui, kinship is part of people’s daily worries. Ethnographic research has shown that many of the social predicaments in contemporary Rapanui society are defined through the way in which the islanders conceive their own society. When Rapanui people are asked to define their society they say: ‘a tatou ta‘ato‘a he hua‘ai (“we are all relatives”). This definition contains various tensions and conflicts. The definition of “all being relatives” is determined by two important aspects of Rapanui society: access and control of land, as well as defining potential sexual couples and potential spouses. Thirdly, kinship is also central in the definition of contemporary identity of Rapanui people at three interconnected levels: individual, family, and ethnic identity.

Therefore, we need to ask: what does it mean to be a relative on Rapa Nui? Or, who are considered relatives? There are no simple answers. Rapanui kinship is now influenced by a contemporary pattern of migration and

by a particular national legislation that draws, penetrates, and finally defines relevant aspects of kinship.

Today, are there any Rapanui youth who have not been confronted with the problem of not being able to find a partner inside the island's society? Are there any Rapanui who does not know someone who has preferred his or her mother's Rapanui family name instead of his/her father's foreign family name? Is there any islander who has not heard of somebody who has had a dispute regarding land inheritance? Or, on the contrary, is there an islander who does not have a relative living in continental Chile, French Polynesia, or any other foreign place, who can welcome them for some time?

The answer to any of these questions explains the complexity and dynamism of kinship in contemporary Rapanui society. The description of "we are all relatives" conceals and contains part of the way the island's social world has been structured. In short, kinship in contemporary Rapanui society has adapted to new social conditions and acquired new functions.

In this paper, I explore new lines of inquiry regarding the kinship and its conception on Rapa Nui. I pose some hypotheses in order to understand its dynamism, identifying the social areas where kinship is stressed and thus has changed. Finally, I will discuss some paradoxes facing contemporary Rapanui society where kinship is not enough to generate interdependencies between different social groups of the present day island society. I argue that kinship has lost its privileged place for articulating social relations between different groups, but has become the ultimate measure to define membership in these groups. The interdependence between them depends more on circumstantial changes (such as the arrival of foreigners or legal changes) than just kinship. However, the Rapanui conception of kinship penetrates into other social spheres.

In this paper, I propose that changes concerning Rapanui society have modified their kinship principles; kinship has taken on new functions and has adapted to changing economic and social contexts. Rapanui kinship acts as the ultimate criterion for defining social identity in terms of autochthony. However, the principles used to define autochthony are stressed by a new particular ethno-scape (Appadurai 2005) that has built a much broader social world than the reduced island space of the 1970s. Thus, kinship – as the islanders understand it – is viewed as a control mechanism of the expansion and contraction of the Rapanui social world in relation to what is considered as "foreign" or "autochthonous". This process states the principles in which Rapanui society recruits its members and classifies them into the categories of "foreigner" or "autochthonous".

I will start this discussion by referring to the sole classic study done by Grant McCall in 1976, to which I will add my own appraisals that have arisen from my

fieldwork. I will then describe some of the problems that Rapanui society currently faces, in order to discuss how certain events have drawn from the existing kinship system. I will end by showing how notions of kinship (what it means to be a relative on Rapa Nui) penetrate the process of defining identity.

To be a Relative on Rapa Nui

Grant McCall (1976) has provided us with a thorough reconstruction of ancient Rapanui social organization. In doing so, he describes in detail the characteristics of the only concept of kinship group that resisted the demographic and social breakdown of the 19th century, the *hua'ai*.

McCall explains that although *hua'ai* is a term and not necessarily a concept, it corresponds to a *cognatic descent category* (McCall 1976:38). McCall clarifies that the term *hua'ai* basically means "to be a descendant of", but this term acquires the form of a category of descent group through sentiment of membership and solidarity between persons (McCall 1976:90). In his work, he discusses at length the *hua'ai* and their corporate principle and concludes that the *hua'ai* groups find their expression in the exclusive access to and administration of resources, land being the most important resource. With regard to membership, McCall indicates that Rapanui people use other terms: *haka'ara* and *hakaranga* (McCall 1976:97). Whereas the first is a discourse about the *hua'ai* origins, and necessarily considers a bilateral line, the second is restricted to a sole line of descent to accentuate an exact genealogical link between two persons. In contexts of inheritance of limited resources like land, the choice of agnation is the definitive one. Thus, *hua'ai* membership defines the contours of a group of persons who share an inheritance (McCall 1976:105).

During my fieldwork, I heard people speaking about *familia* (family) or *hua'ai* indifferently. But the language used is determinant: when speaking Spanish or Rapanui, these terms are mutually exclusive. Though the Rapanui themselves translate *hua'ai* as *familia* (family), this term differs considerably from the notion of the conjugal family model, and the members who compose it differ considerably according to precise circumstances. This, because the term *hua'ai* will always be accompanied with the term *haka'ara*. Analytically, the Rapanui kinship groups *hua'ai* represent a category of a descent group where a group of persons is considered to be relatives by sharing ancestors and a related common memory, but also because of shared resources and by congregating for collective works. On the contrary, the restricted concept of family, under its form of a conjugal group with its descendants, turns out to be limited in our understanding of how the Rapanui people construct and explain their relationship of

kinship. We can understand *hua'ai* as the “occurrence of being relatives”, because in agreement with McCall (1976: 96), two generations are necessary for a person to be considered the founder of a *hua'ai*.

In Rapanui, two people are recognized as being relatives when at least: 1) they descend from the same ancestor, who can be situated in a different genealogical place in the past; 2) when the person marries, which will connect two kin groups; 3) when a person or a couple take on the upbringing of a child (or children) born to a third person (*ma'anga hāngai* or *poki hāngai*)¹; and finally, 4) when they have grown up in the same group of relatives. Social distance is an important benchmark to define relatives.

These four possible ways of *being relatives* are supported by a Rapanui theory of *consanguinity*. The Rapanui people say that they *share their blood* with their ancestors and their living relatives. For the purpose of this study, I don't use the *consanguinity* concept in the classic sense of the anthropological term, but rather in the sense as *consubstantiality*: an ontological element of a shared context for the classification of persons into kinship categories (Dousset 2013). *Consanguinity* is assumed here as part of the Rapanui symbolic dimension about kinship. Today, after over 145 years of Christianization, the metaphors of Judeo-Christian kinship have been incorporated into the logic of how the Rapanui conceive their kinship groups, notably the Christian dogma of *una caro* to describe incest.² I argue that the *shared blood* criterion is an *affective* and *ideological* principle. In consequence, it implies feelings, attitudes, and particular rights and obligations among the members of the *hua'ai*.

McCall clearly argues that kinship relations in Rapanui society are ruled by a value and behavior system that is defined by “*aroha* and *mo'a*” (McCall 1976:141), which is to say that *affection* and *respect* are incorporated into relationships of authority between its members. In fact, for McCall (1976:127) kinship is the language of social relations on Easter Island. Thereby kinship crosses all areas of society.

Each member of a *hua'ai* group has certain social obligations in order to be recognized as a member by others. Consequently, in the definition of Rapanui kinship groups, we can identify a structure of authority determined by the genealogical place of its members. Members distribute authority (*ao*), respect (*mo'a*), and affection (*aroha*) according to genealogical categories and the behavior of their members.

We are interested here in analyzing the behavior and obligations towards members of the kinship group.³ The *ego's matu'a rua'u* (G+2) (which comprise *koro*, *nua*, *papatio*, and *mamatia*) have relative control over economic relationships, property of land and will also attempt to control the sexual relationships and decisions of their descendants (*hua'ai*). Because they have *ao*, they

permanently judge the behavior of their descendants and hope that their mandates and desires are respected. Thus, *aroha* (affection) depends on *mo'a* (respect).

The *ego's matu'a* (G+1) (which comprises *matu'a tane*, *matu'a vahine*, and *papatio* and *mamatia*) exercise authority over their descendants (*hua'ai*), but often excluding the lateral lines of *papatio* or *mamatia*) at the same level as the previous generation (G+2), but this group can also assign land use rights and sometimes property rights, because it is ultimately the grandparents (*matu'a rua'u*) who control the property titles.

The *taina* group (G0) must be available to *matu'a rua'u* and *matu'a* for work requirements or when called upon for other cooperative work as a demonstration of *aroha* in order to be considered a *poki hanga rahi*, i.e. a favorite grandchild or good son/daughter. A person often eludes the control over his/her sexual relations, creating family conflicts for transgression of *mo'a*. The authority (*ao*) over his/her younger siblings is assigned to the *atariki* (or first-born, male by preference). However, in some cases the authority and respect inside the *taina* group is given to the member (*taina vaenga* or *taina ope'a*) who has the strongest character, or to that brother or sister who demonstrates major expertise in a matter in question (like legal or traditional knowledge, for example).

The *ngapoki* generation (and by extension the *makupuna* and *hinarere*) are treated similarly by the previous generations. The *makupuna* and *hinarere* are those who receive the whole *aroha* of the kinship group, who in turn expect to receive *mo'a* from them. The authority of the *matu'a* is similar to that of the maternal or paternal uncles or aunts, as well as the authority of the paternal and maternal grandparents. In other words, the authority of the nuclear family is limited and controlled by the other members of the kinship group, especially by the *matu'a rua'u* and father or mother's *taina* (*papatio* or *mamatia* in the new terminology). For example, in matter of land inheritance, it is the *matu'a rua'u* (grandparents) and not the *matu'a* (parents), who will decide when and which of their *makupuna* (grandchildren) will inherit a piece of land.

In the *hua'ai*, at least one *tupuna* (ancestor) is the founder of an eponym which acts as a category to define the membership of the descent group. Each eponym, also described by McCall (1976), corresponds to a well-defined agnatic category. The expressions of such categories are the 32 family names currently recognized as natives of the island – even if some of these may have foreign origins.⁴ Thus, if *hua'ai* emphasizes the descendant's links, *haka'ara* puts the accent on the ascendance link up to a “founding couple”.

The concept of *haka'ara* highlights the importance of the genealogical memory in Rapanui descent groups. This is put into practice today as an ascending addition of the father's family name to the mother's

family names. It is an exponential formula which excludes potential marriage (and sexual intercourse) with those carrying similar family names, according to memory and judgment of a respected elder. The family name acts as a metaphor for *shared blood*. That is to say, family names establish a *relationship of closeness* relative to the Rapanui ideal of “*consanguinity*”. This *consubstantiality* is the first criterion used to construct lines of ancestry towards a particular ancestor (*tupuna*) and to exclude potential marriage partners. This is not an individual decision, but a collective one, which is used to regulate inheritance or to expand the patrimony of the kinship group. Even today, *haka'ara* defines the margins of every kinship group and the possibilities of new marriages.

The *haka'ara*, as genealogical memory, is also a political resource for recovery of land rights. Tcherkézoff (2003:110) comments in this regards that – as in other Polynesian societies – “(le) affaire de généalogie (qui est au même temps une histoire de terres) et que tout repose sur l'accord ou sur la transmission, l'interprétation et la mémoire de ceux qui sont concernés.” [the whole issue of genealogy (which is at the same time the history of the land) is based on the agreement or on the transmission, interpretation, and memory of those concerned.] Many Rapanui keep copies of genealogical trees made by scholars, notably those of Englert (1974) and McCall (1986). On occasions, these documents are used to legitimize and to claim the exclusive recognition of certain land rights. In fact, the first edition of *Te Mau Hatu o Rapa Nui* (Hotus et al. 1988), the genealogical book of Rapa Nui, was written as an argument to recover the land registered by the Chilean State under the principle of *Terra Nullius* (cf. Vergara 1939; Rochna-Ramírez 1996; Seelenfreund et al. 2004). With long lists of descendants, the Rapanui people argue that every piece of land has an owner. However, this book has been mainly used for defining a particular line of descent, to establish future sexual prohibitions for the younger generations, and to standardize a discourse on the origins, rather than for the adjudication of lands. The rhetorical power of *haka'ara* as argument in the recovery of lands or in the definition of incest, displaced the *hakaranga* term for membership construction in a restricted unilineal inclination. *Haka'ara* is today a category of undifferentiated filiation that allows extending the possibilities of land reclamation rights, but also extends the sexual and marriage prohibitions for young Rapanui.

However, even if a particular historical context is not directly related to kinship, it has nonetheless influenced, modified, and most importantly shown the ways in which social change has taken place in contemporary Rapanui society. It refers to how historic events and socio-historical context can interfere with how kinship is used to build new social groups.

I propose to analyze this new historical context as a series of “structures of conjuncture” (Sahlins 1987). It can be argued that the Rapanui people have put into practice their cultural categories of kinship (*hua'ai*, *haka'ara*, *ao*, *mo'a*, and *aroha*) in a given historical context, which must submit to an “empirical risk”, as Sahlins explains. As a result, this provides a new complex interpretive framework to understand (or not) the new social world.

The Tensions inside *Hua'ai* Do Not Relate to Kinship, But Define It

Cristino *et al.* (1984) in their analyses of Rapanui island society referred to an *open island* context for the timespan when Rapanui society ended their isolation. Based on their work and my own ethnographic research, it is possible to assert that Rapanui society has changed in at least three major aspects: first, Rapanui society entered a constant migration circuit; second, the development of a tourism-based economy, which has inspired – among other aspects – a cultural rebirth; and third, the existence of new legal devices, particularly those referring to the Chilean indigenous law.⁵

What is the relationship between migration, a tourism-based economy, the indigenous law, and kinship? My analysis suggests that the interconnection of these different aspects adds tension to the Rapanui notion of autochthony.

The reference to autochthony sends us back to a debate that is centered upon the question of the relationship between groups who claim an exclusive cultural and historical origin, but who live together as citizens of the same Nation State.⁶

In other words, between those that have *always* lived in a specific place, and those that *have come* to the place, that is to say “indigenous”, “aboriginal”, or “autochthonous” people as opposed to the other “not indigenous” citizens, “not aboriginal”, or “not autochthonous” people.

As Briones (1998:156) explains, the “aboriginality” or autochthony “... refiere al hecho histórico de que había gente viviendo en territorios conquistados por imperios coloniales, y que esa gente tiene descendientes en la población actual de un Estado Nación descolonizado.” [...refers to the historical fact in which there were people living in territories conquered by colonial empires, and that these people have descendants in the current population of the decolonized Nation State]. One could add to the former, the peoples incorporated inside the borders of the Nation State (as in the Rapanui case). However, autochthony is not a product of biological reproduction or the manifestations of the past in the present (Beckett 1988). In accordance with Briones (1998) and Friedman (2009), it is a social process through which people

considered indigenous, aboriginal, or autochthonous, as established by neo-colonial States, often create their cultural differences in the context of the national society. Here we include how these people use social-memory to reflect their political and economic relationships with the neo-colonial State (of which these so-called “autochthonous peoples” are also part) and to its citizens. The definition of autochthony always includes a political component: this corresponds to an identity that is shaped in a political project of sovereignty *vis-à-vis* other citizens considered non-native.

The concern regarding the principle of autochthony between Rapanui people implies the necessity to raise the question about who is Rapanui today. The question is not as simple as it seems, and the answer reveals the bias about kinship in contemporary island society. In this context, as Godelier’s (2010:663) thesis explains: “des rapports sociaux qui n’ont rien à voir avec la parenté pénètrent dans les rapports de parenté et les subordonnent à leur reproduction” [relationships that do not have anything to do with kinship penetrate kinship relations and subordinate them to their reproduction].

During my fieldwork, one of my questions was: who is Rapanui today, and the usual answer was: “*he or she who has a drop of Rapanui blood.*” Here, we return to the principle of *consubstantiality*. If he or she speaks or doesn’t speak the language, if he or she knows or doesn’t know the island history, is this something that can be re-mediated and taught, because according to Rapanui social theory, culture can be learned and taught. On the contrary, to know it or to practice it does not ensure the recognition of autochthony or the rights associated with it. It shows the rhetorical power that the metaphor of *shared blood* has in the definition of identity and Rapanui kinship groups, giving preference to the principle of membership of *ius sanguinis*.

The conflicts of this definition of identity in contemporary island society are clear. The diverse migratory flows, the economic importance of tourism, a new context of inter-ethnic relationships, and a legal bias, all have a profound influence on the Rapanui definitions of kinship.

Kinship and Migration: the Hua‘ai de-located

It has been common in Rapanui society since the 1970s that a grandfather or grandmother (*matu‘a rua‘u, koro, or nua*) who knows that a grandson or granddaughter (*makupuna*) is beginning a relationship with another islander, seeks a genealogical narration (*haka‘ara*) to look for the common ancestor (*tupuna*) and in doing so, imparts a prohibition for this potential couple. In other words, appeals to the incest taboo. Therefore, young people from 1970 up to the present tend to search for partners outside the island’s society.

When I conducted research in Santiago (Chile), centered on the reasons for Rapanui migration to

the continental Chile, the first response was, *I came because I got married to a mainlander (continental).*⁷ Or, *because my father demanded of me to find an island partner separated up to the seventh degree of consanguinity.* This rationalization and argument has possibly been influenced by Christian ideology (*cf.* Porqueres I Gené 2011) on Rapanui kinship practices.

This norm is quite a novelty. When checking the genealogy published by the Council of Elders (Hotus et al. 1988, 2007) I found a number of marriages that today would be catalogued as incestuous. In addition, when analyzing the rules of marriage throughout the 20th century, it is possible to identify the rapid changes that have taken place (*cf.* Santa Coloma 1998). The oldest Rapanui people today remember that it was a common practice until the 1950s for parents to arrange the marriages of their children (*ha‘a mo‘a mo‘a*). Štambuk (2010) conducted extensive interviews with Rapanui elders, which explain these practices. Based on these interviews, it is possible to infer that these marriages were not only mechanisms for controlling incest, but also an economic strategy of alliance between two families seeking to extend their control over resources. The prohibition *up to the seventh degree of consanguinity ties* occurs at the time of the opening of the island in the 1960s to the outside world. This period is characterized by the arrival of government officials, scientists, and Chilean citizens (from both the working class and the upper middle classes of Chilean society), as well as the gradual opening to international tourism.

During this period, the rhetoric of incest was activated,⁸ which in this perspective imposed a migratory regime; the outcome of which was *ethnic exogamy*. To have a foreign partner seemed to be an imperative. With a foreign partner the boy’s father or the girl’s father was gaining a foreign son-in-law or a foreign daughter-in-law who had to take on his or her obligations *as a relative* (as in the *aroha-mo‘a* relationship). These new alliances with foreigners opened new spaces and resources both in the economic and symbolic spheres to the entire kinship group.

What were the consequences of this process? Firstly, the dispersion of the kinship group in an extreme form of neo-locality. Based on the Chilean 2002 census,⁹ I established that 51% of the Rapanui people were living in mainland Chile, out of which 64% of Rapanui women were married to mainland Chileans, whereas 12% of Rapanui men were living with their Chilean wives. These marriages gave rise to children with a non-Rapanui family name. From the Rapanui perspective, these were children of *mixed blood*, that is to say *mestizos*. A young Rapanui spoke to me about his younger brother, “*he is the last one to have two Rapanui bloods [blood-lines], because for sure he is going to have children with a foreign woman.*”

Kinship, Immigration, and Tourism: the Rapanui-Chilean Tension

The island is the second-most visited destination in Chile (SERNATUR 2009). Rapa Nui's incorporation into the global and local tourism-based economy resulted in economic migrants from mainland Chile and a massive arrival of foreign tourists.

Rapa Nui has become a temporary place for people of different nationalities and ethnic backgrounds, not to mention of different social classes: construction workers, intellectuals, wealthy travelers, and merchants, among others. All of these peoples are part of the current Rapanui ethno-scape, to use Arjun Appadurai's (2005) concept.

In this new social context, the contemporary debate on Rapa Nui is mostly related to the massive arrival of continental Chileans, not as tourists or coming from the upper classes, but as workers for the hotel industry and as service providers. In fact, in the last ten years (2002-2012), according to estimations of the National Institute of Statistics, the population of Rapa Nui has increased by 36.3% (BNC 2013). The tension arising out of this situation is revealed in three ways: Firstly, most mainland Chileans do not marry into Rapanui families because they have brought their own families along. As a consequence, the pattern of mixed marriages and the principles ruling kinship established for the last 30 years have been broken (the *aroha-mo 'a* relationship). Therefore, arguments abound stating that the newcomers take advantage of the economic bounty of the tourist industry without leaving "*anything for the profit of the Island*." Secondly, construction workers have brought with them what the islanders call "*malas costumbres*" (bad demeanors). According to Rapanui people, this behavior has resulted in a general increase in crime, such as theft, alcohol and hard drug abuse, among other issues. Finally, many Rapanui parents do not approve of their children marrying people of the Chilean working class, since previously they had established kinship relations with the Chilean upper class, and in the process they have absorbed the Chilean class system.

This new discriminatory discourse coming from the islanders, states that the island must stay open to the tourist flow, but be closed off to economic immigrants. Rigid ethnic borders have sprung up and have shaped "the Chilean" into an ethnic category. Fredrik Barth (1976) made it clear that these boundaries express differences in the classification of "basic value orientations: the standards of morality and excellence by which performance is judged" (Barth 1976:16). Hence, ethnicity – which is understood as the process through which social groups communicate cultural differences (Eriksen 1993) – penetrates into the recruitment strategies of future members of the kinship groups.

I want to mention another example. During the summer months (high season of tourism), many couples split up due to rumors that one or both partners have been unfaithful, establishing temporary liaisons with tourists. This creates conflicts at the family level and within inter-ethnic relationships. The Rapanui people will say that tourists lure their husbands or wives away. In addition, many Rapanui men explain "*on the island we are all relatives, we have few women with whom we can form a family*." However, during winter months (during the low tourist season) many couples get back together, especially if they have children.

Another outcome of this openness has been the birth of children out of wedlock, either between islanders or between islanders and foreigners. We need to mention that marriage, according to the Rapanui social theory, grants certain rights (or legitimacy) to foreigners (such as residence). Consequently, the residence of a foreigner will be legitimate if he or she can demonstrate a formal relationship with a Rapanui family or if this relationship is recognized by this family and others.

We need to ask what happens to the children born out of a relationship between a tourist and an islander. Where do they belong? If these children were reared outside the island, will they be able, some day, to return to the island and claim property rights to the land? Will the *drop of blood* principle be applied in these cases? The problem becomes more complicated when a discriminatory discourse is constructed, particularly towards those foreign women who are referred to as "*cinco hectáreas*" (five hectares) by some members of Rapanui society. Within Rapanui social theory, because that *mixed-blood* offspring will give its foreign mother access to some land, which may be resented by the Rapanui community.¹⁰ On the contrary, when the mother is Rapanui her son or daughter is immediately incorporated into the mother's kinship group. This will cancel the agnatic inclination and will replace it with an undifferentiated filiation. There are radical differences regarding the importance given to the place of origin, residence, and *ethnic affiliation* of the mother.

Kinship and Indigenous Law. The Family Name as Assertion of Autochthony

In Chile, after 1993 the indigenous populations were recognized through a very particular legislation, which gave them status as ethnic groups, but not as indigenous people. In order to be considered indigenous, this law puts emphasis on the links of filiation and descent, in other words, on kinship. Therefore, someone is indigenous if at least one of his or her parents is also of indigenous origin (CONADI 2008:Art 2), which implies a sort of recognition of indigenous surnames, preventing the entry of new surnames into the lines of autochthony. Therefore, to be indigenous is at the

same time, both an identity and a legal category. It is interesting to note that this corresponds very well with the Rapanui logic of a link with a group of *tupuna*, whether they carry a family name, or whether they are founders of a surname and a line of descent.

Many Rapanui today are concerned about what they call *mestizaje* (crossbreeding), which is reflected in expressions such as “*there are children who have two continental surnames*”. Due to this gradual process of eponym disappearance, the Rapanui reaction has been to legally incorporate the possibility of placing the native mother’s family name before the foreign father’s family name (CONADI 2008:Art.71)¹¹ and therefore, maintaining an undeniable belonging to the Rapanui ethnic identity.

It is significant that the law allowed Rapanui people to be recognized as subjects with exclusive rights (together with other people considered indigenous). Until 2007, Rapanui people were the only people in Chile who could make changes to their birth certificates. The law as well as notions of ethnicity began to penetrate into the areas of kinship, notably the rules of filiation. As a result, the Rapanui family name becomes an important defining feature applied to children born from mixed couples, in order to provide evidence and highlight that their ethnic belonging can be agnatic or uterine.

We are *ad-portas* of a process of *ethnic endogamy*. In this regard, it is curious to note that the definition of incest has changed. Nowadays, some parents (*matu’a*) are less drastic than their own parents and grandparents in defining incest. Instead, they encourage their (*mestizo*) children to have a Rapanui partner. They tolerate between three or four “*degrees of consanguinity*” as allowed minimum, that is to say, that they may share ancestors in the genealogical position of *matu’a* of their own *matu’a rua’u* (G+4). In the current vocabulary, that their *koro* or *nua* may have been *primos* (cousins), but never brothers and sisters or first cousins. They justify this relaxation in the belief-based rule in which the *shared blood* will allow them to regain the degree of *purity lost* by the *mixing of blood*: the mathematics of *consanguinity*. But also, this is linked to the creation of conscience of an identity in terms of autochthony, which needs to be protected through alliances between kinship groups of the same ethnic filiation, be it uterine or agnatic.

When discussing autochthony in these terms, it was not surprising to hear that some women put forward the argument, referred to as *womb’s rights*. They stated that “*if the child comes from a Rapanui womb, it is Rapanui, and if it comes from a foreign womb, it is mestizo*”. This is a discourse that is expressed by a small number of people, but that is already present and grants a particular and absolute value to uterine filiation. This change can transform not only the principles of filiation, but also those of membership into Rapanui society.

Conclusion: Kinship and the Definition of Autochthony

I propose therefore that Rapanui kinship is related to a process of identity construction at three interconnected levels that help to determine the principles that define autochthony. Firstly, kinship shapes personal identity. A person is always a member of a *hua’ai*, hence the person is a member of a group that shares a common memory which connects her/him with a particular *haka’ara* (genealogy). In addition, society also recognizes certain stereotypes which organize part of the social world (Eriksen 1993). The personal history, conflicts with relatives and/or other members of society, particular skills, faults, and other personal characteristics, and even some physical features (to have blonde, red, or brown hair) are explained and fitted into the above stereotypes, which together justify the ideological concept of a *drop of blood*. The Rapanui people have attempted to naturalize social differences and individual characteristics within this context.

The second level corresponds to the identities of the kinship groups. The families, apart from being defined by the characteristics given in the first level, have the particularity of being territorialized, primarily depending on the land inherited inside the village. Moreover, this identity linked to the territory is reflected in the choice of names currently given to Rapanui children (we come back to the first level), such as names of the local toponymy, which must correspond to the ancient *mata*¹² to which a certain surname belongs. However, this memory about *mata* is a knowledge that just few people have and it is linked to a more intellectual relationship to the land, history, and tradition. Consequently, this second level is related to political vindications, such as the recovery and legitimacy of an *ariki*’s title (always questioned),¹³ as well as to the administration and property of land and archaeological sites.

The third level has been termed here as “ethnic”. In agreement with Eriksen (1993), ethnicity corresponds to an awareness and experience of cultural differences, in this case between Rapanui and Chileans (as well as with people from other nationalities). Accordingly, the construction of ethnic identity is a contextual and inventive process (Clifford 1988) which provides a sense of belonging to a collective group where its members think that they share a common culture. In this way, the history of the political and inter-ethnic relationship between the Rapanui and Chilean Nation State (and by extension with the Chilean people) is at the core of this identity process.

For this process of identification to crystallize, the Rapanui people use the concept of “*cultura*” or “*cultura viva*” (culture or living culture). This describes all the tangible aspects of difference: language, clothing, and other particular social practices like dances, songs,

tattoos, and body painting (among others). This is an ideological process in which the Rapanui people have selected and established certain “diacritical features” (Barth 1976) which they consider uniquely their own, as if these were transcendent and persist in time. It is important to observe what Alain Babadzan (2009) calls “*un rapport moderne à la culture*” [“*modern relation to culture*”], that is, a reflexive process inspired by past ways of life (real or imagined), which constructs representations of a cultural particularity. This process seems to increase in a context where tourism demands exotic identity performances. Currently, the Rapanui construct their identity emblems, inspired by how they imagine (or represent) their own society in the past.

Following the resurgence in recent years of the conflict with the Chilean State on land ownership as well as the debates related to migratory control to the island, kinship has been incorporated in rhetoric autochthony on Rapa Nui. This implies the necessity of using clear symbols to prove this. Given names, reversal of family names, genealogical rhetoric, and historic knowledge operate as indicators of autochthony. However, they have to be legitimized by membership in at least one Rapanui kinship group (*hua'ai*).

The construction of the concepts of autochthony and foreigner on Rapa Nui demonstrate how complex the questions surrounding kinship have become and that kinship cannot be studied outside its context. Kinship in Rapanui society must be analyzed in relation with the migration process, legislation, and the link with the State and inter-ethnic relationships derived from the new ethno-scape. Therefore, kinship principles are influenced by a new social context that has gone beyond the limits of the island, and which has surpassed inter-family relationships which characterized island society until the 1970s.

Between the *ethnic exogamic-endogamic* contentions, kinship has been elevated as the ultimate measure to explain autochthony. It is closed and fixed into 32 autochthonous family names. Therefore, the Rapanui peoples' autochthony is a universe closed to new possibilities, and is able to control the expansion and the contraction of the Rapanui social world in the island's new global context.

Notes

1. In Rapa Nui, as in other Polynesian societies, there is a traditional system of adoption. Zurob (2011) presents the social conditions that explain what she has called “parenting delegation” such as: conflicts between biological parents, lack of material goods in young couples, or unrecognized paternity. Out of these situations, it is understood that children can be incorporated into another descendent group for a delimited time (*ma'anga hāngai*) or definitively (*poki hāngai*).
2. Cf. Godelier (2010); Porqueres I Gené (2011). Godelier (2010) explains that in the Christian tradition, and by

extension for many people who turned to Christianity, the Catholic Church tried to control all stages of life, that is to say birth, marriage, and death. Especially regarding the definition of incestuous relations, Godelier (2010:352) explains that in Christian tradition, when “un homme et une femme, en s'unissant sexuellement, ne formeront plus qu'une seule chair, qui sera également de leurs enfants. Ce dogme va déterminer l'inventaire et le cheminement de toutes les relations sexuelles incestueuses.” [a man and a woman who unite sexually in one flesh, it will also be that of their children. This dogma will determine the inventory and the change of all sexual incestuous relationships.]

3. In Rapanui society, there are similar terms to designate relatives to those used in the Society Islands, and which are described by Panoff (1965) and Ottino (1971) for the Tuamotu Archipelago and by Bambridge (2009) for the Austral Islands. The terminology referring to relatives is associated with the place of the individual in its genealogy, and in some cases it even defines the gender of the person. The generation of *ego* is defined as *taina*, the first ascending generation as *matu'a*, the second one as *matu'a ru'au* or *koro* (grandfather) and *nua* (grandmother) to specify the gender, when referring to a male or female relative. After them, all members are classified as *tupuna* (ancestors/elders). The descendant generation of the *taina* group begins with *ngapoki* (children), the second as *makupuna* (grandchildren), and the third as *hinarere* (great-grandchildren). Every *taina* group is internally differentiated, between the first-born (*atariki*) and the other siblings (*taina vaenga* for the second-born and *taina ope'a* for the last sibling). This is an example of a classic Hawaiian terminology, but today we can distinguish a new terminology for the nuclear family composed of *matu'a tane* (father), *matu'a vahine* (mother), and *taina* (siblings) of the lateral lines. The concept used for the brothers of the father or the brothers of the grandparents is *papatio* and the concept for mother's sister or sisters of the grandparents is *mamatia*. These terms are built on the assembly of the Spanish concepts of *papá* (father) with *tío* (uncle); and *mamá* (mother) with *tía* (aunt). In addition, the Spanish concept of *primo-hermano* or *prima-hermana* (first cousin) or simply *primo* or *prima* (cousin) is used for the collateral relatives and also for allies. The incorporation of these new terms is part of a process of transformation from a Hawaiian type to an Eskimo type, a process that will be analyzed in another publication.
4. In the course of the last century, we can observe a process of “domestication of the foreigner” (Sahlins 1993) that meant the inclusion of European surnames as being autochthones. In fact, in another article McCall (1986) explains that the current Rapanui surnames were originally personal names, nicknames, or Tahitian names that were transformed into surnames as a byproduct of evangelization and following the establishment of the Civil Registry on the island.
5. I refer to the Chilean Law No. 19.253. To consult this law, see: <http://www.conadi.gob.cl/documentos/LeyIndigena2010t.pdf>.
6. The concept of “autochthonous peoples” (“indigenous peoples” or “aborigines”) is actually a juridical category to level with the United Nations, which recognizes a series of rights for people like those described.
7. On Rapa Nui, “mainlanders” or “*continentales*” refers to Chileans.

8. Here, the concept of rhetoric is used as a device and use of language to convince or to persuade someone with regard to something. In this case, it describes arguments used about the probability of incestuous relationships or arguments used regarding autochthonous identity discourses.
9. For database, see: <http://espino.ine.cl/cgibin/RpWebEngine.exe/PortalAction?&BASE=CPCHL2KREG>.
10. The recent governments have handed out 1, 3, or 5 hectares of land to the younger generations, and through them their parents (in this case a foreign mother) may acquire land as her child's trustee.
11. In Chile, two surnames are legally used: first, the father's first surname followed by the mother's first surname.
12. The *mata* concept refers to the ancient patrilineal kinship groups that controlled a specific territory on the island. For a complete analysis, see McCall 1976.
13. The concept of *ariki* has generally been translated as *king* (in Spanish: *rey*). I think that it is more appropriate to describe it as a political title that alludes to the chiefs of districts, some of which were of sacred character. For a complete analysis, see Métraux (1937) and more recently Moreno Pakarati (2011).

Acknowledgements

I wish to express my gratitude to Andrea Seelenfreund, Laurent Dousset, Serge Tcherkézoff, Olaug Andreassen, and Cristián Moreno Pakarati for reading this paper and for their valuable comments. I also want to thank Andrea and Daniela Seelenfreund for correcting this English version. Finally, I thank CONICYT (Chilean National Commission for Science and Technology) and the French Embassy in Chile for my scholarship to pursue postgraduate studies in France and to the Centre for Research and Documentation on Oceania (CREDO UMR 7308) and the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales (EHESS) for their financial assistance to cover my fieldwork expenses.

References

- Andreassen, O. 2008. When Home is the Navel of the World. An ethnography of young Rapa Nui between home and away. Unpublished PhD dissertation, University of New South Wales.
- Appadurai, A. 2005. *Après le colonialisme. Les conséquences culturelles de la globalisation*. Paris: Petit Bibliothèque Payot.
- Babadzan, A. 2009. *Le spectacle de la culture. Globalisation et traditionalisme en Océanie*. Paris: L'Harmattan.
- Bambridge, T. 2009. *La terre dans l'archipel des Australes. Étude du pluralisme juridique et culturel en matière foncière*. Paea: Au Vent des Îles.
- Barth, F. 1976. *Los grupos étnicos y sus fronteras: la organización social de las diferencias culturales*. México: Fondo de Cultura Económica.
- Beckett, J. 1988. The Past in the Present, the Present in the Past: Constructing a National Aboriginality. In *Past and Present. The Construction of Aboriginality*. J. Beckett (ed.):191-217. Canberra: Aboriginal Studies Press.
- BNC (Biblioteca Nacional del Congreso). 2013. Reporte Estadísticas Comunes: Isla de Pascua. on-line: http://reportescomunales.bcn.cl/2013/index.php/Isla_de_Pascua.
- Briones, C. 1998. *La alteridad del cuarto mundo. Una deconstrucción antropológica de la diferencia*. Buenos Aires: Ediciones del Sol.
- Clifford, J. 1988. *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth Century Ethnography, Literature and Art*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- CONADI (Corporación Nacional de Desarrollo Indígena). 2008. *Ley Indígena n°19.253*. Programa de Promoción e Información de los Derechos Indígenas de la Corporación Nacional de Desarrollo Indígena, CONADI. Temuco.
- Cristino, C., A. Recasens, P. Vargas, L. González & E. Edwards. 1984. *Isla de Pascua: Procesos, alcances y efectos de la aculturación*. Santiago: Facultad de Arquitectura y Urbanismo e Instituto de Estudios Isla de Pascua, Universidad de Chile.
- Cristino, C. & M. Fuentes (eds.) 2011. *La compañía explotadora de Isla de Pascua. Patrimonio, memoria e identidad en Rapa Nui*. Concepción: Ediciones Escaparate.
- Delsing, R. 2009. Articulating Rapa Nui: Polynesian Cultural Politics in a Latin American Nation State. Unpublished PhD dissertation, University of California, Santa Cruz.
- Dousset, L. 2013. From consanguinity to consubstantiality: Julian Pitt-Rivers' 'The Kith and the Kin'. *Structure and Dynamics: e-Journal of Anthropological and Related Sciences* 6(1):1-13.
- Englert, S. 1974. *La tierra de Hotu Matua. Historia y etnología de la Isla de Pascua*. Santiago: Editorial Universitaria.
- Eriksen, T. 1993. *Ethnicity and nationalism. Anthropological perspectives*. London: Pluto Press.
- Friedman, J. 2009. L'indigénité: remarques à propos d'une variable historique. In *Autochtonies. Vues de France et du Québec*. N. Gagne & M. Salaüm (eds.):33-57. Quebec: Les Presses de l'Université Laval.
- Fuentes, M. 2013 (ed.). *Rapa Nui y la Compañía explotadora*. Santiago: Rapa Nui Press.
- Godelier, M. 2010. *Métamorphoses de la parenté*. Paris: Champs-Flammarion.
- Hotus, A. 1988. *Te Mau Hatu o Rapa Nui: los soberanos de Rapa Nui, pasado, presente y futuro*. Santiago: Editorial Emisión.
- 2007. *Te Mau Hatu o Rapa Nui: los soberanos de Rapanui*. Segunda edición. Santiago: Editorial Emisión.
- McCall, G. 1976. Reaction to Disaster: Continuity and Change in Rapanui Social Organization. Unpublished PhD dissertation, Australian National University.
- 1980. Kinship and Association in Rapanui Reciprocity. *Pacific Studies* III (2):1-21.
- 1986. *Las fundaciones de Rapanui*. Hanga Roa: Museo P. Sebastián Englert.
- Métraux, A. 1937. The Kings of Easter Island. *Journal of the Polynesian Society* 16:41-62.
- Moreno Pakarati. 2011. El poder político nativo en Rapa Nui tras la muerte de los últimos 'ariki mau'. In *La Compañía Explotadora de Isla de Pascua. Patrimonio, Memoria e Identidad en Rapa Nui*. C. Cristino & M. Fuentes (eds.):53-73. Concepción: Ediciones Escaparate.
- Ottino, P. 1971. *Rangiroa. Parenté, résidence et terres dans un atoll polynésien*. Paris: Editions Cujas.
- Panoff, M. 1965. La terminologie de la parenté en Polynésie. Essai d'analyse Formelle. *L'Homme* 5(3-4):60-87.
- Porqueres I Gené, E. 2011. Parenté et théologie: la parenté chrétienne. In *L'argument de la filiation. Aux fondements des sociétés européennes et méditerranéennes*. P. Bonte, E. Porqueres I Gené & J. Wilgaux (eds.):349-368. Paris: Editions de la Maison des Sciences de l'Homme.

- Porteous, D. 1981. *The modernization of Easter Island*. Western Geographical Series, Vol. 19. Victoria: Department of Geography, University of Victoria.
- Sahlins, M. 1987. *Islands of History*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- 1993. Goodbye to Tristes Tropes: The Ethnography in the Context of Modern World History. *Journal of Modern History* 65(1):1-25.
- Santa Coloma, M. 1998. Endogamy in Easter Island. *Rapa Nui Journal* 12(3):63-68.
- 2011. Transición demográfica y social en Rapa Nui (Isla de Pascua). Unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Barcelona.
- Seelenfreund, A. Grifferos, A. Hucke, P. Ramirez, J-M. 2004. Los Rapanui de Te Pito o te Henua. In *La memoria olvidada. Historia de los Pueblos Indígenas de Chile*. Bengo, J. (comp): 607-664: Santiago de Chile: Cuadernos Bicentenario.
- SERNATUR (Servicio Nacional del Turismo). 2009. *Anuario de turismo 2008*. Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas – Servicio Nacional de Turismo. Gobierno de Chile.
- Ŝtambuk, P. 2010. *Rongo: la historia oculta de Isla de Pascua*. Santiago: Editorial Pehuén.
- Tcherkézoff, S. 2003. *Faa-Samoa. Une identité polynésienne (économie, politique, sexualité) L'anthropologie comme dialogue culturel*. Paris: L'Harmattan.
- Young, F. 2011. Unwriting “Easter Island”. Listing Rapa Nui. Unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Hawai’i at Mānoa.
- Zurob, C. 2011. Familia, propiedad y herencia en Rapa Nui. *Revista Anales de la Universidad de Chile* 2:165-185.

This article has been peer-reviewed. Received 20 June 2014; accepted 20 August 2014.