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*Ono Tupuna*, the richness of the ancestors. Multiples Landscapes Relationalities in  
Contemporary Indigenous Rapa Nui

By

Antonia Rivas

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requirements for Doctor of Philosophy

in

Anthropology

in the

Graduate Division

of the

University of California, Berkeley

Committee in charge:

Professor Charles L Briggs, Co-Chair  
Professor Nancy Scheper-Hughes, Co-Chair  
Professor Laura Nader  
Professor Leti P Volpp

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## **Abstract**

### ***Ono Tupuna, the richness of the ancestors. Multiples Landscapes Relationalities in Contemporary Indigenous Rapa Nu***

**By**

**Antonia Rivas**

**Doctor of Philosophy in Anthropology**

**University of California, Berkeley**

**Professor Charles Briggs, Co-Chair**

**Professor Nancy Scheper-Hughes, Co-Chair**

Contemporary Rapa Nui is formed by a multiple and complex set of interactions, encounters, and circumstances that comprise the core of their indigenous identity, like many other indigenous people's realities. In this dissertation, I argue that there is not a simple or straightforward way of thinking about indigenous identities without falling into the trap of essentialism and stereotyping. Indigenous people are not what remained of ancestral civilizations, nor are they either invented nor folklorized commodities produced by “neo-shamanism” discourses. Recent theoretical contributions to the understanding of the relationship of native peoples with their territories have been fundamental to rethinking the meanings of indigeneity, but I argue that they continue to essentialize indigenous people relations with their past and the ways in which they are understood in the present. That is why in this dissertation I propose thinking about indigeneity through a notion of "multiple relationalities" as crucial for constructions of indigenous identity.

In this dissertation, based on an extended fieldwork in Rapa Nui (which was formerly known as Easter Island), I contribute to the ways of thinking about indigeneity and ancestrality, especially concerning the manner in which is the relation of the indigenous peoples with their territories is understood. Indigenous territory is framed in multiple ways, constituting notions of landscapes that overlap, creating the unique and unrepeatable space of indigenous people's lands. This dissertation focuses on understanding how these landscapes are configured in Rapa Nui, and how they relate to configurations of indigenous identities Rapa Nui. Consequently, I argue that looking closely at the diverse and complex maps that have been constructed of Rapa Nui landscapes will allow us to analyze the nature of the Rapanui territoriality. I refer to these landscapes as the landscape of the ancestors and the Rapanui nation (chapter 3), the landscape of Chile and the State (chapter 4), and the landscape of tourism and collapse (chapter 4). Understanding how these landscapes are created, overlapped and contradicted, allows us to bring closer Rapanui identities and realities and, at the same time, to complicate broader indigeneity discourses that circulate globally.

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Thanks, gracias, maururu.

## Chapter 1 Introduction



Image 1 Reimiro flag. Photograph of Marta Hotus, used with permission. 2017

### Rapanui Conversations

“Eso es, Antonia ... lo que necesitamos es algo, alguna organización, algo legal, una corporación nos dijo el otro abogado, que sea realizada bajo las normas de Chile o del mundo, pero que nos permita hacer lo que nosotros queramos con nuestra isla, nuestro territorio y con nuestra cultura ancestral, *ono tupuna*, con nuestras reglas, las leyes de la isla, con nuestra herencia polinésica maorí. Que de una vez por todas el Estado de Chile no tome las decisiones, ni se lleve toda nuestra plata, a cambio de unas casas y unos caminos. Necesitamos algo que nos permita administrar nuestra plata, a nuestra gente, quien entra y quién sale de aquí, para que no venga mas gente que no aporta nada a la isla y lo único que hace es ganar plata con nuestra cultura ancestral, con nuestras tradiciones. ¿Puedeshacerlotú?, me dijo Pedro.

(“This is it, Antonia... what we need is something, an organization, something legal, a corporation, said the other lawyer, that follows the rules of Chile or the world, but allows us to do whatever we want with our island, with our ancestral culture, “*ono tupuna*” (ancestors wealth), our rules, the island rules, with our Polynesian Maori heritage. That once and for all, the Chilean state does not make the decisions, stops taking away all our money in exchange for a few houses and some roads. We need something that allows us to manage our money, our people, to decide who enters and who leaves the island, so no more people arrive who add nothing and the only thing that they do is make money with our ancestral culture, with our tradition. Can you do it?” Pedro asked.)



We had been sitting around the fire for at least a couple of hours, drinking *pias* (beers), whiskey and coke, smoking *potus* (cigarettes) and eating a large barbecued *mamoe* (lamb) and different fish using only our hands, from the barbecue.

It was a warm night of August 2010, near HangaPiko cove, on Easter Island, Isla de Pascua, or Rapa Nui<sup>1</sup>, island 3700km west of the Chilean coast. It had been a stormy week, and all the roads were muddy, and the air was warm but very humid and heavy. The night was overwhelmingly beautiful, with a clear view of the ocean, to the only *ahu* (a platform) with a Moai, to the boats in the sea. The men's voices were loud and noisy, full of laughter. Sometimes I didn't know if they were teasing or chatting seriously about something, but mostly, the talk was cheerful. Conversations, usually in Spanish mixed with Rapanui, the native language, were intermingled and it is hard to keep up with a single topic. The drinking was heavy, but nobody looked drunk yet. The music, played in a big stereo Bazooka style, from the local radio station Manukena, was a mix between local Rapanui musicians and popular mainland music.

The participants of this gathering were all indigenous Rapanui men except myself, some of them members of CODEIPA (Easter Island Development Commission) and some employees of SASIPA (*Sociedad Agrícola y Servicios Isla de Pascua*, the public-private institution in charge of providing the basic services in Rapa Nui). I was the new Chilean advisor lawyer of CODEIPA, paid by the State to advise and represent the members of CODEIPA, and had arrived on Easter Island only a month before. Not all the members of CODEIPA were there at the barbecue, only Pedro, José, and Marcelo, who had invited me to join them because they want to discuss something with me. Something very important, they said. The three commissioners were also members of the Rapa Nui Parliament, an organization that was considered radical and confrontational to Chile.

I was perplexed. I hastily asked the commissioners “How could I create a Rapanui traditional institution under the Chilean law? “If I do that, is not going to be Rapanui anymore. What is the Rapanui law, the one of the ancient past before colonization, or something different?” Pedro and José looked at me with that “she is not understanding anything” glance, and Marcelo said, “That's not important, not important at all... The important thing is that Rapa Nui has to be independent, not autonomous as the pro-Chileans want. Rapa Nui has to return to the Rapanui, we need to protect our *hauba'a tupuna'* (heritage), our *henua* (lands), our *cultura* ancestral. We have to recover what the Chileans stole from us in 1889 with the “*Acuerdo de Voluntades*” (Treaty of Annexation), respect the will of our *ariki* (king) *Atamu Tekena*. If they don't agree with these, we'll find the way to be independent, either by filing a decolonization demand in the UN, asking Japan to protect us, or simply declaring that Rapa Nui is independent.” “Ok,” I said. “I am going to study the issue. Are you sure that you have community support for this? We need to consult any initiative that affects all the community, and definitely, this is the case under the ILO 169 Convention of Indigenous People. Do you want to do this on behalf of the Parliament or the CODEIPA? Should we meet with other organizations to share the idea?”

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<sup>1</sup>Following the guidance of the Commission for the Structure of Rapanui language I use *Rapa Nui* as a noun referring to the island and *Rapanui* as an adjective, when referring to the people, language, traditions, etc.

“Too many questions, Antonia; let’s think about it,” Marcelo said. “For now, we should eat and drink; this is *kainene* (good food) Do you want another *pia*?”

The conversation didn’t end here; in fact, it still hadn’t ended yet as of the time of this writing (2017). On the contrary, the political relationship between Rapa Nui and Chile is every minute more complex, and if there is any “solution,” it seems to be still far away.

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People usually tend to have images of places before knowing them, and some places are more fascinating to the imagination than others. People all over the planet have heard of Easter Island, and imagine that it has no people at all, only the moai, the iconic stone statues, that were left as witnesses of its loss. However, despite almost daily flight connections and sophisticated communication technology, Rapa Nui is still imagined as one of the most isolated island societies in the world, a place that many people believe without people at all. Are there any people to study there? This is the classic question people ask when you say you are working with Rapa Nui.

Rapa Nui, also known throughout the Pacific as *TePito o TeHenua*, marks the eastern vertex of what has been termed by European ethnographers the Polynesian Triangle (Zurob 2014); the oceanic ‘Sea of Islands’ in words of Hau’ofa (Hau’ofa 2008). From 1866, as we will explain in this dissertation, the Rapanui people were introduced to Christianity, slavery, law, intensified commerce, diseases, mainly smallpox and leprosy, some of the most efficient colonization forces that we know.

As its geographical location shows, 3,700 km west of the South American coast and 1,819 km east of Pitcairn Islands, without question Rapa Nui is one of the most isolated inhabited islands in the world. Nevertheless, Rapa Nui couldn’t be more cosmopolitan. Here local, national, regional and global phenomena have coexisted and interacted in this tiny territory with a population of only 3,800<sup>2</sup> since the first contact. The island is one of the most visited destination in Chile (Sernatur 2015). Rapa Nui’s integration in the tourism-based economy occasioned in economic migrants from Chile and a “massive arrival of foreign tourists” (Muñoz 2014a). As Muñoz express, “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. 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%.” (Muñoz 2014a:7) Easter Island has become world famous due to the Moai statues that have brought about a prosperous tourist industry. Nowadays HangaRoa, the only settlement on the island, where most Rapanui live, is bustling with activities, people from all around the world, new business, bar or restaurants open every month.

However, still along the main street, Atamu Tekena, an increasing number of cars and motorcycles share the road with occasional horses, and time-to-time

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<sup>2</sup> According to the census of 2002, 65% of these are of Rapanui descent. The same source tells us that there are a total of 4,547 Rapanui in Chile, 56% of which live in the 5th region (on the island itself and in Valparaíso), and 26% in Santiago.

demonstrations and protests occupy the road claiming back Rapanui territory and sovereignty, among other demands.



Image 2 Photography of signs in Atamu Tekenastreet in HangaRoa. Taken by the author

The ethnographic encounter that I described was the first of many everyday situations that I experienced first during my work as a lawyer in 2009-10 and then, during a yearlong fieldwork as an anthropologist in 2014 in Rapa Nui. These encounters showed me that amid the Rapanui, a large variety of arguments, explanations, and solutions were available, depending on who was the interlocutor, to what Rapanui family or *bua'ahe* or she belongs, their occupation, age, their experiences with Chile, among other things.

These range from strong anger or antipathy to Chile to feelings of belonging and sympathy to the country (McCall 1975), from desires of independence, through ideas of autonomy, to a belief that Rapa Nui is in a better position if it is dependent on Chile, because it is “not ready” for autonomy or independence. From a call to take a “step back and return for real to the times of the *matamu'as*” (ancestors) as the only solution to “save” the island, as one influential Rapanui once told me, to a vision of a modern, cosmopolitan, commercial and connected to the world traditional Rapa Nui.

Contemporary Rapa Nui, I began to think at that time, was formed by a multiple and complex set of interactions, encounters, and circumstances that comprise the core of their indigenous identity. There was not a simple or straightforward way of thinking about these issues without falling into the trap of essentialism and stereotype. Indigenous people, I thought, were not what remained of ancestral civilizations neither invented nor folklorized commodities products of the “neo-shamanism” discourses. Later on, I realized that if I listened more carefully to all these ranges of Rapanui voices, they told me stories about land and memory, territory and loss, spaces and time, and that this was the story that I needed and wanted to write. I realized that to get closer, I needed to be able to appreciate and put in conversations their indigeneity in a way that captured both their “differences” and their “similarities” with these concerns. In doing this, to think about the ways of how discourses about ancestrally and land are constructed and performed seems fundamental to unravel the skein of these complex worldviews that are present in Rapa Nui today.

It is fundamental to construct a dialogue between these approaches or *a'amu* (story; history) to comprehend the Rapanui complexity. Thus, just as this research is based in part on data obtained through conversations, I perceive it to be a “conversation” of sorts (Pandolfo 1997). A conversation between different Rapanui people with dissimilar approaches, positionalities, narratives and views about the destiny of the island, a colloquy between Rapanui people and Chilean officers in Rapa Nui and in the mainland, a conversation between the lawyer and the anthropologist, and thus, between anthropology and law, and also, a dialogue between tradition and modernity.

In this dissertation, I intend to contribute to the way of thinking about indigeneity and ancestrality, especially concerning the manner in which the relation of the indigenous peoples with their territories is understood. In my opinion, theoretical contributions to the understanding of the relationship of native peoples with their territories have been fundamental to rethink the meanings of indigeneity, but they continue to essentialize their relations with their past and the way in which they are understood in the present. This is either because they emphasize the cultural dimension of the territories, denying the possibilities of decolonization and practical autonomy of indigenous peoples (Anaya 2005; Stavenhagen 2011; Inter-American Commission on Human Rights 2010); Or, on the opposite side, because they give too much importance to the existence of epistemologies or alterities that tend to erase, to forget the links, the multiple relationalities, that established by indigenous peoples in the construction of their present identities.

Thus, in the first variant, widely used in the narratives of indigenous people human rights organizations, a universal indigenous is created, a legal category whose cultural differences are only recognized by the national States when met certain conditions of ancestry and originality, and they do not threaten the national projects and the current economic model.

As many authors have pointed out, this legalization of indigenous identities safeguards indigenous land and its difference, but at the same time, it establishes only an authentic way of accepting cultural difference, that which States determine as valid (Escárcega 2010). The critiques of this “multicultural” model of understanding and relating to indigenous peoples are well known and will be addressed throughout this dissertation (Engle 2010; Povinelli 2002; Sieder and Barrera Vivero 2017; Hale 2006a).

The second variant, on the other hand, has its origins in the birth of subaltern, decolonial and naturalist theories of understanding indigeneity and the elaboration of alternative counterproposals to the development models. These arguments are founded on the need to think about the existence of different ontologies, of “other worlds” that are immeasurably different from the worlds of the West. We are referring here to a great constellation of theories, which although different from each other, are similar in contrasting the indigenous ontologies with anthropocentric and individualistic models, to face the commodification of nature, stimulating debates on the understanding of the relation between nature and the human or what is not human, and the need to achieve a “paradigm other” that responds to the failures of multiculturalism development policies.

There is, in the ontological turn, not one nature (human) and many cultures (people), but many worlds of separate and incommensurable ontologies, or “multiple natures,” as Viveiros de Castro terms it (Viveiros de Castro 1998; Viveiros de Castro 2013; Viveiros de Castro 2015a). It is an ontological turn that postulates that perspectives, ideas, entities and people should not be understood only as socially or culturally distinct or differentiated, but also, “different-in-being”; not alter as in alternative but as in radical alter—ontologically different in core and kind (Kohn 2015; Escobar 2013; de la Cadena 2015; Viveiros de Castro 2015b; Blaser 2013; Ingold 2014; Bonelli 2016; Holbraad and Pedersen 2017; Hall 2015).

In this dissertation, I argue that both positions, although presented as contradictory in their theoretical formulation, essentialize indigenous peoples under a homogeneous cosmological and analytical umbrella (Ramos 2012; Bessire and Bond 2014), reducing the conditions of possibility to analyze the worlds outside the West. It seems to me that many times these perspectives, by expanding the image (Tsing 2015; Tsing 2012) of ontologically different worlds, lose their nuances and blur the differences and political, social and economic transformations of indigenous peoples, often making particular cases a whole, which may not have ethnographic correspondence. Different perspectives, individuals, and struggles of power are lost in these accounts, and in my opinion, the indigenous is again “exoticized.” It also seems to me that sometimes the postulates of these arguments have no correlation in what the indigenous peoples themselves seek for and place them in seats that are alien to them, thus reinforcing the same stereotypes that they strive to combat.

That is why, in my opinion, thinking indigeneity always means putting into perspective what we have called “multiple relationalities” in the construction of indigenous being. It is not only, as we have already said, a binary of opposition between the white and the indigenous, the colonizer and the colonized, the Rapanui and the Chilean, but multiple networks that are woven between actors that are entangled in a framework of social relations, power, kinship, life histories, which constitute a multiple and diverse indigenous being.

In the same vein, it is not possible to understand in a single way the indigenous land or simplify its link to a “special” relationship. The territory is constituted in multiple ways, landscapes that overlap, create the unique and unrepeatably space of indigenous people lands. It is for this reason that I believe that one way of rethinking these meanings of indigeneity is by analyzing the multiple meanings of indigenous land, which, as we have said, are neither fixed nor immutable. To do this, this research will focus on understanding how the land is configured in Rapa Nui, what we have called landscapes, which give support to read some of the configurations of the indigenous Rapanui identity.

The landscape is an intrinsically multifaceted notion, referring to both a physical reality and representation (or, more properly, representations). The bundling of these two aspects within one analytical paradigm produces an important focus for anthropological inquiry. While cultural anthropologists have often used the physical landscape as an ethnographic element for description, most anthropologists have not made it an explicit subject of inquiry. There has been, nevertheless, an increasing

appreciation of the importance of landscape, and theorizing within the field is closely related to the work of a growing number of social scientists, who have turned their attention to the interrelation of the social and natural worlds (Braun 2002; Descola and Pálsson 1996; Escobar 2013; Gerber 1997; Anthias 2012; Bender 1993; Hirsch 2006; Hirsch and O’Hanlon 1995; Ingold 1993). The landscape concept works as a frame for bringing together diverse aspects of human existence, including subsistence and material production, social organization, religion, and identity, allowing anthropologists to analyze the interrelations between these mechanisms via the vehicle of landscape (Feld and Basso 1996; Basso 1996; Basso 2000; Hirsch and O’Hanlon 1995; Stewart and Strathern 2003; Hirsch 2006; Tilley 1994; Mitchell 2002).

Consequently, I argue how diverse and complex maps constructed the Rapa Nui landscape, which allows us to approach the nature of the Rapanui territoriality. We have named these landscapes as the landscape of the ancestors and the Rapanui nation (chapter 3), the landscape of Chile and the State (chapter 4) and the landscape of tourism and collapse (chapter 4). In my opinion, understanding how these landscapes are created, overlapped and contradicted, allows us to bring closer Rapanui realities, and to construct the map of voices and conversation of which we have spoken. I am interested in this dissertation in rescuing what Tsing (Tsing 2015) names as the urgency to cultivate the “arts of noticing,” the ability to realize what, like matsutake mushrooms in the forest, is slightly hidden, forgotten or difficult to see. Not only to listen to those great narratives, the cries, the high rhetoric, but also to be able to perceive the small daily acts.

### **Global Indigeneity: Modernity, Ancestrality and Authenticity in Rapa Nui**

In the past, Latin American countries led to the assimilation of indigenous people to the national society and actively dissuaded indigenous identification. State nationalism connected indigenous with the nation’s “glorious indigenous past,” marginalizing them in the present (Jackson and Warren 2005:551). However, recent decades have seen a reversal. It was only in the 1960s that indigenous struggles in Latin America took on an international character through its participation in institutional forums such as the United Nations (Bonfil Batalla 1971; Stavenhagen 2000; Feldman 2010; Peña 2005). In the 1990s, it was soon clear that indigenous peoples were still there, fighting for their lands and their political autonomy. In this way, constitutional reforms recognizing multicultural nations containing plural citizenries and degrees of autonomy were discussed and promulgated in several countries (Sierra 2010; Rappaport 2005; Sierra 2001).

Thus, one of the most remarkable processes of the past few decades in Latin America is the appearance of indigenous peoples in the political scene; this is a process that includes other world regions (see, e.g. de la Cadena and Starn for the new indigeneities in various parts of the world) (de la Cadena and Starn 2009). The Zapatista revolution and the election of Morales as President of Bolivia in 2006 did much to put this fact in international circles, but the experiences go well beyond these events.

Even in countries like Chile that have a relative small percentage of indigenous peoples, the indigenous people have occupied a prominent role in resistance movements. Despite the multicultural narratives of respect for indigenous cultures, the ratification of international human rights treaties, and new legislation, the Chilean state has had a tradition of unity and centralism (Boccara and Seguel-Boccara 2010; Solar, Kröll, and Foerster 2013; Vergara, Gundermann, and Foerster 2004). Standing in contrast to the rest of Latin America, the Chilean state has maintained its vision as a homogeneous nation with a single cultural, linguistic and religious identity, and hasn't come to recognize its cultural, linguistic and legal diversity. Chile has been a latecomer to the multicultural era.

While millions of native people did actually disappear, were killed, languages were lost and traditional societies dismantled, many are still there, reconstructing and creating new paths of living in this changing, globalized world (Cattelino 2008; Daniel 2010; de la Cadena 2000; de la Cadena 2010; de la Cadena 2015; Rappaport 2005; Postero 2013; Goodale 2006).

In current decades, indigenous people have been successful at “lobbying” the international and national arenas for recognition of their claim to be “peoples” with a right to practice traditions that differ from those of majorities in states where they live. This kind of global indigenous identity helps indigenous people to create alliances, associate and produce international pressure on governments.

One of the most important international instruments, the ILO 169 Convention, declares, in article 8:

1. *In applying national laws and regulations to the peoples concerned, due regard shall be had to their customs or customary laws.*
2. *These peoples shall have the right to retain their own customs and institutions, where these are not incompatible with fundamental rights defined by the national legal system and with internationally recognized human rights. Procedures shall be established, whenever necessary, to resolve conflicts which may arise in the application of this principle.*

As I perceive the situation, there are some important complexities in the study and analyses of traditional/ancestral indigenous law. Modernity as a concept is based on rupture and transformation. It carries ideas of breaching magical understandings, transcending indigenous superstitions and undoing traditions. The arrival of modernity, then, suggests the disenchantment of the world: “the progressive control of nature through scientific procedures of technology, the inexorable demystification of enchantments through powerful techniques of reason” (Dube 2003:729) and the arrival of “civilization” in a society without rules or order.

Tradition, in this discourse, is understood as an obstacle to progress, to development, as something of the past that is necessary to leave behind in order to improve. James Clifford has said, “The Western idea of tradition, at least since the early-modern period, has typically been opposed to notions like progress, science, rationality, modernization, development, and now globalization - all terms associated with a dynamic future. Tradition is bound up in the past, the repetitive (Lévi-Strauss's ‘cold’ societies), the conservative, the religious, the native, the local, the non-rational, the non-Western” (Clifford 2004:152). In this logic, the “advance of backward nations”

into modernity needed and included elements such as respect for the rule of law, industrial economies, scientific technologies, nuclear families, democracy, secular government, among other things (Ferguson 2006), that sooner or later would become universal.

Affirming that there is an outside to modernity is complicated and forces us to first interrogate modernity's self-image, particularly its self-constitution in opposition to "tradition" (Aparicio and Blaser 2008). In the last decades, anthropology as a discipline has taken essential steps in this direction by showing that "traditional societies" have never been fixed, isolated, or outside of history; that they have certainly not been really "traditional" in the terms established by the modern vision (Fabian 1983; Wolf 1997). Richard Bauman and Charles L. Briggs suggest that representations of customs and worldviews played a crucial role in shaping the forms of social inequality that constituted modernity as early as the seventeenth century, long before modern evolutionary or other forms of biological reasoning gained ascendancy (Bauman and Briggs 2003).

If we focus on the ideas that dominate the academy today, it seems that if there are no traditional societies, "then we are all modern" (Aparicio and Blaser 2008). Even as anthropologists spoke of invented traditions or cultures in non-judgmental ways (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983) the disgrace of inauthenticity makes the term controversial (Briggs 1996).<sup>3</sup>Indigenous thinkers rejected the implication that dynamic traditions were only political, required for current purposes (Briggs 1996). They argued imperialism remained in the perceived need to differentiate between "invented tradition and organic custom, between conscious fabrication and the constant recombination of any society in transition" (Clifford 2004:156). Expressions about how an indigenous group is no longer indigenous because they were "modern" or they were "assimilated" since they used cellphones, lived in houses, dress with jeans, are very common. People continually ask: if indigenous people only perform their traditional dance for tourists or want to use their traditional law to build a casino, are they still indigenous? Contesting beliefs about what is involved in being (or not being) indigenous are mixed with ideas about modernity and tradition.

In contemporary society, different spaces of freedom to be diverse are accepted, sometimes encouraged, but within restrictions imposed by national projects and the protection of capitalism accumulation (de la Cadena 2000; Povinelli 2002; Hale 1994; Hale 2006a; Simpson 2014a; de la Cadena and Starn 2009; Kaltmeier, Raab, and Thies 2012). Indigenous cultural resurgence and political self-determination find room in this arena. Gaming, tourism, commerce in art or culture, resource development, are obvious examples (Cattellino 2008). Here we find a tension, the assumed contradiction between material wealth and cultural authenticity. When the bounds of the discussion are

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<sup>3</sup> For influential "natives" interventions see: Haunani-Kay Trask, 'Natives and Anthropologists: The Colonial Struggle,' *The Contemporary Pacific* (Spring 1991), 159- 177; M. Annette Jaimes and George Noriega, 'History in the Making: How Academia Manufactures the "Truth" about Native American Traditions,' *Bloomsbury Review* 4(5) 1988: 24-26. For critical analysis of the confrontation: Margaret Jolly, 'Specters of Inauthenticity,' *The Contemporary Pacific* 4 (winter 1992), 49-72; Charles Briggs, 'The Politics of Discursive Authority in Research on the "Invention of Tradition,"' *Cultural Anthropology* 11(4) 1996: 435-469.



established in a way that the alternatives for any indigenous people are either real modernity or fake traditions, no one can recognize of something outside modernity. Ideas of multiple or alternative modernities (Kahn 2001; Gaonkar 2001) still allow for some play of difference, but only within the bounds of a modernity defined in such a way as to mean everything contemporary in general and nothing in particular.

Contemporary indigenous movements thus require a rethinking of the idea of tradition and authenticity. While indigenous people's failure to reclaim their rights invites more silence, plunder, abuses and mistreatments, the more that indigenous people are seen and perceived outside of well know traditional context, the more they risk being seen as "inauthentic" (Dean 2003; Briggs 1996). Such criticism is evocative of what Sahlins argues: "When Europeans invent their traditions...it is a genuine cultural rebirth, the beginnings of a progressive future. When other peoples do it, it is a sign of cultural decadence, a factitious recuperation, which can only bring forth the simulacra of a dead past" (Sahlins 2000:4). For these reasons, it's fundamental then to improve a meaningful understanding of modernity and tradition and its specificity. It's important also to not deny indigenous agency in playing the card of ancestral nostalgia too, to be legitimate speakers in national and international forums. Sometimes, as Roseberry highlights, using hegemonic language is not a symbol of approval but the site of struggle: "the words, images, symbols, forms...used by subordinate populations to...resist their domination are shaped by the process of domination itself" (Roseberry 1994:361).

In this sense, the instances of talking about ancestral traditions emerging in Rapa Nui everyday interactions reveal a wide diversity of form, content, and distribution of speaking. There is not an interview that I have conducted with Rapanui people or a meeting that I have attended to in which talking about the present situation or even about the future of the island failed to mention the ancestral/past/tradition, the need to think in the right way, the old way. However different, all these approaches share some understanding about Rapa Nui. In general terms, that Rapa Nui is for the Rapanui and that the special feature that bring the Rapanui together is the past, the *tupuna or matatua*, the special knowledge that they all have because they share a common past, an ancestry, an understanding of the future as ancestral.

This "old way of doing things," this *hauba'a tupuna* (roughly translated as "ancestral valuables," and now usually translated as material and immaterial heritage) is not a perfect examination or recreation of the past, although I heard sometimes that the only solution to the present situation is to come back to the times of the *Moai*, but a perception of an ideal shared past that contains traces of ideas of solidarity or union, of a close relation with the communal land and the environment, of respect for the elders, and a rejection of the colonizers.

In this view, tradition is good because it is old, it's ancestral, it's *ono tupuna* (the richness of the ancestors), and it carries the ancestors' wisdom and arouses positive sentiments. But tradition is also good, because it is not Chilean, it is Rapanui property, and it is the key to differentiating themselves from the colonizer. In thinking about these notions we must acknowledge the alterity of the Rapanui world, but at the same

time, recognize the interactions with others possible worlds that also constituted their identity.

Audra Simpson (Simpson 2014a) begins her book with two claims: (1) that one sovereign nation may exist within another without being negated; (2) that an alternative to “recognition” can exist within a framework of multicultural politics. Following these ideas, I think that today the Rapanui construct their idea of the Rapanui nation, inspired by how they imagine (or represent) their own society in the past, and this is very clear when we analyze their relation with the land, the nation, their own understanding of membership. I understand this process of “return” or “reconstruction” of traditional law as embodying the idea of appropriating again spaces of autonomy, of self-determination, of returning to the past, to the freedom that were usurped before by the colonizer, by the *conquistador*, as a refusal of the Chilean state, of the imposition of the project of colonization. These processes of refusal are based in an ideal past, in the ancestral, operated not outside but in maybe in an alternative modernity. This refusal—the refusal of language, the refusal of citizenship, of membership, the refusal of “recognition,” is naturally phrased in terms of *sovereignty* and *autonomy or independence*, which are common parlance today in the discourse of the world's indigenous peoples.

These refusals are also processes of recovering spaces of resistance, autonomy or independence, but not the same old ancestral spaces; these are new spaces, contained in a special room recreated for this purpose by international law, by the national states. It's the space of the recreation of an indigenous traditional, customary law based on a shared understanding of a common past, but using the language of the global world, of the international law. It is a process that asks all indigenous people around the world “to have a special relationship with the mother earth,” to repudiate private property, to be enough exotic to be different but enough similar and “well behave” to be part of the international community. Indigenous continuity and success require a degree of tactical conformity with external expectations and at least a partial acceptance of multicultural roles and institutions (Povinelli 2002).

Here, I find useful Tsing's ideas of (non)scalability (Tsing 2012; Tsing 2015; Tsing 2011). How we can understand the global universalizing lens of indigenous international human rights that ask and claim for local specificity and at the same time, call for a global understanding of the indigenous worlds? Scalability, in Tsing words is “the ability of a project to change scales smoothly without any change in project frames” (Tsing 2015:38). Is it possible to “scale up” particular indigenous traditional or ancestral law to create an international frame that covers all indigenous people? Here we find an essentializing trap: How can all indigenous people around the world, despite the different circumstances and histories have very similar traditions, which can be labeled as indigenous. This implies that if we put all the indigenous knowledge, stories, ideologies in one large mixer, we are going to find a universal indigenous citizen, a global indigenous. In this sense, globalization has allowed indigenous people to connect with each other, to join forces again through multinational companies and states, but at the same time, it has created a sort of ideal indigenous individual, connected to the earth and the land, spiritual and fighting again oppression and the plunder of their resources. One of the axes of working with issues of indigeneity is the need to explain

very specific examples, but at the same time, to be aware of global tendencies. Indigeneity is, after all, a discourse of place and belonging and the struggles of individual peoples who have their own history.

The experiences of the Rapanui in Chile seem very far away from other indigenous groups indeed, but they are expressing them through a set of discourses that circulate globally. This is the case of indigenous traditional or ancestral discourses. Despite that these concepts emerge locally and refer to concrete elements of indigenous cultures, they gain power and force as they are articulated in the global arena. The risk is one of scalability, of the possibility of expanding the scope of the singularity of the tradition into the universal understanding of tradition without losing the essential elements. It is important to study how some features are unable to “scale up” but some are. And to understand that sometimes discourses of tradition or indigeneity have as much potential to create a hierarchy as to dismantle it and how the empowerment of some indigenous people may entail the disempowerment of others.

In the center are the Rapanui understandings of tradition and ancestrality and the relationship with a territory, the land on which these stories are told. In my work as a lawyer in CODEIPA, I began to realize the paramount importance of land in the configurations of the Rapanui identity, and how all the political discourses regarding the importance of the culture in Rapa Nui and the opposition to Chile were expressed mainly in “ancestral land talk.” As we will see in chapter 2, international human right law has adopted a position that links the survival of indigenous peoples with effective access to their traditional territories. In this way, the right to traditional lands is indissolubly related to the right to life of these communities. In this dissertation, I will analyze how to argue autonomy/independence/decolonization with *ancestrality* or *traditionality* (Richland 2008) becomes a fundamental way to recover the territory and, thus, recuperate autonomy, to decolonize Rapa Nui, and to create new but still ancestral paths for the future. Thus, while the Rapanui highlight migration topics or more everyday problems when discussing current conflicts, the conversation eventually comes around to indigenous politics, the future and the understanding of ontological life in their ancestral heritage and worldviews.

Therefore, while many indigenous peoples, scholars of indigeneity, legal practitioners and advocates for indigenous causes call for the respect, and in some case for the incorporation of traditional, customary or ancestral culture (as Rapanui people call it) in national legal systems, there has been little scholarly exploration of how indigenous people and its members conceptualize and invoke tradition/ancestrality in their everyday practices.

In legal scholarship, those who work with indigenous people, have a strong loyalty with the necessity of a broader understanding of the law, searching for a legal paradigm respectful of the traditional way of life of the indigenous people, usually using the legal pluralism model. The problem that often faces lawyers is that the question of what is traditional law is a complex one that lawyers do not know how to answer. So, they hire anthropologists to find what the indigenous law is in a particular community, the traditional customs that indigenous people are still practicing. Anthropologists usually write reports that, while strengthening the hybrid character of these practices,

they usually manage to find some “ancient” practices that are still present, that could help lawyers to fight for the respect and protection of these practices. Indigenous people, governments, and NGOs make great efforts, to find the “real” traditional indigenous law, the customs that indigenous people are actually using and to write them down in a systematic account useful in courts of law (Povinelli 2002).

These discourses or narratives are strongly intertwined with ideas of multiculturalism and international human rights, as the ILO Convention article I cited above. In this same sense, attending to the languages of indigenous human rights conventions, indigenous leaders, NGOs, and even national states, we can have the feeling that there is a distinct, fully recognizable indigenous traditional law that is possible to “recover,” “rescue,” “save,” “write down” or “apply.”

I suggest ways of thinking about these contradictions by distinguishing between Rapanui ideologies of ancestry and the actual practices surrounding their expression. I attempt to show how the Rapanui themselves engage issues of tradition/ancestry in relevant social aspects related to territory. There is no mistaking how epistemologically committed Rapanui are with both the concept of tradition and its material consequences, and also how today, indigenous people have a better chance of success of affirming rights presented as traditional, part of their native culture.

The articulation of this decolonized future is grounded in both the revitalization of many different and sometimes contradictory Rapanui worldviews based in the notion of ancestral traditions and international human rights law. Currently, the Rapanui (re) construct their identity, inspired by the knowledge of the past (or how they imagine or represent it). For this process of identification, as we explain above, the Rapanui people are using the concept of *cultura ancestral* or *cultura viva* (culture or living culture) (Muñoz 2014a), or *ono tupuna* (the richness of the ancestors) referring to the ancestral knowledge. This “describes all the tangible aspects of difference: society rules, language, clothing and other particular social practices like dances, songs, tattoos, and body painting (among others)” (Muñoz 2014a:31). But also, the installation of hotels, cabins, restaurants, spas, stores, surf and scuba diving center, shootings of movies, documentaries and TV from all around the world, has created a new language of money, where 4x4 cars, motorcycles, fancy stereos, trips to Tahiti, among others goods, are fundamental to show economic success.

These mixtures of global and local discourses empower the Rapanui’s voices through a political rhetoric that asserts their rights as a nation (Young 2011; Arthur 2012; Arthur 2015), as a people, but at the same time strengthen their belonging (and dependence) to the Chilean society (Delsing 2015; Arthur 2015). Rapa Nui face a dilemma today, namely, that “the more successful any ethnic population is in commodifying its difference, the faster it will debase whatever made it different to begin with.” (Comaroff and Comaroff 2009:19). The large scale and remarkable determination and diversity of Rapa Nui resistance make me think that the struggles are not going to end soon (Cristino 1984; Porteous 1980a; Cristino and Fuentes 2011; Fischer 2005a; Fischer 2001; Foerster and Moreno Pakarati 2016).

Rapanui organizations such as the Rapa Nui Parliament now want to turn attempts at integration into self-determination (or decolonization or independence), as

revealed by their actions (Gonschor 2009; Young 2014; Young 2015; Young 2012), even though there is strong opposition from other members of the community. Other organizations have proposed autonomy within the nation-state, but what is meant by autonomy takes on different meanings depending on who is speaking. Some have asked for a special law for Easter Island and a special Rapanui commission to make decisions about Rapa Nui.

Thus, the Rapanui have been wanting significant change in their relationship with Chile in one form or another for many years, including reform within the current framework, an autonomous political status within Chile, and independence (Rochna Ramírez 1996; Gonschor 2009; di Castri 2003; Fischer 2005a; Foerster and Moreno Pakarati 2016). There is not a uniform worldview shared by all Rapanui, on the contrary, it is a dynamic process under construction every day, nourished by the different perspectives and ideas of the future, but cemented in narrative of common understanding of the past, of the abuse, the plunder of their resources and the actual consequence of colonialism in their way of life. Though stories of this past are sometimes different and contradictory, they shared an indignant feeling that Rapanui people have been abused in the past.

Like many indigenous people around the world, the Rapanui insist on the integrity of their traditional or ancestral knowledge and their *hauiha'a tupuna* governance, ideologically and discursively *refusing* Chilean citizenship. Audra Simpson reflects about the Iroquois' politics of refusal, which stands in stark opposition to the politics of cultural recognition. Following the implications of refusal, Simpson claims that a sovereign political order can exist nested within a sovereign state, albeit with significant tension around problems of jurisdiction and legitimacy (Simpson 2014a; Simpson 2007).

In 2009, while working in CODEIPA, the State gave the sub-commission the mission of creating a list of Rapanui people susceptible to being beneficiaries of a future land delivery. In order to make this discussion easy, I proposed to the commissioners to elaborate a list of criteria that should be taken into consideration to elaborate the list. After a long discussion, they reached an agreement. From my point of view, this list is a very good indicator of the way that CODEIPA operates, mixing notions of ancestral customs, religious views and Chilean law. The criteria was the following; 1. The applicant (or their parents) cannot be an owner, possessor or occupier of other rural land. 2. The land will be delivered to the head of the family in collective ownership. 3. The applicant cannot have benefited in previous transfers of land. 4. The applicant could not have been involved in the purchase or sale of land. 5. The applicant has to be older than 18 year of age. 6. The applicant must be Rapa Nui and resident in the island. 7. The applicant or his relatives cannot be involved in illegal occupations of land. 8. Preference will be given to applicants who are legally married.

This criterion, from my point of view, shows how Rapanui members of CODEIPA are trying to use a practical notion of ancestral Rapanui law. With the notion of binding elements such as the importance of family ties, collective ownership, prohibiting and punishing the sale of land, and trying to solve the problems of accumulation of land by a few, they are attempting to use their traditional land system inside the Chilean structure. These processes are deeply intertwined with the long path

of colonization. As the criteria shows, with private property as an always contested but everyday notion in Rapa Nui, a Catholic community, with capitalism as part of their lives, and with years of interaction with the Chilean law, it seems complicated to return to the times of the moai and their *mata* settlements configuration. It is possible, however, to think of a new system that most of the Rapanui want, named autonomy, independence, or self-determination based in a shared idea of what constituted tradition, of a common understanding of the past, of being Rapanui, on hearing the voice, the rich voice, of the *tupuna*.

In the particular case of Rapa Nui the narratives of the Chilean government have constructed a vision of CODEIPA, as a unique case in Chile where natives could decide their futures on their own terms, resolve their disputes, administer their resources and create their own strategies of development. But some Rapanui perceive this reality in a very different way, as one where the State is in control of the commissioners, imposing the power and force of the nation and the state, referring to them as “*paihenga o te Tire*” (Chilean dogs) (Young 2015). I think that both narratives—of the government and the Rapanui people—fail to capture the complex interactions between law, colonization, capitalism, modernity and more that occur every day. Both approaches look at the indigenous law as static and fixed, without coming to understand that years of interactions, misunderstandings and shared history have shaped their appreciations and values about the meanings and significances of the law.

In Chile and Rapa Nui, as in much of the world, human rights and multiculturalism have been accepted as discourses of resistance and social struggle, with little consideration to their liberal grounds and their ties with the neoliberal state. It is fundamental to look carefully at these discourses, not to disqualify them or to destabilize the movements that engage them, but rather to understand certain risks that may be associated with them as concepts. Thus, it is important not assume that human rights and indigenous rights are always intrinsically challenging to the neoliberal state; neither should we presume that these discourses always serve hegemonic state power (Mattei 2008; de Sousa Santos 1987; Povinelli 2002). This study assumes that the processes at work in understanding contemporary Rapanui ancestral law are ambiguous and have multiple tensions (French 2009; Snyder 2013; Richland 2008; Sieder and Barrera Vivero 2017). If we assume that law, like culture, is not static or independent of other forces, and it is crucial in the construction of the indigenous identity, we need to comprehend how this notion of ancestrality is currently used (Merry 2000; Nader 2002; Nader 1990; Comaroff 2001).

“Indigenous traditions, like all traditions, are not fossilized remains of the past” as an author said (Ramos 2003:414) “they are constantly being reinterpreted and resignified to accommodate innovations and socio-cultural changes that constantly bombard their lives both from within and without their societies”(Ramos 2003:414). They are products of structure and agency, “forged in the crucibles of culture and history” (Dean 2003:5). At the same time, Rapanui discourses about the future of the island are usually formulated in terms of refusal of the nation state, and at the same, recuperating an “ancestral” law, claiming the state enforce obligations of respect for their traditional customs and authorities, language, territory and natural resources. By

questioning the state's monopoly on legal production, and seeking the right to their own law, authorities, and forms of justice, those Rapanui refuse the State control and assert their differences.

Overall, today it is possible to observe how Rapa Nui is witnessing a revitalization of Rapanui identity that seeks to refuse the Chilean present a national discourse however diverse, how it speaks through Rapanui worldviews with an emphasis in the relations to the land (Delsing 2015; Arthur 2012; Gomez 2010; Moreno Pakarati and Zurob 2012; Foerster, Moreno Pakarati, and Ramirez 2015).

In the process of reasoning about notions of traditional/ancestral in Rapa Nui, I came to realize that in the center there was always the territory and its links with the political situation of Rapa Nui. I discovered that a useful way of analyzing these complex issues is trying to unpack the different narratives associated with the Rapa Nui land. In this way, this dissertation will examine how three different landscapes are constructed, how they constitute territory in Rapa Nui and help us think about the actual configurations of Rapanui identity. These three landscapes represent, in my opinion, the most important narratives that shaped Rapa Nui territory today; the landscape of the ancestors (chapter 3), the landscape of the Chilean State (chapter 4) and the landscape of tourism (chapter 5).

In chapter 2, I will explore how the notion of multiples landscapes is created, separating myself from theories that establish a unique and special link between indigenous peoples and their lands. To do so, I analyze the connections between indigeneity and territoriality, its relations with human rights discourses and the way in which I perceived the idea of multiple landscapes in the understanding of Rapa Nui territoriality.

Chapter 3 inaugurates the first landscape of Rapa Nui, the “Landscape of the *tupunas*. Nation of the ancestors” designed to discuss how Rapanui people engage both epistemically and practically with notions of tradition or ancestry in the construction of their identity and their territory.

Chapter 4, “*Isla de Pascua*: The landscape of Chile and the State” analyzes how Isla de Pascua (Easter Island), the Chilean island, was created in Rapa Nui and how the State has managed to create a landscape that is crucial to the understandings of territoriality in Rapa Nui and to the configuration of actual Rapanui identity.

Finally, chapter 5 “In the shadow of the Moai: Tourism and collapse” describes and examines how the global importance of Rapa Nui has constructed a world imaginary about the island that is essential to understand the meanings of the multiples landscapes in Rapa Nui.

### **Brief History of Rapa Nui Land**



Image 3 in Katherine Routledge: *The Mystery of Easter Island*, 1919

Rapa Nui was “re-discovered” in 1722. At the time, a population of Polynesian origin, who had arrived on Easter Island many centuries earlier, inhabited the island. Rapa Nui is a highly particular place, deeply marked by the effects of a long process of colonialism. McCall calculates, for example, that some 1,500 Easter Islanders were abducted or killed during a few months in 1862-1863 by Peruvian slave ships. This may have been as much as half of the population at the time (McCall 1976). From no other island in the Pacific were so many people taken. The story goes that only 15 returned to the island, only to compound the disaster with more diseases, which decimated the population from 6,000 people in 1862 to 900 in 1868 (Cristino and Fuentes 2011). Catholic missionary activity began the year after the slave raids ceased. By 1868, Catholic priests removed the last of the Rapanui from their traditional clan territories. They “bought” two plots of land on the island and re-settled the Rapanui around two churches (McCall 1976). Without consent, Rapanui people were removed from their ancestral lands and required to live in the vicinities of HangaRoa and Mataveru.

According to Metraux: “When Father Eyraud landed in 1863, the population was distributed in *HangaRoa*, *Anakena*, perhaps *Vaibu* and the district surrounding *RanoRaraku*. The missionaries concentrated the population in a single village and thus broke the last connections of the individuals with their ancestral territory. The memory of the old order survived with remarkable tenacity, and as late as 1914, Routledge was able to obtain from aged natives references to lineage groups and their respective distribution” (Metraux 1940:120). That same year, Frenchman Jean-Baptiste Dutrou-Bornier proclaimed himself king of the island, made the island a sheep ranch and subjected the Rapanui. Dutrou-Bornier formed a commercial firm with a partner from Tahiti, John Brader, with the intention of gaining lands in the island for ranching. Most of the land they acquired in exchange of cloth or pieces of cotton, a practice supported by the Mission with whom soon they would create the *Consejo de Estado de Rapa Nui*. This “association between the missionaries and tyrant Dutrou-Bornier controlled and



arranged land purchase contracts”(Arthur 2015:151). Since his arrival in the island the Frenchmen was accountable of a succession of mistreatments and crimes committed against the Rapanui people that occasioned in a complicate relationship with the preachers. The island separated into two sides: Dutrou-Bornier and his followers, and the missionaries and their people. In opposition to the missionaries, he accepted “paganism and surrounded himself with several local chiefs, to whom he gave firearms for collaboration with his causes”(Zurob 2014:28).

The Rapanui attempted to seize opportunities and use outsiders for their own drives. The struggle itself was a renewal of ancient animosities between tribal alliances (Moreno Pakarati 2011; Fuentes and Pakarati 2013). Moreno Pakarati proposes that Rapanui participation in the disagreements between Dutrou-Bornier and the missionaries can only be understood in terms of “native political power holders that engaged with one of these two sides”(Zurob 2014:28).

The bishop of Tahiti in 1871 interfered in the disagreement and took the missionaries and their people to Tahiti. Arthur expressed that “most of the population of the island left for fear of staying under the command of Dutrou-Bornier, with no house, no land and no food. Only 175 stayed on the island, most of them against their will. At this point all the population concentrated in Mataveri, HangaRoa and a few isolated houses in Vaihu; the rest of the island was uninhabited. With a total control over Rapa Nui, between 1872 and 1877, Dutrou-Bornier converted the island into a ranch that had as tenant farmers the majority of its inhabitants”(Arthur 2012:116).

These purchases are currently considered by most of the actors to be fraudulent. Undoubtedly, these are the originators of Rapa Nui's entry into a new land valuation system, transforming land into a tradable good (Zurob 2011). If indeed the Rapanui "ceded their lands" with the awareness that that land ceased to belong to them, there is no certainty. However, what we did know however, what we do know for sure, is that some years later, already entered the twentieth century, the community feels that they have been “stripped,” and repudiates this “contracts.”(Zurob 2011)

By the census of 1877, only 110 Rapanui had survived. As Muñoz expressed “all contemporary Rapanui descended from these 110 survivors <sup>4</sup>”(Muñoz Azócar 2007). When the Rapanui killed Bornier in 1876, the Brander-Bornier partnership concluded in an extended lawsuit.<sup>5</sup>

Rapa Nui was annexed by Chile on September 9 1888 by means of the “Treaty of Annexation of the Island” (Acuerdo de Voluntades) between Capitan Policarpo Toro representing the Chilean Government and the chiefs of the Island, becoming the only Polynesian island colonized by a Latin-American country (Chilean Government 2003). This is not the time to discuss the legality of the Treaty, but is important to say that there are many important questions about its validity. These issues relate to its lack of ratification, the poor enforcement of the treaty, and whether Toro had real power to actually sign this agreement representing Chile. The oral tradition of Rapa Nui records

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<sup>4</sup>Translated by the author. All quotations of Spanish texts are Rivas's translations unless stated otherwise.

<sup>5</sup>Details of this litigation are preserved in an archive entitled "Documentos de la Isla de Pascua Pertencientes al Senior Enrique Merlet," currently located at the Compania de Inversiones "La Escocesa" Ltda., Santiago, Chile [here after referred to as Documentos archive]. (Porteous 1980a)

that *Atamu Tekena*, the *ariki* (king), grabbed a portion of land with grass in his hand gave the grass to Toro and kept the land. For the Rapanui people, this gesture meant that although sovereignty may have been ceased, Rapanui people retained their inalienable property rights over the land of their island. This indicated that the grass that flourished there would be interpretable in terms of Chilean sovereignty, and the land would remain the property of the Rapanui (therefore the expression of *pasto* or *manku* -literally grass in Spanish and Rapanui language respectively - used by the islanders to refer to Chileans until today)(Zurob 2011). This coincides with testimonies written almost thirty years later by the religious Bienvenido De Estella (de Estella 1921).

The Treaty was signed in both Spanish and a kind of Rapanui (mixture of Rapa Nui and Tahitian). In the Spanish version the chiefs ceded the sovereignty over the island in favour of the Republic of Chile, while in the Rapanui version, Chile offer to be “friend of the island” (supposedly a protectorate). Neither version mentioned cession of property title (Chilean Government 2003).

There is not an interview or conversation that I have had with Rapanui where the Treaty is not mentioned, there is no Rapanui that not know the story of Atamu Tekena and Policarpo Toro and the grass. Used for different purpose and objectives in the moments of Rapanui history by the Rapanui and the Chilean State, the signature of the Treaty is without doubt foundational in the constitution of the Rapanui identity. Also, Toro’s mission was to purchase the landholdings of Easter Island proprietors. In 1888, he had established that at least six different groups of persons had rights to Easter Island estate, among them were the missionaries, the heirs of Brander, Barnier and Salmon, and finally, the native inhabitants as “primitive landowners” (Vergara 1939; Porteous 1980a). Following a series of negotiations by Policarpo Toro in 1888, the land rights in Rapa Nui were: the government of Chile as the owner of the mission’s lands and buildings and of the Salmon brothers’ lands, and Policarpo Toro as tenant of Brander’s lands, buildings and animals as well as of the Rapanui’s lands (Cristino 1984).

In 1895, John Brander sold all his rights on Easter Island to Enrique Merlet, a French merchant, settled in Chile, for the sum of £ 4,000. In that same year, Merlet signed a lease with the Chilean State for 1200 pesos per year. With this lease, the configuration of the period between 1895 and 1953 is characterized by the installation of a big private sheep ranch, controlled by the State, but managed by “private intermediaries that were given total control of the island” (Zurob 2014:31) till 1953(Foerster, Moreno Pakarati, and Ramirez 2015; Cristino and Fuentes 2011).

In Moreno Pakarati words: “The foreign private interest in Rapa Nui began as a commercial venture created by Jean Baptiste DutrouBornier in the 1870s. Passing through various forms, it ended up as an operating company known as the CEDIP” (Moreno Pakarati 2012:29). In 1903, the Scottish that possessed ‘Williamson Balfour & Co.’ built a secondary company (Fischer 2005a) “CompañíaExplotadora de Isla de Pascua” (‘Exploitation Company of Easter Island’; henceforth CEDIP, in Spanish).

Most of the claims that the Rapanui people have today, demanding self-determination or autonomy from Chile, have roots in the questioned Treaty of Annexation (Gomez 2010). However, through this treaty, Chile leased ownership to the

CEDIP, who retained control of the island until 1952 when the Chilean government finally asserted its sovereignty in the form of occupation by the Chilean navy. For almost a century, therefore, Easter Island existed as a company state (Porteous 1981) which is defined as a functional region dominated economically, socially and politically by a business corporation rather than by a civil government (Porteous 1980a). The conditions of the Rapa Nui people were very poor, confined to HangaRoa, and separated with a wall from the rest of the island<sup>6</sup>.

It is important to say that the Rapanui people have not remained calm about all these abuses. Throughout the period of alien domination, indigenous rebellions took place periodically. We can mention the murder of Dutrou-Bornier in 1877 (Foerster 2010a), the revolts before the murder of the last Rapa Nui king in 1899, the Angata Revolution in 1914, among many others. This last uprising of the Rapa Nui, caught some attention from the Chilean Government especially of the Chilean Bishop Rafael Edwards, who was the leader of a public campaign to end the bad treatment of the Rapa Nui, the poor working conditions, asking for charity and demanding an urgent intervention of the Chilean authorities (Edwards 1918).

In 1933, the Chilean State registered the whole territory, based on the fiction of it being land without a people (Vergara 1939; Rochna Ramírez 1996). Operating as the legal owners of the territory, the Navy distributed plots of 5 hectares for agrarian use from 1928 to 1962, named “Títulos Provisorios” (provisional titles) to the married man of the island and only occasionally to widows. From the Chilean government’s perspective, these provisional titles only allowed the beneficiaries to use the land (it was not their property), while the Chilean state was its legal proprietor. The Rapanui continued to live with serious restriction of movement within the island, poor working conditions, and with no possibility to travel. In 1964, a new revolution took place in Rapa Nui, led by Alfonso Rapu, a young Rapanui schoolteacher. An open letter to the Chilean President Eduardo Frei was sent from the island complaining of the Navy rule, asking to be recognized as Chilean citizens. It’s interesting to compare the different appreciations of Chile thought the years, as one author said “in 1964 to be Chilean meant emancipation, in 2004, to many it means domination” (Fischer 2005a:262).

In 1966 by the Law 16.441 the Rapanui gained full Chilean citizenship, the rest of the island was reopened to them and they were finally allowed to travel outside the island<sup>7</sup>. It was at that point that the Chilean state decided to be present on the island territory, establishing major institutions, such as a court (with full competence in all the legal issues) and the Ministry of National Land. Some lands were “expropriated” for the

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<sup>6</sup>Porteous stated, “The most essential wall on the island, at least from the company's point of view, was the long boundary wall which symbolically cut off the island's single village of Hangarua from the sheep pastures that comprised the bulk of the island. By this means CEDIP attempted to separate the native population from the sheep stock. This ad hoc reservation system was only partially effective, however, for the wall was patrolled mainly by company police of indigenous origin. Sheep rustling for food soon became an established characteristic of the Easter Island indigene's life-style” (Porteous 1978:156).

<sup>7</sup> In 1965 an airfield was constructed at Mataverí, and regular commercial flights started landing there by 1967. That same year a NASA station was established on the island to track artificial earth satellites; the U.S. military contingent associated with the station left the island in 1971. In 1986 the airport runway was extended to serve as an alternate landing for the U.S. space shuttle.

construction of school, public offices and tourist buildings with the promise of compensations, which were never paid (Yañez and Cárdenas 2014). Since then, Rapanui people started claiming their land back from the Chilean government, through a mechanism that recognizes its ancient traditions of use of land and inheritance. These facts are the foundation of one of the current conflicts (Foerster, Moreno Pakarati, and Ramirez 2015). In 1979 under the Chilean military government the Decree-Law 2.885 was passed, which provided for the donation of land and the transfer of title to the “regular occupants” (Yañez and Cárdenas 2014). This was the first time in the history of the land in Easter Island that individual private land ownership as such was officially introduced in relation to the Rapanui (Delsing 2015; Zurob 2011). While many Rapanui have openly spoken their disagreement with the Chilean system, they have submitted to it in practice, and while they resisted land titles before, they have now registered for them.

In 1983, Alberto Hotus organized the first contemporary Council of Elders, uniting the clans around the preparation of a petition to the United Nations Committee on Decolonization, as part of a referendum for independence (Delsing 2015).

Law 19.253 known as the Indigenous Law, which applies to all indigenous people of Chile, was passed in 1993 at the beginning of the new democratic government after the dictatorship of Pinochet. This Law established that only members of the Rapanui people could own the land of the island. The Law establishes a special system providing restrictions on land dealings. Indigenous land could not be transferred, expropriated or be subject to change, mortgaged or acquired by prescription, unless these transactions were performed between indigenous people. Lease or transfer of these lands was also prohibited. It also created the National Corporation for Indigenous Development (CONADI), and in the case of the Rapanui it created CODEIPA –the Easter Island Development Commission.

However, this “chilenization” (Montecino and Foerster 2012) of Rapa Nui has since the 1980s been contrasted with the “Rapanuization,” that is that “institutions and political spaces that had previously been under the control of external agents are being appropriated by the Rapanui with more and more impact every day”<sup>8</sup> (Andueza 2000:114) and also with a renewed focus on their land rights, language and cultural difference as Polynesians.

The current distribution of land in Easter Island (2014) is the following: the total area of the island (16,600 hectares), the 14.78%, is in the hands of Rapanui in the form of domain titles (*parauhenua*), 12.57% are in possession of Rapanui without legal titles (in possession or with provisional titles) and over 70% (National Park Rapa Nui and Fundo Vaitea) is under Chilean administration (Yañez and Cárdenas 2014). Of the total number of dominion titles, 9% have been delivered during the period 1990-2005, which includes the so-called first phase of restitution of agricultural land to Rapanui people, with 252 titles of individual dominion titles in rural areas, granted in the parceling process 1998-2000.

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<sup>8</sup>Personal translation

The result of this individual land delivery process has been subject to strong criticism by many -and sometimes- contradictory reasons: that they didn't respect the ancestral residency pattern, that it was individual and not a collective delivery, that much of the land given remains unused (the demand for land is mainly housing), that the land has been leased or sold (sometimes at ridiculously low prices or in exchange for vehicles) to other Rapanui with more money, which created a sort of Rapanui local landowners, and finally, that there was actual or little care taken with archaeological heritage areas. In 2014, the Chilean government and CODEIPA proposed a second delivery of land. The plan was to distribute 1,052 hectares of land to Fundo Vaitea among 264 families in plots of 2.5 hectares. The Ministerio de Bienes Nacionales (Ministry of National Estates) tried to concretize this plan in a consultation process with the Rapa Nui community that was strongly opposed by many organization and members (for very different reasons), making a call to abstain and not vote. While voters approved of the plan to continue to restore lands to the Rapa Nui people (329 votes in favor, versus 41 against), the community rejected the state plan to return the Fundo Vaitea lands to the families by a margin of 192 to 168 votes (Young 2015)

Much of this land has been transferred from generation to generation, using the instrument of the assignment of rights (*cesiones de derecho*) by which family members transfer their "rights" to a piece of land to another member of the family. Generally no "legal title" supports these assignments, except of the land possession (Yañez and Cárdenas 2014). These "instruments" operated in opposition to the Chilean law but using its words and terms, while creating a very special and local adaptation, has been used and accepted by CODEIPA and, in part, by the Ministry of National Estate. In 1979 under the military government, the Decree-Law 2.885 was passed, which provided for the donation of the land and the transfer of title to the "regular occupants". This was the first time in the history of the land in Easter Island that individual private land ownership as such was officially introduced in relation with the Rapanui people. The figure of domain titles has undoubtedly changed the ownership pattern present in Easter Island (Delsing 2015; Zurob 2011; Foerster, Moreno Pakarati, and Ramirez 2015). Although many Rapanui have publically expressed their disagreement with the Chilean system, because it allows the land to acquire a tradable value, they have submitted to it in practice, and while they resisted land titles before, they have now registered for them.

On the contrary, Provisional titles and Assignments of Rights are associated with the collective use of the land that prevailed before, when the value of the land was given by its productive capacity (Gomez 2012; Yañez and Cárdenas 2014). I have heard people saying that *cesiones de derecho* are Rapanui custom, that they are an ancestral way of transferring land respecting Rapanui way of heritage.

What is considered ancestral or traditional in 1900 or in 1970s differs profoundly from the discourses about traditionalism today. For example, actual "popular" knowledge said that in pre contact period, the island was divided into discrete territories, each maintained by one of the ten *mata*<sup>9</sup> and their subgroups or lineages (*ure*,

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<sup>9</sup> The exact number of clans or mata is still controversial.

*paenga or ivi*). *Mata* were grouped into two mayors factions; *Kotu'u 'Aro o te Mata Nui* and *KoTu'uHotuIti o te Mata Iti*.

This division of the land, suggested by some of the first visitors, collected by one anthropologist in the 1930s and reproduced by the Elder Council in the 1980s, has been assumed as the “official true” in the last years, and used as support and argument of all Parliament's demands. However, later researchers have showed that this was not the actual land distribution of the *mata*. On the contrary, it was a construction of some of the Rapanui in the early nineteenth century to protect their land against the Company (Foerster, Moreno Pakarati, and Ramirez 2015) using the maps as devices of political refusals.

Very similar analysis can be done concerning contemporary land customs that are shown as “ancestral” or traditional, but are truly products of the rule imposed during the Navy administration, or related to practices introduced by the church. Investigation suggests Rapanui genealogy and ancestry are another fundamental piece of the refusal devices that Rapanui people utilize to think about land and the Chilean tenure system (Foerster, Moreno Pakarati, and Ramirez 2015; McCall 1981; Porteous 1980a; Fischer 2005a; Cristino 1984). Today most of the Rapanui people that I talked to were aware of their ancestry, their *mata* and the territory to which they belong, despite the terrible consequences that the arrival of missionaries has in the brokerage of their resident patterns (Cristino and Fuentes 2011).

When we discuss land in Rapa Nui, the notion of ancestral future gains significant ground both as a way of refusal from the nation state land policies and also as a tool for the understanding of the configurations of contemporary Rapa Nui. It is not an overstatement to say that land serves to Rapanui people as a way to remember the past, to maintain the memory of this shared history in the recent past and also as a device to think about the possibilities of the future. Thus, land constitutes a material reminder of the past, of the *ono tupuna* (richness of the ancestors), or the ancestral land configuration and the sacred places (*ahu*) where the *matatus* (ancestors) build the *Moai* representing the *tupunas*. And also, land represents the recent past, as a silent notice of the abuses, the imprisonment in HangaRoa, the leprosarium, among many other sad and tragic events. And also, land represents the recent past, as a silent notice of the abuses, the imprisonment in HangaRoa, the leprosarium, among many other sad and tragic events. The land is past, present and future.

## Methods

This research is primarily based on yearlong fieldwork conducted in 2013-2014 on Rapa Nui. However, it is also based on knowledge and information that I gathered in the time that I worked as a lawyer in Rapa Nui in 2009-2010, when my questions about ancestry and tradition began to be formulated. I never stopped being the lawyer in Rapa Nui; I never ceased to be called “la abogada” (the lawyer) while walking the streets of HangaRoa, and I was asked for opinions and recommendation when I attended meetings. For this reason sometimes this participant observation research was

indeed “very participant,” despite my intention of remaining in the periphery. I wasn’t easy to be both the lawyer and the anthropologist in the field, but at the end, I think this was a great thing that allowed me to think about anthropologist positionalities and the (im)possibility of an impartial or neutral anthropology. In many senses, my positionality has been valuable; it has allowed me to talk and dialogue with both Rapanui and members of the State. I was able to interview and observe both “up” and “down” (Nader 1972), while recognizing my partial perspective.

In this sense, lawyers and anthropologists have taken an important role in the formulation of historical discourse, in inspiring policies to determine ethnic and legal categories, in collaborating to “rescue” cultural losses, in settling rights claims, and in providing information utilized to authenticate or debate indigenous histories, territories, and identities. As such, our works are invested of some level of authority and have the prospective to be adopted by others. In Rapa Nui, where there is a large concentration of anthropologists-archeologists interlocutors, rising discussions involve the authoritative positioning of anthropologists as legal witnesses, interpreters, and historians in indigenous affairs, particularly since our narratives have potential political consequences to either unite, hinder and increase current revitalization and recognition efforts. Anthropologists are often called to verify indigenous historiography and identity for rights claims; authorial difficulties arise when we work to empower groups to “fit” bureaucratic rubrics. Such positions carriage a paradox for anthropologists, because there is “no way to defend traditional societies without in some way transforming them - without, above all, taking on some of the trappings of bureaucracy and written law” (Niezen 2013:142).

This research was conceived to focus mainly on the everyday interaction in the multiple Rapanui landscapes as a way of unpacking and unsetting their complex meanings. Methodologically, then, my research aimed to apprehend both episodes of everyday practices and discursive construction of these multiples landscapes. If anything, I hope that the ensuing chapters can move readers to appreciate the fluidity of human experiences in spite of the historical and geographical processes that seemingly fix us to our presumed identities.

This investigation is also grounded on an extensive review of literature and key documents; as well as an analysis of media coverage, websites and social media concerning the relationship between Rapanui people and the Chilean State. Primary data collection methods included: participant observation; more than 100 field interviews; note-taking; recording key events via photos, videos and audio; and newspaper coverage. I used semi-structured interviews, given the versatility of this approach. Interviews were recorded and conducted at or near people’s homes, or in neutral outdoor areas, according to the preferences of the interviewee, and I took detailed notes during the interviews. Field notes and a research diary were made in Spanish and were later transcribed and analyzed.

Ethical research practice was followed, with the research being approved by the ethics committee of the University of Berkeley California, and informed consent was obtained from all who were interviewed. With the intention of protecting the privacy, I

have not mentioned any interviewee's name, except when I allude to a public authority or representative.



## Chapter 2

### Multiple landscapes in one space. Indigenous lands and Human Rights.

*After taking off from Santiago you see nothing but the sea, the sea, and just the sea. But after a 6 hour trip, if you are lucky, and the day is clear, you will be able to see the complete island, its sinuosities, curves and subsidence from the Lan Chile plane. How small! You are surprised, it seems like you will be able to cover it all with the size of your hand. What do you see? If it's summer, you'll probably see a golden field, the dry grass yellow. You may also see the same land but burned down, black, prepared for the new grass to grow, as you will learn later. If it is winter, on the contrary, you will see the same meadow but now green, bright, like a golf course. You will certainly notice a beach, surrounded by palm trees and a turquoise sea like in a travel magazine fantasy. You will also get to see a fairly large group of people on the beach, suspecting they are tourists. You quickly also see some stone statues, the Moai! Huge, imposing, just as the stories you read as a child, which you imagined just like that or maybe not, perhaps you imagined them bigger.*

*You see a tourist bus parked near the Moai, you are almost able to perceive the flash from the cameras. You go over another statue too, you try to look over your shoulder, but it's out of your sight and now you see what looks like a luxurious hotel in the middle of the meadow. You would not notice it, it almost mimics with the environment as one of those eco sustainable constructions, if it was not for that luxurious pool that shines like a water eye. On the rocky coastline, you'll see pickup trucks parked and what looks like people fishing between the rocks. Everything happens very fast, but you will also see lots of land, delimited and marked, side by side, but it does not seem to be planted. Plots seem solitary, abandoned. You can see plantations, outside the plots, you think they are bananas or pineapples, you are not sure. You see some temporary constructions, made in a hurry, and you also notice a white flag, which flies defiantly, with a red sign, similar to a canoe, you learn it is called a reimiro afterwards. You see people gathered in front of a fire, some sitting and others seem to dance, you see guitars and you try to imagine the songs and the laughter, but they leave your sight, and you forget the party. If it's spring, and you're lucky, you'll see a purple, lilac, flowered island that seems to be rocked on the water by the wind and the breeze.*

*You also notice some trees, small forests rather, they seem like eucalyptus trees. You get confused, you read that there were no trees on the island, that the natives had cut them all down. You may also see horses, many horses and cows, perhaps on top of an abu (ceremonial platform), perhaps looking for a pool of water that the rain may have left yesterday to drink. No doubt you will see volcanoes, probably three. One of them will surprise you by its beauty, a blue water eye, that reflects the sky, and that ends in a cliff that falls into the Pacific Ocean. You could not imagine something so beautiful.*

*You can also see a cemetery, and if you pay more attention, you can see how colorful it is, full of flowers in the white tombs with their crosses. Just before landing, you will see a village by the sea, with a church, a main street (and surely a row of cars causing a traffic jam), a soccer field and many zinc roofs. You see many new constructions, incomplete; you can see that the population is increasing.*

*The town is much bigger than you thought, although it is still small, it still does not fit into your head that people live on this island that you imagined for years deserted, or inhabited by aliens. You see again the sea, the restless Pacific Ocean, immense, challenging and when you think you are going to land on the water, there is a modern, long and narrow airstrip where the plane descends*

*without problems at the international airport of Mataverí in Easter Island, or Rapa Nui, as we prefer to call it.*



Image 4 Photograph of Rapa Nui island landscape.

As we will see throughout this dissertation, the process of forming indigenous identity is constituted and recreated through multiple interactions. Thus, it is not a binary process of opposition or exclusion of the “other,” but a progression of the manifold and interweaving relations that are being negotiated over and over to constitute indigenous identity. I argue that only in this way, it is possible to listen the indigenous voices in their complexity. If we don’t take this multiplicity of relations into account, we run the risk of maintaining the essentialist notions that have characterized the academic discourse on indigenous populations, confining them to a place that only exists in the past, in the memory, not in the contemporary and present indigenous reality.

As I will analyze in this chapter, in the middle of all these issues is the understanding of the relationships of indigenous people with their lands. In recent decades with the emergence of indigenous population human rights, a discourse that tends to emphasize the value of indigenous land only in relation to their ancestral ties, has prevailed (Escárcega 2010; Knapp and Herlihy 2002; Occhipinti 2008). This does not mean that the traditional ancestral link with the territory is not one of the most important and fundamental gauges for understanding indigeneity today, but it is not the only one. There are many other stories, interactions, and narratives that nurture the indigenous land with meaning (Trask 2004; Di Giminiani 2013; Tsing 2002; Kauanui 2005; Ingold 1993; Elden 2010). Hence, failing to recognize them puts a bandage on us that does not allow us to see the whole landscapes of indigenous lands. This is the reason of the introductory preface of this chapter, which aims to show in a less academic and more literary way, how I perceive the multiple visions of the landscape of

Rapa Nui, allowing us to glimpse some of its unique and unrepeatably meanings.

### **Indigenous people's "special" relationship with the land**

As I mentioned in the introduction, the multiple interactions between the members of the same people with others, living together within a historically situated reality are what constitute the indigenous identities. However, as we will see below, within these multiple interactions, there is one to which particular attention should be paid to and constitutes the cornerstone for indigenous demands. The "safeguard" of indigenous identity is directly related to the ancestral land, territory or space that indigenous peoples claim as their own and in their demands. As pointed out by many authors, especially those who speak from the discourse of human rights, the territory has the quality of unifying the indigenous identity, since it is the basis on which its people's existence is founded (Robertson 2017).

The centrality of land rights for indigenous peoples is also reflected in the definition of being "indigenous." It is not at all hard to note that whenever there is a definition of indigenous people, one of the main elements is the relationship with land (Gilbert 2006). I have not encountered yet a definition that does not include land/territories as a fundamental part of the indigenous identity, especially in this moment of consolidation of indigenous rights movements. Even more, the etymology of the word tells us that "indigenous" means "originating in the region or country where found; native" (Online Etymology Dictionary n.d.). The word comes from the Latin word *indigena*, a contraction of *indu* (in, within) and *gen* (root). In French, similarly, the term *autochtone* is defined as "he who comes from the land where he lives and who did not come as result of immigration"<sup>10</sup>. In turn, this term comes from the ancient Greek *khthon*, which meant land. Thus, there is no doubt that the notion of a specific historical attachment to a territory is a defining element of being indigenous. It is worth to note here that this indigenous land is not any land, it's a traditional, historical or ancestral, and it's the same land where their ancestors lived.

"We need to protect indigenous people's special relation with their traditional lands and territories" is a phrase that we hear a lot when we are familiar with discussions about indigenous people rights, indigeneity and colonialism. Here, understandings of indigenous identity are constructed and based in the relationship with land. In these narratives, indigenous people are thus the people of the land, the guardian of the earth, the custodians of the soil. The right to land, to territories and natural resources has become the cornerstone of indigenous rights, the spearhead of the indigenous claims to self-determinations, autonomy and sovereignty. It has been said that it's the first step in the road to decolonization; it's literally the soil, the firm ground that supports the construction of indigenous futures.

Land is definitely connected with the definitions of indigenous people and their future in this connected and globalized world. Discussions about development, indigenous identity, authenticity, property, ecology, sustainability, self-determination or

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<sup>10</sup> Translation from definition of Le Petit Robert dictionnaire de la langue française 2004

autonomy, among many others, are intermingled with the understanding of this relation. Regarding the rights of indigenous peoples under international law, there is great emphasis on the question of identifying who indigenous peoples are. As a result, there is an abundant literature on the subject (Anaya 2004; Toivanen 2002; Pasqualucci and DeVries 2009; Gilbert 2006; Catellino and Walsh 2005; Fodella 2006).

It is possible to say with certainty that the relationship of indigenous people around the world with their traditional lands, territories and environments is one of the more important, controversial and studied issues. International human right laws, national legislation, courts decisions, indigenous people movements, NGOs proposals, confirm the relevance of the subject. In every international forum, indigenous peoples have emphasized the fundamental nature of their relationship to their homelands (Stavenhagen 2011; Anaya 2005; Pasqualucci and DeVries 2009; Inter-American Commission on Human Rights 2010).

In this sense, they have highlighted how difficult it is to separate the concept of indigenous peoples' relationship with their lands, territories and resources from that of their cultural differences and values. Whether indigenous people are claiming successfully their ancestral territories back from a nation state, or demanding demarcation of their traditional land or are trying to recover the communal property of the land that are currently possessing without legal title, or are urban or landless indigenous people, or are fighting the installation of a water dam, a pipeline or a mine in their lands, or are constructing a casino in a land named "reservation," in the center of the conflict there is always land and the relationship that indigenous people have with it.

"It's all about the land, the sad things that happened in the past are explained because someone want our land, the happiness of seen the revival of our culture in the fight for our land, the fights between the Rapanui because some of us want all the land for themselves. The land of this island is everything to us" as one of my friends told me in his bright and lucid way in one of my first interviews in Rapa Nui.

It has been said that, this relationship with the land and all living things is at the core of indigenous societies. The word land is often conflated to mean landscape, place, territory, home, or all or some of these at the same time. Land thus, carries a particularly significant and substantial workload. As such, unpacking and reflecting about land, means to understand the physical and metaphysical, in association to the notions of place, territory, and home. Nevertheless, amid Indigenous peoples around the world, relationships to land and place are distinct, particular, changing and un-generalizable. Every indigenous group established their relations to land over time, depending on multiples and complex factors. Whether that place is in an island, in the desert, in the mountains or in a city, the relationship and attachment with a place is fundamental in the process of self-understanding and in this way they sought and found their life. Land is what is most valuable, contested, required.

The land is fundamental in the construction of this complex and contradictory identity. It is not only about the physical space where reality is situated, but it is also the demanded space that has been fought for. In this way, the land constitutes the most

important marker in the construction of worldviews about the indigenous being and its identity (Webb 2015; Reyes-García et al. 2014; Yi 2016; Tamayose and Takahashi 2014).

The ancestral bond with the territory is the most important focal point to the demands of the indigenous peoples before the States. The international law has acknowledged this by lying down that a decent and future life of the indigenous peoples, as collective entities, is directly related to the possibility of recovering and living in the territories that were once plundered. In this way, land has come to be accepted as a vital element of indigenous culture.

### **International Indigenous Law and the Indigenous Land: the territorial turn**

These entire indigenous human rights framework are based in the idea that indigenous people were dispossessed of their land in the past, and in this, international law was indeed responsible. Conventionally, international law recognizes five different forms of territorial acquisition: occupation, prescription, cession, accretion and conquest (Gilbert 2006). To different degrees, these forms of territorial acquisition have fundamentally contributed to indigenous dispossession. Although it is not the purpose of the following chapter to explore the different ways of “legal” acquisition of territory, it is however crucial to discuss their effect on the dispossession of indigenous peoples’ rights of proprietorship. Concerning the theories of acquisition of indigenous territories, two main classes emerged: first the acquisition by conquest and second the acquisition of so-called legally “empty” territories. Under the first approach the reasoning was that indigenous peoples exist but are “savages,” “incapable”; thus, imperial colonial powers are superior, which is legally translated by the right of conquest (Gilbert 2006; Aug 2014). Under the second approach, indigenous peoples did not legally exist; thus their territories were open to colonization; they were “nobody's land,” “terra nullius.”

Based on such opposition, colonial powers occupied international law, making two major statements about indigenous peoples’ land rights: indigenous peoples do not legally exist—thus their lands can be obtained; or indigenous peoples exist but are inferior—thus their right to occupy their homelands can be terminated. This distinction has some significant consequences concerning the structure of the contemporary legal regime on indigenous peoples’ rights. Thus, international law has played an important role in the colonial acquisition of indigenous territories. The international regime regarding title to territory, which emanates from the Roman property rights regime, has had some devastating effects on indigenous peoples’ right to safeguard their territories (Medina 2016).

Based on the notion of “civilization,” international law has failed to acknowledge the territorial identity of indigenous peoples. In consequence, the contemporary situation faced by indigenous peoples is the clear result of a system that was drafted in the last five centuries, and, in some parts, international law regarding possession and territory has not changed much since then (Clarke and Goodale 2010; Catellino and Walsh 2005). Recent developments in international human rights law

have arguably signaled the end of the age of dispossession. Instead, with indigenous peoples in the forefront, it can be argued that we are witnessing the birth of a new era in which protection and reparations are gradually coming to occupy central positions in international legal discourse. From this perspective, indigenous peoples' land rights are addressed through different lenses of the human rights discourse, namely: cultural rights, property rights, and economic and social rights.

Under international law the question of who indigenous people are and their ties with land have received a lot of attention. Although there is no single accepted definition, there have been many attempts to establish a single one. Jose Martinez Cobo, in his study on the Discrimination Against Indigenous People, provided the most widely cited "working definition" of indigenous peoples: "Indigenous communities, peoples and nations are those which, having a historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies that developed on their territories, consider themselves distinct from other sectors of the societies now prevailing on those territories, or parts of them. They form at present non-dominant sectors of society and are determined to preserve, develop and transmit to future generations their ancestral territories, and their ethnic identity, as the basis of their continued existence as peoples, in accordance with their own cultural patterns, social institutions and legal system" (United Nations. Sub-commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities. and Martínez Cobo 1987).

As seen, in this definition one the most important features are the territorial connections of indigenous people to their territories and the historical continuity with the ancestors that live in that land before colonization and the people that today inhabit (or are claiming back) that land. Most of the definitions shared these two elements, especially those related with indigenous humans rights.

In a similar way, article 1 of ILO Convention No. 169 contains a statement of coverage rather than a definition, indicating that the Convention applies to "(b) peoples in independent countries who are regarded as indigenous on account of their descent from the populations which inhabited the country, or a geographical region to which the country belongs, at the time of conquest or colonization or the establishment of present state boundaries and who irrespective of their legal status, retain some or all of their own social, economic, cultural and political institutions." Following the same path, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), the Inter-American Court and most other international sources recognize this spiritual and cultural relationship between indigenous people and their traditional lands, granting recognition of indigenous people rights to their land, natural resources<sup>11</sup>. In words of

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<sup>11</sup>The Declaration provides broad recognition of the rights of indigenous peoples to land, territories and natural resources, including:

- The right to strengthen their distinctive spiritual relations with lands and resources (article 25)
- The right to own, use, develop and control the lands, territories and resources that indigenous peoples possess by reason of traditional ownership (article 26)
- The right to redress, by means that can include restitution or, when this is not possible, just, fair and equitable compensation, for the lands, territories and resources which they have traditionally owned or otherwise occupied or used, and which have been confiscated, taken, occupied, used or damaged without their free, prior and informed consent (article 28)

James Anaya, the former United Nations Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, "their ancestral roots are embedded in the lands in which they live" or in which they have lived (Anaya 2004). Similarly, in a very cited case that paved the way for the elaboration of an Inter-American jurisprudence regarding indigenous peoples, *Mayagna (Sumo) AwasTingni Community v. Nicaragua*, the Inter-American Court stated that: "indigenous groups, by the fact of their very existence, have the right to live freely in their own territory; the close ties of indigenous people with the land must be recognized and understood as the fundamental basis of their cultures, their spiritual life, their integrity, and their economic survival. For indigenous communities, relations to the land are not merely a matter of possession and production but [have] a material and spiritual element which they must fully enjoy, even to preserve their cultural legacy and transmit it to future generations" (Corte IDH 2001).

The Inter-American Court holds, in accordance with the UN Declaration and existing and evolving international standards on indigenous human rights, that it is necessary to protect indigenous rights to their ancestral territory, not only to safeguard the physical survival of indigenous peoples, but also to ensure their cultural survival. The Inter-American Court, for its part, has underscored that indigenous peoples' territorial rights concern "the collective right to survival as an organized people, with control over their habitat as a necessary condition for reproduction of their culture, for their own development and to carry out their life aspirations." (Inter-American Commission on Human Rights 2010)

As seen, these international institutions are connecting the survival of indigenous people to the land, to the possibility to live in their territories. The Inter-American Court has insisted, "States must respect the special relationship that members of indigenous and tribal peoples have with their territory in a way that guarantees their social, cultural, and economic survival." (Inter-American Court of Human Rights 2007:27).

Claims for the recognition and protection of indigenous territories have become an important focus, following the publication of several studies (United Nations. Sub-commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities . and Martínez Cobo 1987). This has led to successive instances of discussion in international Human Rights organisms, which focus on the legal literature that highlights the fundamental nature of the relationship between indigenous peoples and their land.

International human rights mechanisms, including the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Peoples Issues (UNPFII); the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples; the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP); the Universal Periodic Review (UPR); and several Treaty Bodies and Special Procedures, serve in part to provide legal mechanisms for Indigenous Peoples to demand the protection of their rights (for example, the right to Free, Prior,

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-The right to the conservation and protection of the environment and the productive capacity of their lands or territories and resources (article 29)

-The right to determine and develop priorities and strategies for the development or use of their lands or territories and other resources (article 32)

Informed Consent (FPIC) -a key concept for self-determination and protecting Indigenous lands).

All this legal and bureaucratic system of indigenous rights protection is relatively new. It has been said that indigenous rights movements appear in the international human rights forum near the 1970. At that time, indigenous groups and activists from Anglophone countries such as United States, Canada, Australia dominated the scene. Here, where one important feature of the relation with these indigenous nations and the settler states is dictated by the importance of the treaties that were signed between them and its underlying idea of ongoing indigenous sovereignty over territories.

When Latin American indigenous groups and activists began to get involved in international human rights forums in the 1990s, the debates suffer a shift from the “sovereignty approach” to the “culture approach,” which sees indigenous rights as derived from cultural difference to majority society rather than from (former) international sovereignty. One important manifestation of the “culture approach” is the now legal concept of a “special relationship of indigenous peoples to the land,” which says that nation state must protect the cultural relationship indigenous communities have with their lands (Bryan 2012; Martínez, Sepúlveda, and Palomino-Schalscha 2015).

Since the 1980s, indigenous peoples across the Americas and beyond have mobilized around demands for collective rights to their ancestral territories. In doing so, they have drawn support from an array of local, national and international development actors, activists and even academics. In 2007, the United Nations General Assembly finally adopted the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) which declared and defined the rights enshrined in ILO C169 in a more broad manner, while simultaneously subsuming them under the more fundamental right of indigenous peoples to self-determination (Lennox and Short 2016). Indigenous Peoples’ collective rights to land incorporate a right to territory and its defense and everything that is contained in it, from material elements—land, water, natural resources, even subsurface elements—to spiritual ones. For this reason, articles 25, 26, 27 and 32 of UNDRIP refer to the special connection indigenous peoples have to land, territories, waters, coastal seas, and other resources, and to their right to own, use, develop, and control them.

In addition, two subsequent International Decades of the World’s Indigenous Peoples were proclaimed (1995–2004 and 2005–2014), as well as the establishment of special entities monitoring the situation of these groups, including the Special Rapporteur and an Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.

The issue of the rights of indigenous peoples has thus gradually but progressively gained importance for the international community. This has led to an international legal framework that is comprised of individual and collective rights stemming from general and ad hoc instruments, deriving from different sources, and belonging to different areas of international law. Regarding land issues, the result of this renewed interest, has been a variety of state-led legal processes for recognizing and titling indigenous territories.



In this way, important Latin American (and indeed global) restitution processes of indigenous territories have been generated in the last decades. These are usually based on the idea of repairing the State's historical debt to indigenous peoples, under the Human Rights framework and under the theoretical umbrella of multiculturalism. By this means, important quantities of territory have been restored to the indigenous peoples. Usually the territory retrieval represents a stage, in a series of conflicting relations between the different groups involved. Indigenous peoples do not always feel that they have won by recovering their land. This can only be considered as a first step in their ultimate self-determination goal, and the possibility of determining their own relations or lifestyles, contrary to what is expected. Land restitutions places States as respectful safeguarding Human Rights entities, which constitute the ultimate goal. On the other hand, States act very cautiously on the land cessions, which imply just land and not territory, which would include a promise of autonomy, sovereignty and the recognition of indigenous peoples as sovereign nations.

Indigenous peoples' land claims are one of the areas of tension that potentially threaten the sovereignty of States. Land rights touch upon the issue of territoriality, and State territorial sovereignty is certainly an area that States are most reluctant to allow any encroachment upon. International law has been established to protect States' territoriality; indigenous peoples' land rights pose some crucial questions for the relationship between States' territorial integrity and fundamental human rights.

Mechanisms have been established to comply with the norms established by international agreements regarding indigenous and traditional norms, in many of these land cessions. However, a property system on commercial logic is kept, which responds to productivist and developmentist models. By promising a compensation for past events in order to turn back history, an opposite outcome results: a new way of relating to property, the State and third parties come into play, while natives are required to maintain at least their traditional image. The States are, then, those who define the rules of the negotiation processes, "both playing the game and making the rules"(Verdery 2003) establishing the means of land cessions (collective or individual private property), the given legal title, the land cession location and extent. The States determine a series of legal categories and of identity markers, which define who are "genuinely" indigenous and who are not, in order to proceed with these restitutions. Those meeting the State's criteria on geography, genealogy, race, language, ethnicity, lifestyle, etc. may access these refunds. Those not considered indigenous are excluded and marginalized.

Sometimes it seems that the relationship to land is only marked as "special" when indigenous people have been successful in the attempt of been outside modernity. When they have endured and survived all the attempts of civilization/colonization/legalization/Christianization/modernization/mercantilization and have remained unchanged, unpolluted, and ready now to show and celebrate their cultural difference. If they have succumbed to the almost unstoppable forces of colonization they are not longer indigenous, they are extinct or in the best of the cases, they are subjects of actions of recovery/salvation/protection of their people and their culture in the frame that the State have setup.

Seems that this relation with land is only labeled as “special” and therefore worth more protection when is linked to the traditional past, when is directed to the “recuperation” of old customs and tradition or when it is possible to demonstrate ancient and continuous possession. If this continuum is broken, then the relation to land is not so special, is not authentic and thus, is not worth protected or not needed “recognition” from states. In this case, those indigenous peoples who have been able to conserve their territory, or a robust sense of belonging to a land, seem to define what indigeneity should be.

Many authors have argued that when indigenous peoples seek legal recognition for culture or land claims, courts dismiss them if indigenous communities do not appear to be living by paradigms prescribed the anthropologists who have studied these communities. (Simpson 2014b; Speed 2005) Such theorizing highlights how authenticity and “prior presence” are less relevant than the forms of power and economy that produce indigeneity continuously in relation to non-Indigenous subjects, sovereignty, environment, the academy, and policy (Radcliffe 2015). According to critical readings of neoliberal multiculturalism, indigenous leaders become co-opted as *indios permitidos*, or “permitted Indians” (Hale 2004).

Following Hale, the question is how does one formulate indigenous land claims and represent them in a language necessary to achieve legal recognition from national and international bodies, without portraying them in terms that reinforce internal rigidities or create criteria that other subaltern communities would be unable to meet? (Hale 2006b)

In this sense, the idea of the traditional or the ancestral as a “harmonic ideology”(Nader 1990; Nader and Ou 1998; Nader 2002) is used by States (and by indigenous peoples and their allies) in which the past is represented as idealized, without internal conflicts and tensions of power, an ideal society before the arrival of the colonizer. The media and the tourist industry, as we will see, profoundly contribute to create this “ideal native” reproducing a discourse that already exists at both local and global levels.

### **Latin American multiculturalism and the ontological spin**

The process of human rights recognition for indigenous peoples has been widely embraced in Latin America. Therefore, reforms have been established to respond, in part, to the indigenous demands, varying their form and manner depending on the country. These reforms, which vary in content and language, reflect international paradigms, the indigenous discourses in the region, the political processes and individual and regional power balances in each country. It is a legalized multiculturalism (Sieder and Barrera Vivero 2017). Mexican pluriculturalism, Bolivian and Ecuadorian plurinationality and recognition of good living (Acosta 2008; Altmann 2013; Widenhorn 2013) and the Chilean multiculturalism, to mention just a few examples. The way in which indigenous peoples have dealt with indigeneity has received much attention, especially the mode it has been regulated: Evo Morales’ administration in Bolivia, for example, as the first president belonging to an indigenous people in the continent

(Fabricant and Postero 2015b; Fabricant and Gustafson 2014; Postero 2007; Goodale and Postero 2013).

Chile has been facing a very limited legal multiculturalism, with colonialist and paternalistic hues, despite the ratification of ILO 169 and UNDRIP in 2007 (Vergara, Gundermann, and Foerster 2004; Boccara and Bolados 2010; Bauer 2015; Moreno et al. 2016; Guerrero 2016; Castro 2005; Martínez, Sepúlveda, and Palomino-Schalscha 2015; Boccara and Ayala 2012; Foerster 2012a). However, the conflicts between the State and indigenous peoples have not diminished. In fact, they appear to have increased, in spite of the land restitution processes that have been carried out. In the Chilean case, the Nation-State has insisted on managing an indigenist policy of colonial character, sustaining asymmetric power relations, denying the possibility of autonomy and constitutional recognition. In addition, they have included the indigenous idea by means of representations of this ideal past, but already “extinct”.

The region moved towards a “multicultural constitutionalism” (Sieder and Barrera Vivero 2017), which at first was well received by many, with the hope it would become a mechanism to counteract the dramatic situation of dispossession and exclusion of the indigenous peoples in the continent (Van Cott 2000; Sieder 1997). Expectations were high, most countries were beginning their democratic processes, so the inclusion of the indigenous peoples as autonomous political subjects was expected and that ‘internal colonialism’ would be reverted (Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui 2010; González 2006). However, many soon lost all hope, and researchers began to point out the impossibility of fulfilling the emancipatory promises, that through law and the restitution of land had been fact. It was pointed out that this legalized and bureaucratic multiculturalism was only part of the multicultural project (Engle 2010; Hale 2002; Hale 2004; Kirsch 2012; Povinelli 2002; Rodríguez-Garavito 2011; Sieder 2011).

Many authors have highlighted that multiculturalism reinforces segregation and exclusion, making it impossible to build up an intercultural project based on the recognition, valuation and legitimation of what is “distinct”. This is the reason the State’s neoliberal multiculturalism has been pointed out as not been capable of challenging the property system without establishing important changes to the configurations of power and control of natural resources (Wade 2004; Hale 2002; Goodale and Postero 2013; Sieder 2011; Postero 2013; Ramos 2003; Povinelli 2002; Povinelli 2011a).

In response to the negative social and environmental impacts of accelerated exploitation of natural resources in the region involving large-scale oil, gas, mineral, and hydroelectric projects in territories where indigenous peoples traditionally resided, some indigenous organizations have strategically invoked the concept of good living, which can be understood both as an ethical paradigm envisioning human beings with respect and in harmony with each other, nature, and the spiritual world, and as a socio-political construct, rooted in a particular historical moment. The latter counterposes alternative notions of development to the dominant neoliberal model, looking for an ontological turn in the understanding of indigenous worlds (Escobar 2013; de la Cadena 2007; Araya 2016; Blaser 2013; Viveiros de Castro 2015b; Kohn 2015; Ingold 2014).

However, rather than conceive this as being a mere strategy to gain rights, this is

also a reality that is lived in different degrees by indigenous peoples but also a manifestation of how deeply affected they are by climate change and the dispossession of their lands and territories. Although the call of such indigenous ontologies by indigenous intellectuals and their allies might be regarded as a convenient tool of strategic essentialism to undeniably shape a “cross-national, transformative, and counter-hegemonic discourse against neoliberal globalization and its negative effects on mankind and nature” (Sieder and Barrera Vivero 2017), some authors have pointed to the missing connection between concepts such as *buenvivir/vivirbien* and the real-life practices of everyday people living in local communities as well as the many members of indigenous groups whose lives have been shaped by migration and immersion in capitalist, urban life (Viola Recasens 2014; Silvia. Rivera Cusicanqui 2010) Others have criticized the ontological turn in anthropology with which the enunciation of *buenvivir/vivirbien* as a political construct is intrinsically linked, and particularly the elaboration by anthropologists of a universal or standardized category of indigenous alterity (Bessire and Bond 2014) as a historical wishful thinking that ignores the fundamental questions of “how [and when] difference comes to matter and what kinds of difference are allowed to matter” (Bessire and Bond 2014:442).

Unquestionably, indigenous claims of radical alterity need to be understood within their specific historical, political, and territorial histories. That is the challenge that this dissertation tries to assume, the possibility of understanding the multiplicity of relationships that exist in indigenous ontologies, and indeed, in indigenous territories.

### **Multiple landscapes in one land**

The indigenous land is a physical space, geography, and at the same time it is a story, history and memory. It is subsistence and resistance. It is ecology and investment, it is tradition and tourism, and it is opposition and union. As already analyzed, the indigenous identity is constituted around "multiple relationalities" as territory also does. The space is one and, at the same time, it is multiple. It is past, present and future. That past, that present and that future are also multiple and diverse.

Consequently, it is not a matter of natives turning their eyes into the past to understand the future, because that past has never ceased to be there, it has always been part of their indigenous identity. Discourses, perspectives and how they used of the past in the present, is what changes. The sense of place and the forms of socio-spatial organization are not ontological essences, but they are strongly articulated to the experiences that provide them with meaning. The places and the senses of place, as well as the social networks woven through them, cannot be separated from the political processes that seek their territorialization. “The concept of territoriality itself as a central element of the political construction of the reality” (Escobar 1998:72) is what is at stake with the new indigenous geographic policy, and “not only the land itself or who remains in it,” as Arturo Escobar says.

The indigenous territory is built up through multiple landscapes, which are contested, worked and re-worked by individuals according to particular individual, social and political circumstances. They are not fixed spaces, but in circulation, moving

through diasporas, identity migrations, new arrivals and people who migrate. Landscapes are constituted by feelings, sensations, past and present constructions, social practices. They are products of colonial and postcolonial identities, struck by the market and law, marked by disease, exile, slavery, and death.

Thus, landscapes are not only physical spaces, but quite the contrary. They are subjective, volatile and multiple notions (Bender 2006). The same place is not experienced in the same way by different individuals, not even by the same person at different times. What a space, a place means, to someone may be contradictory and confusing just as what a territory may mean for the people. There is nothing simple or univocal in the relations with territories.

In *Legendary Hawai'i and the Politics of Place* (2007), Bacchilega (Bacchilega 2007) explains how indigenous relationships to place help rethink the empty moniker of *land* or *space*. She notes that in Hawai'i, land needs to be understood as an indigenous storied place, or *nāwahipāna*, space that draws on cultural memory and activates history in the present moment and location. In this sense, as Kauanui have noted (Kauanui 2005) indigeneity is both routed and rooted, moving, evolving, and gesturing toward its past and its future. Here, a relationship to the land is opened up in a way that acknowledges the processes that require and facilitate movement without compromising the importance of Native relationship to lands. Indigenous Nations claim land through a discursive communal sharing, and land is not only given meaning through consensus of claiming territory but also through narrative practices. It is invested in meaning and identity or identities.

Michel Foucault's (Foucault 1984) remark that scholars widely conceive of space as "the dead, the fixed, the undialectical" is a figure that indigenous scholars should avoid at all costs. Sadly, the need for indigenous to legitimate land claims in a Western court system produces a focus on "accumulation" of past rather than a focus on a living land that is conceived and held in indigenous worldviews. In other words, land claims contend from a place of precedence and must prove or legitimate the length of our occupation on the land rather than the importance of land. While this is a strategic move for indigenous peoples, it is imperative not to be caught in this statist ideology.

Indigenous identities are built upon relationships that vary, which contradict and complement themselves. The native land, the land of Rapa Nui is one, but multiple at the same time. The territory becomes, in this way, multiple and diverse. It is an indigenous identity constituent, not only because of its connection to the past or because it is the place where they have lived since ancient times, but also because of the present bonds that are built (and deconstructed) upon it.

What fills the indigenous territory with meaning, and what is intended to be addressed in the following chapters, is the relationality as opposition and complement. The only possibility of avoiding essentialisms, so frequent when referring to indigenous identity, is to understand that indigenous realities are constructed on the basis of their link with the past and the multiple ways in which they understand it in the present.

The vision of the territory is variable, just as the appreciation of a landscape never being the same depending on the subject that observes it, the season of the year in which it is observed, what are the intentions of the observation, what state of mind

they are in, among other factors. The indigenous land carries several meanings and interpretations. In the following chapters, the meanings of the land, the multiplicity of the landscapes in Rapa Nui will be analyzed, which as a whole configure what is meant by territory.

We are following what Li stated: “Three points are important here. First, what land *is* for a farmer is not the same thing as for a tax collector. Land may be a source of food, a place to work, an alienable commodity, or an object of taxation. Its uses and meanings are not stable and can be disputed. Second its materiality, the form of the resource, matters. Land is not like a mat. You cannot roll it up and take it away. It has presence and location. It has an especially rich and diverse array of "affordances" - uses and values it affords to us, including the capacity to sustain human life. Third, inscription devices - the axe, the spade, the plough, the title deed, the tax register, maps, graphs, satellite images, ancestral graves, mango trees – do more than simply record the presence of land as a resource, they are integral to assembling it as a resource for different actors. These devices have varied spatial and scalar coordinates, some of them enabling land to be manipulated from a distance, others demanding presence on the ground” (Li 2014:1).

Rapa Nui is the land of the ancestors, but it is also the land of archaeologists who seek to discover its secret with modern tools. The same land which the Rapanui claim as their own while the State divides territory granting titles of domain, the same space where a tourist buys a miniature Moai souvenir while an avid dealer seeks the opportunity to build a 5 star hotel. It is also the land which the State registered as its own but grants money for development projects. It is where occupations are created in order to demand the State to restore it back again. The land which is exchanged by the Rapanui for a 4x4 pick-up truck and also the land which was depleted by sheep in hands of a foreign company. The land of conservation projects, the land of recycling and "collapse." It is both the land wounded by leprosy and the land that encloses the Latin American fantasy of the Polynesian paradise.

There is no discourse on indigeneity that does not have the land as its main and constitutive element, either as a claim for the restitution of the ancestral territory, or as a discursive element to deny the indigenous "quality" of a person not living in their traditional land. In order to understand this multiple universe and its complex relationship with the peoples, it is fundamental to be able to situate the natives in their reality, individually or locally, as we will see in the case of Rapa Nui. The (non) scalability concept is used by Anna Tsing to refer to the possibility of studying local phenomena in globalized contexts (Tsing 2012; Tsing 2015). Following this idea, the invitation is to zoom in and find the possibility of amplifying the Rapanui territory, with its singularities and similarities in its multiple landscapes, which create it and constitute it.

### Chapter 3. The landscape of the tupunas: Nation of the ancestors

Decolonization, which sets out to change the order of the world, is, obviously, a program of complete disorder. But it cannot come as a result of magical practices, nor of a natural shock, nor of a friendly understanding. Decolonization, as we know, is a historical process: that is to say it cannot be understood, it cannot become intelligible nor clear to itself except in the exact measure that we can discern the movements which give it historical form and content. –

Franz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 1963, p. 36

#### **Ancestral land**

The fundamental importance that the Rapanui gave to the land and to the property retrieval of their ancestral territory, as an essential condition for the survival of their own people was one of the first things I understood during my fieldwork, and which I had perceived before in my job on the island as a lawyer. The link with the ancestral territory is an important rhetorical tool present in many of the indigenous peoples discourses in the world. In this way, the ethnic difference is constructed, among other things, by the opposition between the local-traditional and the outside-new (Candea 2010; Escobar 2010) As already seen, several arguments on the basis of which indigeneity is reaffirmed, relate to the relationship and connection with ancestral or traditional territories (de la Cadena and Starn 2009; Hale 2011; Hale 1994; Moore 2005; Bryan 2012; Martínez, Sepúlveda, and Palomino-Schalscha 2015; Elden 2010; Escobar 2013; de la Cadena 2015).

The territory, which has been inhabited since time immemorial, is constituted as a crucial element in the continuity of tradition in native Rapanui history (Goeman, Goeman, and College 2008). An island that has survived the wildest colonialism of the past and which now faces both the most amiable side and, at the same time, the most dreaded ups and downs of Chilean Latin American multiculturalism (Hale 2006b; Boccara and Bolados 2010; Speed 2005; Kaltmeier, Raab, and Thies 2012; García 2005). Native inhabitants look at their past full of hope, at the richness of their ancestors, hoping that they will become the ones to give them the tools to understand the present and especially the future.

In my opinion, it is this way of conceiving the connection to the land, appealing to the ancestral link with the land, fundamentally expresses the difference with the other. This link is the primary articulator of the speeches of sovereignty, self-determination, and independence of the indigenous peoples. A power, a fundamental force to understand their identity, and it is undoubtedly a relevant argument to sustain and fight for their difference is given to indigenous peoples by their ancestral relationship with the territory, the characteristic of being the original inhabitants (Richland 2008; Rappaport 2005).

This power generated by ancestry is not based exclusively on kinship or genealogical ties, nor on the mere ‘spiritual’ or ‘special’ relationship with the land

(Stavenhagen 2011)Not even by an ontologically different way of understanding the world related to the relationship between humans and non-humans (Ingold 2000). The particularities of this power allow, through the relationship with the territory, to understand the social relations between members of the same people and with third parties is explained by the multiplicity of links, understandings, and relationalities.

The notions on how memory is conceived or understood, the memory of the ancestral past of the territory (Bender 1993; Stewart and Strathern 2003)is articulated by ancestrality as a fundamental characteristic of the indigenous territories that construct the landscape. The most direct link with memory and identity is territory, because it represents the tangibility of its past, and the material possibility for its future. What is referred to, as “ancestral” is the ancient occupation of a territory and the continuity of this ancestral command, which allows them to live otherwise, in ‘other world’, in another worldview. The demands for the recovery of ancestral territories are not only a struggle for land, but also the defense of other ways of life, from a “political ontology” perspective (Escobar 2010). The way of relating to nature seems like a different understanding, with beings other-than-human, Marisol de la Cadena’s ‘other-than-human’ beings (de la Cadena 2015). These are the struggles that seek to understand the possibility of other worlds, in which a different understanding of humanity and their relation with ecology is displayed.

As the misak indigenous local community members in Colombia say, we must "recover the land to recover everything... that is why we have to think with our own head, speaking our own language studying our history, analyzing and transmitting our own experiences as well as other peoples” (Canales and Moreno 2016).

The ancestors’ landscape is constituted as a memory place that serves the indigenous peoples in order to make sense of the present in Western and legal terms. This is because it articulates continuity through the past and allows demonstrating originality thus “proving” the property. To do this, it counts on the uninterrupted link with the ancestors, the first occupants, through genealogy (Fabian 1983; Povinelli 2002; Di Giminiani 2016; Ingold 2000).

The idea of the Rapanui “dispossession” is then addressed. They have never ceased to remain on the land, and they have never been removed away from it (which almost happened with the Peruvian slave expedition). This “dispossession” occurred on paper, in the document, in fiction, as Chile did not meet the promises on the Treaty and then, more dramatically, inscribed the entire island as its own in a property register, as we shall see on Landscape of the State. Unlike other peoples, the Rapanui were not moved, there are no other legal titles on their land but the State’s. There is no “settler colonization”, anyway; the land is not theirs (Fay and James 2010; Verdery 2003). There was a refusal to accept the granting of titles of domain in the cessions of land or restitutions made by the State, although increasingly attenuated. This implied the recognition of the Chilean domination.

The land and its ancestral heritage also operate as memory devices, but not only of ancestral memory before the colonizing contact, but also as a reminder of the violence and resistance which the Rapanui have been subject of. Wounds were left in the territory by the dispossession and the brutality that was experienced in these lands,



marking the landscape and constituting a map in which violence is again experienced and acted, at the same time as remembered. This generates a collective understanding; a shared identity about what happened in the past, but the way it is recreated or imagined in the present is what varies.

These links to the land are the result of a relationship among the land itself, history and people. The land is not sacred as a piece of ground alone, but also because of the historical memory associated with it. These memories are imagined and re-imagined throughout its history and passed down from one generation to another. The land is associated with history, stories that reconnect a person with their place, with their origin and, therefore, generating a new space. The relation with the land is not only of dominion and a beneficial interest. Moreover, when the Rapanui explain their existence, they do so through their link with the land, which they call *kainga* (womb) and the territories they belong to are called *benuaporeko* (native land), the place where their ancestors were born (Englert 1948; Hotus Chavez 1988; Delsing 2015; Zurob 2011).

The language, the family stories, the dances and what the Rapanui consider sacred, are related to specific places on the island. The Rapanui belonging is deeply connected to the relation with those places and the history related to them. A Rapanui informant, an activist for independence, with whom I spent countless days talking to and discussing, trying to define a strategy to achieve the island's recovery, once said to me: "We the Rapanui are the same people who arrived with *HotuMatua* and the territory that we have, our island, has been always the same. No one has more right than us to this land. I do not care what the State or someone else says. We are the inheritors of this land".

The Rapanui past, which will be re-imagined many times throughout its history, will become the way to understand themselves as a people and also, as already mentioned, the master key to think and imagine the future. In this way, it is the representations of the past, of the time of the *ariki*, which give sustenance to the present demands against the State of Chile, no matter how diverse in their content. Often nostalgia for the past is very strongly expressed in conversations about the importance of doing "good things" and for this, it must be done in the ancestral traditional way, *hauba'a tupuna* (which literally translates as ancestral values). Ancestor left an inheritance, whether it is materially represented by the moai or by the language or by the food, that heritage is valuable and worthy of maintaining. As *ono tupuna* (the richness of the ancestors), it deserves the utmost respect.

The demonstrations of respect and appreciation for the ancestors' heritage have multiple and varied manifestations. One of the most recognized today is a cultural festival that takes place during a February fortnight every year, in which the entire community actively participates. It started in the 70s decade and has had an increasing emphasis on reproducing the Polynesian cultural traits, being today its *raison d'être*. It was held for the first time as the Spring Festival, and later known as the *Tapati Rapa Nui* (Bendrup 2009). In it, the Rapanui community is divided into two groups seeking to crown a queen, and competing in various cultural, artistic, sports activities. In the 2017, everything was focused on recovering the ancestors' memory, so the faces of important

figures and ancestors were painted on the stage and seemed to give the celebration a blessing. As pointed out, it is a “recognition to the work of the Rapanui ancestors, legitimate founders of Rapa Nui of the 21st century”(Imagina 2017).



Image 5 Tapati Rapa Nui 2017 stage. Picture by Jacinta Arthur.

Thus, both Alfonso Rapu’s face could be seen on stage, leader of the 1964 mobilizations, and Maria Angata’s from 1914. As seen in the following chapter on tourism landscape, ancestry’s invocation is also a common rhetoric in what has been called ethnic or indigenous tourism. The ancestral is transformed here into a commodity, a consumer good that seduces the tourists and convinces them of the “authenticity” of their identity (Comaroff and Comaroff 2009).

At the same time, this worldwide interest in the festival is undoubtedly a process of “ethnic pride,” which is increasingly based on Rapanui ancestry and where the best demonstration of the traditional is celebrated and competed for. The most “ancestral” one, the one who has the best suit, or dance the finest dance, earns more points and finally gets the crown. This recognition of the ancestral has been re-imagined and rethought, inspiring the founding of a new music and dance ensembles, the revival of traditional tattoos (very popular among young Rapanui), sports activities such as *hakapei*, Polynesian canoeing, *hakabonu*, among others (Fischer 2005b; Young 2013).

The Rapanui constantly refer to a non-fixed and non-chronologically linear past. It is built as a historical memory, which is transmitted by oral tradition and also in a written form, not only by the Rapanui themselves but by researchers who visit or are interested in the island. These investigators, who frequently base their findings on information provided by native informants and in archaeological studies, are also memory creators and have become a fundamental part in the almost complete disappearance of the island’s society, after slavery and disease. These investigations take two sides. On the one hand, the rescue of the Rapanui memory testimonies, the writing of knowledge and stories in order to protect them for the future, and on the other, the usurpation of the Rapanui own voices which need to be written on the researcher's filter, to be legitimate and to be heard.

At the same time, memory is also nourished by many different theories held by those who have written about Rapa Nui, especially in relation to the image of “mystery” and “fantasy” that is built upon this territory. There is a strong worldwide attraction for this image of Rapa Nui that is related to a New Age discourse, which allows people to visit the island looking for UFOs, astrological connections and lost civilizations, which in turn generate into a very low quality new kind of literature, in my own opinion. It is, therefore, performatively represented (Graham and Penny 2014) for creating stories for tourism and to deal with a national unitary rhetoric of the State, as we will see when analyzing the other maps or landscapes that constitute Rapa Nui’s multiple, relational and diverse territory.

The past is one and diverse at the same time, it is collective of the people but also individual and familiar. Explaining and thinking about the past is always a complex enterprise, and it is the product of a multiple and rhizomatic interaction (Deleuze and Guattari 1980) among several factors.

### **The past in the ancestral**

The mythical origin of the Rapanui people recalls King *Hotu a' Matu'a*, who would have been in charge of a colonizing expedition from Hiva. Illegitimate son of a king of Hiva, *Hotu a' Matu'a* and his men undertook a journey frightened by the danger of a natural disaster (Englert 1948). A complex society developed in conditions of extreme isolation under which natural resources, naturally scarce for being a volcanic island, drastically decreased and a period of internal war (Englert 1948). This is the beginning of a process, which in at least three stages - discovery, colonization and effective settlement - began around the ninth century AD, which would have ended in a deep crisis of the Rapanui culture towards the XVI and XVII century, beginning later an internal process of socio-political and religious reorganization, which is interrupted by the sudden arrival of the first European explorers in century XVIII.

The English anthropologist Katherine Routledge visited the island in 1914, being a privileged witness of several fundamental events in Rapanui history, such as the uprising of Maria Angata. In her book *The Mystery of Easter Island* (Routledge 1919) it is first established how the island would have been divided<sup>12</sup>. Beside from the

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<sup>12</sup>“They were divided into ten groups, or clans (“mata”) which were associated with different parts of the island, though the boundaries blend and overlap; members of one division settled not infrequently among those of another. Each person still knows his own clan.

In remembered times there were no group restrictions on marriage, which took place indiscriminately between members of the same or of different clans. The only prohibition had reference to consanguinity, and forbade all union nearer than the eighth degree or third cousins. These ten clans were again grouped, more especially in legend or speaking of the remote past, into two major divisions known as Kotuu (or Otuu), and Hotu'iti, which correspond roughly with the western and eastern parts of the island. These divisions were also known respectively as Mata-nui, or greater clans, and Mata-iti, or lesser clans. The lower portions of the island were the most densely populated parts, especially those on the coast, and the settlements on the higher ground appear to have been few (fig. 91).

In Kotuu, the Marama and Haumoana inhabited side by side the land running from sea to sea between the high central ground and the western volcano Rano Kao. They had a small neighbour, the Ngatimo, to the south, and jointly with the Miru spread over Rano Kao and formed settlements by the margin of the crater lake. The Miru lived on the high, narrow strip between the mountain in the apex and the cuff, and mixed up with them was a

interesting aspects of Routledge's description of ancient settlement patterns, it is important to point out that, according to authors (Foerster, Moreno Pakarati, and Ramirez 2015) these names remain more or less unchanged until today and are still used by the population. We will return in detail to this later.

The property of the land of lineages was inherited or assigned by their *ariki*s, the boundaries were generally defined by rocky promontories or other anomalies of the land, and even by natural stones whose peculiar form led them to believe that it might entail supernatural powers. Each of these “landmarks” had been sacralized by priests and chiefs, each land had a proper name and its owner had the right to establish prohibitions (*rahui*) on their use or on the recollection of natural resources that were circumscribed to the land, the coast and the adjacent sea (Edwards 2011). At the center of the ancient system is the figure of the ancestors (*tupuna or atua*) that founded the cultural order rapanui. According to Nelson Castro's interpretation, “the ancestor created prohibitions (*tapu*), without which no socio-cultural order would be possible. But the ability to establish these *tapu* resided in the *mana* that the ancestors had acquired and transmitted to the *mata* and lineages”(Castro 2006).

Some reports of the first visitor's referred to the land division. Apparently, the boundaries between the lands were of rectangular form, well defined, and demarcated with *pipihoreko* used to mark off the territories within the Island. Father Sebastian Englert, who for nearly thirty-five years was the parish priest on Easter Island, in his book *La Tierra de HotuMatu'* describes the surprise of early explorers (Behrens 1722, Cook 1774, and La Perouse 1786) regarding how the natives approached land division (Englert 1948).

Langer, one of the members of the La Perouse expedition wrote on his Journey in April 1786, “The most probable conjectures that can be formed as to the government of these people are, that they consist only of a single nation, divided into as many districts as there are Moais, because it is to be observed, that the villages are built near those burying places. The products of the earth seem to be common to all the inhabitants of the same district...” (Dos Passos 2011:68–69). McCall said, “Each clan territory was marked out with piles of stones and other landmarks. The boundaries were clear to those who lived there, though disputes did occasionally arise and discussion took place at the court of the all-island chief at Anakena who was just a little more powerful than the rest”(McCall 1981:30).

For Father Sebastian, the *tapu* was the reason why the boundaries were respected. “Tapu, or taboo, is generally a kind of negative magic or prohibition which frequently refers to a person who must not be touched, a thing which must not be used or a place in which it is not permitted to set foot. This concept was an important

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lesser people, the Hamea. To the east was another small clan, the Raa, which is spoken of in conjunction with the Miru and Hamea.

The principal HotuIti clans were the Tupahotu, the Koro-orongo, and the Hitiuira. The last were generally known as the "Ureohei"; they inhabited jointly the level piece of ground from the northern bay to the south coast, and had some dwellings on the eastern head land. Next to them on the south coast was a small group, the Ngaure. The particular importance of the clans lies in the fact that, while they may be merely groups of one body, they may, on the other hand, represent different races or waves of immigrants. If there have been two peoples on Easter Island, these divisions are one place where we must at least look for traces for it. (Routledge 1919).

element in the religious practices on the most islands of Polynesia and was vitally important on Easter Island” (Englert 1948).

Through these sources we can conclude that the land of the *mata* was communitarian and that the members worked in family groups. The first migrants to Easter Island arrived with an organization; political, social and economic, of which communal labor and specialist production were integral aspects (Sahlins 1999). The ground belonging to a lineage was called *henuaporekoranga* (the land where the ancestor was born). According to Hotus, the property of the land was a “corporative function,” where cooperation between people was activated or des-activated. The land rights were not absolute, and depended largely on the behavior of the person and the subsequent approval of the community (Hotus Chavez 1988; Zurob 2011).

Maps have been used since the beginning of the contact and colonization as a mechanism of control, registration and domination, as seen in the section of the history of land and we will delve in the State landscape chapter. Maps elaborated by explorers and researchers also served as devices of memory, of protection of the ancestral knowledge that were consequently reread and used by the Rapanui. What was considered ancestral or traditional in 1900 or in the 70s differed from the discourses about traditionality today. For example, current “popular” knowledge that in pre contact the island was divided into discrete territories, each maintained by one of the ten *mata* and their subgroups or lineages (ure, paenga or ivi). Mata were grouped into two mayor factions; *Kotu'u 'Aro o te Mata Nui* and *KoTu'uHotuIti o te Mata Iti*.

This division of the land, suggested by some of the first visitors, collected by one anthropologist in the 1930 and reproduced by the Elder Council in the 80' has been assumed as the “official true” in the last years, and used as support and argument of all Parliament's demands. However, later researchers have shown that this was not the current land distribution of the Mata, on the contrary, was a construction of some Rapanui's in the early nineteenth century to protect their land against the Company (Foerster, Moreno Pakarati, and Ramirez 2015) using the Maps as devices of political refusals.

Therefore, much water has gone under the bridge from the 10 clan list that Routledge pointed out previously existed, which was elaborated in 1919, based on the information provided by his informants, and the elaboration of the map shown below.



diffuse boundaries between the tribes, referring to the changes that Rapanui society should have undergone progressively over time. The feeling of belonging to different tribes in the local population at that time was a strikingly important trait of both these authors.

During the following decades, studies were also carried out on the *mata*, especially research that sought to investigate the racial “purity” of the Rapanui (Foerster, Moreno Pakarati, and Ramirez 2015). In them, it was argued that the two confederations would be of two distinct breeds product of different migratory waves. Most of these studies were based on the work of Englert, which in turn were based on the continuity of the *matas*, and of the two great confederations, in the present society of Rapanui.

Later, a “refoundation” in the Rapanui society was described by the anthropologist McCall, as a product of the democratic changes that would have been experienced by the arrival of the colonizers. McCall noted that the Rapanui had stopped organizing in relation to the *matas* or tribes and began to think of family units, called *hua'i*, descendants of common ancestors (McCall 1981). Thus, from the arrival of the Chileans to the island, the Rapanui began using surnames, which were generated from Polynesian names or their Christianized versions, from the parents of the families that already existed. These surnames (Rapu, Tuki, Tepano, Pakarati, Haoa, Paoa, among others) gave rise to the families currently present on the island (Muñoz Azócar 2007). Many of those surnames have disappeared today, but others have formed families of a great presence in Rapa Nui today. However, McCall points out that the recognition of belonging to the *matas* still existed in the discourses.

This “local patriotism” (Englert 1948) or “tribal patriotism” (Metraux 1940) as these two important witnesses and scholars of society in Rapa Nui called it, was present in the stories of the Rapanui of that time. They pointed out, at different historical moments, that the natives knew and referred constantly to the area of the island where their lineage originated, stating that it was the place where they wanted to die or be buried, having special devotion and respect for the places where the *abu* or the *Moai* were. Thus, both Englert and Metraux maintained that even in spite of the great changes undergone by the Rapanui society, “tribal patriotism... has been preserved even though it is attenuated in the memory of the modern natives” (Metraux 1940). In this way, the old organization of the *matas* is intended to relate to the current *hua'i*.

At the end of 1980, the Council of Elders, led by its president Alberto Hotus, published a book, *Te Mau Hatu 'O Rapa Nui* (The Sovereigns of Rapa Nui). This happened a hundred years after the Treaty of Annexation, which is currently a great contribution to the understanding of the meaning of the land for the Rapanui. This book is frequently used by the Rapanui (from all political sectors on the island) to justify the land claims against the Chilean State, using their maps to reconstruct the territorial distribution of the *matas* on the island. The land, then, is linked to the Rapanui blood and establishes, through genealogies associated with the *mata* again, that the Rapanui are the owners of the entire island by ancestral inheritance, rejecting the 1933 Chilean tax registration. In this way, the *matas* are once again granted a fundamental political force, this time and for the first time in a document from the

community, based on the idea of ancestral territory, demonstrating "without a doubt, the connection of the present inhabitants with their ancestors and respective assets" (Hotus Chavez 1988:13). It is interesting to analyze Foerster, Moreno and Ramírez's ideas on how the map that is introduced in this book establishes clear, delineated and clear boundaries between the different forests, an issue that in previous maps did not happen (Foerster, Moreno Pakarati, and Ramirez 2015).

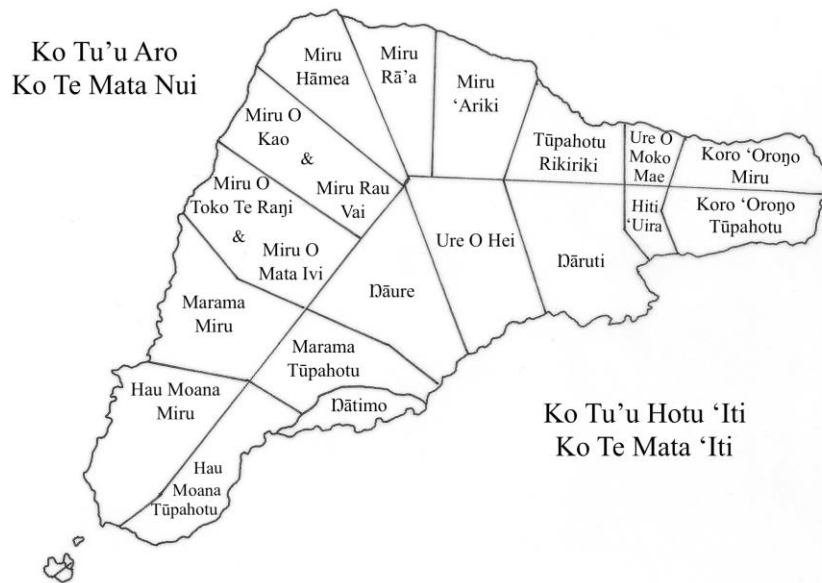


Image 8Map 3 1988, Council of Elders

The authors suggest that the map fulfills the political objective of responding to the population's need to have tools for disputing Chile's state dominance with the 1933 inscription, while the old tribal maps had a different objective of "demonstrating the traditional cultural heritage" (Foerster, Moreno Pakarati, and Ramirez 2015).

Therefore, the Council of Elders map aims to prove that the Rapanui people are the land undisputed rulers on the island, refounding the pact that would have been agreed by the State in 1888, and that was never formally ratified. It is then reaffirmed that Chile was never really given sovereignty, since they did not fulfill the promises established in the Treaty of Annexation.

The book is both a genealogical work and a current population kind of record, which links them with their ancestors in the *matas*. Thus, the same authors state that "the 'book' has become a kind of 'civil' or 'notarial' Rapanui registry, which would allow to identify who is who in Easter Island and, therefore, who is entitled to the land"(Foerster, Moreno Pakarati, and Ramirez 2015:30).

The book reaffirms a sanguine character of the Rapanui identity(Muñoz Azócar 2007), by incorporating in its second edition certain foreign surnames who had settled on the island, leaving three generation Rapanui offspring. These "mestizos" are recognized as fully Rapanui, and therefore, entitled to land ownership (Cardinali, Edmunds, Pont, Hill, Calderón). Therefore, a "drop of ancestral, original blood is



enough for a person to be Rapanui,” as a fervent defender of the autonomy of his people expressed in an interview.

By re-reading field notes, today I realized that many times I found myself in Rapa Nui discussing which the exact representation of the past was, what the correct interpretation of a story about a site was, what had really happened. On many occasions the talks focused on the respect for the ancestors memory, on the need to return to past ways of life, leaving aside the Chilean way of doing things. A primordial aspect in the Rapanui discourse of all sectors, including those opposed, is to respect the *tupuna* or *matatua* who left the legacy of the land, the *Moai*, lineage and a different way of seeing life. In this context, it is quite frequent to hear: “we cannot let our culture go extinct,” “we must safeguard the intangible Rapanui heritage,” “our duty is to teach children the Rapanui language, we cannot let it be lost,” “we cannot let them come from the *cont* (Rapanui’s short for “continental”) with their bad habits and contaminate our culture.”

In the long sessions of the CODEIPA, all the present Rapanui agreed it was necessary to carry out the so-called land cessions and do things in a Rapanui kind of way without establishing what that was about or the specific time of it. In this way, I understood that when the Rapanui refer to their ancestral past, they do not refer to a certain fixed and immutable historical moment, but to a representation of a past. This history has never ceased to be present, it has never ceased to be told or transmitted, and its meanings or interpretation vary according to who emits them, who are the interlocutors, and what the scenario is.

It is in this context in which the ancestral link with the land constitutes the key element of the continuity among the past, the present and the future, which unifies them as a determined people. Speaking and thinking about ancestry, resorting to the *matas* and the traditional forms of understanding and knowledge, is the Rapanui way of making its agency operative and fighting for its sovereignty and, above all, of distinguishing themselves from the Chilean.

The land, for the Rapanui has a deep emotional bond, since they were born there and that is directly related to the constitution of the original identity, based on the recognition of historical belonging to the place. Even nowadays, it is common for a Rapanui person to know to what *mata* or tribe their ancestors belonged to, and the geographic place in which they were situated by lineage on the island. The link to *matas* and, therefore, to ancestors, is not only the continuity of historical memory, but also a fundamental refusal mechanism to the State (Simpson 2014a). It is a sort of formal and political resistance, which allows the maintenance of the demand for the territory alive and relevant. It permits explaining that the land remains “special” and worthy of protection and recognition. In this way, the Rapanui people maintained an ancestral connection with the land, allowing a successful rejection of the State’s attempts to become the owner of the island and prompting several negotiation processes on it. By means of this mechanism, the Rapanui presented themselves as the absolute masters of the land, regardless of the titles that the State of Chile has over it. If the land belongs to the Rapanui, to the *mata*, and each one of the natives knows which one they belong to, in the continuous effort to keep genealogy alive, the State is always a non-compliant usurper.

Thus, this investigation suggests Rapanui genealogy and ancestry is another fundamental piece of the refusal devices that Rapanui people utilize to think about land and the Chilean tenure system (Porteous 1980a; McCall 1981; Fischer 2005a; Foerster, Moreno Pakarati, and Ramirez 2015; Cristino 1984). Today most of the Rapanui people that I talked were aware of their ancestry, their *mata* and the territory to which they belong, despite the terrible consequences that the arrival of missionaries have in the broke of their resident patterns (Cristino and Fuentes 2011).

In the interviews, I realized that since today every Rapanui descend from the 110 survivors, many belong to several different *matas* that can be linked to different territories of the island. This is clearly appreciated when I reread the transcripts of the conversations I had with so many Rapanui who, although differing deeply with the proper actions to recover snatched territory, agree that the territory belongs to the Rapanui and that, by ancestral inheritance, they are the owners and masters of it.

“We must return to our *matas*, we must return our bonds with nature, with our land. I imagine an ideal future as the one in which Chile leaves, abandons us. The real Rapanui, the blood ones, know where they belong. There would be no cost for each one to take their things and leave for their land. My father and my father's father left us that inheritance. I imagine every Rapanui in his plot”, this was pointed out to me by a Rapanui leader, an influential member of the Parliament, who with a deep and strong tone of voice, tried emphasizing the idea of returning to the *matas* and to recover the property of the land was neither an illusion nor a fantasy.

On the contrary, talking to a Rapanui woman, child to a Chilean father and a member of the *Makenu* Rapanui group, an indefatigable fighter for the necessity of a migration law and on the feasibility of returning to the *matas*, she pointed out to me: “I asked my mother-in-law, if you had to do an exercise, what would your territory be? She would have 16 different places to go. It said that you would be entitled to your father's *mata*, that it is patrilineal inheritance. It would have to be a very fine exercise, it is a very delicate subject to think about where they come from. As I returned to these practices and lived in those territories, they seemed very unreal to me, not so to have a more affective link with these places. For example, having the administration of tourism in that place or so, because in that place I feel comfortable and not other, because the *varuas* (spirits) annoy me or so. That is ok, but I don't think everyone will go back to live to their places of origin.”

It is also illuminating what a young man, a leader and a recent member of the CODEIPA told me, when I asked him the same question about the *matas*;

“We all know the *mata* where we belonged to, what clan we belonged to, the place where we feel more comfortable on the island. There are places on this land I know I own, where I would like to have my *hare* (house) and live there forever with my children. There are also places in the countryside where I don't feel ok, where my heart is tight and where I would never go to sleep. But I also know, because I study and because I now have a political responsibility, that the actual return to these places is difficult. How do we agree? How do we know or how we choose which

place, which *mata* is the one that belongs to us? We are all Rapanui, we are the owners of the land, but we have mixed a lot, now we have to think with the people, not like different families with rivalries. That's why I do not agree with the occupations, because in the end they benefit the loudest, the ones who fight the most and not all the rest who are quiet in their houses.”

These quotations, selected from the hundreds that I collected in my time on the island, are clear in portraying that despite the differences, the ancestral past is present and operates as a clear and effective mechanism for claiming the territory. However, this ancestral linkage has multiple origins, it is generated by the union of a myriad of links, relationships, agreements and disagreements that generate ‘multiple relationalities’ that form what today we can call the Rapanui people. In this way, the diverse and complex link with the land in the Rapanui people is also fundamental to understand them as political and social beings. The relation with the *kainga* has blood connections and also bonds with the political form of understanding themselves as a people.

The criterion of the *matas*, a genealogical membership, has been constituted in the way of understanding who belongs and who does not belong to the Rapanui people, an issue that was recognized by the Chilean Indigenous Law. As we know, the Rapanui are only those who have a recognized Rapanui surname or children with a Rapanui father or mother, not those who identify themselves as such or were born on the island or are married or living with members of the village. For the rest of the indigenous peoples in Chile, this possibility has no room. They are only entitled to land, as we already know, or to be recognized as owners or legal owners, those who are considered as Rapanui, so this legal category operates effectively as an instrument of exclusion against the rest, all non-Rapanui (McCall 1996; Zurob 2011; Muñoz 2014a). Many Rapanui family members traces his or her ancestry to specific places of the *henua* (Andueza 2000; Foerster, Moreno Pakarati, and Ramirez 2015). In this way, the important feature to be a member of the Rapanui people is to be able to trace their ancestry to their Rapanui *tupuna* traces his or her ancestry to specific places of the *henua* (land). Today knowing that they *mata* or *matas* one person is still essential and Rapanui often places themselves by situating themselves genealogically. As shown, Rapanui generally engaged with the world of the “ancestors” (*tupuna*) with one another in the context of their own discourse, to the strength of the island, to the culture, and to articulated the difference with Chile.

The past, which is called upon using several foundational moments and the relationship with the land of the ancestors are read in various ways throughout history. Many ancestral traditions that belong to different periods in Rapanui history, some of them recent, are mentioned in the ancestral discourses about the land, as we will see throughout the remaining pages. In this way, the ancestral does not refer simply or rather only to the remote past of the *matas*, but also, for example, to the practices of the Navy and the State of Chile, to allocate 5-hectare plots of land to Rapa Nui families.

Very similar analysis can be done with relation to land customs that are present today the “ancestral” or cultural but that is product of the rules during the Navy

administration, or related to practice introduced by the church. An example of a paradigmatic case in Rapa Nui is the HangaRoa Hotel. In the 1960s, with the expansion of public services on the island, the Rapanui ceded several plots of land in the urban area that had previously been 'allocated' to families through provisional titles, as already pointed out.

These lots were lands in which the Rapanui had forcibly established themselves first by the action of the missionaries and then by the construction of the wall which confined them to HangaRoa, separating the urban and permissible area from the sheep-fields (all the rest of the island). In 1928, the subdelegation officer made a temporary 9.8 hectares field cession to Maria Tepihe and her children, Ana, Ricardo and Esteban in a coastal sector HangaRoa (Vargas 2011).

In the year 1970, Veronica Atamu, Ricardo Hito's widow ceded the N° 40 plot land rights in HangaRoa to Corfo, so that the tourist tents of people visiting the island were first installed and then, the "HONSA" hotel could be built (Porteous 1980b). The objective was to exchange for the construction of a house on urban land in the city with the promise of the land return after a while, according to the family. None of these promises were written down and the Hitorangui family, who today claims these lands, have stated that Veronica Atamu was illiterate, a situation that would have been used against her by public officials who carried out this exchange. It is worth noting that this type of exchange was very frequent at the time. The State needed land to install the new public services, many Rapanui agreed to cede the land on which they held provisional titles, with the promise of future compensation<sup>13</sup>. Consequently, the entire civic center,

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<sup>13</sup> A letter sent to the Chamber of Deputies, dated September 27, 1966, signed by numerous members of the community denounced this reality:

"As a result of the arrival on this island of the officials sent by the Supreme Government, several problems have been generated which, with the respect this corporation deserves, we consider them to be of public knowledge and to the Chamber's knowledge, as well.

... We know that in some towns in Chile there is a lack of police protection and it is for them of extreme urgency to have this vital element. Here, given the mentality of our people, we have never had crime, robbery, or crimes of passion. Unfortunately, our fellow citizens will bring these here. That is why we categorically reject the police arrival in such a number (there is one for every twenty inhabitants) and we estimate that there is no valid reason to justify such an arbitrary measure.

Honorable President, we respectfully present our sentiment to you and through you to the whole Honorable Chamber, that this measure is highly damaging to our dearest desires for freedom, and is directly attacking our mentality, since no one better than us knows how our people are, and in this we will not make us lie. Chileans know us well, they have lived and worked on the island.

... We must make clear to the Corporation and to the public that it is not an opposition to the development of government plans. However, with the respect that our authorities deserve, we demand the Government to respect us. We regard this step as fundamental, since we will by no means allow ourselves to be deprived of our land and property with impunity. Everything can be done with a good judgment and understanding, the promised compensations are only promises and for us, they will not have a real value until we see them becoming a reality and actual facts.

Last year, Moses Tuki, a native, was removed from his plot in order to build the Radio-Faro antenna. He was promised, among other things, a house and a thousand other things. The antenna is already a reality, and the promises logically made out of words, as required by a skilled politician, are still waiting for the house.

For the construction of a school group, a piece of land was removed from Dona Elodia Pakarati, they promised the same, plus a plot of land at one end on the island. There is still nothing yet. The school is already in full construction.

offices and housing for officials were built and also the Anthropological Museum, among many other public buildings. These are the current conflict founding facts, as the descendants of those who participated in those assignments are requesting today to be finally compensated for the transfers made.

In October 1970, the Chilean Tax Authority through a public deed donated to the Corporation for the Promotion of Production (CORFO) the land for the construction of a hotel to be called HangaRoa. In 1981, during the military dictatorship, CORFO sold the Hotel HangaRoa to Hugo Salas, a Chilean who did not come from Easter Island, an issue that would contravene the 1964 legislation (Yañez and Cárdenas 2014). Later, in 1991, Hugo Salas joined the Interamerican Hotel Society as a partner and granted in the domain the above mentioned land and hotel. Finally, in 2005, the Inter-American Hotel Society sold the hotel and its land to Sociedad Hotelera Panamericana, owned by the Schiess family, who began renovations at Hotel HangaRoa.

During those years, Rapanui Hitorangui family began the actions claiming that land as ancestral family property, without any success. In August 2010, when everything was ready for the inauguration of the refurbished Eco Hotel Spa HangaRoa, the Hitorangui family occupied the Hotel's facilities, preventing its opening. At the same time, as we have already pointed out, many other properties were being occupied by other Rapanui families claiming the compensation that the tax authority had promised in the 1960s. Among all the claims of ancestral lands, the case of the HangaRoa Hotel presents the particularity of the opposition of particular interests, not only the State ones. This is one of the few properties that are in individual possession and not of the Rapanui or the State. Its possession today is registered on Sociedad Hotelera Interamericana SA's name, which belongs to the Schiess family and has as antecedent a State registration in 1933 and a series of subsequent transfers, in violation of the legal status that regulates the lands on the island.

After a 3 months hotel occupation, the Chilean government decided to send Carabineros de Chile Special Forces to put an end to the occupation. The police action left many Rapanui wounded, which motivated the reaction of the national and international community, through claims from international organizations, press releases and protests, among other actions.

Surprisingly, on February 18, 2011, more than six months after the HangaRoa Hotel occupation began, an agreement was announced at the Palacio de La Moneda (Chilean Government House) to settle the conflict, which at its central point included the transfer of ownership, which included the land and the Schiess family \$40 million hotel complex to a foundation made up of representatives of the Rapanui community. In exchange for this assignment, the hotel project management would retain the exploitation right based on usufructuary rights for a period of thirty years. According to the then Interior Minister, Rodrigo Hinzpeter, the agreement thrived thanks to the "effort... generosity and patriotism" of the Schiess family when they handed over the hotel property to the Rapa Nui people. For its part, in a public statement the

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To take the parallel street to the Aerodrome, the properties of 4 islanders were passed through, and three houses will be destroyed. They have been promised something: we do not know".

Hitorangui family questioned the agreement announced by the then Minister Hinzpeter, emphasizing that those lands “were illegally sold by the State, violating the Pascua Law. The minister, going beyond what the prerogatives conferred by his investiture, felt entitled to indicate the terms of the concession and destination of the profits that the usufruct of our lands will mean”(La Tercera 2011)

Several lawsuits were filed by both the Schiess family and the Hitorangui family. So far, the Hitorangui family has had very bad results, as all their judicial attempts to recover the land from the hotel have been rejected, since it has been pointed out that “they have not been able to prove the dominion, the continuity, about the terrain demanded”(Vargas 2011). However, they have not ceased in their attempt to reclaim the land. Periodically they present themselves in front of the hotel with banners and occupations, not giving room to be forgotten.

“This land is ours, it belongs to us by ancestral right, it was stripped and taken away by the state, and we will not stop until we have it back. We are a clan, a family that will fight for what is theirs, whether we have to camp years outside the hotel. We know that we have an ancestral right that is ours and we will fight to the death, although other Rapanui won’t support us. They sold themselves to the State, they forgot to be Rapanui,” a Rapanui woman, member of the Hitorangui clan, told me very emphatically and with great emotion, when she told me about the battle they had taken for the ownership of the hotel grounds.

As seen in this case, the Hitorangui family claimed the land as an ancestral territory by invoking traditional rights on the land, using a language closely linked to the one used in international law for the rights of indigenous peoples. The rights invoked by this clan, do not have an ancestral origin in the strict sense, they do not go back to the times of the *matas*, but are based on a family recognition, as being part of one family, *au'huai* which made an agreement with the State of Chile.

In the past, it was reported that people were “passing” or lending plots of land, which were returned or not no matter how much time had passed. The land was ceded to relatives or acquaintances who needed or worked for a certain time, always with the possibility of recovering it, if needed or if it they did not meet what was agreed. This “custom,” very much in force today in what is called “transfer of rights,” has been incorporated into the current Rapanui custom, as we will see later. Therefore, it is not surprising at all that the heirs of those who ceded land to the State authorities, for certain purposes, demand their restitution today.



Image 9 Photograph outside HangaRoa Hotel, showing a sign created by the Hitorangui clan. June 2016.

Overall, today it is possible to observe how Rapa Nui is witnessing a revitalization of Rapanui identity that seeks to refuse the Chilean present a national discourse however diverse, speaks to Rapanui worldviews with an emphasis in the relations to the land (Delsing 2015; Arthur 2012; Gomez 2010; Moreno Pakarati and Zurob 2012; Foerster, Moreno Pakarati, and Ramirez 2015).

### **The Rapanui Nation**

Individuals are always confronted with a dynamics of exclusion/inclusion: the belonging in a group is presented as the necessary exclusion of another, in the construction of an indigenous identity as a dynamic process, multiple and intersubjective. Generally, this process of exclusion does not operate as a simple oppositional binary, that is to say, “I am Rapanui because I am not Chilean”, or vice versa. It is constituted of multiple complex interactions, which shape the way in which a collective understands themselves, like an indigenous people. In the case of the Rapanui, this process has two “other” priorities that shape this identity. On the one hand, their membership in the Chilean state (by force) and on the other hand, the genetic and family closeness to the Polynesian world, in which many have lived (Muñoz 2014a:8). However, other interactions that surely form their identity landscape in Rapa Nui cannot be ignored either: The impact of tourism and its visitors coming from all over the world and often settle on the island; the short but fundamental American influence and presence on the island; the impacts of global indigenous movements which determine how identity must be presented to be successfully received in human rights forums. We are here with a sort of Polynesian Rapanui (or Maori) indigeneity that feeds on other mentioned sources, as well.

Currently, the process of being Rapanui is constituted in part as opposed to being a continental Chilean (Muñoz 2014a; Muñoz Azócar 2007). The Rapanui generally tend to think of themselves as distinct from the Chileans, the *tire* as they call them, and do not hesitate to point out: “by the flag, we are Chileans, by blood, we are not”. There is a common feeling of pride in belonging to the Rapanui people, to

differentiate themselves from the Chilean, to recover the tradition and to live like their ancestors. Nowadays, as a result of the forced migrations to Polynesian islands, as well as the opening of flights to Tahiti in the 60's, proximity with Polynesian villages has been generated. The contact is frequent and Tahiti undoubtedly was and is a landmark for the Rapanui (Muñoz 2014a)

Foester and Montesinos point out about the Rapanui: “relegated to the town of Hangaroa and with limited access to land, they established their ‘ethnicity’ in the midst of Chileanization, proletarianization (being workers of the Company) and evangelization. Likewise, the mixing had its Tahitian, Chilean and European imprint...”(Montecino and Foerster 2012). The dynamic ways of being Islanders, that is, being Rapanui, Polynesian and Chilean, had to do with the fact that identity has always been “mixed, relational and inventive” (Montecino and Foerster 2012). It is generated from processes and dyadic contrast relations where what is individual and own confronts the alternate, configuring contextual forms of being. Thus, a Rapanui configuration identity is related to the contrasts that were established primarily by these two alternate actors.

There have been innumerable moments of tension, revolution or resistance in the Rapanui community, since the Treaty of Annexation in 1888. Since the arrival of the colonizers, the Rapanui have taken action to protest against what seems disadvantageous or unfair for them, seeking better living conditions. They spectacularly rebelled against the policies of the Exploiting Company in 1914 led by Maria Angata(Foerster and Moreno Pakarati 2016; Castro 2006; Mardones 2016; Fischer 2001; Stambuk 2010; Foerster 2015), seeking to end their poverty and famine situation and by demanding better living conditions. In 1964, another revolution was held in the hands of women and Alfonso Rapu, which was held in order to be recognized as Chilean citizens and grant them the same rights as the continental ones (Foerster and Moreno Pakarati 2016; Stambuk 2010; Zurob 2014; Arthur 2012). These are the two most recognized resistances moments in the history of Rapa Nui, but the truth is that the whole relationship between the State of Chile and the Rapanui people is swarmed by these periods of conflict, where the Rapanui express their dissent by using different mechanisms to achieve new conditions in what they consider an agreement they signed in 1888.

In the last decades in Rapa Nui the disagreements with the Chilean State have multiplied. Since return to the democracy in Chile, the airport periodically shuts down, riots, demonstrations and marches, long and tense meetings with Chilean public authorities in the island and in Santiago, occupations of land, public buildings have taken place. In general, leaders would agree in saying that overall, the protests were in part a response to the Chilean State’s failures to deliver promised laws to control Chilean migration to the island, however, demands were also expressed in terms of a more intense need of differentiation and resistance from the Chilean State based in very complex and different ecological, spiritual, international indigenous human rights or even economic arguments.

Thus, while Rapanui people do emphasize the more technical issues of migration in discussing the conflict, ultimately the indigenous politics articulate with a



spiritual ecology that grounds Rapanui epistemological and ontological life in their own ancestral heritage and worldview. Hence as one Rapanui expressed, the reclamations are also about the need to “protect our ancestral property and ancestral lands” and recover “Rapa Nui to the Rapanui.”

In July and August 2010, about a hundred Rapanui, grouped in family clans, occupied plots of land where Chilean government offices are located, such as the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Public works, the Municipality and the Hotel HangaRoa, as we already see. The Chilean Police evicted the clans in a violent way, under the orders of the Chilean State. The images of Rapanui people protesting across the boundaries of the island were widespread over the Internet. The resolution of most of these land conflicts is still pending.



Image 10 Photograph of Carabineros de Chile in HangaRoa, in the mist of the 2010 occupations.

In March 2015, Rapanui leaders organized by Parliament Rapanui, shut down the Chilean administered national park of Easter Island, requesting self-determination, control of the park resources and solutions to the immigration problematic. Access to the major “tourist sites” such as *RanoRaraku* (the place the world famous *Moai* statues were carved) and *RanuKau* (home of the “bird-man” ceremonies and petroglyphs) were closed to the public and renamed as “patrimonial territory” and “ancestral property” of the Rapanui Nation.

These protests, which lasted for more than 5 months, ended with several Rapanui parliamentarians being charged by the courts for unlawful association and improper entry fee charges to the National Park. Hotel businessman MatíasRiroroko, 71, close to the parliament, and his daughter Elisa were arrested at the Santiago airport and were kept in prison for several days. They denounced ill treatment and prosecution by the Prosecutor. In March 2017, MatíasRiroroko representing several Rapanui, filed a complaint against Chile before the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) in order to mitigate “the long history of humiliation, inhuman treatment and attacks against integrity,” stating that Rapanui people have been undergoing this since 1888. The complaint was supported by Chilean lawyers and it sought to ratify the Treaty of Annexation by the National Congress; the recognition of the Rapanui's exclusive right to access collective land ownership, so islanders would not remain

confined in HangaRoa; the declaration of an autonomy statute for Rapa Nui and a plan development to guarantee the well-being of the people.



Image 11 “Closed. Ancestral Property” Unknown photographer, published on Facebook during the demonstrations.

It is worth mentioning the way in which the Rapanui movements have been articulated in recent years. Two institutions have played a part: The CODEIPA, an organization created by the Indigenous Law, which includes both elected members of the Rapanui people and public institutions with a fundamental job in matters of the land; and the Municipality, which although being a Chilean institution, plays a very important role because of its high ability to provide employment, and because of its mayor who has been a very controversial figure in the last three decades. Pedro *Petero* Edmunds has become a prominent public figure, both loved and hated alike. His business ties, his particular style of playing his role, the fact that he owns a hotel and a supermarket on the island, and the long time he has been in power, make him a figure repudiated by the population. In his last campaign, his slogan was “Rapa Nui con amor” (“Rapa Nui with love”), and in all his public speeches he referred to the need to ‘make love’ in Rapa Nui, generating more union and commitment. In general, his political positions have been quite volatile, he has belonged to several political parties in his career, and his statements have fluctuated between periods in which he has called for independence from Chile and other times in which he has taken a stand for Chile, calling for union and friendship. No one is indifferent to the mayor’s figure.

There are other discourses and narratives that have been fundamental to establishing the social life and current demands in the ancestor's landscape and the Rapa Nui Nation. These new discourses have led to the creation of many Rapanui organizations, which are becoming more and more important in the configuration of demands for self-determination. Despite their divergent positions on the way of thinking about the future and how to face the relationship with the State, they share narratives about the causes of the current conflict with Chile.

What follows is what I perceived in my time on the island and it is not intended to be a complete analysis, nor to fully reflect the opinion of all Rapanui. It is rather a perspective on a perspective, an attempt to reflect what was heard, nothing more.

The importance of respecting the ancestors legacy, on taking action to “save” the Rapanui culture or preventing “the pollution brought by the bad continental habits” is what the positions are based on. In many of them, the past is represented with nostalgia and stress for the former solidarity that existed, the sense of family and community, the ability to live with the few resources that they had, the joy of spending an entire afternoon singing and playing the guitar. They always talk how exciting was to discover new things, to be surprised and yearn for and they keep complaining about how these feelings no longer exist.

There seems to be consensus among them, and so can be confirmed in the interviews, and especially listening to the informal conversations in public places: Rapa Nui has changed and for the worse. They point out that capitalism, cars, and vans, fast food, crime, drugs, and greed have arrived in the island. They point to examples of the above as people began to sell land for money or cars, they stress that the importance of the extended family was replaced by the nuclear family: “people go to religious curantos (*umu*) just to get their food and then leave,” without understanding the importance of the rites. Less young people speak the Rapanui language and do not respect or know their history, which is now “a pure show for tourism.” It is common to hear that the solution to the major problems, often associated with the migration of the continental to the island, is within the Rapanui themselves, since they are the only ones who can own the land and, therefore, it is in their power to decide who to rents their houses, whom they give work to. They say that as long as they do not take action on the issue, the problem is not going to be solved. It is said that the problem are not Chileans “but the kind of Chilean that arrives in the island,” usually referring to the social class of the visitors.

These positions differ in nuances, but in general, I would dare to say that they share similar notions about how to read the current problems and the need to renegotiate, to reschedule the agreement with the State and to think that the solution is in the Rapanui, in the common heritage left by their ancestors. The disagreement is how to look towards the future, how to read this ancestral heritage.

There are Rapanui political organizations such as the Council of Elders (the only one officially recognized by the State by the Indigenous Law), the Rapa Nui Parliament and the *Makenu*Rapa Nuior Group of Women, among others. These organizations are constantly being created with various objectives associated with the defense of the Rapanui rights, the protection of the environment, the promotion of their culture and arts, fishing, etc. During the 1980s and 1990s, the Council of Elders became really influential. It was then integrated by a representative of each family on the island. This council was considered a successor of the Council of Chiefs that went along the last kings Atamu Tekena and SimeónRiroKainga at the end of the 19th Century (Hotus Chavez 1988; Moreno Pakarati 2011). The institution was the only representative entity of the Rapanui for more than a decade, which was led by Alberto Hotus until 2016. It

had a rather critical vision about the role of the Chilean State in the history of Rapa Nui, as shown in the book *Te Mau Hatu'O Rapa Nui* (Hotus Chavez 1988).

However, the Council influence decreased in the late 1990s, faced with the fluctuating stance of its leader, the statements that called the Rapanui to continue to belong to the Chilean State and accusations of power monopolization. This was how the Council of Elders II was formed, which would give rise to the formation of the Rapa Nui Parliament, years later.

The Rapa Nui Council of Elders, as stated in article 68 of the Indigenous Law, have a seat insured in CODEIPA, being the only Rapanui social organization officially recognized by the State. The Council of Elders I continue to exist, although it has practically disappeared from the political scene on the island. It remains to be deeply considered by the continental authorities, but some Rapanui has criticized their position since the adoption of a friendlier attitude towards the Chilean State as the best way for the development of the island. For this reason, it's hard to recognize at present the representativeness of the Council of Elders in the local context, beyond the loyalty that some people still maintain towards Hotus.

The Rapa Nui Parliament originated as an alternative to the Council of Elders, with a radical stance against the subordination of the Rapanui society to Chilean institutions. The Parliament has occasionally stated that the island should be completely withdrawn from the Republic of Chile and that it should seek self-administration or independence. However, throughout the time they have also reaffirmed the need for a new deal with Chile. In the Rapa Nui Parliament, there are also more moderate voices who pursue an independent state model in free association with Chile.

Along with this, the formation of two institutions, the *Hōnui* and *Ma'uHenua*, has changed the political panorama of the island in the last years. Therefore, “the institution of the *Hōnui* is and represents the empowerment of the community through the 36 *mata* (or clans): the *Tuki*, the *Riroroko*, the *Tepano*, the *Rapu*, the *Haoa*, the *Araki*”(Foerster 2016a:1). In this way, each *mata* or clan chooses their representatives, who meet once or twice a week to discuss important themes for the island in the Rapanui language. Its intention is to be a representative means of all the Rapanui, unlike what happens with the Council of Elders or the Parliament representing only a sector of society. Along with this, it should be noted that things typically Chilean, or *tire*, are excluded from this space, it is an important act of refusal to everything Chilean, an important manifestation of the Rapanui power and sovereignty.

*Ma'uHenua* is an indigenous community according to the Chilean Indigenous Law, created in 2016 and constituted by all members of the Rapanui people over 18 who want to be part of it. The administration of the Rapa Nui National Park is among the objectives of the community. Currently, *Ma'uHenua* is in a first stage of co-administration of the National Park with CONAF. *Ma'uHenua* holds the responsibility to take charge of public use sites, the protection of archaeological sites, ranger activities and the entry fees to the Park, as stated in the association agreement. Meanwhile, CONAF is responsible for the ecosystems conservation and protection and for the forest fires prevention and combat. The very frequent Rapanui demand for greater autonomy is where *Ma'uHenua* is inserted in, as we will see, which indicates that the

island cannot be administered as a municipality or be administratively dependent on the Region of Valparaiso, because it is a territory of a people, a nation and, due to that, it deserves special treatment.

While the Parliament was supported by part of the population of Rapa Nui, other members of the community show their profound discontent with the Parliament politics, organizing protests for “peace,” asking the Chilean government to intervene, seeking nonviolent solutions to the immigration conflicts, asking the Rapanui community to find solutions among each other, to stop the fighting among Rapanui and create a shared and common analysis of the problems. One Rapanui parliament leader, said to the press “the new strategy was to fight against the community, against the ones in control of the hotels and tourist agency --that would be their way to make the Chilean state act.” (Young 2014)

Rapanui organizations as the Rapa Nui Parliament now wish to setback the long held rule of integration and push instead for self-determination (or autonomy or independence), even with a strong opposition of other members of the community. They also proclaim their right to self-governance declaring autonomy in the Parliament’s constitution: “we request our identity, and as a consequence we announce our autonomy via the creation of our own structures of governance” (Chilean Government 2003). Others have proposed autonomy within the nation-state (without specifying what they meant by autonomy), and asked for a special law for Easter Island and for a special Rapanui commission to make decisions about Rapanui.

The Chilean nation-state has been one of the main players in this story. Its strong presence in Rapa Nui has become clear throughout these pages. Since the 1888 Annexation, the navy rule and the subsequent sequence of governments of different ideological make-up, up to the prolonged discussions about Rapa Nui autonomy, the Chilean state is hanging on to its principle of sovereignty. Sovereignty is at the heart of the issue, although not always at the center of the disputes. Chile can thus be considered to be a prime example of a modern nation-state, and Rapa Nui as the reaffirmation of this statehood. The concept of unitarian state remains paramount today, somehow attenuated by the liberal idea of multiculturalism and this concept is used as an instrument of national unity, leading to fierce nationalism in some political quarters, particularly the Chilean Right wing. The possibility of a plurinational state, as the case of other Latin-American countries in which indigenous peoples are able to administer their own affairs, still meets ardent resistance in Chile.

From the perspective of some Rapanui however, Chile is a nation-state in trouble, some say in decline, that has proved not capable of dealing with difference and the particularities of Rapa Nui.

In 2014, Rapanui national identification cards were launched with the support of Rafael *Rinkō* Tuki, the Rapanui representative of the Chilean National Corporation for the Development of Indigenous Peoples. The cards code personal information in the Rapa Nui language, and at the top of the cards is a national identification of *Hau* (nation) Maori Rapa Nui. Tuki emphasized that the cards are intended as an expression of Rapa Nui “territorial sovereignty and the right to self-determination” in accordance with instruments of international law (Young 2015).

Rapanui people, in their multiple and complex universe of refusals, question the legality of Chilean occupation and claims for self-determination in the recognition of themselves as a preexistent independent having a number of special and specific attributes that emerge from a shared past history, from the ancestors' knowledge that bring new and diverse possibilities in the future.



Image 12. Rapa Nui identification card 2015

As a conclusion, the importance of narratives on the ancestral land in spite of all the time elapsed from that past to which they resort is what it has been addressed. The concepts like *Ono Tupuna* (the richness of the ancestors) have been portrayed as one having a fundamental role in the Rapanui identity unification, since it allows to articulate this identity in connection with the ancestors and the land. In this way, the ancestral connection with the land and the “original” character of its inhabitants are fundamental to present themselves as differentiated subjects to all the “others” that surround them, especially in respect to Chile. Currently, the debate on indigeneity and the rights of indigenous peoples is based on demonstrating this ancestry, originality or historical continuity with the land.

Just as indigenous peoples' obligation to prove the “authenticity” of their culture, their identity or their art, the issue regarding territory is even more complex. In order to fulfill this ancestry, indigenous societies are perceived as fixated with their way of the past, that is, societies where time passes in a different way, much more repetitive, less subjected to change products of the passing of time or the contacts with other societies (Fabian 1983)

Indigenous peoples have had to present evidence to prove they are the legitimate owners of the lands they demand (Richland 2013; Richland 2005). Their destiny depends on it (Clifford 1988). At the same time, they have also had to prove (and prove to themselves) that they are sufficiently different from the society which colonized them in the past and, in a sense, are even still colonizing them in the present, and that despite attempts of assimilation, they remain sufficiently different and maintain strong genealogical ties that have not been broken (Povinelli 2006; de la Cadena and Starn 2009). In this way, they must be able to have evidence, records, documents, papers, authorizations, whatever is required to prove this “ancestral domain”, even through representations or actions that make that difference essential (Young 2011; P.G. McHugh 2011; Paul G. McHugh 2011).

Moreover, the State has to have a proactive participation in their proof of authenticity or historical continuity and the recognition of the dispossession. In order for the Rapanui to have rights over their land, they must accept that it is the State that grants it and “recognizes” it. The recognition of the State, the restitution of the land, brings the promise of autonomy and self-determination but, at the same time, comes with the sword of paternalism, colonialism, and condescension. It offers the possibility of citizenship in the modern state, but with certain limits.

As already seen, the way in which the State allows the restitution of the land is usually associated with the recognition of the State dominion and the total State subjection, the rules of the Western property recognition (Fay and James 2010). This is very characteristic of neoliberal systems and state multiculturalism, in which the ethnic, racial or identity differences are celebrated as a cultural worldview, which does not affect the market’s logic. As Povinelli says, rather than encouraging identification with colonizers, neoliberal multiculturalism “inspire[s] subaltern and minority subjects to identify with the impossible object of an authentic self-identity, [i.e.] a domesticated, non-conflictive traditional form of sociality and (inter)subjectivity” (Povinelli 2002:6).

As we have seen, in recent decades the recognition of the indigenous peoples and their collective rights, especially in Latin America, has resulted in their being forced to prove their indigeneity, their ancestry in the formal ways permitted and accepted by States which do not seem a threat for national unity. To be recognized, they must be a diverse group in the national society, but not so diametrically to question the system; otherwise they become dangerous and are no longer recognized or allowed to coexist (Hale 2005; Hale 2006a; Hale 2014; Hale 2011; Postero 2007; Goodale and Postero 2013; Goodale 2006).

In the case of the Rapanui, unlike most of the world's indigenous peoples and even Chile, the land they claim is recognized by the Chilean law as their own, it can only be acquired by Rapanui (and by the State, of course). This means that, except for the Hotel HangaRoa mentioned, there are almost no private third parties in question. However, they must prove ancestry and belonging, mainly to provide the image of authenticity that allows them to argue their demands for greater autonomy, independence, and for the State to recognize the ownership of the land. They need to demonstrate the difference and then arrive to a better agreement, a new pact with Chile.

It is essential to emphasize that this is not merely a rhetorical construct, an action or a mere strategy to achieve its objectives, although without a doubt, part of the Rapanui agency is related to understanding the proper and effective way of using the available tools for the recovery of its territory. The link with the ancestral land has multiple readings, as well as a possible way to understand its contemporary and transformative interpretations. The link with the ancestral land is also a call to take in serious the indigenous peoples “possibility of being”, their ontologies and their links with the territory and the differentiated political projects that call into question the hegemonic economic and social model.

We must be careful to fall into the temptation of categorizing everything as an “invention” or “construction” or, on the contrary, to “essentialize” everything relative to indigenous culture, without confronting categories such as the special relationship

with the land or ancestry. It is about capturing the multiplicity, contradiction, harmony and dichotomy of the relations that give rise to indigenous territoriality, and to a large extent, to indigeneity. To think about the natives beyond the constructed and fixated images of their past, but understanding at the same time that the importance of their ancestry is to think further.

The Rapanui *kainga* is sustained and understood as the land of the ancestors, that land where they were born and which underpins their sentimental, but also political force in which the *tupuna*, their ancestors, left them as an inheritance. But as we have pointed out, this ancestral land is not the only landscape in Rapanui; it only constitutes one of multiple landscapes in Rapa Nui. Let us now see another of these landscapes, the one on the State landscape and the island they have named Easter Island.



## Chapter 4.

### *Isla de Pascua.* The landscape of Chile and the State.

Easter Island! Rapa Nui! When I was studying Geography, it was my favorite subject. I was really proud of that paragraph: “Chile possesses Easter Island in Oceania, the only South American colony which may be bragged about.” It was ours! It was then natural to be compared to the English.  
(Pedro Prado *La Reina Rapanui*, 1914:26)



Image13Moai replica in Santiago de Chile.

*I had been working for almost a year for the Chilean Administration, as a lawyer in Indigenous topics in Chile, mostly related with the long conflict between the Chilean State and the Mapuche people, when a feeling of frustration and uselessness started overflowing my work. Nothing we did made sense; it was impossible with the government's new measures to really agree on something. I thought about quitting, I knew it would take me less than a year to be already enrolled in my PhD program on Cultural Anthropology, but I still didn't know where or what to do, what my interests really were. My mind was wandering around, when one of my colleagues, an anthropologist, told me about a work position for a lawyer in Rapa Nui, in the Easter Island Development Commission (CODEIPA, by the Spanish name). It was good money, the idea seemed attractive, but what did I know about the place? To be honest, practically nothing. I could just picture the usual weather forecast presenter on TV, who would mention the sunny and 25°C warm weather, after the continental forecast of course, while showing a triangular map. I could also remember the sau-sau dances for the National Day celebration, but I had never had the chance to dance to them.*

*I started reading everything that came across me about the island. Its history surprised me, I couldn't believe I had never heard about this place which I started to feel fascinated with. I didn't even know it was the most isolated inhabited island in the world. Everything I read seemed to be part of a mystery novel. Moai, explorers, civil war, slavery, exploiter companies, missionaries, engraved wooden tablets in a language nobody could decipher, North American bases, and Hollywood movies. Everything was taken away from them! They had almost disappeared and they were still standing tall!*

*Little by little the idea started making sense to me, I could go there just for a few months, take a look of what it was about. I could always come back. It was the perfect place to start applying for doctoral studies, I thought.*

*I asked people what they thought and I got surprising responses.*

*People working for the Administration would tell me Rapa Nui was just an apparent paradise, that Rapanui people were tough and sullen. It wouldn't be easy being a Chilean in Rapa Nui.*

*A lawyer who I admired a lot and who had lived in the island years ago, advised me not to go, it was an unkind place, especially for women, who go crazy on the island, she said.*

*Someone else told me they had been working in the island for several years and that it was a constant challenge. They don't understand the State; they want everything easy and for free. If they don't like something, they scream in their language until they achieve their goal. They make independence threats, but they wouldn't know what to do without us, they said.*

*Someone else said, just go. It's gorgeous, unexplainably magical, colors are hallucinating. You'll be able to swim and dive. Rapanui people are mysterious people.*

*Another lawyer, who had also worked on the island, would encourage me to go, it's a fascinating place, you won't regret it, especially if you are interested in anthropology. You will understand Chile there, you will change the way in which you see the world, they said repeatedly.*

*My friends wanted me to go. We'll have a nice place to visit! We'll all come and visit you! (And they all did).*

*Nobody who visits Rapa Nui stays indifferent. Whether you love it or you hate it, someone else said. Look for an adoptive family, so they will be able to accept you more easily.*

*The more I read, the more I knew I wouldn't miss the opportunity to know and live a place which engendered such dissimilar opinions among my Chilean friends. In less than a month, I was on my way to Rapa Nui.*

The following chapter will try and make a critical genealogy about power modes and subjectivity on the ways of understanding the indigenous landscapes. We shall, then, not only focus on native stories that construct the ways of understanding Rapanui landscapes, but also become closer to those others involved who build up and redefine the Rapanui land. One of these landscapes seem fundamental to explain Rapanui's land, among all of these overlapping landscapes, by complementing and contradicting themselves, in what authors have named as a colonial-state map (Foerster, Moreno Pakarati, and Ramirez 2015) and is added to the Chilean map. Rapa Nui becomes, then, *Isla de Pascua*, an insular territory which has been a part of Chile since 1889.

Focusing on an ethnographic approach which draws on long hours spent on legal consultations services and attending meetings as a lawyer for land issues in Rapa Nui, long conversations and interviews with the Rapanui and the non-Rapanui that

worked for the State and Rapa Nui institutions and my own status as a public officer, this chapter aims to illuminate the micro-practices of government, sovereignty and identity to understand Rapa Nui as a territory that is disputed both symbolically and materially. In order to understand this multiple process, this research and this specific chapter is a combination of history and ethnography, as to offer an anthropological view of governability in Rapa Nui, understanding the State through discourses and worldviews in the production and creation of sovereignty in this territory.

Rapa Nui undergoes a new stage in its history when Chile annexed this island to its territory in 1888 by having reached a “Treaty of Annexation” signed by the king Atamu Tekena, the Rapanui chiefs and the local Chilean authorities. The State would not acknowledge the colonization until much later, leaving the island into private companies’ hands, generating the already mentioned map. “A three-way pact is then stated, among the community, the State and the company” (Foerster and Montecino 2016), which will mark the destinies of the land. A view of the state land will follow.

Through this Treaty of Annexation, Chile will add to its territory an insular colony, away from the coast and quite different to everything they were used to in the continent. How will this colonial land be constructed, the state land? Which will be the state landscape in the island? Which circumstances will explain Chile as a new independent nation just emancipated from its colonial past, undertaking the colonization of a Polynesian island?

It is worth highlighting that the colonial Chilean vision regarding Rapa Nui is quite different from the typical European colonial vision which took economical advantage and benefitted from its colony. Rather, the State seemed to have abandoned the island and its inhabitants, as various authors would agree, and that after signing the Agreement of Annexation would leave them to their fate and at the mercy of the unscrupulous hands of a Company whose only purpose was, as its name says, to exploit their resources to the fullest (Metraux 1940; McCall 1981; Fischer 2005b; Cristino 1984; Chilean Government 2003; Foerster 2016a). As a result, unlike the colonialism we are used to, that which strips of all its resources to the colony, that of Chile on Easter Island would seem to be of a different nature (Foerster 2012b). Chile neither did receive substantial economic benefits when annexing Rapa Nui nor incorporated a territory of great extensions to its sovereignty. It seemed that the profit of the State came from another source, which would allow us to explain its stubbornness in keeping this remote Polynesian island with such a little population under its control. The Chilean and Rapanui’s worldviews come into play at this point about the motives and justifications of the annexation.

### **The Origins Of The Colonial Pact**

Policarpo Toro Hurtado, captain of the Chilean navy, first visited the island in 1870 (Foerster, Montesinos, and Moreno 2013) and later in 1886. As a result of these visits, an annexation of the island was proposed to the State of Chile, arguing that it would be an excellent place for a naval station, allowing Chile, in the Pacific Ocean, to

shelter from other nation invasions. Toro pointed out that the incorporation of Easter Island would allow “to prevent a foreign power, to take possession of it and threaten us from there, in future emergencies in which Chile or another South American Republic may be implicated in”(Toro 1886). He also stated that the island presented excellent conditions for cattle and the farming of tropical fruits, and that it’s privileged geographical location opened great commercial opportunities after the opening of the Panama Canal (Vergara 1939; Fuentes and Pakarati 2013; Foerster, Montesinos, and Moreno 2013; Delsing 2015; Fischer 2013; Porteous 1980a).

Porteous states that “Chile's annexation of Easter Island was motivated by considerations of national prestige and perceptions of the island's military and commercial value. In particular, the island was valued for its agricultural potential, its strategic possibilities, and its location on what was believed to be the future mainstream of seaborne commerce”(Porteous 1981:70).

Thus, after several attempts and unsuccessful negotiations by Toro, on 9 September 1888, a Deed of Cession o Treaty of Annexation between Rapa Nui and Chile was signed. There are many controversies and discussions about this Deed until today, marking the ways in which these two peoples are related and conceived. Different interpretations of the Agreement can be found in the official report of the “Commission of Truth and New Deal for the Indigenous peoples of Chile” (Chilean Government 2003) and in the alternative report prepared for the same occasion by Mario Tuki and others.

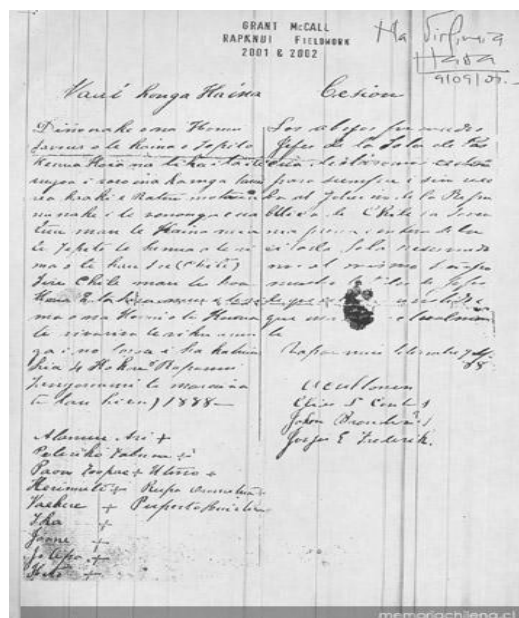


Image 14 Copy of the Deed of Cession in Commission of Truth and New Deal for the Indigenous peoples of Chile. 2003

In this way, it is constantly discussed whether Rapa Nui did or not give sovereignty to Chile, and if it did, what Chile's obligations were and whether they were fulfilled. That is, if the State of Chile needed to ratify the agreement, if Chile had

bought all the lands of the island or only a few as well as other issues.(Gomez 2010).

Interpretations of the known texts show considerable differences. In the translation by Hito and others (Chilean Government 2003) of the Rapa Nui/Tahitian version of the agreement, Chile is referred to as a “friend of the place” (*mautehoakona*). This coincides with testimonies written almost thirty years later by the religious Bienvenido De Estella (de Estella 1920).

King *Atamu Tekena* had demanded that Chile hoist its flag below the Rapanui flag, and said; “we know that the Bishop put the island under the protectorate of Chile, but nothing has been sold. Mister Toro kept prudently silent at the indication of the kanaka King” (de Estella 1920:140–142) The Spanish text on the other hand, stated that the sovereignty of the island was transferred to the Chilean Republic, reserving at the same time the chiefly titles of which they were invested (McCall 1996).

Rapanui people usually relate to that when the people were gathered to make the “agreement,” the *ariki* Atamu Tekenagathered some soil for himself and passed on a piece of grass to Toro. This stated that the grass that grew there would be interpretable in terms of Chilean sovereignty, and the land would remain the property of the Rapanui (therefore the expression of “paso” or “*mauke*” - grass in Spanish and Rapanui language -used by the islanders to refer to Chileans). This agreement was the basis of the commitment that Chile would assume with the island and its inhabitants<sup>14</sup>. The islanders allege the breach of the agreement, as the cause of many conflicts of the recent past and, in particular, “of the negative attitude of the community towards the state and Chileans in general” (Chilean Government 2003:138).

In this way, as we have already announced, throughout the history of the relationship between the State and Rapanui people, the 1888 Treaty of Annexation was named countless times to reaffirm claims against the State. Thus, as an example, the Rapanui lost control over the territories of the island, by the action of Alberto Sánchez Manterola, who was the administrator of the CEDIP and also representative of the State by having the role of maritime deputy. The elect king Simeon RiroKainga was then sent, in 1896, to demand the compliance of the 1888 Agreement to the President of the Republic (Foerster, Moreno Pakarati, and Ramirez 2015) Unfortunately, King RiroKainga died in Valparaiso, possibly assassinated to prevent him from filing a complaint (Foerster 2010a). This and other episodes enlighten us about the power that the Deed of Cession has had to become as a fundamental discursive device when defining relations between Rapa Nui and Chile.

There are many conflicts and disputes that are associated with whether or not Chile has met the agreement and if it has been respectful of its commitments. What we do know with certainty is that Chile did not effectively take possession of the island and that the agreement was not ratified by the Chilean authorities. This left Rapa Nui and

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<sup>14</sup>A few months before the agreement, Policarpo Toro’s brother Pedro Pablo, along with three other families, had settled in Rapa Nui as “agents of colonization.” This first attempt of establishing a Chilean colony failed, and in 1892 Pedro Pablo abandoned the island with the surviving colonizers. Pedro Pablo Toro wrote of this time: “We spent a few weeks in exasperating situation. Many came to fear that the Government of Chile had definitely abandoned the island. The same kanakas, observing that in more than two and a half years no national ship had appeared, they also started to believe they would no longer send any other, and they started claiming their rights over the island and to take an arrogant and threatening manner not previously expressed ” (Toro 1886:192)

its few inhabitants at the mercy of private hands who administered it at their disposal, as seen by analyzing the company map. It is worth emphasizing that the company's managers were also considered the representatives of the State, thus sharing the position of administrator and maritime deputy. Although the State disregarded compliance of the fulfillment of all the obligations contracted in the voluntary agreement, it was still present, at least in the shadow, in the figure of the Company's Manager (Moreno Pakarati 2011; Foerster 2012c). Only in 1964, after the rebellion of the Rapanui led by Maria Angata against the abuses of the CEDIP did the State begin to notice that to maintain its dominion in the island, a greater presence was necessary.

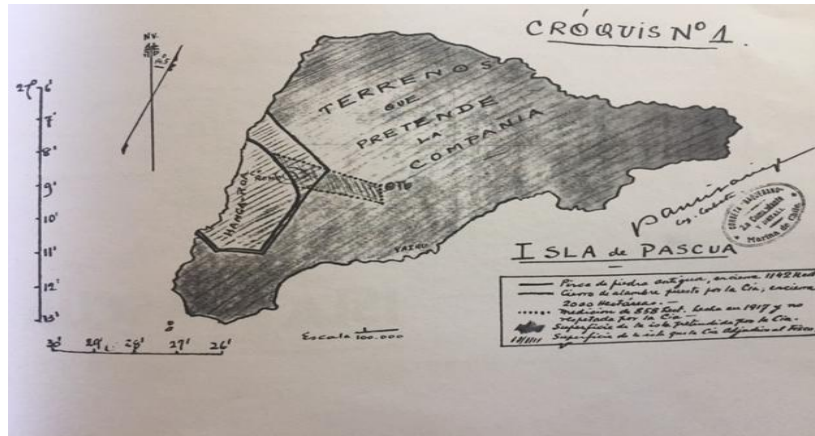


Image15MapfromVictor Vergara “La Isla de Pascua. Dominación y Dominio” 1939

Thus, in the face of the attempt by Enrique Merlet, CEDIP's manager, to register the limitations of his alleged property in the Real Estate Registry, the State of Chile decided to take action on the matter. The presence of the Catholic bishop, Rafael Edwards, was crucial here, as he was a very influential figure of the Chilean elite (Vergara 1939; Moreno Pakarati 2014), and who strongly opposed the presence of the Company in Rapa Nui. This was particularly shown through a campaign in the Chilean press (Foerster 2011) questioning their territorial claims and the treatment they gave the islanders. It is worth remembering that since 1896 the Rapanui were confined in HangaRoa by means of a stone wall that prevented the transit to the rest of the island (Delsing 2015; Fischer 2005a).

The response to this conflict on the part of the State was the expiration of the lease contract to CEDIP in 1916, transferring the administration to the Chilean Navy, an issue that was later mitigated with the elaboration of a Temporary Temperament. This agreement established a new regulatory framework for the relations between the Company and the State and renewed the lease while defining the conflicts of property delimitation (V. M. Vergara 1939; Moreno Pakarati 2014). Along with this, from that moment on, the figure of the administrator of the CEDIP with the maritime subdelegate which represented the State split.

## No Man's Land

It was not until 1933 that Chile really exerted property action on Rapa Nui when it listed the whole territory in the Real Estate Agency in Valparaiso, as a juridical fiction of no man's land (*terra nullius*). The territory was considered to be empty and deserted, open to working men and sheep and ultimately for exploitation. The State acquired the island by "occupation" based on article 590 of the Chilean Civil Code, as indicated in the inscription (Vergara 1939; Rochna Ramírez 1996). The inscription had the objective of resolving once and for all the struggles between the State and the private company, specially the CEDIP, concerning the property of the land. The State, therefore, justified the domination, once again making the original owners of the territory, the Rapanui people, fall into oblivion, by considering them only as occupants and not owners of the island, ignoring their ancestral rights and their homegrown condition. Vergara pointed out that "he proceeded to occupy an island that constituted a *res nullius* on which no state sovereignty was exercised and its inhabitants were a handful of men decimated by epidemics and leprosy, persecuted and exploited by pirates ..." (Vergara 1939:37)

The protection of the land against the ambition of CEDIP to take ownership of the whole island is frequently used as a state registration argument, stating that "the Chilean State did what it had to do at the time. Merlet wanted to register it all on his behalf. All the land would be his and not the State's. The state protected the land and we should all be grateful," as an influential Rapanui man told me in a long and open conversation. Asking about the 1933 inscription, I received many similar answers, especially from Rapanui people with greater appreciation for Chile or Chilean public officers.

The Rapanui people had no possibility of being considered subjects of rights or legitimate owners of the land that they inhabited as first occupants, according to the logic of this doctrine. There was a tendency to "sweep out the natives from the map," according to the multiple maps elaborated in the period between the agreement and 1933. The basis was only the illustration of a legal dispute between the properties of the CEDIP and the State of Chile. There is almost no Rapanui toponymy in these maps and places are renamed in Spanish. There is a focus on demonstrating to whom the part of the island belongs. The struggle between the two "colonial powers (state and private), which were contending for dominance over Rapa Nui in the first decades of the twentieth century," is depicted here (Foerster, Moreno Pakarati, and Ramirez 2015:48).

For the present study, the interesting thing is that the justification of the dominion of the lands on the part of the State or of the Company takes place in the purchases that the Catholic church would have conducted between the natives or to DutrouBornier and his partner Brander, whose heritage was later sold to Enrique Merlet (Edwards 2011). The priest Hipólito Roussel and Dutrou-Bornier will be the first foreigners to "buy" land, probably in exchange of goods of scarce value, for the mission in the first case, and for the establishment of a cattle company, in the second (Moreno Pakarati 2014). Thereby, the Rapanui were considered capable enough to sell their lands to the French businessmen or the church, to justify the dominion of another person, but not to subsequently own property.

Through this inscription, the tenure of Rapa Nui ceases to be justified solely by

the “cession” of the sovereignty that would have occurred in 1888. Then, the argument of the “occupation” of the land is adopted. Most European countries in their imperialist pretensions to justify their action, during the nineteenth century, used this explanation of the occupation by *terra nullius*. Subsequently, in the twentieth century, the unraveling of the falsity and arbitrariness of these arguments has been one of the pillars of the decolonization movements and indigenous peoples rights. As example, the situation in Australia this policy was revoked in the last decades as the recognition of the Native Acts, following the court case known as *Mabo v Queensland* in 1992, took place. For the first time, the Australian Supreme Court established that the doctrine of *terra nullius* did not apply to lands where inhabitants already existed, even though those inhabitants were considered “uncivilized.” This recognition of the Australian natives original titles and the declaration of the nullity of the *terra nullius* doctrine has generated a large and important investigation in Australia of the limits of indigeneity and its links with the right and role of anthropology as a “certifier” of these titles before Western justice (Burke 2011; Merlan 2014; Glaskin and Dousset 2011; Abramson and Theodossopoulos 2000; Paul G. McHugh 2011; Povinelli 1998).

Bringing back the Rapa Nui case, it is worth mentioning the constitution of a Consultative Commission by the State on Easter Island, formed with the aim of countering the Company's attempts to gain control of the Island. The Commission entrusted the lawyer Víctor Vergara with the study of the subject. The result of this investigation was *Easter Island, Domination and Dominion* (Vergara 1939) which tries to justify the acquisition of the island by Chile. Vergara points out that Chile has respected international law and that in this case, three presuppositions are required for “occupation to be a legitimate mode of acquiring dominion and sovereignty, that is “*res nullius*,” “*animus domini*” and “*apprehensio inauguration*” (Vergara 1939).

In this way, the State justifies its domination of the island, not by the agreement with the Rapanui signed in 1888, but by means of a mechanism that gave civil right, declaring then that the island belonged to no one, that as an empty land, without inhabitants with the capacity to be masters of it. Thus, through registration, the disputes regarding land ownership are settled with the private Company, but at the same time, it is leased again until 1953, when the State of Chile terminates the lease with CEDIP and transfers the entire administration to the Chilean Navy.

### **Isla de Pascua, Chilean Land.**

However, this union with Chile was not yet complete in 1933. The Rapanui were not yet Chilean, they could neither leave Hanga Roa nor the island. In 1952, the State terminated the lease with CEPID, and the Navy started administering the land. However, the Rapanui still maintained an uncertain legal status as non Chilean. After 1953, Rapa Nui was governed by the Chilean Navy: “If in the past the Navy had always been a weak presence, dependent on the Company for food and supply (and most human company), by this time Easter Island was being run as if it were the Baquedano itself... the Navy also assumed the role that the Company had played as importer of all Western civilization” (Fischer 2005b:201) This was assured by a



Temperamento Provisorio (May 5th 1917); a provisional code that attempted to regulate the activity on the island.

The Rapanui acquired the Chilean citizenship after the revolution led by Alfonso Rapu in 1964, and the State began to concretely incorporate the marine tenure in its administration. The so-called “founding wound” of the historical resentment of the islanders towards the Chilean State, may be explained by Chile’s abandonment of the island until the 1960's in hands of private companies and the delay in the recognition of the Rapanui as Chilean citizens in 1966 (Moreno Pakarati and Zurob 2012). As we know, in 1964 the main public services were established on the island, as Porteous states: “During the late 1960s the mainland government was concerned to expunge the islands’ former “colonial” status, to upgrade the conditions of life of a people who were both local and socioeconomically marginal to Chile, and to achieve “the incorporation of the islander into the mainstream of national life” (Porteous 1980a). Accordingly, an elaborate plan for the improvement of utilities, social services, communications, transport, and housing was announced, with the deliberate intention of effecting rapid “transformation and modernization.” Infrastructural improvements were motivated on the one hand by the need to provide basic standards for a nascent tourist industry, and on the other by feelings of guilt regarding Chile’s neglect of the island during the previous eighty years. (Porteous 1981; Delsing 2015)

Since the Chilean citizenship was granted to the Rapanui in 1966, we have been able to see that their demands have varied remarkably. If at first these claims had to do with the claim of equal rights to the State, nowadays, they have turned into protection from the State, the restitution of their territory, greater areas of autonomy as well as respect for their traditions.

During these years, the island has been divided into two large extensions of land, the National Park and the Vaitea Ranch, under *Ley Pascua* (Easter Island Law). The National Park had already been declared as such in 1935 with the intention of “protecting certain plants and animal species.” The character of National Monument was then added to protect its archaeological monuments and prohibit excavations without authorization. However, in 1966, the National Park of Tourism established an area of 7000 hectares, which currently occupies about 42% of the total area of the island. We will explore the map in detail, the National Park landscape and tourism in chapters ahead. The other large area of land known as the Vaitea Ranch, which represents mainly the land that formerly belonged to CEDIP, occupies approximately 28% of the island's surface (4,600 ha aprox.) and is currently managed by SASIPA, a Corfo subsidiary. In these State lands, it is where it overlaps the conservationist interest of preserving heritage of great ancestral archaeological value, as well as the demand of the Rapanui people for the lands in order to carry out economic and other activities outside the urban radius.

In 1993, Law 19,253 on Indigenous Peoples was passed, as a result of an arduous negotiation by indigenous peoples and the State. Among its many provisions, it establishes the rules for the recognition of the indigenous land, noting that in the Rapanui case, the land will be governed by the norms established in DL 2,885 of 1979. Concretely, the DL No. 2,885 empowered the President of the Republic to grant titles

of ownership to all original families in Easter Island, who were regular owners and who lived in urban and rural fiscal lands (article 1, DL N ° 2,885). On the other hand, families that were not wholly original from Easter Island, were granted the same benefit. They included families whose members had one of their parents being a native and had been granted permanent residence in the island for at least 5 years. According to article 8 of Decree No. 2.885, the applicant had to certify: “1. That they are in physical and continuous possession of the property for at least ten years, at the date of submission of the application referred to in the following article; 2. At the date of claim submission referred to in the following article there is no pending trial against them regarding the possession of the property, which must be certified by a certificate issued by the Civil Court in Easter Island.” Most of the inhabitants of the island refused, despite the strong pressure they were subjected to in the application of this mechanism, since it did not recognize that the land of Easter Island belonged only to the Rapanui. Thus, no formal request was made for the granting of a title of domain, denying an individual domain until much later.

The Chilean State has had an ambivalent position in this regard, stating that although the land would belong to the Rapanui people, the State should be held responsible for safeguarding their integrity. This included occasional individual land cessions to certain Rapanui families of 250 plots between 3 to 5 hectares and then through a more massive cession of the lands in 2000, where areas were mostly “reduced” from the Vaitea Ranch and in a lesser extent of the National Park. The subdivision of the landscape, the indigenous land and its importance will be addressed in the following chapter.



Image 16 Commission of Truth and New Deal for the Indigenous peoples of Chile. 2003

It is worth mentioning here that it was in this cession-of-land process that, for the first time, after an intense negotiation with the State, a President of the Republic recognized that the whole land of the island belonged to the Rapanui people, and that the 1933 inscription was intended to protect it (Delsing 2015) By conceding plots of land with titles of domain, the State has faced the Rapanui claims without giving in the

territory as a whole. The State, then, preserves its dominion and protective role by solving individual demands but maintains the political conflict in force and without resolution.

However, despite the 1933 inscription, references to the Treaty of Annexation signed in 1888 have never disappeared in the relationship between the State and Rapanui people, as already noted. On the contrary, the constant revision, and the frequent demand in the different social conflicts of the last decades, turns it into a moment, which keeps being imagined. On many occasions, whether formal or informal, the ratification of the Treaty of Annexation is demanded, which will allow the Rapanui people and the State of Chile to conclude a new agreement, in order to renegotiate the terms in a new space of equal conditions (Chilean Government 2003; Stavenhagen 2007).

For example, the Commission on Historical Truth and New Treaty with Indigenous Peoples, whose objective was to (re) examine Chilean history and (re) write it in the light of the historical and current situation of indigenous peoples, strongly recommended the need for “Ratification of the agreement of wills by the National Congress, which must be passed as a matter of law, as it contains general and mandatory rules that establish the essential bases of the legal system that will regulate the relationship between the State of Chile and the Rapa Nui in the future, in accordance with Article 60 N 20 of the Political Constitution of the Republic”(Chilean Government 2003).

Likewise, leaders of the Rapa Nui Parliament, an organization that has been considered by the State and by some Rapanui as more extreme in their positions and who call for the independence from Chile, has also manifested on countless occasions the need to make a new agreement with Chile, one in which the terms of the debate are agreed and respected by everyone.

Consequently, it is possible to understand the changing narratives about the Deed of Cession, the 1933 registration, the cession of the lots of land and the demands for total or partial restitution of the lands as constant negotiation deeds between the State and the Rapanui people. This will allow us to consider these moments as renewable agreements, in constant negotiation that will mutate their content according to historical moments and political needs.

The recognition by the State that the property of the whole island belongs to the Rapanui is the only possible solution, for a large part of the Rapanui community. This does not imply that there is an internal agreement among them on how best to carry out this process. The previous statement could be verified during the interviews I conducted. On the one hand, organizations such as the Rapa Nui Parliament seek the restitution of the land, as pointed out in the *Land of ancestors*, using a rhetoric that appeals to ancestry, to their *matas*, where every Rapanui knows where they belong through their *bua'i* and where they should return. An influential member of this organization pointed out that “each of us knows where we belong, where blood is thicker than water, where we should go to die. If that is difficult in practice, it is our problem, we will solve it. It is an ancestral realm. We do not need a *tire* to tell us what to do.”

On the contrary, a Rapanui that although got along well with the movements of autonomy of Rapa Nui, declared that he considered that the State should recognize and assign the dominion of the Rapanui land to the community, but that he did not find prudent to establish actions to allow the people to return to the same ancestral territories. In his opinion, “to establish a community territory, which belongs to everyone, where a Rapanui institution administers and delivers permits for use to people or families on land that need them” was for the best. In the same vein, in several conversations, the Rapanui that pointed out that the land belonged to everyone and that no more individual titles of dominion should be given and that suitable and respectful formula of the Rapanui custom had to be found.

While the State recognizes that the land belongs to the Rapanui, it establishes a mechanism that maintains the state dominion at the same time that it acts like a “father figure” granting plots of land to the children who need them. This explains the 1933 inscription, the recognition of the status as a “regular occupier” and the process of “cession” (and not restitution) of land that has been carried out in recent years. The Rapanui are, then, forced to “recognize”, on paper, the State as absolute owner of the land if they want to access the “benefits” granted by the State.

Whether it is through the cession of plots of land, or by granting the Rapanui greater manageability of the territory or the National Park, or by establishing that the CODEIPA (through its elected Rapanui members) will determine who will be benefited with the cession of lands, the State have not detach from the total property, keeping Rapa Nui as its possession, a colony on the high seas.

As some authors have pointed out, what happens is that the “State was facing an “ethnic” conflict for many Rapanui (Rapa Nui vs. Chilean State), with family plots cessions”(Foerster, Moreno Pakarati, and Ramirez 2015). So, the State did not recognize the traditional mechanisms of use, possession and transfer of the rapanui land by imposing a foreign system, individually owned and privately owned. It is argued that the State, by means of these cessions of land, transformed traditional communal property into individual property (Delsing 2015; Arthur 2012; Young 2011) and also privileged certain Rapanui (those receiving land) by generating economic inequality in a society that previously would have been fairly egalitarian (Rochna Ramírez 1996; Delsing 2015).

### **The Building Of Imaginary Maps**

The multiplicity of relations and discourses that define the understandings between the Rapanui and Chilean peoples have been displayed on the Chilean portraits of Rapa Nui, considered as “allures”<sup>15</sup>(Foerster 2010b). The author divides these allures into four: Geopolitics (related to the control of the territorial and maritime space which implies having the sovereignty on Easter Island). The “erotic and the 35 names” allure (which refers to the sensual Polynesian worldview, unattached from the bonds of Catholic sexuality and seducing the European/Chilean).The “religious” allure and

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<sup>15</sup> Personal translation.

“charity” (connected with the islanders' conversion into Catholicism, their relationship with the religious and the “charity” activities carried out by priests and the religious to “save” these people's souls). Finally, the “monumental” allure (which represents the surprise by the construction greatness of the Moai by the islanders and the representation that “other” culture must have built such works, not the Rapanui) (Foerster 2010b).

At a State level, the link between Rapa Nui and Chile began on a national rhetoric, by including it on national maps, teaching about it in geography classes, or dancing their traditional dances at the Chile's independence celebrations. A new discourse transforms Rapa Nui into Easter Island, a Chilean colony and turning its inhabitants, the Rapanui, into Easter Islanders. In this way, the physical occupation of the territory also included an ideological occupation. The process of the territory's ideological occupation occurred through the civilizing evangelization and Christianity (Castro 2006; Fischer 2005b; McCall 1981), the insertion of currency and financial market and by the imposition of Western education (Zurob 2014; Corvalán R 2014) and positive law (Gomez 2012). All of the above was manifested from an ideological discourse based on the need to civilize the Rapanui, to prepare them for a future insertion into the Chilean national world.

The state map is also being built by the implementation of multiple Western/Chilean binaries to construct and define space, redefining the indigenous practices of naming, generating or making room, that is to say, to understand Rapa Nui as part of the Chilean land, like Easter Island. Consequently, there are several ways that have been studied that drastically transform the ways in which the relationship with the territory is conceived and perceived. Whether it is through a colonial practice of renaming places with colonial names (Foerster, Moreno Pakarati, and Ramirez 2015; Silva 2004; Kauanui 2008; Sharma and Gupta 2006) or the technique of mapping domains (Chapin, Lamb, and Threlkeld 2005; Bryan 2011; Knapp and Herlihy 2002; Knapp 1961; Feldman 2010; Offen 2009; Sletto 2014), or establishing legal measures to state that the only useful land is productively occupied, or the insertion of private property models that were forced into their acceptance in order to continue living in the place or the obligation to inscribe and notarize the ownership of land. In this way, there are enforced concepts that do not account for the indigenous ways of understanding the land: It is no longer a *henua* but a property, it is no longer the *henui* who explains the link with the land, but a title bestowed by the Ministry. It is now the paperwork, as it is said in Rapanui *henuaporeko* (title of domain) which determines who the rightful owner is. It is no longer Rapa Nui, but Isla de Pascua, ruled by the norms and laws of the Republic of Chile.

The European colonialism in Africa and elsewhere, which sought to take control over the indigenous world through the division and redefinition of its traditional entities, as seen in Rapa Nui, the application of the indirect rule as a control mechanism (Mamdani 2012; Mamdani 1996; Ross and Benton 2015; Benton 2010). A traditional or customary right was generated according to several authors, reminiscent of ancestral practices, but no longer an *ad hoc* interpretation of African elites and their European partners. This, in order to achieve greater power and control over the population,

drawn upon their traditional origin (Chanock 1985; Moore 1986; Comaroff 2001). This is how European colonialism is built up, taking control of the indigenous and local world through the division and redefinition of its traditional institutions, the design of new frontiers and national maps, and the subjection of the population to a bureaucratic new state logic to access land, labor or housing (Das 2007; Moore 2005). In this way, they seek to “civilize” or “pacify” the population through instruments that seem close or known to them, but at the same time they function as a new incorporation into the colonial map. This creates the state map, a frequent concept in which the relations of indigenous peoples with national states means State control, in which it is always seeking control of the social world, either through the creation of new institutions outside or in systems or in spaces that are granted the character of traditional. This explains why the State requires a title of dominion of the Rapanui in order to qualify for the housing subsidy or development of projects. In simple words, the State puts the money to build a house, only if the person who postulates has a legal recognition that he or she owns that property.

In addressing colonial constructions of space, it is necessary to address the notion of property and territory not just as material places, but also as discursive constructions. The inability to see past a familiar worldview closed down possibilities of hearing the voices of Indigenous people or the possibilities land has to offer. The early discovery discourses continue to the present day to shape understandings of land and its function in relationship to communities.

In order to make the land apt for its transformation into a commodity and ready for investment and prosperity, the map, the survey and the legal recognition of the land's ownership has been instrumental in preparing the land for colonialism (Blomley 2003). In this way, to turn the land into a map in ways it can be measured or examined is necessary to adjust it to the needs of the colonial power (Li 2014a, Li 2014b). Therefore, the land of Rapa Nui travels to Chile, although not removed, even being an island. It circulates and now becomes national territory, colonial or global. It ceases to be a local land. It is no longer the Rapanui land. Rather it is an indigenous land, which is recognized only if it passes through the eye of the state. Thus, the only possibility in which the land can be possessed by the Rapanui is by recognizing the final dominion of the State, the form in which it is also dispossessed by them (Elden 2010).

The Chilean cartography in reference to Rapa Nui is one of the ways to link the island to Chile. In this way, it is inserted in the maps in a small box in the city of Caldera, in the north of Chile, making it appear much closer to the continent than it really is. In this way, geography seems like a bond, the distance separating Rapa Nui from Chile vanishes and the image of proximity between Easter Island and the continent is created.



Image 17 Maps taken from Chileans tourism websites. 2017

Just as the map plays a key role in Rapa Nui's insertion into the Chilean worldvision, the provisional title, the title of domain, the transfer of rights, the indigenous community, the indigenous association, the Easter Island Development Commission (CODEIPA), the housing subsidy, among others, are also instruments, devices, spaces created by the State - with more or less Rapanui participation - that seek to maintain social control but with a more local and more typical Rapanui resemblance. Many of these instruments have been used and rethought by the Rapanui as their own systems. They have been reappropriated, resignified. In a way, we can say that they have been turned into a Rapanui tradition. In this analysis, it is fundamental not only to consider these reappropriations as demonstrations of the power of the State, the internal colonialism, the strength of the irreversible influence of the State, but it is also fundamental to go deeper into their meanings, the understandings of the Rapanui themselves. All of them are topics already being addressed by analyzing the landscape of the ancestors and the landscape of the nation.

Chile's insistence in its insular dominion is the geopolitical, the geographical “allure,” as noted previously. The dominion over Rapa Nui allows Chile to extend its sovereignty in the Pacific, granting them a tricontinental-valued characteristic. Therefore, Easter Island confers Chile a powerful presence in the Pacific, expanding its territorial sea and granting the possibility of an exclusive economic zone. This is how Chile, a Latin American country, a republic still in a consolidation process, becomes the “only South American country to have an inhabited overseas colony, and today still a point of pride for Chileans”(Mccall 1997).

Rapa Nui's geopolitical importance for Chile (and for the world) is reaffirmed by the role it played for the United States during the Cold War, under the authorization and support of the Chilean administration. Between 1965 and 1970, an American base of the United States Air Force was set up on Easter Island, with the official mission of installing a meteorological base, but in reality, the mission was to secretly monitor French atomic activities in the Tahiti archipelago (Stambuk 2016). Although it is not

the aim of this chapter, it is worth mentioning that the installation of this base is incorporated -for the first time- into Rapanui landscapes, money, new goods, food and clothes (Porteous 1980a). The entire American adventure ended when Salvador Allende took office as the President of the Republic.

Along with this, as we will analyze the tourism landscape in detail, it is necessary to emphasize Rapa Nui's importance throughout the world with its archaeological wealth, positioning it, not only as a Chilean heritage site, but also as a World Heritage Site, according to UNESCO. The reason the State has guarded it jealously is mainly because it is a jewel to humanity, which happens to belong to Chile, protecting it from everyone, even from the supposed threat of its original inhabitants. This explains the reason the State has economically maintained the island, as it seems to be an unusual form of colonialism.

Rapa Nui is an image for Chile, a postcard, a country image frequently pointed out. This makes the country visible to the world, giving it a chance to show off, advertising itself to achieve new commercial alliances and to increase the tourist flow. In the image, the importance of the dominion over Rapa Nui may be appreciated: The former President of the Republic, Eduardo Frei Ruiz-Tagle led the Chilean delegation at the "Chile Week" in China, in 2016, which aimed to publicize and promote trade and visits to Chile. The event's main act was the exhibition of Moai reproductions and Rapanui dances in a well-known section of the Great Wall of China, as shown in the picture. Many allusions of the two great "wonders of humanity" (the Chinese wall and the Moai) were made, along with the appealing call to visit Chile and learn about its beauties, while a Rapanui dance ensemble was performing. Chile introduces itself through Rapa Nui, the Moai is the image they expect consumers to remember. It is neither about the deprivation of natural resources nor about the extraction of great wealth from its territory. It is about the State taking advantage of its distant maritime possession which can be appreciated in the economic importance it renders to Rapa Nui's exotic image over the world.



Image 18Photography taken from the Chilean Ministry of Exterior Relationship website. 2017

### **The State on Easter Island today**



We will make a pause to summarize and picture the State situation in Rapa Nui within the structural context. The Republic of Chile is divided into territorial units called “Regions” administered by “Regional Administrations.” These are composed of an Intendant, directly appointed by the President of the Republic, a Regional Council and other public officers directly elected. Additionally, the regions are constituted by smaller territorial units, denominated “Provinces” that are administered by a “Governor,” who is also directly appointed by the President of the Republic and exercises under the authority of the regional Intendant. The Provincial Governor is responsible of supervising the existing public services in the province, according to the instructions given by the Intendant.

Rapa Nui belongs territorially to the V Region of Valparaíso. The Intendant and Regional Administration are located in the regional capital, in the city of Valparaíso, about 4,000 km distant from Rapa Nui. Also, this territory constitutes the Province of Easter Island and the Municipality of Easter Island, where the authorities are respectively the provincial Governor, dependent on the central administration, and the Mayor. Also there is a municipal council elected by popular vote.

The Chilean State exercises national sovereignty over Easter Island through the following institutions: the Provincial Administration, where the governor is appointed by the President of the Republic, the National Forestry Corporation (CONAF), current co-administrator of Rapa Nui National Park together with *Ma'uHenua*, the Provincial Office of National Assets, the National Corporation for Indigenous Development (CONADI), the Council of National Monuments through the Technical Secretary of Rapa Nui Patrimony, Carabineros (Police Officers), the Investigation Police, the Army, the Air Force and the judicial entities, among others.

In the past decades, it has been a normal practice for continentals to assume leading positions, relegating the Rapanui to minor administration positions. In the last decades, the “rapanuiization” has taken place, a process in which the Rapanui have been assuming positions in the public administration (Andueza 2000). Therefore, at present, the Government, CONAF, CONADI, among others, have Rapanui leaderships. Other public institutions traditionally controlled by the islanders are the Municipality, led by a Rapanui mayor since its creation and elected by the entire population of the island (not only Rapanui). Also, it includes the commissioners of the Development Commission of Easter Island (CODEIPA), chosen only by Rapanui people. Another State entity that influences decision making in Rapa Nui is the Provincial Office of the Ministry of National Assets, known locally as the *Ministry of Lands*, associated with the cession and regularization of land tenure. These posts are typically filled by people of continental origin, but they act in conjunction with the CODEIPA, which in turn is mainly integrated by the Rapanui.

The CODEIPA<sup>16</sup> seems to be the institution with greater Rapanui acceptance,

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<sup>16</sup> It is worth remembering that it was precisely in this institution where I came to work as a lawyer to Rapa Nui, I made friends, and that was also where my future research took a major turn. As I write this dissertation, the memory of long conversations with the commissioners (at that time they were only men) is always on my mind. They opened the doors for me to think about the tradition and its links with the law. They taught me to think differently about the relationship with the State, to look at justice and the law with other eyes. Every time I say

although not exempt of criticism as it is often heard that there is no impartial procedure of conflict resolution and that its commissioners benefit their relatives or acquaintances.

There are five members democratically elected that form the CODEIPA that are elected by popular vote and belong to the ethnic group. During the last elections, the Rapanui who live in Santiago and Valparaíso were included as voters while a large number of candidates are registered for each election. The CODEIPA also counts with the following State entities representatives: the National Corporation for Indigenous Development, the Ministry of National Assets, the Ministry of Planning, the Ministry of Education, CONAF, the Ministry of Economy's Corporation of Development and Reconstruction and the Chilean Navy.

The CODEIPA fulfills the role of representing the Rapanui as a speaker before the authorities of the Government in issues relevant to community in the island. One of the responsibilities is to suggest development initiatives to the Executive in matters of education, health, conservation of natural and cultural heritage, land and in matters related to local development, among many others. However, the effective power of this commission is concentrated almost exclusively in the allocation of land. Therefore, most of their work is related to conflicts between the Rapanui people about land, in which the commission acts as a mediator (Foerster, Moreno Pakarati, and Ramirez 2015: 108). They also play a key role elaborating lists of "beneficiaries" for future land cessions and in approving or rejecting transfers of rights. In addition, CODEIPA is in charge of extending permits for great magnitude project realization, whether proposed by public or private institutions.

Along with this, there are Rapanui political organizations such as the Council of Elders (the only one officially recognized by the State by the Indigenous Law), the Rapa Nui Parliament and the *Makenu Rapa Nui* or Group of Women, among others. These organizations are constantly being created with various objectives associated with the defense of the Rapanui rights, the protection of the environment, the promotion of their culture and arts, fishing, etc. During the 1980s and 1990s, the Council of Elders became really influential. It was then integrated by a representative of each family on the island. This council was considered a successor of the Council of Chiefs that went along the last kings Atamu Tekena and Simeón Riro Kainga at the end of the 19th Century (Hotus Chavez 1988). The institution was the only representative entity of the Rapanui for more than a decade, which was led by Alberto Hotus until 2016. It had a rather critical vision about the role of the Chilean State in the history of Rapa Nui, as shown in the book *Te Mau Hatu'O Rapa Nui*. (Hotus Chavez 1988)

However, the Council collapsed in the late 1990s, faced with the instability of its leader, demonstrations that called the Rapanui to continue to belong to the Chilean State and accusations of power monopolization. This was how the Council of Elders II was formed, which would give rise to the formation of the Rapa Nui Parliament, years later. The Rapa Nui Council of Elders, as stated in article 68 of the Indigenous Law,

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something about the Rapanui, I automatically think of what Don Marcelo, El Nito, Tonga and Mario would answer me. They are the origin of this research.

have a seat insured in CODEIPA, being the only Rapanui social organization officially recognized by the State.

The Rapa Nui Parliament originated as an alternative to the Council of Elders, with a radical stance against the subordination of the Rapanui society to Chilean institutions<sup>17</sup>. The Parliament has occasionally stated that the island should be completely withdrawn from the Republic of Chile and that it should seek self-administration or independence. However, throughout time they have also reaffirmed the need for a new deal with Chile. In the Rapa Nui Parliament, there are also more moderate voices that pursue an independent state model in free association with Chile.

Along with this, the formation of two institutions, the *Hōnui* and *Ma'uHenua*, has changed the political panorama of the island in the last years. Therefore, “the institution of the *Hōnui* is and represents the empowerment of the community through the 36 *mata* (or clans): the *Tuki*, the *Riroroko*, the *Tepano*, the *Rapu*, the *Haoa*, the *Araki*”(Foerster 2016a:1). In this way, each *mata* or clan chooses their representatives, who meet once or twice a week to discuss important issues for the island in the rapanui language. Its intention is to be a representative means of all the Rapanui, unlike what happens with the Council of Elders or the Parliament representing only a sector of society. Along with this, it should be noted that things typically Chilean, or *tire*, are excluded from this space. It constitutes an important act of refusal to everything Chilean, an important manifestation of the Rapanui power and sovereignty.

*Ma'uHenua* is an indigenous community according to the Chilean Indigenous Law, created in 2016 and constituted by all members of the Rapanui people over 18 who want to be part of it. The administration of the Rapa Nui National Park is among the objectives of the community. Currently, *Ma'uHenua* is at a first stage of co-administration of the National Park with CONAF. *Ma'uHenua* holds the responsibility to take charge of public use sites, the protection of archaeological sites, ranger activities and the entry fees to the Park, as stated in the association agreement. Meanwhile, CONAF is responsible for the ecosystems conservation and protection as well as prevention of forest fires. The very frequent Rapanui demand for greater autonomy is where *Ma'uHenua* is inserted in, and as we will see, indicates that the island cannot be administered as a municipality or be administratively dependent on the Region of Valparaiso. This is because it is a territory of a people, a nation and, due to that, it deserves special treatment.

With that in mind, Rapa Nui's management of the territory is structured by a series of political tensions in the broad sense of the term (between Rapanui authorities and heads of service, Rapanui authorities and national authorities). It is certainly structured, as well, by the plurality of laws, which interfere in the island's management. That was the tenor of the constitutional reform that was carried out in 2012 in order to

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<sup>17</sup>The Council of Elders I continue to exist, although it has practically disappeared from the political scene on the island. It continues to be deeply considered by the continental authorities. Alberto Hotus' position has been deeply criticized by the Rapanui since it has not allowed a new election for President of the Council. This would maintain Rapa Nui in a position of dependence towards the Chilean State as the best way for the development of the island. For this reason, it is difficult to recognize at present the representativeness of the Council of Elders in the local context, beyond the loyalty that some people still maintain towards Hotus.

recognize Easter Island as a special territory, which had to be governed by different rules, stating that “Article 126 bis: Special territories are those corresponding to Easter Islands and the Juan Fernández Archipelago. The Government and Administration of these territories shall be governed by the special statutes that establish the respective constitutional organic laws.”

The purpose of Special Statute project was to grant greater autonomy to the Rapanui people in the administration of the territory by eliminating its dependence on the Valparaíso Region. This, in order to generate a more direct relationship with the central level of administration and the creation of a Territorial Assembly in charge of governing and administering the island, with its own patrimony. Again the State recognizes here the particularities of Rapa Nui but within its own scheme. It is worth mentioning that a Special Statute Bill has been a commitment from the government of Chile to the Rapanui for ages, but has not seen the light. Several bills have been drafted and submitted to the National Congress, but a definitive project has not yet been approved.

### **Ethnography of the State on Rapa Nui**

A multiplicity of authorities, institutions and organizations in charge of local affairs exist in Rapa Nui, an island where about 7,000 thousand people live although no more than 3,000 would be Rapanui. This multiplicity of actors, whose functions often overlap, mark the State presence on the island, and define the relationship between the Rapanui and Chileans and between State and Rapa Nui.

The State of Chile is a heterogeneous social field, formed by agents with different interests and strategies. This shows us, again, that we are in a place of multiple interactions, which it is not possible to understand neither in a single way nor in a single glance. There is much literature on the possibility of making anthropology of the state, of the bureaucracy, understanding the fundamental role that public agents would have in shaping and determining the relations of subjects with States (Das and Poole 2004; Das 2007; De La Maza 2012; Gupta 2012). In this way, to conduct ethnographic research about social practices and indigenous politics negotiations in the present-day gives us the possibility of analyzing the State as a cultural construction that impacts societies in different ways. This, through different mechanisms and devices, imposes cultural forms of identity, relations and visions of society, from a perspective of the analysis of the power involved. Therefore, to understand the history of the impacts of Chile’s arrival in the island is fundamental to trace the changes and transformations that occurred.

As we know, public services began to be set up in Rapa Nui in the 1960s and therefore, the arrival of the Chilean public officials to the island became more widespread. At the beginning, these people and their families, enjoyed high esteem and a higher status in the Rapanui community, probably due to the novelty and their ability to access more goods. The collected testimonies always refer to the great economic deficiencies situation in which the Rapanui lived, of which they were probably more aware when they knew the opposite reality of the people who they came to know or

who came to live to the island. Many recalled that children were deeply envious of the situation of public officials, due to the abundance of goods and products they received periodically from the continent, which contrasted with the situation of shortage of the Rapanui families. In the records of the Easter Island Court, which also began to operate in 1966, most of the open judicial cases were related to thefts of goods from the Rapanui community members onto the population coming from the continent, which was largely explained by the scarcity of goods the Rapanui population experienced<sup>18</sup>.

Local stories also talk about how the relations between continental and Rapanui were quite frequent and well received, which generated important affective bonds that led to the existence of many “mixed” families. Formerly, a marriage between the local children and a continental was seen as a positive thing, because it translated into a way of opening doors to the outside, as well as an incorporation of labor force into the family. Along with this, the traditional prohibition of marriages between relatives, up to the second degree of consanguinity, makes these unions with continental or foreign individuals quite common. As Muñoz said “If we consider the demographic decay of the mid 19th century, all living Rapanui are the descendants of the 111 islanders who remained in Rapa Nui and some others from the Tahitian diasporas, the Rapanui are now considered all relatives among themselves and members of a large family, with genealogical distances that consider consanguinity and affinity to allow or prohibit marital unions<sup>19</sup>” (Muñoz Azócar 2007:167). Since the Rapanui community is small, the chances of finding a partner outside the circle of relatives were and are quite small. Their mixing would respond, in part, to this difficulty.

According to census studies conducted by McCall, in 1950 there were 724 rapanui people and 29 non-rapanui people on the island. In 1970, non-Rapanui people had increased to 491 (McCall 1981). By 2011, the population of the island reached almost 6,000 inhabitants. According to the preliminary results of the 2012 census, the Rapanui ceased to be a majority on the island. The current total figure would be 5,806 inhabitants, representing an increase of 54% in the population in the last ten years. According to this preliminary data, approximately 3,000 of them are continental individuals and 2,800 are Rapanui individuals (information of the Municipality of Easter Island). The rise in the island population would be of an annual 4.3% (approximately 164 people), first by immigration and then by birth.

This increase “has produced more profuse relations between both ethnic groups, an increase in miscegenation and a reformulation of personal identities”(Moreno Pakarati and Zurob 2012). According to Moreno and Zurob, major continental informants point out that “in their time” the Rapanui families favored continental integration”(Moreno Pakarati and Zurob 2012), but today “foreign blood in a Rapanui individual may become something negative and an object for discrimination by some “purer” islanders. Whereas, for others (especially in the case of European blood or other Polynesian islands) it is a matter of pride, and there is a kind of ethnic conscience which, on the one hand, calls for “Purity” and, on the other hand, 'to improve the local

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<sup>18</sup> In June of 2015, thank to summer grant of Tinker Foundation, I studied the judicial archives in Rapa Nui. However, the analysis of these texts is still a pending business

<sup>19</sup> Author personal translation

breed<sup>20</sup>” (Moreno Pakarati and Zurob 2012).

In 1973, almost two-thirds of the male population was receiving a salary from some of the public services that were established on the island, due to the erection of public services which opened new sources of labor (Moreno Pakarati and Zurob 2012). Most of the most skilled jobs were filled by continental individuals, which received much higher incomes. In view of these data, it is a logical thing to believe that the new Western customs, which came to Rapa Nui, had an important effect on the local population, as being affected by a process of “Chileanization.” In recent years, the number of young Rapanui who have obtained a technical or university degrees has increased. This has allowed Rapanui individuals to take on many occupations historically filled by the continental, in which has been described as the “Rapanuization” of the institutional spaces (Andueza 2000). The already mentioned employment survey indicates that about 29% of those who work do it in public services, and probably the current percentage is higher.

Grant McCall reflected on the relationship of “like” and “dislike” between the Rapanui and the Chileans living on Easter Island during the 1970s (McCall 1975). The conclusions reached indicate a “relationship between a continental worldview and their relationship towards the Rapanui”(Muñoz Azócar 2007:10). This worldview resembles to the “set of rhetorical images and a discourse that the continental ones have about the Rapanui, contained in the whole diffusion apparatus on the island’s culture, from documentaries, films, books, naval reports, to journalistic and tourist chronicles. Many of these results in exotic representations found to be curious, strange and incomprehensible by continental Chileans who visit the island”<sup>21</sup> (Muñoz Azócar 2007:11).

Changes in the expression of the cultural forms of different peoples have been associated with all acculturation processes. Old customs succumb to more “modern” forms arising from an external culture, but this does not necessarily imply the disappearance of the original culture or its fundamental features. Following the incorporation of the island to the province of Valparaíso, the massive presence of continental Chileans in Rapa Nui, during the mid-1960s, transformed the Rapanui society (Stambuk 2016; Foerster and Moreno Pakarati 2016). The society began to build up through negotiation, resistance and a pact, a different way of interacting with the State and its citizens over the years.

State officials have been both fundamental elements for solidifying state dominance in Rapanui as well as fundamental agents of change and social transformation. It is necessary then to distinguish between the public officials who live in Rapa Nui and those who are in charge of the affairs of the island from the continent. In this way, the perspective of Chilean civil servants living in Rapa Nui is very different, since they usually establish personal relationships with members of the Rapanui people, empathizing with the Rapanui demands and by having a greater knowledge of the Rapanui culture. This obviously does not happen in all cases, and differentiations may be made in terms of the discourse dominating the relationship between the Rapanui

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<sup>20</sup>Author personal translation

<sup>21</sup>Author personal translation

and several institutions established in the island. The perceptions of a Chilean official of the Armed Forces, Aeronautics, or *Carabineros* are probably not the same as those coming from an official of National Assets, the Government or the Technical Secretary of Patrimony. A personal thought may be the one that public employees have a different sensitivity regarding the Rapanui people, depending on the nature of their jobs, the number of Rapanui colleagues and the type of relationship that they should engage with the local population. It would become a very interesting ethnographic study to carry out, but nevertheless, it is not the subject of this investigation.

Cursorily, my personal experience allows me to affirm that public officials, who live on the continent and have to deal with issues in Rapa Nui, are intimidated by the way the Rapanui interact. The dialogue with them becomes very complex. They point out that a very difficult exchange is expected from the Rapanui, who “only shout and do not listen.” Especially, they argue, because there is no agreement among them, which would make any dialogue impossible. It is worth clarifying, however, that it is also possible to find these arguments in public officials living in Rapa Nui (and also in Rapanui individuals, although a minority).

Therefore, the “fault” of the slow progress bills, the development projects or other initiatives no longer act in a “non-compliant” State, but in the natives themselves, who are “unable” to carry out a dialogue in the terms that the State demands. They are described by agents of the State as “belligerent,” “fragmented,” “loud,” “proud” and not quite “conciliatory,” which transfer the error responsibility onto them and not to the State. I also frequently heard comments about how the Rapanui did not value the special treatment the State gave them and were not able to appreciate their privileged and ideal situation, especially when compared to the situation of the Mapuche people in southern Chile. In this way, a discourse is built from Chile, which portrays the Rapanui as hostile subjects, whimsical and who are filled with hatred towards the Chilean, and Rapa Nui as an unfriendly place to visit.

This is a very frequent position in the relations between indigenous peoples and the States. It demands unity and coherence from the natives in the formulation of their demands, dismissing the plural and multiple nature of indigenous identities (as well as national identities). In my opinion, the requirement of unanimity in the indigenous voice implies that it is possible to find a society without internal differences and where it would be possible to find a single voice, a single position, a single way of looking at the future. This is a frequent demand for indigenous peoples, who are called for union, authenticity, and above all internal, harmony in relations with the State, without considering their own dynamics of dealing with their own internal conflicts or with the State.

This view does not consider that this approach of the Rapanui, of aggressively confronting the State, has not only to do with a cultural characteristic but also with their ancestral rage for the pain of shared history. Also, that this approach is part of a rational and studied move to deal with the State. According to a personal viewpoint, those cries and those demands that seem messy and contradictory are the ones to guarantee the Rapanui, the interest of the State and greater urgency in solving their problems. This would be a strategic mechanism, part of the Rapanui agency, and part

of the constant negotiation between the Rapa Nui and the State of Chile that determines the fate of this relationship.

In all these negotiations with the State, a common feeling of distrust in the island population may be seen. It is common to hear that the projects, the plans and the programs that the State implements in Rapa Nui are not pertinent to the local reality and that the Rapanui are not consulted for its elaboration, in spite of the multiple surveys and studies that are elaborated. There is a common distrust related to such studies or projects that seek to have information that enriches the public policies in their objectives to be applied on the Island. In the case of institutional Chile, this research is not useful, since the community continues to feel that public policies have not favored them. Hence, “nothing is done right,” the community declares discontently and distrustfully. They feel it is not possible to go deeper into the issues and they do not see “concrete” results. Moreover, they are critical of all studies designed from the continent, which they say do not incorporate the Rapanui language.

In this manner, there is a widespread social belief about the loss of the resources generated by tourism are “left on the continent.” In many conversations I had with Rapanui people, they express that the money generated on the island was the outcome of the island’s intrinsic cultural importance based on the legacy of their ancestors. Thus, the fact that the economic resources that enter directly into Rapa Nui do not “remain” on the island constitutes a form of usurpation of their rights as heirs of this ancestral legacy. Continental Chile is seen by many Rapanui as taking advantage of the resources they inherited. Additionally, the mindset is that state institutions use their land to set up their offices and form part of the National Park. The result is an image of Chile as a country with little disposition for dialogue.

It is important to mention again that when talking about the Rapanui position before the State of Chile, we do not find a single opinion, rather the opposite. There is a fairly widespread perception of the need to achieve greater autonomy spaces, before the State and a tacit agreement. Additionally, there is urgency of legislating in respect to the migration of foreigners and continental Chileans to the island. Also, many of these issues fail to muster an agreement on how to make the changes. Within the Rapanui and Chilean communities there are important differences in the way of dealing with conflicts. Thus, although all Rapanui would agree that the lands are only of the Rapanui, they would disagree with the legal regime in which the land should be handed over. Some consider the titles of dominion, others the community or usufruct, etc. or whether the whole island should be restored or only specific places. The same is expected in respect to the need to have a greater regime of autonomy, or independence, as seen in the following chapters.

There is no doubt that the Rapanui have become aware that the State has an “historical debt” with them, and that it must be repaired as a result of the historical processes mentioned above. What is not clear yet is the best way to pay off that debt. The idea of “historical debt,” an expression found in many demands of indigenous peoples throughout the world, has succeeded in unifying the responsibilities of national states for the atrocities committed against these groups.



In general, based in the information that I gather in Rapa Nui, I agree with the conclusions of Moreno and Zurob field study, that point out the islanders' perspective: "feeling discriminated is more associated with the past than with the present. The Rapanui may feel discriminated in interpersonal relations at present and by the Chilean State as an ethnicity and as a people. In the continent, cases of discrimination against the Rapanui are currently rare, unlike decades ago. Rather, the Rapanui are seen today as something exotic and interesting" (Moreno Pakarati and Zurob 2012).

As one of my Rapanui friends points out to me, "if they made me choose, I would be Rapanui again, there is nothing better, we live in the best place in the world, a place where everyone wants to live, that's why we cannot let anyone in anymore." I could today declare that the majority of them that I talked with are very proud of being Rapanui and have a strong attachment to the local culture and the island, with a great sense of a group and/or cultural belonging, and high levels of ethnic self-esteem that includes the current process of modernization. In this context, the demands by the restriction of the residence permits of continental ones in the island are inserted. The Rapanui people asking the continental, "when are you leaving?" is a phrase that has become very classic and ironic among the Rapanui, as a way to show their dissatisfaction with the large number of continental Chileans arriving in the island.

Disagreements between the Rapanui and the continental arise sporadically in the face of economic initiatives (to set up a hotel, a restaurant or a store) that link Rapanui people with Chilean or foreign investors. Most of these continental investors are perceived with distrust by the community because they come to profit and to enrich themselves with the Rapanui's cultural heritage without giving anything in return. And this happens with locals willing to grant the land. Along with this, there are also conflicts associated with the continental's "bad habits" that are arriving in the island. Allegedly, new crimes are currently being committed, crime has increased and new drugs are getting in. Therefore, it is quite usual to wonder if the perpetrator of a crime was a native or a continental Chilean, the day after a crime is committed. Likewise, the arrival of continental workers as a labor force in the construction sector generates mixed reactions<sup>22</sup>.

From the State, there is also another narrative, very common in the discourse of state officials. They portray the Rapanui as "ungrateful" and that they want "everything for free," or are being "spoiled by the state and do not want to work." In this same logic, they declare that the demands for independence from Chile are utopian because "they would starve to death" if they lack the means to subsist by themselves. Therefore Chile, under this discourse, is not only the legitimate owner and holder of all the land on the island, but also stands as the savior, the only one who can effectively take care of Rapa Nui. The Rapanui, according to this rhetoric, are again unable to determine their own future; they are savages who require the Western "civilizing" power to survive.

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<sup>22</sup>In most cases, workers are brought by large construction companies, who are criticized for making profits on the island and not reinvesting in it. In recent major construction projects such as the Explora and HangaRoa hotels and the new HangaRoa Hospital, companies have been required to ensure that contract workers leave the island after the work is completed. However, this commitment has not been easy to meet, given that the island's job market opportunities are very attractive to continental workers.

“If you want us to leave, we're all leaving now,” as a Chilean public officer told me while exiting a tense CODEIPA meeting, “but if we do, we are taking the planes, the port, the antenna, the tractors, the subsidies, and all the scholarships ... See if they can survive on their own.” However, this position is not unique to Chileans or public officers, it is also common to hear similar positions from some of the Rapanui, which are fearful with this possibility.

We see here a variant of internal colonialism, which denies all agency and possibility of independence to the Rapanui, symbolizing a stonewall of denial of self-determination. In a speech in April 2016, Michelle Bachelet, acknowledged, “This island is the heritage of the Rapanui people,” yet she qualified that statement, adding: “but at the same time [the island is] a national and a world heritage site.” Therefore, “it is everyone’s responsibility, from wherever we come”(Gonzalez 2016).

The words of the President of Chile confirm what we have been insistently saying, as we have seen in this chapter: Chile recognizes that Rapa Nui belongs to its original inhabitants, but it is unable to detach itself from its dominion. They believe it is important either because it needs it as sovereignty or as commercial value. These are more than enough reasons to maintain a neoliberal multicultural policy of negotiations and multiple interactions. This is known as the state map, a diverse and complex landscape that marks and determines how the territory is conceived and understood in Rapa Nui.

The State, by means of the indigenous law, recognizes that the Rapanui are the only ones who can own the land, but that the State will be in charge of administering it, deciding its division and distribution. In this way, the State never ceases to be the owner of the territory, as pointed out. A very traditional variant of present-day multiculturalism is established, where indigenous peoples are recognized with ancestral land rights (or new lands in case of relocations). Nevertheless the terms are set by the States themselves (Hale 2005; Radcliffe 2015; Povinelli 2002; Povinelli 1998; Shah 2010; de la Cadena and Starn 2009; de la Cadena 2010; Simpson 2014a; Young 2011; Fabricant and Postero 2015a; Bessire 2014; Li 2014; Albro 2013; French 2009), which makes dialogue impossible outside these margins. If an indigenous consultation is carried out in order to carry out the cessions of land, different levels of autonomy may be found or if the administration is given to an indigenous organization, but the terms are always defined and imposed by the State. Things might change with the constitution of the *Hōnui* and the creation of the *Mau'uHenua* which manages the National Park. However, the State does not seem to detach from the property as to transfer it to the Rapanui.

## Chapter 5

### In the Shadow of the Moai. Tourism Landscape, Archaeology and Collapse.

Tattoos and body paint are two of the most traditional artistic manifestations in Rapa Nui, we invite you to experience these unique practices. Choose one of our most characteristic symbols, such as Make Make god or the manutara, or even our most exclusive designs and we will guarantee your tattoo as an unforgettable experience. You may even choose one of our temporary tattoos. We will also give you the possibility to make you part of our culture by learning in the first person the meaning of the symbols that are part of the traditional takona or body painting and enjoying the wonderful experience of a photo shoot outdoors looking like an Authentic Rapanui ... "

*www.imaginaladepascua.com*

Antigua Rapa Nui, patria sin voz,  
perdónanos a nosotros los parlanchines del mundo:  
hemos venido de todas partes a escupir en tu lava  
llegamos llenos de conflictos, de divergencias, de sangre,  
de llanto y digestiones, de guerras y durazos,  
en pequeñas hileras de inamistad, de sonrisas  
hipócritas, reunidos por los dados del cielo  
sobre la mesa de tu silencio.  
Una vez más llegamos a mancillarte.

Pablo Neruda<sup>23</sup>  
La Isla III

### The mystery island

One morning, while waiting for one of my Rapanui interviewees at a cafe on the main street in HangaRoa, I was approached by a couple of tourists in their 60s, to ask

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<sup>23</sup>Ancient Rapa Nui, homeland without a voice  
forgive us the chatterboxes of the world  
we have come from everywhere to spit into your lava,  
we come full of conflicts, of divergences, of blood,  
of tears and digestions, of wars and peach trees,  
in small rows of unfriendliness,  
of hypocritical smiles, united by the celestial dice  
atop the table of your silence.  
Once again we come to defile you.  
Pablo Neruda  
The Island III

about the car rental place. I explained that the place they were looking for was still closed, which would be opened in 30 minutes. I kindly tried to help them and invited them to sit at my table. They came from Kansas City, USA and this was their first trip to Rapa Nui. I asked them what they thought, and they told me that they were coming for 4 days, before they had been in Torres del Paine and San Pedro de Atacama. They were very surprised about Chile, it was very modern and they had never thought it was so diverse and beautiful. They added that Rapa Nui was fascinating, they had spent the previous day on tour with a Rapanui guide and they were still shocked by the history of the place. They thought there was no other equal in the world since they had traveled a lot since their retirement.

Faced with my question of the reason they had chosen Rapa Nui, the man told me that it was his childhood dream. “When I was a kid, I had a favorite comic book (which name I do not remember) and in one of its issues, the main character came to Rapa Nui and had adventures with the Moai, who came to life and walked around.” The man looked rather shy when he told me that for many years he thought this was a fictitious place, product of the author's imagination and that it was not until his youth that he discovered that it was a real island, and that people lived there. “I really thought it was an island inhabited only by stone statues, I never imagined there was a town with such a fascinating history,” he added. The woman remained silent, observing the people who passed the sidewalk, and suddenly added to the words of her husband, “It is a pity that the inhabitants themselves have ended their culture, destroying their trees and knocking down the Moai. It makes me sad to think about this ... as they did not have enough culture to realize the heritage they had.” They had seen BBC documentaries reporting how the Rapanui had cut all the trees on the island to move the Moai. I emphatically replied that the story of Rapanui's responsibility for the island's environmental “collapse” was only a theory, that many researchers disagreed with it, that there was a much deeper story about what had happened. “At least, today there are people who are worrying about, caring for this island, rescuing the culture and its history, and they are taking measures so that what little is left is not lost.” There was a silence on the table, and no one added anything else. The tourists said goodbye, wished me luck with my studies, and left.

The story got me thinking: It was not the first time I had heard tourists saying such things. However, I felt that I was now aware of the power, the narrative impact that this story had. In my field notebook, I wrote that I had to reflect on how this narrative on Rapa Nui was being constructed, on how was created a worldview, this fictitious landscape that blamed the Rapanui in a history of their own devastation, and confined them to a place where they were unable to take charge of their own destinies. There were here others called to save Rapa Nui, to recover it for the world. The tourism landscape transforms Rapa Nui no longer in a place of the State or the Rapanui, but into a heritage of all humanity, in a treasure that must be cared for, rescued and preserved. It is not a living or standing space, but a museum, a great archaeological piece. Everything in Rapa Nui is built around this landscape; everything revolves around the Moai and its history. It is the Moai and its mystery, the protagonist of this landscape.

In Rapa Nui as in many places that are conceived today as tourist destinations, images are created that are used to generate consumer goods, to exercise control and to maintain balance of power (D 'hauteserre 2010; Comaroff and Comaroff 2009; de la Maza 2016). The search for “authentically” indigenous societies is a very common discourse in contemporary tourist practices, which look for slightly explored, even “wild” or “primitive” places, unalterable places where time is expected to have stopped.

The landscape, the divisions of property, the *pircas* (small stone walls), the titles of dominion and the architecture of the houses of subsidy were inserted by the landscape of the State and its colonial policies (Stambuk 2010). The tourism landscape is heavily made up by cafés, the hotels, restaurants, tour buses, Polynesian dance groups, among many things. It is an architecture built around archeology, around the Moai and the stories of the past. It has been called archaeological tourism and it also has, as we will see, a strong emphasis on what is called ethnic or cultural tourism.

This type of tourism is intrinsically related to anthropology and archeology in a complex manner, which determine how a society becomes a coveted place to be visited, often creating a special, exotic, “another landscape” landscape. They are, as seen on the State map, determined places representations, which produce a fixed image uncovering relations of power and hierarchy. In this chapter, the tourism landscape discourse or political representation will be described. This generates a “constructed system of arguments, ideologies and interpretations that shapes social practices, affecting the way we see things and talk about them”(Hay 2005:187).

Thus, a landscape is built by all those who participate in it: the State by promoting tourism to Chile through the image of Rapa Nui, the Rapanui making a performative act of their identity, often transforming it into an object of touristic interest (Comaroff and Comaroff 2009; Graham and Penny 2014) travel agents, archaeologists and anthropologists, among several other individuals who participate in these representations. These representations are not only a reflection of reality, but specific discourses for these images produce and articulate it (Deleuze 1988). These representations create reality, articulating a specific discourse that is chosen to be spread. Rapa Nui is presented to the world as a mysterious, Polynesian, exotic island which reflects, in a way, how the Rapanui identity is also perceived from the outside. We will focus here on how this space, this island, is constructed through different worldviews, stereotypes, and fantasies that circulate globally and deconstruct locally.

The tourism landscape allows both dissimilar and contradictory images to coexist (Foerster 2010b): the monumental desolated image of Rapa Nui with no more inhabitants than its Moai, the image of Rapa Nui and its exotic and erotic inhabitants who seduce their visitors with their sensual dances and paradisiacal beaches in the background, the image of Rapa Nui which is both the cause of the environmental destruction and the one that has the answers to make it ecologically sustainable, the image of Rapa Nui transformed into the Chilean Easter Island, which attracts the future visitor to come to the country. All these images, and many more, make up the tourism landscape in Rapa Nui.

The map of tourism and archeology and the narratives that go with it are predominant in the construction of the current landscape of Rapa Nui. Not only

because of its economic importance but also because of its implications in current identity configurations. It is not possible to understand what it means to be Rapanui, their contemporary indigeneity, if we not analyzed and go through this predominant discourse. The touristic landscape in Rapa Nui is the primordial discourse that allows us to enter one of these multiple landscapes that build the Rapanui territory. The land, as an identity, is one, but at the same time as we have seen, it is diverse. It is not a binary, there is not a single correct answer, but multiple layers, different perspectives that oppose and contradict, building up the complex indigenous being and their land (Hirsch 2006; Tilley 2006; Bender 1993; Hirsch and O’Hanlon 1995; Tsing 2011). Rapa Nui tourism is characterized by its “archaeological” component, but incorporating more and more elements associated with the diffusion of their local culture. Tourism also generates a great diversity in activities, such as the creation of music and dance groups, the elaboration of handicrafts, jewelry and costumes, the organization of tourist tours (Consejo Nacional de la Cultura y las Artes 2012). In this way, the activity leads to a revaluation or reconstruction of the ancestral practices and customs among the Rapanui, a fact that reinforces in them their identity characteristics and makes them feel like a unique culture, unrepeatably, inherited from a millennial tradition, laying the foundations for their frequent demonstration of ethnic and cultural pride (Delsing 2015). An excellent great example of this is the Tapati Rapa Nui festival.

For some decades, Rapa Nui has experienced an economic boom due to the explosive growth of tourism (Figueroa and Rotarou 2016). The only relevant industry on the island is tourism, which is growing at an excessive rate. If in 2010, 75,375 tourists visited the island, in 2016, 107,999 people did so. Unlike what happens in many places in the world in what it is known as ethnic or indigenous tourism, the tourism industry in Rapa Nui is in the hands of the members of its own indigenous people as a fundamental consequence of the exclusivity of the property of their land (an important exception being the Hotel HangaRoa case). For this reason, many of the Rapanui and their families have obtained significant economic benefits by installing residential lodges, cabins or hotels of various categories, restaurants and supermarkets, allowing some of them to own merchant ships, hotels in other parts of the world, diversify their businesses, buy houses on the mainland and other goods. This has undoubtedly meant a significant change in the local landscape, not only because of the greater circulation of money and people but also because of the increase in the number of vehicles circulating on the island, the number and size of constructions (businesses and housing). New restaurants and cafes, more shops, are emerging every day. In short, HangaRoa has ceased being a town and has become a city by leaps and bounds.

### **A Brief History of Tourism in Rapa Nui**

Tourism was severely restricted in Rapa Nui until 1967, only a couple of years after the Rapu revolution and the definitive incorporation of the island into the Chilean territory (Porteous 1980b). A ship came once a year with merchandise and a few visitors. However, the Rapanui had already had experience in selling their handicrafts for dollars, to foreigners who occasionally appeared on their shores. On April 3, 1967,

the first commercial tourists arrived into the island, brought by Lindblad Travel, an American company in the Chilean Lan Chile airline (Fischer 2005a; McCall 1981; Stambuk 2016) the same one that operates until today.

The airstrip had been built a little earlier, under great reserve, with American monies, who had important military interests in having a place to land in the middle of the Pacific (Stambuk 2016; Fischer 2005a). A weather station was being built for public knowledge (Foerster and Moreno Pakarati 2016), so members of the US base that settled on the island between 1966 and 1970, were dressed in civilian clothes. The Americans almost always cultivated very good relations with the Rapanui, generating comparisons with the continental Chileans who also began to settle in HangaRoa. In this way, after a year, couples were established between Rapanui women and men from the North American base, children were born, new merchandise and clothes were introduced, bars were opened, and dollars began to circulate massively (Stambuk 2016; Fischer 2005a).

Mataverí airport had been a Chilean aspiration for many years, but it had not been fulfilled. It had been planned previously on the only beach on the island, *Anakena*. The Chilean colonel Roberto Parraguéz was the only one who landed in his plane *Manutara* on the island, on four occasions between 1951 and 1965, and an American plane in 1964, which sank in the track. In agreement with the North Americans, the track began being built, with the support of the Chilean construction company Longhi, which brought to town about a hundred workers, who also entered the local landscape. The construction of the runway was intended to serve the military interests of the United States in the Pacific Ocean, but the Americans left when the Chilean socialist president Salvador Allende was elected. So the track was used by Lan Chile and the Chilean Navy for the transportation of passengers and goods.

The first tourists, mostly wealthy Americans, were housed in tents. In 1971, a hotel in HangaRoa started being built by the State-owned company, HONSA, which then sold the property to a private company. These are the earliest records of the complex history we have already told of the HangaRoa Eco Village Hotel (the only hotel not owned by Rapanui today). At the beginning, there were monthly flights, and since 1971 two weekly flights to Mataverí Airport and a route was created between Santiago - Isla de Pascua- Tahiti. The impact of these more frequent flights in the configuration of tourism and the population in general was very significant, not only for the gradual increase of visitors but also for the possibility for the Rapanui to resume their ties with Polynesia (Muñoz 2014b). This would partly explain that the tourist activity had so many similarities with that of Tahiti and Hawaii, and that there was such closeness and friendship with these peoples. The way tourism was conceived, and the crafts for tourism in Rapa Nui today, is similar both in its production and in its contents, to what we could find in the rest of Polynesia. According to some authors, since the beginning of the tourism, visitors were received in the Polynesian style, with welcome necklaces of flowers and farewell shells necklace.

Rapa Nui became an open-air museum from the 1960s on. It went from being the exploiting company's "Isla Rancho" (Ranch Island) to the "Isla Museo" (Museum Island), which now belongs to the whole world, as so accurately described by an author

(Fischer 2005a) In 1968, the Spring Festival on the island was held for the first time, which was later on known as the Tapati Rapa Nui (Bendrup 2005). At the same time, the State reaffirmed the status of a National Tourism Park, and in the 1970s the National Forest Corporation's administration in Easter Island (CONAF) took on the park's administration.

The Rapa Nui National Park's current configuration and its name were established in March 1995. Since the 1990s Rapa Nui has been considered a focal point of attraction for cultural tourism, which became the main economic activity on the island and a source of notable increase. During this time, the island was again in the public eye, thanks to film projects: in the mid-1990s, the film "Rapa Nui," produced by Kevin Costner, was filmed on the island. For almost a year of filming, much of the population worked as labor for props or extras, receiving, for the first time, large sums of money. With the income, the islanders were able to open their homes to receive guests, expand or repair their homes and buy appliances. In Chile, on the other hand, the *Iorana* soap opera, set in Rapa Nui, interested many viewers on the island, and became part of the continental worldview on the island.

Rapa Nui was declared a World Heritage Site by Unesco in 1995, confirming its character as a "unique cultural phenomenon in the world" and its universal heritage. Chile, from the outset, has encouraged and stimulated tourism in Rapa Nui, fueling this exotic and mysterious worldview that transforms it into Easter Island. Sernatur, the government's tourism office, frequently campaigns to increase tourism in Chile using Rapa Nui as their main image, as seen on the Landscape of the State. In this way, advertising emphasizes that Rapa Nui belongs to Chile by forming part of the beauties of the country just as much as Torres del Paine and San Pedro de Atacama. Currently tourism on the island exceeds 100,000 visits per year. Many Rapanui work as tour operators, hotel and residential owners, restaurants and shops, among others, being without a doubt the main source of local income. Since July 2016, the park has been co-administered with the *Ma'uHenua* Indigenous community, which is made up of members of the Rapanui people and whose goal is to manage and gain total control the National Park in a few more years.

### **The Museum's Metaphor**

There are numerous studies promising to decipher the secrets of Rapa Nui for readers and finally unraveling the enigma of the Moai. These colossal stone sculptures, scattered throughout the island, have attracted worldwide attention and have become an emblem, a world icon. There are more than 900 stone statues all coming from the slopes of the *RanoRaraku* volcano.



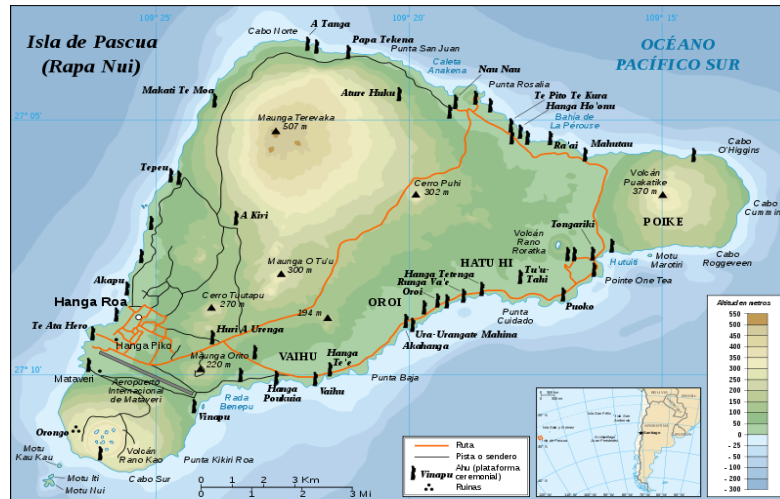


Image 19. Touristic map handed to the tourists visiting the island. Unknown elaboration.

Part of this archaeological wealth has also been stripped from the hands of its owners, and taken to museums in the West. In this way, human skeletons, Moai, sculptures, kava kava, and many other artifacts were taken from Rapa Nui, often by deceit, and deposited in museums all around the world (Arthur 2015). It is estimated that 79 Moai, heads, torsos, pukaos, and various figures were removed from their original places and are now found elsewhere. Emblematic is the history of the *Moai HoaHaka Nana 'Ia*, today one of the most visited and famous pieces of the British Museum, which was stolen from the ceremonial village of Orongo, by the crew of an English ship called *Topaze* in 1868.

One of the missionaries who resided on the island at that time, Gaspard Zumbohn, narrated the episode: “A British ship called *Topaze* had come to spend some days in our bay of HangaRoa. The commodore of this embarkation wanted to take one of our “Moai” to give it to the museum of London, but it was impossible to transport one of these enormous masses on board. Now, a league from our residency there was the bust of an idol half buried. The British admiral visited this monument and found it of his taste. Despite the reduced dimensions of this piece, the work of 500 crewmen aided by two or three hundred Indians was required to move it. The operation was benefitted from the new route that we recently finished, which did not prevent the idol from marking the nose to long line on the land, despite all of our precautions to avoid this accident. Our archaeologists feared that much of the captive god's face was noticeable disfigured, but the enterprise resulted beyond their hopes; Also to declare their joy they offered us a splendid meal”.(Zumbohn 2013).

What the priest reports in a jovial tone is that only a small sample of the extent of the thefts to which the Rapanui were subjected. Like the emblematic *Hoahakana'ia Moai*, it is said that there are 45,000 Rapa Nui objects spread throughout the world, although there is no complete registry of them (Ascencio 2016). The Rapanui community currently calls *Hoahakana'ia Moai* as “The Stolen Friend” and has demanded its return since 1995, when Easter Island was declared a World Heritage Site.

In this way, Rapa Nui is built as an open-air museum, but it is an incomplete museum, since many of its fundamental pieces have been distributed throughout the world. This story of plundering is not at all unique to Rapa Nui. As a product of colonization, the museums in the West were fed by archaeological and anthropological expeditions of pieces from the dominated peoples (Clifford 1997). They were power representation and the colonial domination sites for years. Therefore, museums became “contact zones,” that is “the space of colonial encounters, the space in which peoples geographically and historically separated in contact with each other and establish ongoing relations, usually involving conditions of coercion, radical inequality, and intractable conflict”(Pratt 2008:6-7).

In this way, museums where human objects and bones of indigenous ancestors were stored became very painful places for indigenous people. They were intimately linked to a dispossession, colonization and oppression history. However, as today there is more space for the enunciation of indigenous demands, museums with this type of collections are objects of public scrutiny by the peoples who today demand the return of their stolen objects, destabilizing a history of racial discrimination, hierarchies and domination.

The Rapanui filmmaker, Leonardo Pakarati, in his excellent documentary *TeKubane or te Tupuna* (The spirit of the ancestors), shows the Rapanui feeling of loss of the *mana* by the theft of these ancestral pieces. This is represented by a search trip of a Rapanui grandfather and his granddaughter to Europe (Pakarati 2015). Currently, there is a Rapa Nui *KaHakaHoki Mai TeMana Tupuna* repatriation initiative, the aim being to repatriate the remains of their ancestors (*ivi tupuna*) found today in museums around the world to reunite them with their land and their descendants (Arthur 2015).



Image 20 Image taken from Leonardo Pakarati 2015's *TeKubane o te Tupuna* film.

The repatriation movements have been enunciated in order to give back their ancestors to the people, to recover their lost *mana*, which was stolen and stripped. When the objects are taken, when the bodies are taken, the power of the people and their energy are taken. To recover these things implies concrete actions of

decolonization, independence, to return to the energy path that colonialism so dramatically stripped away (Arthur 2015).

The Moai as a symbol of Rapa Nui has had a global impact and its image has circulated throughout the world. Even since the 1960s, Moai have been moved to be exhibited in different parts of the world. For example, in 1968, the head of an ahuTongariki Moai was transported to the United States to be shown in New York City and Washington DC (Mulloy 2013). In 2010, efforts were made by the Louis Vuitton Foundation to move a Moai to be exhibited in front of the Louvre Museum in Paris. An indigenous consultation was carried out based on ILO Convention 169, in which the Rapanui community rejected by 89% that the Moai left the island (Consejo de Monumentos Nacionales 2010).



Image 21 Moai raising in the Plaza of the Seagram Building NYC 1968. (Mulloy Photo Archives, Cyril Morris Photographer)

### **The Appearance of the Moai and the Disappearance of Rapanui**

Rapa Nui has long been the subject of innumerable studies and research in the most diverse fields, from archeology to botany, including genetics, linguistics, geology, and anthropology, among others. Rapa Nui is one of the few places in the world to have had as much attention as it has. The interest it arouses in the world comes not only from the researchers but from poets, painters, musicians who have been inspired by his beauty and “mystery” to create their works, since its “discovery.” Therefore, Rapa Nui is built, in this landscape, as a unique place in the world, full of mystery and fantasy, which everyone dreams of visiting at least once in a lifetime. As the “most isolated inhabited island in the world,” this feature confines it to become a place of fantasy and mystery. Several novels are located on the island, many of which have similar topics in relation to explorers and archaeologists who will investigate and fall in love with a native and/or unravel an ancestral mystery. Women are sensual, men are masculine and enigmatic, and words like “mysterious,” “fantasy” and “enigma” are repeated incessantly (Galilea 2014).

The icons of this mystery are the Moai. In the words of Portenous, “Moai would seem to be the perfect Rapa Nui icon, because: it is a large vertical object with human features which projects an aura of power; it combines the object with the general ideas of remoteness (spatially, temporally, and in demeanor) and mystery (all the problems of who built the Moai, how they were transported, and where the builders originated); and because it is associated with romantic adventure in the person of Thor Heyerdahl, who began serious excavation and promoted Rapa Nui to the waiting world. The Moai are hyperbolic in their very nature, being both larger than life and sterner than life. They seem like Freudian superegos, projecting their powerful gaze across the supine island” (Porteous 2004:16).

Many have been represented having fantastic adventures on this island with the Moai: Indiana Jones, Superman, Scooby Doo, Ogu and Mampato, Johnny Quest, The Simpsons, among others, are seen in some of the images (Conrich 2016; Haun 2008).



Image 22 Images taken from: <http://Moaiculture.com/popculture.html> website on June 2017.

As well as these textual incarnations, the Moai are the central focus of the UNESCO world heritage site and have been appropriated into endless forms for advertising and mass-produce consumer items. Today is possible to find a ridiculous variety of objects representing the Moai.



Image 23 Photography taken form the Internet, through a Google search of “Moai products”

It is striking that in most of these representations of Rapa Nui, the undisputed protagonist is the Moai, completely forgetting its inhabitants, the builders of the statues and ancestral occupants of this island. In popular representations, it seems like Rapa Nui is an uninhabited, unoccupied island, where the only witnesses of a disappeared civilization are the Moai.

This argument is very well summed up by Prado in his novel about the island, by stating that “.. I looked up to the unknown artists who made those people cold, silent and still. They chose, as their most precious material, what one day emboldened by the fire, ran with a red, burning and devastating roar. [...] Oh! mysterious and calm Rapa Nui; I envy your court of giants of stone, because its origin no one will ever penetrate” (Prado 1914).

Monuments are the most visible archaeological legacy in Easter Island: the *ahu* with moai, the moai that remain in the *RanoRaraku* quarry, the *pukao* quarry, the village of *Orongo* with its spectacular ceremonial compound, and the many petroglyphs that are found in several places of the island. The *abu* with moai, destroyed in part during the internal wars and then abandoned for many years, are the only remains of the many ceremonial centers that must have existed on the island in the past centuries. It is estimated that there are about 300 *abu* and about 900 moai, most of which are tilted.

The archeologist William Mulloy and his team suggested starting the restoration of several sites, with the explicit intention of creating an open-air museum. In this way, in 1966 the restoration works began: *AbuAkivi* with its 7 Moai facing the sea, the first *ahu* restored (after the statue of the *AbuAtureHuki* was re-erected by the Rapanui people at the behest of Thor Heyerdahl in 1956). The *Tabai* complex was restored between 1968 and 1970 and the *AbuHuri to Urenga* in 1972, both by the team of Mulloy. Between 1978 and 1980, Sergio Rapu, Rapanui archaeologist, restored the *AbuNauman*, in the beach of *Anakena*. In 1995, the *AbuTongariki* was restored, with the Chilean archaeologist Claudio Cristino leading the way. In 2002, it was the turn of the *AbuRungaVa'e*, by the Chilean archaeologist J. Miguel Ramirez 2002 (Figueroa 1980; Fischer 2005b; Ramírez 2004; Vargas 2006; Figueroa 2013).



Image 241. Old RanuRaraku pictures. Unknown author. 2. Tahai. 2010. Picture by the author. 3. AhuTongariki. Picture by the author.

The origin and meaning of the moai continues to be a series of unknowns: the technique of their transportation, the location on the ahu and their fall or descent from the seats of honor. While there have been thousands and very dissimilar theories in this regard, ranging from UFOs to other civilizations, no fully satisfactory one has been developed. Thus, the question about the civilization who built the Moai, the numerous altars ahu, as well as the writing with hieroglyphic characters, printed on *rongorongo* boards and on rocks still remains a mystery for the public opinion (Haun 2008).

This collective imaginary, which has been represented hundreds of times in movies, books, comics, in very dissimilar ways, as already pointed out, always had the Moai and its enigma as the protagonist (Porteous 2004). It is precisely the mystery of the construction of the Moai and especially its displacement from its place of construction to other places of the Island, which has been the object of the most diverse and crazy speculations (Flenley, Bahn, and Bahn 2003; Dos Passos 2011; Ter Mongat 1978; Chauvet 1935; Shepardson 2013; Ask 2015; Barron and Low 2007). Oral tradition has held that, as Routledge emphasized, the statues were moved by *mana* (Routledge 1919), a concept common to Polynesian societies which is so difficult to enunciate and translate for our Western eyes: It moves us on to think about an ontological difference, in such an alterity that makes us reflect on the possibility of another world (Blaser 2013; Escobar 2013; de la Cadena 2015). This point will be reflected upon later. It is enough to say that many Rapanui respond in the same way, pointing out today that there is *mana*, somewhat attenuated perhaps, but present, as the product of all the sufferings and spoils to which they have been subjected.

In the past, most of the anthropological work aimed at rebuilding an ancient culture; in general, sought to understand what had been Rapa Nui (Routledge 1919; Heyerdahl 1957; Figueroa 1980; Cristino 1984). In this way, the enigmatic origin of its inhabitants, its condition of a unique geographic isolation in the world, the production and construction of the Moai, and the causes of the decline of this “civilization” were the subjects that received attention from the studies on the island. These questions and their answers served as a fundamental tool to build up a global, fixed and stereotyped image of what Rapa Nui was and it is the cornerstone of its tourism today. Metraux locates the Easter mystery: “From the day of its discovery by the Dutch, that tiny land isolated in the 'immense marine solitudes' of the South Pacific, was surrounded by a halo of mystery and strangeness. Its gigantic statues have earned it a fame that, in two centuries, has never gone down” (Metraux 1937; Metraux 1995:13). “For two centuries, the name of the island has been almost synonymous with mystery. In the world of ethnologists it occupies a place much like that of isles of fancy in children's imaginations” (Metraux 1939).

As we have already noted, the Rapanui, like most of the world's indigenous peoples, were destined to disappear in the opinion of the visitors and scholars who showed interest in this island. Internal wars and slave raids, leading to the death of thousands of men and women carrying traditional knowledge, diseases such as leprosy and smallpox, colonization and evangelization by Catholic missionaries, commercial exploitation by the colonizer DutrouBornier and his successor, the Easter Island Exploitation Company, and the confinement of the population to a tiny space on the island are some of the important and dramatic facts that led to the prediction about the end of this civilization in the hands of those who visited. As already seen, 4000 people lived on the island before colonization: only 111 survived in 1877 (Mccall 1997). The panorama was catastrophic in 1860: Easter Island was not up to salvation. It was agonizing, according to a author (Metraux 1940).

At the same time, visitors and explorers wrote chronicles about the exoticism and eroticism of the inhabitants of this island, which highlighted the spectacular nature

of their landscapes and the mystery of their origin. The first encounters are a testimony of the bond established between the Rapanui and the Europeans in the 18th century. Written by the European ship crews, missionaries and explorers such as Cook, La Pérouse, Banks and the Forsters, among others (Cook 1777; Forster 1777; La Pérouse 1798; Lisiansky 1814) describe these first contacts clearly from a European and Western perspective. These visitor accounts (some spent only a few days and others were settled there) are contradictory and complex narratives that had already built the island's global worldview. In some of these stories, the natives are joyful and crave the "crafts" exchange with the sailors. In others, they are harsh and unfriendly, not allowing even the landing. Others describe the beautiful and promiscuous women who used their beauty to achieve better exchanges, while others recounted they had not seen women during their stay. In the same way, some of the explorers or merchants describe the Rapanui as agile and merchants, while others do not hesitate to define them as thieves and liars.

Similarly, Pierre Lotti, one of the earliest visitors and stellar witness of its past, points out in 1872: "In the midst of the great ocean, in a region where nobody ever goes through, there is a mysterious and lost island, dotted with monstrous statues, work of an ignored race, degenerated today or disappeared, being its past an enigma"(Schávelzon 2014).

Another example is the testimony of a famous Englishman, James Cook, whose second voyage around the world led him to Rapa Nui in 1776 left written testimony of his visit (Forster 1777). From then on, the image of an island full of mysteries was consolidated, because nobody could explain how this culture had been able to erect such monumental works. Unlike the Dutch expedition decades before, Cook and Forster described a poor island, where some of the Moai that were standing during Roggeveen's expedition were now tilted.

Moreover, Foerster states that the "mystery" about Rapa Nui is constructed, based on these first encounters, as a product of the European narratives that focused their interest on the monumental statues more than on the inhabitants of the island and their customs, highlighting a negative and impoverished image with few elements to deliver to outsiders (Foerster 2012a). There are no non-European reports on the way the Rapanui of that time experienced those encounters; they were erased from the scene of their own culture. They are tragic stories, which depict the natives as passive and inactive subjects in their own history. Current historiographic trends seek collaborative explanations in the study of cultural contacts, which emphasize the agency of indigenous peoples in these stories (Campbell 2003; Moreno Pakarati 2011; Foerster and Moreno Pakarati 2016; Stambuk 2010).

The present inhabitants in Rapa Nui have been looked upon as decimated and savage individuals in many of the testimonies in the various stages of recent history. Even more, they have been considered as ignorant of their past and incapable of being the heirs to the fantastic civilization that built these majestic stone statues.

Therefore, when the first missionaries arrived, some said that "they only found an agonizing civilization" and that they saw nothing more than a people "without a past and without a future, physically and morally broken"(Metraux 1940). One visitor,



speaking about his time in Rapa Nui, said that “In fact, the race is being swiftly and surely starved off the face of the earth: there is no hope for them in the future, which is dreary and desolate as the island itself. It is a sad thing to contemplate, this inevitable perishing of a patient harmless people, a people with no enemies, but lacking likewise friends able and willing to rescue them from their deplorable fate. Only one thing can save them –emigration from the cruel land they call their own” (Chambers 1869).

Bishop Edwards who, in the face of the despotic action of CEDIP (Easter Island Exploiting Company), took the “salvation” of the natives as his own cause, also adopted this same position and stated: “... On the shores of the sea and on the slopes of volcanoes, and until today, the remains of gigantic constructions may still be found. The dilapidated quays, the palace foundations or perhaps of ancient temples, which were together enormous cemeteries. They are silent witnesses of remote grandeur. What people, what race did these works?” (Edwards 1918:9–10).

These same poor and ill inhabitants could not be the descendants of these magnificent craftsmen; the bishop could not accept it. It was not them, it could not be them. Rapa Nui’s secret needs to be discovered by others. In Foester's words, “the only ones who can make these monuments speak and to decipher their contents are the Rapanui (bishops, archaeologists, anthropologists, tourists)” (Foerster 2010b). Thus, the frantic search for explanation begins, for the enigma to explain whom and how the Moai were transported.

In this way, Rapa Nui is invented for Westerners through these representations, and the myth is formed. It was the Norwegian sailor Jacob Roggeveen who began this myth by naming it Easter Island, based on the date he first saw it. Then, Katherine Routledge incorporated it as an obligatory point of reference in anthropological studies. And finally, it was Thor Heyerdahl’s expedition on his famous boat *KonTiki*, which made it known worldwide. In 1955, the archaeological expedition on the island was led by Heyerdahl and the American archaeologist William Mulloy. They spent more than 6 months on the island, employing a large number of Rapanui inhabitants in their excavations. First was his book *Aku-Aku*, *The Secret of Easter Island* (Heyerdahl 1957) and then the film, documented in 16mm and shown around the world, which would put Rapa Nui in the eye and the public imagination. From that moment on, the mystery was massively disseminated and popularized: everyone wanted to unveil the “secret” the Moai concealed (Porteous 1980b). As Mulloy stated, little by little this small territory was gaining recognition for “having the most spectacular open air museum to be found throughout the whole of Polynesia” (Mulloy 1980)<sup>24</sup>.

The “mysteries” of Rapa Nui's prehistoric past in the narratives and their process of global circulation are, in my view, mainly creations of hyperbole and racism, as we shall see below. Through the representations of these first visitors and many of the later studies, Rapanui were excluded from their own history, the population was left to oblivion, denying them part and voice in this story. It did not mean that the Rapanui were indeed passive subjects in these encounters, but quite the contrary, as this research

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<sup>24</sup>Mulloy who would return to the island in 1959 to lead the AhuAkivi restoration with the Chilean archaeologist Gonzalo Figueroa, would become Rapa Nui’s most acclaimed archaeologist. His deadly remains rest in Rapa Nui’s Tahai Ceremonial Center and the museum’s library takes his name

has intended to demonstrate. Nevertheless, a voice is given to the Rapanui, when depicted as savages, barbarians, who ate each other because of internal issues, knocked down their own monuments and trees and became engaged in bloody internal wars. This is how they have been presented, as examples or lessons for humanity.

When the narratives include the native inhabitants on this island, they do so to make them responsible for the environmental “collapse” that supposedly would have occurred in Rapa Nui, as we shall see (Diamond 2011; Flenley and Bahn 2007). In these theories, Rapanui society would have been self-destructive by the actions of its inhabitants, who exploited the environment in a non-sustainable way (the palmas forest, its marine wildlife and birds), which provoked an internal war and, with it, a series of disastrous consequences: Hunger, cannibalism, demographic decline, etc(Flenley, Bahn, and Bahn 2003). The geographer Jared Diamond speaks about an “ecocide,” as the island’s inhabitants would have deforested the land in order to move the Moai, in a book which sold millions of copies. Diamond uses Rapa Nui as an example to demonstrate that human beings are the ones causing environmental collapse. Diamond believes Rapa Nui is “the clearest example of a society that is destroyed by overexploiting its own resources” and that the consequences of deforestation “start with starvation, population crash and descent into cannibalism” (Diamond 2011:118).

Easter Island’s tragedy has become an environmental catastrophe allegory, constituting itself as a discursive device that presents a call of attention for the future to humanity. In this way, the narrative of the collapse, popularized by Diamond, based on the theories of Flenley and Bahn(Foerster 2012a; Flenley and Bahn 2007; Flenley, Bahn, and Bahn 2003), have dominated the popular discourses on Rapa Nui and to a large extent, the archaeological investigations carried out on the island.

Diamond's theories have been much debated and disputed by many experienced researchers on Rapa Nui (Hunt and Lipo 2009; Jarman et al. 2017), who point out that the change in the island was not a result of a single cause but a combination of factors. There was emphasis on the damage caused by Polynesian rats, and that “demographic and cultural collapse resulted from European contact beginning in 1772 A.D. with the devastating consequence of newly introduced Old World diseases to a non immune Polynesian population” (Hunt 2007). Their explanations are very different from the "ecocide" interpretation that attributes demographic decline to overexploitation caused by the inhabitants themselves. It has also been argued that much of the island’s current erosion, the disappearance of almost all of its endemic flora and fauna, should not only be attributed to the Rapanui society but also to external agents appearing on the island as product of the colonization, especially the insertion of the commercial sheep breeding company and the introduction of foreign flora and fauna, among other factors (Fischer 2005b; Flenley and Bahn 2007; Flenley, Bahn, and Bahn 2003).

However, the view of “collapse” has predominated in most of the written and visual representations of Rapa Nui. For example, the ecological devastation of the island by the islanders themselves was portrayed in the Hollywood film Rapa Nui. The film, a box office disaster, represented very roughly the mentioned stance. Likewise, innumerable television programs by networks such as National Geographic and The

History Channel collect this theory by dramatizing and exaggerating the internal wars impact, cannibalism and ecological devastation on Rapa Nui. During my time on the island, dialogues such as the ones at the beginning of this chapter were more than usual and became fertile ground for reproducing the worldview that built up the tourism landscape and archeology, as noted in my conversations with tourists, students, and researchers.

Archeology and anthropology have had a fundamental role in this construction, which has almost invariably excluded the Rapanui. Today there are several Rapanui archaeologists, otherwise, the Rapanui have historically been removed from the map through the telling of this story. Although today there are several Rapanui archeologists and tour guides are mainly Rapanui people, the Rapanui have historically been erased. Archeology is fundamentally a foreign language, which the inhabitants of the island have had to learn to speak, but almost always as other's informants. Thor Heyerdahl himself has told his colleagues: "we have not come here to study the natives.... We have come to do excavations. If there is an answer to the enigma of Easter Island, it must be hidden underground"(Heyerdahl 1957:136). This assertion has no correlation either with what he says in his book, nor less with the stories that the Rapanui themselves tell about his visit (Stambuk 2010), where he resorts in innumerable occasions to the knowledge of the people, to his traditional or ancestral knowledge, to find the answers to his questions.

The Rapanui have contributed with fundamental information from their first visitors, which must be classified and theorized to become "reality." Just in the recent decades, a new paradigm has been inserted in the way of doing research, in anthropology or archeology that includes the protagonists of history, listening to their voices and not only interpreting them. In recent years, there has been a fundamental change, reached by the understanding not only of the concrete impacts of colonialism on indigenous peoples but also and fundamentality by a new way of perceiving their world or worlds and knowledge(s). Anthropology, then, has reflexively questioned itself on the authority of an ethnographic discourse through the impact of postmodern, postcolonial, decolonial, ontological, or naturalist studies. In this way, the subject-object, subject-nature dialectic becomes more complex, inserting new ways of perceiving and understanding reality, culture or history.

In this new understanding of indigenous narratives, I recognize *Ma'uHenua*, which seeks to maintain the complete administration of the National Park in the hands of Rapanui and not the State, the creation of *Hōnui*, the demands for approval of archaeological and anthropological studies by the community and the need for such knowledge (or lack of knowledge, by the way) to remain on the island, as fundamental for a new appreciation of the ontologies, ways of being and looking of the Rapanui themselves.

Of course, the indigenous worlds assessment also implies that the indigenous worlds are also plural and contradictory, not always collective and harmonic. These are human groups, united by a sense of common identity, but which is created and based on multiple relationships, not just binaries. In order to understand the internal tensions and contradictions that exist in the indigenous peoples, and which at the same time give

them a sense of unity, it is fundamental to understand this universe of multiple landscapes.

Tourism has been the space in which the Rapanui have politically demonstrated their demands against the State, which has also represented an economic outcome and the construction of different worldviews. Rapanui movements have occupied the Mataveru airport on different occasions and have prevented the arrival or departure of flights (as in 2009); they have also occupied the National Park as a way of pressuring the Chilean authorities on conflicting issues. The Rapanui have very effectively used the space provided by tourism, both to make their situation known in the world and to demand special treatment from the rest of the Chilean population, especially against other indigenous peoples.

### **Indigeneity and the Environment**

As previously seen, an increase in the use of a conceptual category has been used insistently by the defenders of indigenous territories and the environment, from what we call the territorial turn based on human rights (Escobar 2013; Anthias 2014; Ulloa 2005). It is the union of the nature's preservation and conservation environmental discourse with those of the indigenous peoples who seek the retrieval of their ancestral territory. The main argument is that they are the real guardians of their land and their environment, that no one is more capable than themselves of preserving their heritage and ecosystem.

Therefore, an indigeneity discourse is articulated, which circulates globally and where the fundamental relationship with nature and the territories is the basis of their identity and difference. The discourses on "ecological native" or "the good savage" are once again recreated, but from the perspective of the respect for nature and the environment (Ulloa 2005; Krech 1999).

Indigenous peoples are, in this way, the best and most qualified guardians of the land, especially when the achievement of environmental objectives is associated (Wade 2004; Doolittle 2010). The beginning of The Anchorage Declaration is a typical example: "We express our solidarity as Indigenous Peoples living in areas that are the most vulnerable to the impacts and root causes of climate change. We reaffirm the unbreakable and sacred connection between land, air, water, oceans, forests, sea ice, plants, animals and our human communities as the material and spiritual basis for our existence" (Indigenous Peoples' Global Summit on Climate Change 2009).

A special alliance has been generated by the convergence in the global dialogue between environmental activists against climate change and the struggles of indigenous peoples for their territories and recognition. Therefore, a category of "universal native" is created, which essentializes all differences, establishing a single form of nature's knowledge and creating a single common identity: that one of the environmental guardian. A common indigenous worldview is presented, a single indigenous worldview that would be shared by all those who fall into this conceptual category. As seen in Chapter 1 and 2, this is a very complex categorization, which not only leaves out those individuals who feel part of an indigenous people but also those who do not meet the

established requirements (such as an indigenous person living in the city), discarding diverse ways of understanding indigeneity. Native knowledge, its visions, cosmovisions, ecologies and understandings are diverse and complex; they are not exhausted by the “special” relationship with the land, or with a spiritual relationship with it. This does not mean that indigenous peoples do not have a special relationship with the land, or that they do not actually take better care of natural resources than non-indigenous people, they probably do. The intention is to explore the rhetorical resources through which the indigeneity and environmentalist discourses are united.

Discourses on the protection of the environment have become a very effective political tool for indigenous leaders, in the struggle for recognition of their sovereignty, self-determination and rights on the territory, especially in the field of international human rights. For many indigenous peoples, these spaces represent a new opportunity to demand the recognition of their traditional knowledge, access to ancestral territories, and control of natural resources recovery. Therefore, they reaffirm that indigenous peoples are not responsible for climate change, but active agents against it.

We get to the point of opposing discourses about what we mean by indigeneity and modernity. If the cause of the serious environmental crisis in which we find ourselves is the development model of the West and projects aiming at “civilizing” indigenous peoples, the current moment is ideal to give space to other projects, other cosmovisions or worlds ontologies. This dimension is reaffirmed by ethnic territorial claims that request space for other ways of seeing life and relating to nature. At the same time that the notion of “development” or “civilization” as an advance is called into question, we return to what was previously defined as “savage” or “barbaric” with respect to the ways of life of indigenous people. It is a revaluation of indigenous wisdom by its ways of generating knowledge in its relationship with space and territory. The contradictions and complexities of worldviews that are built upon indigenous peoples in relation to savagery or barbarism is what many anthropologists have studied in recent years (Briggs 2003; Taussig 2005; Kohn 2015; Povinelli 2011b).

The main interest here is to explore these rhetorical resources, regarding the responsibility that the Rapanui would have had in the environmental disaster of their territory due to the inconsistent nature of the narratives used both in the past and in the present. The Rapanui are presented as an uncontrolled society that did not take care of and overexploited the environment, depleting its natural resources (Fischer 2013; Fischer 2005a). Rapa Nui is, thus, presented as an example for humanity of everything that should not be done, a call for attention on the sustainability need and the care for resources (de la Croix and Dottori 2008; Boersema 2015; Figueroa B. and Rotarou 2016; Rainbird 2002; Diamond 2011).

Not only in respect to the past have the Rapanui been held responsible for environmental devastation, it has also been frequently pointed out that they carried out actions that also contributed to the current damage to the island's ecosystem in the 20th century. The dramatic decrease in the number of lobsters that exist today is a paradigmatic example, as a result of their indiscriminate capture by traps used by the Rapanui to supply the tourism needs, including the periods when lobster trapping was closed (Tapia 2010).

Similarly, many of my Rapanui fishermen friends told me about how not so long ago, dynamite fishing was considered normal, which allowed the capture of a large number of fish but at the same time it heavily impacted the ecosystem (Stambuk 2010; Stambuk 2016; Yanez et al. 2014)

Another common practice that has been considered detrimental to the environment is the habit of burning pastures as a way of eradicating shrubs and favoring a more suitable animal consumption pasture growth for cattle and horses, due to its role in increasing erosion.

Constructions of indigenous peoples as guardians of the ecosystem are called into question as many of these practices are considered to be traditional or ancestral. Rapa Nui has been considered as a fragile ecosystem and very vulnerable to environmental deterioration (Ambar 2001; Duran, Duran, and Rodriguez 2012) The rapid population growth has substantially increased the number of vehicles and the garbage generated. Basic services are not able to cope, there is no sewage system: wastewater or liquid waste, for example, is threatening the contamination of the underground drinking water. On the other hand, it has been pointed out that coastal pollution and indiscriminate fishing by ships on the high seas have significantly altered the marine ecosystem, generating a significant decrease in native species and flora.

Currently, a radically different discourse may be observed, from the Rapanui themselves and some environmental and human rights organizations, who emphasize that the only way to protect Rapa Nui's fragile ecosystem is to listen to the voices of its native inhabitants, who have the necessary ancestral wisdom to protect it. Today is common to hear among the conversation in the community that Rapanui knows the territory better than any expert or outsider, that they are united to the land, to their *henua* by an emotional and ancestral link. A new signifier for the Rapanui land, a new way of articulating the continuity and a change between the present (and the present inhabitants of the land) and the past (and the ancestral occupants) is being built here.

During this field research, I witnessed how young people rejected the projection of the Rapanui as the cause of the environmental "disaster" on the island and declared themselves called to protect the island's ecosystem while preserving the Rapanui culture. On the contrary, the cause of environmental damage is frequently associated with external agents. New organizations with a focus on the environmental preservation of the island have emerged to clean coastal areas receiving tons of waste from the mainland and offshore fishing vessels, recycling of garbage, and other initiatives associated with environmental sustainability. The image shows a moai given to the taxpayers in the funding of a documentary by a Rapanui filmmaker about sustainability in Rapa Nui, which was generated with plastic macroparticles. In my opinion, it clearly presents what has been analyzed here about a new way of representing Rapanui, now associated to the respect for nature, sustainable practices, to the traditional.

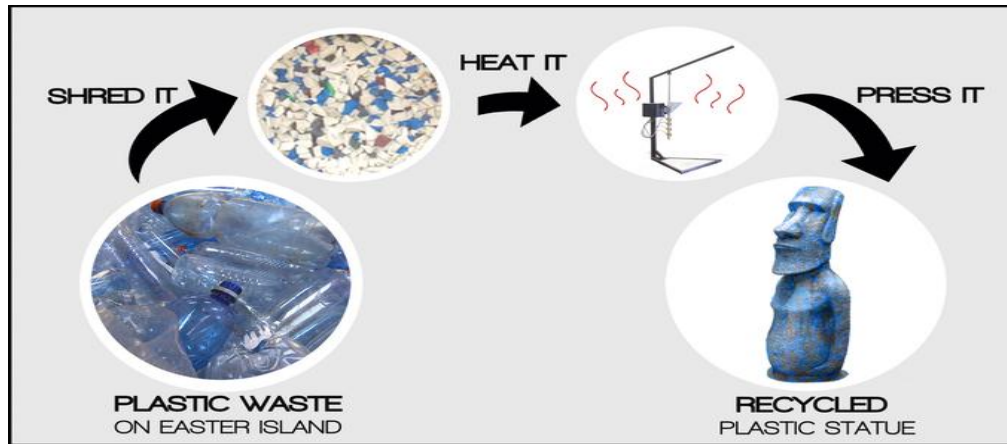


Image 25

“We have to become ecologists again, like our ancestors, who were the first ecologists. We must not have waste, we should respect the prohibitions, clean the coast, share the ancestral wisdom, live from what we have here, which is what we have here.... We have our survival, the stone for writing, our *hoko* for dancing, our sea for collecting the richness of the sea, for making our necklaces, for eating, for substantiating,” pointed out to me a Rapanui woman who has dedicated her life to recycling and conservation.

These same Rapanui voices vehemently call the Rapanui to return to the traditional, to worry about their environment and their island, as the only way to “save” or “preserve” their culture. One interviewee told me that those Rapanui who rented their huts to the *tire* did not contribute anything to the island, they polluted, they did not make any efforts to keep the environment clean: “they were not real Rapanui, they had no *mana*, they had transformed.” Nature, the environment, and the very essence of being, with its ontology closely linked to the land, are united in this discourse. If it is possible to preserve the environment, they will stop the foreign invader who comes to colonize but this time with their garbage, and the Rapanui culture will also be saved.

“We are a living heritage of humanity. That is why we have to take care of ourselves and protect one another. As we were a *holy bone*, as they say in the *conti* (short for continent). We cannot open the doors to everyone, we cannot let bad habits contaminate us and make us disappear. That's why we do not want more people on the island, that's why we have to do something like lock the doors, put a padlock on it, and say “No trespassing is allowed.” Many islanders feel the need of a regulation in immigration control on the island as it would have reached a limit in its carrying capacity, as reflected on the previous paragraph.

Rapa Nui is a special territory, it has been the argument in the Chilean Constitution which makes the island a fragile ecosystem in need for protection and the restriction in the circulation of people, so as to take care of a culture that “is unique in the world,” as a Rapanui woman pointed out in an interview. The Rapanui people are conceived then inextricably bound to their *henua*, their land. There is no understanding

of the people without its territory. To protect their environment is the way to survive and prevail.

The conservation discourse is one of preservation for future generations; but, as we have seen throughout this dissertation, it is articulated on the basis of the past and ties to ancestral practices, similar to what Clifford would call “traditional futures”(Clifford 2004; Clifford 2013). However it is neither a return to an already vanished past nor even to an invention of an extinct past, as Clifford points out in his book and some other authors have argued (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983), it is more likely to be a continuity of the past, multiple and plural but continuous. In other words, the past has never ceased to be, it has always been there, beyond the multiple and diverse readings of it. It is the same past rethought on the basis of their contemporary needs and current political discourse, the map of tourism is where these speeches are most clearly appreciated.

### **Tourism culture**

What the Rapanui consider to be part of their traditional culture today is worth taking a look at. Music, dances, parties, dress, arts and crafts are elements that contain a strong identity and are easily recognizable as belonging to the Rapanui way of life. However, these identity expressions of the Rapanui culture have been rearticulated over time through discourses of ethnicity. They have become a product of historical processes of colonial character and of the openness of the Rapanui to insert new elements into traditional ones, both those that are received on the island and those coming from other islands, such as Tahiti, that they later socialize with the rest. This phenomenon is a natural practice in all cultural expressions in the world, which we have already analyzed from the point of view of authenticity.

The constant transit of people and knowledge brings exchange, mutual influence and, obviously, change (García Canclini 2001; Briggs 1996) As we have pointed out, the threshold of demands regarding the immutability of their traditions and the obligation of authenticity on indigenous peoples is always higher than on the rest of society. Rapa Nui's culture has strongly resisted the external influence onslaught, by appropriating and resignifying these expressions at their own pace. Culture is, then, built up on collective and individual memory, tourism, travel, archaeology and anthropology. Therefore, the Rapanui are strengthening their ethnic identity by rescuing and re-editing their cultural knowledge expressed through diacritical features such as songs, language, myths, oral history, food and dance, clinging to the memory of what could differentiate them from “others” (Bendrup 2009). The tourism openness has had undoubtedly a fundamental role in these processes. Music and dancing are a great example of this (Bendrup 2005).

Before the contact with the West, the Rapanui had a series of songs that were hand clapped along the music, stones struck against each other and a stone drum, called a *keho*(Campbell 1971; Campbell 1980; Metraux 1940; Englert 1948). Each family group had its own group of singers who appeared at parties (Consejo Nacional de la Cultura y las Artes 2012). Most of the old Rapanui songs were called *riu*, inspired by the island's



stories (Abarca 2015). There were also those more festive, of love, of weddings, on fights and on deceit, like the *ei, uté*. Singing competitions were frequently conducted. Local music experienced important changes, since the missionaries arrival on the island. With evangelization came the Tahitian language and the Gregorian chants. The guitar, the *ukelele* (Hawaiian guitar), and the accordion or *upa* were introduced by the English; they engendered greater contact with Polynesian music (Campbell 1971; Stambuk 2010; Stambuk 2016; Englert 1948) In this way, the Rapanui began enthusiastically receiving these new forms of music and dance and often adapted them to their local rhythms.

*Sausamis* is a paradigmatic example of this. It is considered to be the typical Rapanui dance and it is danced throughout Chile for the Independence celebrations. *Sausau* has a Samoan origin, which was probably brought in the early 20th century to Rapa Nui by seafarers. Another important example is the *hoko*, now considered as a traditional Rapanui dance. In the case of *hoko*, it could be said that it is the role model for “traditional” dances. The term *hoko* was used to refer to “gestures and movements, especially from the upper body, which were performed while singing while sitting. In 1964, a Rapa Nui dancer modified these gestures and movements by ordering them into an organized struggle, adding new movements, weapons and a more powerful recitation” (Bendrup 2005:10). In the late 1970s, “A group of Rapanui artists landed in New Zealand, this being the first time artists on the island saw Maori haka... “the new *hoko* style they created upon their return was reinforced and became an important feature of Rapa Nui’s performing arts” (Bendrup 2005:11).

Currently, the dance has adopted “dance techniques and styles from the Marquesas Islands, Tahiti and New Zealand” (Consejo Nacional de la Cultura y las Artes 2012) mainly due to the participation of Rapanui groups in festivals that are carried out in the Pacific islands. In the case of music, there are today many singer-songwriters and musical groups from the island that sing in their mother tongue and Spanish, mixing different styles of music and preserving ancient songs.

*Tapati Rapa Nui* has become a very relevant Polynesian festival, attracting thousands of tourists every first fortnight in February each year. It started in the 70's, and there has been a progressive emphasis on reproducing Polynesian cultural traits, that being today its *raison d'être*. A large part of the community participates in this festival, including the public and private institutions, which provide input and service supporting one of the *Tapati* queen candidates. *Tapati*'s central objective is the election of a queen, in which two Rapanui families are in a contest for the crown. The competitions, ranging from traditional dances and songs, water sports, sports competitions to crafts and food, put into play cultural ancestral practices, which seem renewed by the festival. In this way, cultural practices such as watersports, aspects of oral tradition, art and crafts or *hakapei* have been recovered, which were had not been practiced 20 years ago.

In this way, the Rapanui people, like so many other peoples who live on tourism, have learned to live on a stage, to perform their culture. The island, therefore, becomes a living archaeological museum, a living culture, as so many Rapanui pointed me out in the interviews. Its culture, resignified and commodified, is transformed into a live show, in which the majority of its inhabitants are artists. The opening to international tourism,

consequently, promoted a more “exotic” folklore, focused on both the traditional Rapanui and the “commercial” part of it.



Image 26 “Rapa Nui. The mystery is alive” Image chosen from Sernatur and Rapa Nui’s Chamber of Commerce as an international image for tourism. 2016.

We are faced here with the processes that have been described as *Ethnicity Inc.* (Comaroff and Comaroff 2009) or culture’s commodification. Within this categorization we can undoubtedly find the increasing number of “ancestral” tours offered to tourists, where the guide is dressed in a reminiscent of traditional fashion, offering tourists the “real” Rapa Nui experience. They show the hidden, what they would not normally see, “to live the true experience of the Rapanui world” as a Rapanui travel website emphatically points out (Imagina 2017).

This performative act, which is inseparable from tourism in the Rapanui case, has important consequences in Rapanui society. Everything Rapa Nui becomes a reappraisal of the local, the native, the ancestral, all at the expense of the *tire* (the Chilean). It is understood that if tourists from all over the world come to the island, they do it for the Rapanui heritage, looking for the difference, not for the Chilean elements (Foerster 2016b). Studying how this performance is generated allows us not only to understand the structures of social relations in this process, but it also focuses on a “greater attention to the dialectic between performance and its wider socio-cultural and political-economic context” (Bauman and Briggs 1990:61).



Image 27 Photograph by Jacinta Arthur 2017. Reproduce with permission. Tapati 2017

Tourism, now as a global phenomenon and a typical product of consumer societies, where the difference is exoticized, becomes a commodity, highlighting the primitive and wild, the old or natural, and then can be sold. Tourism is one of the largest industries in the world, and heritage cultural tourism is one of its most successful versions. In this way, a symbiosis is generated between cultural heritage and tourism, which is transformed into merchandise, which in turn, gives rise to the cultural tourism industry. The tourist in Rapa Nui looks for the fantasy of the mystery, of the old explorers who were surprised for the first time with these stone giants. This creates another landscape, one fashioned for the tourist, a performance of ancestry. However, it is not a purely fictitious or inauthentic landscape, but rather a way that the Rapanui have found to restate their past, to make it present and future.

In this sense, it is interesting how Rapa Nui's indigeneity has been formulated today in relation to the debate of who are the ones who can participate, spread, recreate, or represent the Rapanui culture. Both in the conversations or interviews that I did during my fieldwork, and especially afterwards, through the observations of interactions in social networks (especially Facebook), I could see how there are frequent controversies about Rapanui culture fostered Chilean continental individuals taking advantage of the commercial side. These conflicts are produced by situation such as dance acts performed abroad by Chileans not coming from Rapa Nui or Chilean artisans who produce traditional Rapanui art pieces, or tour guides in the National Park who not Rapanui.

The predominant discourse is related to “not allowing more enjoyment in our name, if we do not do this, our culture will disappear” as a woman told me very emphatically in an interview. “There are impostors everywhere, people who have not even come on vacation to the island and posing as Rapanui,” a young man told me when referring to a Chilean dance ensemble in Europe. “It is about safeguarding what

is ours, and we have been robbed enough, so that now that we can gain something with it we are stripped off it again, why should others get rich with my culture?,” pointed out a Rapanui woman referring to a Chilean businessman who had miniature moai made in China and sold them as souvenirs on the island. There seemed to be a curious agreement about this, in the multiplicity and diversity of visions and opinions in Rapanui society. It was important for them that the representatives of their culture were the Rapanui, not others.

Faced with questions about what was a truly Rapanui feature in the art of craftsmanship, responses were emphatic in pointing out “Rapanui art was that which was produced by a Rapanui.” As simple as clear. The same happened in regard to touristic guides or jobs in public offices. In this way, the Rapanui have acquired a special sense of their identity, a sense that refuses to intrude on what is identified as they’re own<sup>25</sup>. In this way, it is possible to understand how the Rapanui actively pressured the elimination of letter c) in article 2, in the elaboration of the Indigenous Law, which considered the self-identification criterion, in the granting of the indigenous quality. The Rapanui members of the indigenous people are those whose family name is of native origin, or those children of a Rapanui father or mother (and, therefore, are conceded the right to land ownership): people who identify with their lifestyle, speak the Rapanui language, or share the Rapanui worldview are not considered Rapanui.

The importance of understanding and studying the landscape that has built tourism in Rapa Nui, becoming an agent of social change and a vehicle of expression of their identity is the main subject of the present chapter. Tourism as a discourse has two sides, therefore. On the one hand, it has become a way of articulating the need to “preserve” culture (in addition to the idea of safeguarding the environment) and, at the same time, it becomes the element that contaminates this “authenticity” of an indigenous society, commodifying it, making it suitable for the taste of the spectator or tourist. However, the story is much deeper than this opposition. The primary interest was portraying the Rapanui, as having been able to acquire the tools, to adopt strategies and options, to determine their destinies and be constituted in its own terms throughout their history. Understanding the present in Rapa Nui implies recognizing it as a multiple and plural space, where identity discourses are articulated with a strong sense of belonging (and, at the same time, of exclusion), which show an extraordinary resilience and adaptability capacity in this small but incredibly famous island in the middle of the Pacific.

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<sup>25</sup>A discussion about authenticity or perceptions of whether objects produced for tourism are art or are simply commercial objects or products of the commodification of indigenous cultures in the present, will not be addressed here. It is enough to say that authenticity questions regarding the indigenous art and tourism have been highly explored topics, and quite controversial, by anthropology and other disciplines.

## Conclusions

From the first day I arrived in Rapa Nui, I was surprised by the diversity and complexity of the stories, positions, and discourses that existed within the Rapanui people, knowing almost nothing about the island and its history. My views on indigeneity, as a lawyer in indigenous affairs with human rights experience, were rather discourses repetitions built on activism, on the importance of respecting indigenous peoples rights to the territory, their natural resources, their own rights, cultural expressions, and traditions. I had never questioned these categories before, but little by little I became aware of the reality textures and nuances and the impossibility of putting these general legal molds in line with the vibrant and diverse reality of indigenous peoples. It seemed to me, from that first moment on the island, that determining the “way of life,” the Rapanui “cosmovisions,” its “traditional or ancestral right” were very complex tasks since they were multiple and very diverse. Even more challenging was to compare them to the rest of the indigenous peoples in Chile or the world.

From the initial conversations, I felt that the Rapanui spoke to me from that diversity of cosmovisions and worldviews, although they shared a similar discourse regarding the respect for the legacy of their ancestors and protection of the wealth that they had inherited, the ways in which they faced the future, the relationship with Chile, and the destiny of Rapanui territory; nevertheless, perspectives on these issues were very different. Little by little, I was able to distinguish positions and the diverse ways of seeing the world within Rapa Nui. I listened to those who spoke louder and were generally heard by Rapa Nui scholars but rejected by the State. I heard other voices also, much softer, which spoke, without yelling, about pacts, telling me about interaction, travel, and circulation. Those voices were not present in most of current the anthropological research.

I met Rapanui families, the *bua'ai*, and started to differentiate them, noticing the assigned character traits they had been given by the scholars and the community, to learn their conflicts and their differences. I realized there was not a single Rapanui discourse, but several ways of understanding themselves and the others. The multiplicity and the contradiction about being Rapanui, and how this was reflected on the land which fosters them, on the landscape, which builds them up, is what I have tried to capture in this dissertation

I have argued for the urgent need to understand indigeneity in a way that attends to its intrinsic complexity, faces its contradictions, discourses, and daily practices, and avoids essentialist definitions. For this reason, I held on to the importance of analyzing global or national discourses that have shaped categorizations of who is a native and who is not through narratives that construct homogeneous legal and social categories (Briggs 2003; Merry 2006; Merry and Coutin 2014; Goodale 2007; Goodale 2016; French 2009).

These discourses have contributed to create a sort of homogeneous “universal native” that does not account for their particularities or their differences (Bowen 2000; Banerjee 2000; French 2009; Clifford 2013; Dean 2003; de la Cadena and Starn 2009). Therefore, in this constructed narrative, indigenous traits only have value and deserve

to be protected in relation to their histories, traditions, visions of the world, which are based on the past, and not in the way in which they are conceived in the present (Garrouette 2003; Briggs 1996; Phillips and Schochet 2004; Clifford 2004). In this way, for indigeneity to be recognized as “valid”, it should be as similar as possible to what is imagined as an ideal type of “non-modern” native (Bacchilega 2007; Hirtz 2003; Coombe 2005; Giunchi 2010; Sturm 2002; Basso 2000). For this, natives must prove their indigeneity by reconstructing its history, showing that their way of seeing the world is different from the rest and it is linked to an ancestral past and shared by all members, breaking them apart from the others (Escárcega 2010; Richland 2005; Richland 2013). The consequences of this need of proving indigeneity, is the categorization of what needs to be protected or not. What is perceived as non authentic, as less indigenous, is not recognized and is excluded from protection (Speed 2005).

Different concepts and categories begin to operate and to be used by all actors, such as “closeness to nature,” “caretakers of the Earth or the land,” “tradition,” “cultural distinctiveness” (Ulloa 2005). These concepts are used in various ways to prove or reject indigeneity in the political sphere of recognition. In this way, ideas are created, which tell one single story and speak of one single way of seeing the relationship with nature, the land, anchored to a fixed and immutable image of the ancestral or traditional.

One of the characteristics which is considered as essential in the definition of who is indigenous, in this ideal and universal type, is the assertion that indigenous peoples have a special relationship with nature and the land (Postero 2013). Although I have not analyzed it in detail in this dissertation, within these global configurations, there are many elements that are considered essential for the constitution of the indigenous identity: Language, genealogy, territory, spirituality, and among them, as we pointed out in chapter two, the importance given to the territory and the “special” relationship that indigenous peoples would have with their land.

The idea that Indigenous Peoples’ close relationship to nature makes them safe guardians of the future of humanity—because of their contributions to conservation practices and environmental knowledge—has a considerable echo within the international human right community (Anaya 2005; Inter-American Commission on Human Rights 2010; Stocks 2005; Fay and James 2009). Linking the ideas of “indigenous” and “nature” is one of the fundamental axes through which indigenous peoples can validate their uniqueness and recognition.

As seen through this dissertation, the multicultural public policy of the nation-states regarding this matter and a significant part of the discourses of indigenous people themselves have been exclusively focused on the ancestral territory recovery, especially in Latin America, what we call the “territorial turn” of the indigenous politics. Therefore, the statement “territory is everything” is pointed out, minimizing the indigenous peoples' multiplicity of aspirations about the recovery of their ancestral land. My interest has been highlighting how these generalizations prevent us from seeing the general panorama, *landscapes* as we have called them, which constitute multiple and diverse forms of understanding indigeneity today, beyond the analysis of the use of this

rhetoric by the State or by indigenous peoples themselves in the achievement of their objectives.

Similarly, I have analyzed how recent trends in anthropology, through what is known as the ontological turn (Holbraad and Pedersen 2017; Paleček and Risjord n.d.; Benaduci, Lutri, and Sturm 2016; Alberti et al. 2011), have not been the appropriate vehicle to contest these generalizations, arguing the existence of a radical difference, an fundamental alterity, between indigenous peoples and their others. This finally reifies the difference I maintained, and ends up by essentializing it again (Bessire and Bond 2014). In this way, I have argued that both the ontological turn and the human rights discourses regarding indigenous peoples, being so different, operate as ways of categorizing the indigenous in a single and confined world. A world in which the relationship with their ancestral past is read in a unique way, without taking into consideration how the various paradigms and understandings about seeing the world or worlds, are co-constituted, through multiple interactions that generate unique and unrepeatable spaces that must be thought of in their particular realm.

I did not intend in this dissertation to deny the difference or reduce it to something unimportant, but quite the opposite. I think that taking indigeneity seriously involves examining how demands for territory, for sovereignty, for difference in the end, emerge through multiple interaction tensions, accommodation, resistance, and pacts. In this sense, anthropology theory responsible for studying the indigeneity phenomenon must be able to analyze the impact of the discourses that circulate globally, how they transform social practices and especially, the way in which they are appropriated, incorporated, rejected or rethought in the local sphere. A collaborative approach is required, then. One, which is capable of achieving more than just reflecting the researcher's perspective, and which includes the voices of the indigenous peoples themselves in their own complexity and difference.

In this sense, the concept of indigeneity has been articulated almost exclusively on the base of its relation to the meaning of place and the space for indigenous peoples, reflecting a unidirectional view to understanding it. Therefore, in spite of the numerous investigations that have been conducted, which portray how multiculturalism benefits and reproduces colonial practices in understanding the land as a cultural right (Engle 2010; Hale 2005; Niezen 2003), this conception is strongly present in contemporary discourses, conceptualizing indigeneity as a matter of ancestry, of a mere special connection with the territory.

This is the reason why I chose to go through Rapa Nui with the landscape metaphor, as a means of arguing the importance of taking into account the multiplicity of interactions in the construction of current indigeneity (Stewart and Strathern 2003; Bender 1993; Hirsch and O'Hanlon 1995; Anthias 2012; Moore 2005). I tried creating a sort of map of how the multiple landscapes in Rapa Nui are configured, which in turn constitute its territory, and demonstrating how the only way to understand the indigenous land meanings is through the joint appreciation of the landscapes, which constitute, contradict and shape it again and again.

The relations of the Rapanui people with their territory may not be understood in a dichotomous or unidimensional way. The Rapanui, like many other indigenous

peoples, grant sense and meaning to their landscapes through stories that complement each other, by affections, situations, and feelings that are shared and experienced together but also differentiated. In other words, they all share the same space, but they experience the place and the landscapes differently.

Through the ethnographic experience acquired during these years, it may be understood how indigenous identities in their relation to spaces cannot be thought univocally, but by putting on the map all the ways in which it is constructed simultaneously. Therefore, the territory that indigenous peoples claim as their own is not only understood as the one that was inhabited since time immemorial and that was stripped away from them. Rapa Nui is also the territory which the State occupies, which the tourists observe and enjoy, the one which is sold and recovered, the one in which a hotel was built and which was occupied as a claim to be used in an ancestral way.

Therefore, I focused on three of these landscapes, which to my own judgment had been the most relevant to the understanding on how the discourses on the relationship with land are configured in the present Rapa Nui, to elaborate this dissertation.

In this way, in chapter three, the *Landscape of the Ancestors* was analyzed, giving an account of the fundamental importance of the past in the construction of the Rapanui indigeneity. The Rapanui territory is understood as the same territory that was inhabited by the ancestors, the *matamuas*. This move provides a basis for seeking to prove an autochthonous and traditional relation, the continuity with the territory. It is understood, therefore, that ancestors leave a legacy and wealth, the *ono tupuna*, which allows the present Rapanui to understand each other and explain themselves as the land sovereigns. No one else can own the territory, only *HotuMatua* descendants, the first *ariki* and colonizer. The State of Chile appears here as a usurper, who strips away the land from its true owners and their ancestral heritage, and inscribes it in its own name, through documents, inscriptions and laws. The sustenance to this ancestral landscape is given by their certainty of being descendants of the first inhabitants, of having been colonized and exploited, of the loss and recovery of what was theirs.

The way of understanding this ancestral past is neither uniform nor linear, but rather a means in which complex and multiple processes are resignified and re-explained to understand the past according to the needs of historical moments. Therefore, what is ancestral is not necessarily the oldest, but what evokes the way of 'doing things properly,' which appeals to the nostalgia of the past and above all, serves to articulate a Rapanui present and future. The Maori Rapanui Nation is thus created, seeking a differentiation from the Chilean Nation, generating ties with the Polynesian world and articulating a differentiated identity which gives space to the birth of sovereignty, autonomy and independence political discourse.

In chapter four, another landscape map was analyzed, *Easter Island, the landscape of the State of Chile*. In this landscape, the island becomes Chile's territory, a special territory of the Republic. The annexation, occurred in 1888, will be constituted as a foundational moment, which will be thought about and recreated at innumerable moments in the history of relations between Rapa Nui and Chile. In this chapter I focus on the ways in which Chile builds up the map of Rapa Nui, through discourses, worldviews and



different allures that are also incorporated into the current Rapa Nui landscape. The State presence in Rapa Nui, the State agents discourse and the diversity on the perceptions in the Rapanui about continental presence, are also traced in this chapter.

Finally, in chapter five, I tried explaining how another of the fundamental landscapes is configured when trying to explain Rapa Nui; the *Tourism Landscape*. Every day the landscape of tourism and the narratives of archaeology and collapse that goes with them is more relevant in the Rapanui territoriality and it is inescapable in any attempt to explain and analyze current Rapanui identities. Here, the figure of the moai, those giant statues or stone sculptures known worldwide, play a fundamental role, transforming Rapa Nui into an open-air museum, despite the fact that many of these pieces have been robbed and taken to the West. In this landscape, the construction of the image of Rapa Nui as a mysterious, seductive and enigmatic place is explored, whose secrets are destined to be revealed by others who visit it and not by its own inhabitants, who are even denied the possibility of being the ones who built the moai. Along with this, the consequences of the theories that have put Rapa Nui as a paradigmatic example of overexploitation of natural resources and of what has been termed as environmental “collapse” is also explored.

A different rhetoric has been generated in the present, in which discourses are constructed and where the Rapanui are the only ones capable of recovering the sustainability of the land, recuperating in this way their ancestral sovereignty as well, based on a rhetoric influenced by the global indigenous peoples movements. Finally, the chapter examines how the current dynamics of the tourism industry in Rapa Nui have been built, generating a Rapanui identity that is commodified and at the same time creates a process of “ancestralization” that attempts to recover and safeguard a unique and differentiated identity.

As I have pointed out, the readings, perspectives, and looks on a territory are innumerable and will depend on who the observer is. An analysis of landscape of the diseases that mark the Rapanui skin remains pending, one where leprosy and smallpox at least on discourse were held responsible for a prolonged confinement on the island. It would also be possible to address the landscape left by the Exploitation Company with their sheep, the military heritage on Rapa Nui being a Chilean Navy military base, the territory marks on the plotting of the land by the granting of provisional titles and titles of domain and thus other landscapes that, to a greater or lesser extent, should be incorporated into this analysis.

Rapa Nui, as I have demonstrated throughout this dissertation, it is both included and simultaneously excluded from the global discourses of indigeneity, which strengthens my central argument: that to understand Rapa Nui, it is necessary to observe how the discourses are articulated locally but without losing sight of how they circulate globally. In my opinion, the only possibility to study the present indigenous identity and its relations with the others is by exploring the multiple and complex interactions which constitute it, by reading, in the materiality of the locality, by its consequences and its ramifications, by examining the diverse and contradictory landscapes that constitute it. Otherwise, the focus is lost, and all indigenous peoples

appear equal and homogeneous, which is nothing further from the contemporary native reality.

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