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Journal

Structure and Dynamics, 6(1)

Author

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Publication Date

2013

DOI

10.5070/SD961017971

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WE, THE TAUMAKO KINSHIP AMONG POLYNESIANS IN THE SANTA CRUZ ISLANDS

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Raymond Firth's We, The Tikopia, first published in 1936, still sets the standard for detailed, nuanced, sensitive ethnography. As Malinowski's student, Firth—who died in 2002 at the age of 100—was a hard-headed functionalist, whose forte was careful examination of cultural “institutions” and their effects on individuals as well as on other institutions. Suspicious of abstruse theoretical pronouncements, he presented his analyses in plain language and always situated them in relation to the “imponderabilia” of real people's everyday lives. We, The Tikopia has been a foundational text for generations of anthropologists, and it helped to guide my research on three Polynesian outliers over the past four decades. Since the time of Firth's initial fieldwork, conditions in the region have changed drastically, as even the most remote communities have become enmeshed in the world market economy. In 2007-08, I studied a revival of indigenous voyaging techniques on Taumako, a Polynesian community near Tikopia, in the southeastern Solomon Islands. I was struck by the extent to which the cash economy permeated Taumako life, altering the tone of kin relations in ways that would have been unimaginable on Tikopia in the 1920s—or even on Anuta, where I conducted research, in the 1970s. Here, I will examine Taumako kinship in light of the insights offered by Sir Raymond three quarters of a century ago and explore the changes to the kinship system brought about by new economic forces.

Raymond Firth's *We, The Tikopia*, first published in 1936, still sets the standard for detailed, nuanced, sensitive ethnography. As Malinowski's student, Firth—who died in 2002 at the age of 100—was a hard-nosed functionalist whose forte was careful examination of intersecting cultural “institutions” and their effects on individuals as well as on one another. Suspicious of abstruse theoretical pronouncements, he presented his analyses in plain language and always situated them in relation to the “imponderabilia” of real people's everyday lives. *We, The Tikopia* has been a foundational text for generations of anthropologists, and it helped to guide my research on three Polynesian outliers over the past four decades. Since the time of Firth's initial fieldwork, conditions in the region have changed dramatically, as even the most remote communities have become enmeshed in the world market economy. In 2007-08, I studied a revival of indigenous voyaging

techniques on Taumako, a Polynesian community near Tikopia, in the southeastern Solomon Islands. I was struck by the extent to which the cash economy permeated Taumako life, altering the tone of kin relations in ways that would have been unimaginable on Tikopia in the 1920s—or on Anuta, where I conducted research, in the 1970s. Here I examine Taumako kinship in light of insights offered by Sir Raymond three quarters of a century ago and will explore the pressures on the island's kinship system that have been wrought by global economic forces.

During my second year of graduate school, Sir Raymond spent two quarters at the University of Chicago and was instrumental in my choice of Anuta as field site for my dissertation research. Anuta is Tikopia's nearest neighbor, and Anutans resemble their brethren in language and culture. Although my theoretical approach departed from Firth's, I tried to emulate his exemplary field technique and thorough, integrated analysis of island life. In addition to establishing what is now a forty-year relationship with the Anutan community, I have conducted fieldwork on Nukumanu, a Polynesian community in Papua New Guinea, and Taumako. Although the primary focus of my Taumako research was not kinship but an attempt to revive traditional voyaging and navigation, I followed Raymond's lead in emphasizing the broader cultural and social context and the way in which the elements of Taumako's contemporary system fit together. In particular, the revival was intended both as an expression of cultural identity and a strategy for economic development. By "development," the Taumako had in mind producing cash income in a community no longer content to rely on its subsistence economy. The commodification of Taumako's economy, in turn, has affected—and in some respects undermined—the power of kinship as an integrating force. The supremacy of *aloha*—a word translated as 'love', 'compassion', or 'empathy'—which is the centerpiece of many Polynesian systems, has given way in a variety of contexts to competition and mutual suspicion, driven by the profit motive. At the same time, islanders express a longing for what they perceive to be a true Polynesian past, built on kinship, *aloha*, and a respect for chiefly authority. The result has been a deep-seated ambivalence and profound uncertainty about the future.

Taumako Kinship Terminology

Unlike Nukumanu, Tikopia, and Anuta, Taumako has experienced generations—perhaps centuries—of regular interaction with Melanesians who occupy the larger islands of the Santa Cruz group (Davenport 1968; Leach and Davidson 2008).¹ Through years of voyaging and inter-island economic exchange, the Taumako adopted aspects of the local Melanesian systems of kinship and social organization, and they borrowed a good deal of their phonology and lexicon from what are now described as "aberrant" Melanesian languages (Pawley 2006). It is hard to know how long ago the changes occurred; undoubtedly, they took place gradually over a protracted period and very likely accelerated during the 20th century when voyaging canoes were supplemented by ships and, more recently, by outboard motorboats. By the early 1960s, Davenport (1968) reported that Taumako social structure was indistinguishable from that of the nearby Melanesian communities. Still, the language remains recognizably Polynesian (Hovdhaugen 2006; Hovdhaugen and

Næss 2002; Næss 2000; Næss and Hovdhaugen 2011), and the Taumako identify themselves as Polynesians, whom they consider quite distinct from the Melanesians of Ndeni, Vanikoro, Utupua, and the main Reef Islands. Taumako's Polynesian connections are evident in their kinship terminology.

As is common around Polynesia, the Taumako merge members of the grandparental generation and higher under the same term, *puna* or *pu*. Likewise, members of the grandchildren's and lower generations are *mokopuna* or *mokupuna*.

In ego's generation, the picture is more complicated. As in other Polynesian languages, terms used for siblings differ depending on ego's gender. However, it is not a simple matter of relative sex, as it is on most of the Polynesian outliers. A male calls his brother *tokana* and his sister *tuohine*; a woman calls her brother *tuongane* and her sister *teina*.² An unusual feature of Taumako nomenclature is the existence of a separate term, *kave*, for cross cousins.³ A male cross cousin may be specified as *kave tangata*, and a female cross-cousin as *kave ahine*—*tangata* being the common Polynesian term for 'male' and *hine* for 'female'. This could suggest a practice of cross-cousin marriage sometime in the past, but if so it was abandoned well before my interlocutors' lifetimes.

In the parents' generation, the options expand still farther. The usual term of address for 'father' is *opa*, while the term of reference is *tamana*. Once one has a child, people resort to a system of teknonymy. Thus, my friend Inny Taupea was commonly called Opa Lakapau 'Lakapau's Father', both in reference and address. When one becomes a grandparent, that relationship takes over, so that Nathaniel Leiau is typically called Pu Ini 'Ini's Grandfather'. 'Mother' is *hina* or *nana*. *Hina* is usually the term of reference: 'my mother' is *hina aku*. The word, *ate*, was sometimes given as a synonym for *hina*, but I was also told that this is "really a Vaeakau word" from Pileni. *Nana* is used as the term of address for 'mother' and is also invoked for purposes of teknonymy. My friend, Melody Aloha, was often referred to as Nana Madlyn, Madlyn being her daughter's name. *Nau* is the term of address for 'mother' in Tikopian, and at least one Taumako islander suggested that it is used similarly on her island. In my experience, however, such usage is uncommon. Lastly, the Pijin term, *mami*, is commonly used for 'mother'—as is *tati* for 'father' and *grani* for 'grandparent'.

In contrast with most west Polynesian and outlier languages (e.g., Samoa, Tonga, Anuta, Tikopia), Taumako does not appear to have a separate term for 'father's sister'. Rather, she is either called by the same term as the mother or by the Pijin word, *anti* (from English "aunt"). For example, I once heard a young man use the expression "Anti Mako" for his classificatory mother, Vakataumako. Another friend explained that this is a term used by unmarried people, both men and women, for their aunts. When one marries, the term of choice switches to *nana*. Thus, the children of Fox Boda, before they were married, called Vakataumako, their father's adoptive sister, Anti Mako. Since their respective marriages, they all have called her Nana Mako. The absence of a separate term for 'father's sister', while differentiating Taumako from most languages of west Polynesia, puts it in line with the northern and central Polynesian outliers (e.g., Kapingamarangi, Nukuoro, Nukumanu, Sikaiana, Rennell, and Bellona), which are believed to have been populated by immigrants from Tuvalu and Tokelau several hundred years ago (see Fein-

berg 2009; Feinberg and Donner 2012; Carson 2012; Early 2012).

Lastly, the mother's brother is termed *ingoa*, a word that otherwise means 'name' and, in this context, suggests a relationship of respect. In this way, Taumako's kinship system resembles that on Nukumanu and Sikaiana (Feinberg 2009; Feinberg and Donner n.d.). Yet the respect associated with the avuncular relationship is easy to exaggerate. One evening, I was sitting in a room with a middle-aged friend, when his adult nephew entered. The latter sat down next to his uncle and playfully punched him on the upper arm, just below his shoulder. I asked if it is acceptable to hit one's mother's brother, and the younger man just punched his uncle again. Everyone had a good laugh. Evidently, the *fahu* joking relationship made famous by Radcliffe-Brown (1952) in his discussion of Tongan kinship has not entirely disappeared on Taumako. I could not find a variant of *tuatina*—a word for 'mother's brother' in a number of other Polynesian languages—among my Taumako interlocutors.

In the children's generation, 'son' is *ataliki*, daughter is *hine*, and *tama* or *mēmea* can be used for a child of either sex. *Mēmea* is the Taumako term for a child in the sense of a young person; *tama* is the common Polynesian term for one's offspring. I was given *ilamutu* or *ilāmutu* as a term for a man's sister's son, but I could find no special term for a man's sister's daughter or a woman's brother's child. As far as I could determine, all were called by the usual terms for one's own son and daughter.

Affinal terms are also roughly similar to those in other Polynesian languages; for example, 'husband' is generally termed *matua*. An alternate term, *pengi*, appears to be synonymous although, according to one interlocutor, the two are used in somewhat different grammatical spaces: one says *na pengi* 'her husband' but *te matua ona*, roughly 'husband of hers'. 'Wife', as on other Polynesian outliers, is *nohine*.

The generic term for in-law of adjacent generation, used reciprocally for parent-in-law and child-in-law, is *hingona* (cf. *pungona* [Anutan]; *fongona* [Tikopian]; *hinaona* [Nukumanu]). 'Father-in-law' may be differentiated as *mangovae* or *hingona tangata*; *opa* is used as the term of address for 'father-in-law', as it is for 'father'. 'Mother-in-law' is termed *naungovae* or *hingona hine* as a term of reference and *nana* as a term of address. As is true on other Polynesian outliers, a sibling-in-law of same sex is *mā*. A man refers to his brother-in-law as *mā tangata* and addresses him as *tangata* or *sangara*. A woman refers to her brother-in-law as *tokana tangata* and addresses him as *tangata* or *sangara*. She refers to her sister-in-law as *mā*.

Terms of reference are rarely used by themselves. Generally, they are either preceded by the definite article, *te* 'the', or are combined with a possessive pronoun. The pronoun may either be preposed (*toku tokana* 'my brother' [male ego]) or, more frequently, appear as a suffix (*tokaku*). A list of Taumako kin terms in table form, as indicated by three consultants, is as follows:

ENGLISH GLOSS

TAUMAKO TERM

grandparent (JT; GN)

puna

my granny (JT)

puāku

father (JT)

te tamana

father (GN)	<i>mana</i>
father (GN)	<i>mh</i>
my father (JK)	<i>tamana aku</i>
my father (GN)	<i>toku tamana</i>
my father (GN)	<i>manaaku</i>
my father (GN)	<i>mhaku</i>
daddy (JT; GN)	<i>opa</i>
my dad (JT)	<i>opaaku</i>
your dad (JT)	<i>opaau</i>
mother (JT; GN)	<i>nana</i>
mother (JT; GN)	<i>hina</i>
mommy (JT)	<i>ate</i> (primarily a Pileni word)
mommy (JT)	<i>mami</i>
my mother (JK)	<i>hina aku</i>
my mommy (JT)	<i>nau</i>
mother's brother (JK; GN)	<i>ingoa</i>
uncle; MB (JT)	<i>ingoa</i>
brother, ♂ ego (JK)	<i>tokana</i>
sibling of same sex (GN)	<i>tokana</i>
sibling of same sex (GN)	<i>kana</i>
yr. sibling of same sex, optional term (GN)	<i>teina</i>
my brother; (JK)	<i>tokaaku</i>
brother, ♂ ego (GN)	<i>kanaaku</i>
sister, ♂ ego (JK; GN)	<i>tuohine</i>
my sister, ♂ ego (JK; GN)	<i>toku tuohine</i>
woman's brother (JK; GN)	<i>tuongane</i>
my brother, ♀ ego (JK)	<i>toku tuongane</i>
cross-cousin (JK; GN)	<i>kave</i>
female cross-cousin (JK)	<i>kave ahine</i>
male cross-cousin (JK)	<i>kave tangata</i>
son, ♂ ego (JK, GN)	<i>ataliki</i>
my son, ♂ ego (JK)	<i>ataliki aku</i>
daughter, ♂ ego (GN)	<i>ahahine</i>
my daughter, ♂ ego (JK)	<i>hine aku</i>
son, ♀ ego (JT)	<i>tama</i>
child of either sex; either ♂ or ♀ ego (GN)	<i>tama</i>
child of either sex; either ♂ or ♀ ego (GN)	<i>memea</i>
daughter, ♀ ego (JT)	<i>taine</i>
man's sister's child (GN)	<i>ilāmutu</i>
man's sister's child (GN)	<i>ilāmotu</i> (alternate pronunciation)
man's sister's child (GN)	<i>lamutu</i> (term of address)
man's sister's child (GN)	<i>lamotu</i> (alternate pronunciation)
nephew; sister's child (JT)	<i>ilamutu</i>
grandchild (GN)	<i>mokopuna</i>
husband (GN)	<i>matua</i>
husband (GN)	<i>pengi</i>

parent-in-law (GN)		<i>hingona</i>
father-in-law (GN)		<i>mangovae</i>
father-in-law (GN)		<i>hingona tangata</i>
father-in-law (GN)		<i>opā</i> (vocative)
mother-in-law (GN)		<i>naungovae</i>
mother-in-law (GN)		<i>hingona hine</i>
mother-in-law (GN)		<i>nana</i> (vocative)
child-in-law (GN)		<i>hingona</i> (reciprocal)
sibling-in-law of same sex (GN)		<i>mā</i>
sibling-in-law of same sex (GN)		<i>tangata</i> or <i>sangara</i> (vocative)
sibling-in-law of opposite sex (GN)		<i>tokana</i>
sibling-in-law of opposite sex (GN)		<i>tangata</i> or <i>sangara</i> (vocative)

JK=Jefferey Kuper JT=Janet Teurunga GN= Geoffrey Niumama

I should note that there are several differences between my findings and those reported by Davenport (1968:161-166). For example, I could locate no one who recognized *hipaku* as a word for ‘grandfather’ (p. 161), and he omits what I found to be the most common terms, *puna* or *pu*. He renders ‘daughter’ as *takutaina* (p. 161), whereas my consultants gave it as *taku taine*, literally, ‘my daughter’. In several places, he gives the first-person possessive pronoun as *tuku* (p. 162), whereas my interlocutors rendered it as *toku*. In contrast with my consultants (see above), he offers *ngane* as a reciprocal term for siblings of opposite sex (p. 164). And *hungata*, the term he gives for an in-law of adjacent generation, was identified by my consultants as a word from Malaita, a Melanesian island hundreds of miles away. These differences could be a matter of idiosyncratic variation or differences in dialect, of which there are many in the Vaeakau-Taumako region, or they could reflect linguistic changes over the half century that separated our two studies. In at least some cases, however, the discrepancies are likely due to Davenport’s relatively short visit to Taumako and consequent linguistic mistakes.

Associated Behavior

Parent-Child

On Taumako, as elsewhere, parents are expected to provide their children nurturance, support, guidance, and discipline. Meanwhile, children should respect and obey their parents. As on Tikopia and Anuta, children address their parents by kin terms and do not use personal names. In other ways, however, the formal respect for parents that one finds on Tikopia and Anuta, as well as through much of the Polynesian Triangle, seems attenuated. On one occasion, for example, I saw my friend, Melody, dressing her young daughter, Madlyn. As Madlyn was putting on a skirt, she lost her balance and grabbed Melody’s head to stabilize herself. No one admonished her for touching her mother’s head. On another occasion, I saw Madlyn accidentally hit her father in the head with a betel nut husk. They both laughed about it. This was considered inappropriate but not a grave offense. On Anuta, it would have raised greater concern, although people there probably would also have reacted with laughter.

I asked Geoffrey Niumama about the propriety of children grabbing their parents' heads and pulling their hair. He said it is acceptable for small children who do not know any better. For older children and adults, touching someone else's head is *tapu* 'taboo'. Still, since children do not seem to be reprimanded for such behavior, it is unclear how they learn proper etiquette. On Anuta, children are instructed about such matters from infancy onward. There, one avoids walking in front of any relative in a respect relationship while the latter is sitting, and one avoids walking between people who are facing one another; rather, one walks around behind. On Taumako, unlike Tikopia and Anuta, it is acceptable to stand while someone else—even a prominent leader—is seated.

While formal respect seems to be attenuated, harsh discipline is sometimes meted out. On one occasion, two young boys stole a single betel nut from my house. I mentioned the episode to their mother—normally an affable, considerate young woman—who beat the boys severely with a stick. All the adults I asked about the matter agreed that she had acted appropriately. Her husband seemed mildly amused by the incident and expressed the hope that his sons had learned a useful lesson.

Siblings of Same Sex

The relationship between siblings of the same sex is close and informal; brothers or sisters should cooperate in economic tasks. The informal nature of this relationship is illustrated by an exchange with my friend, Allen Ioki. One day, Allen asked me in a teasing tone if I was thinking of my wife, back in the USA. Then he asked if I imagined she was thinking about me. After replying in the affirmative, I inquired as to our kin relationship and whether that kind of talk was appropriate for us. He said we were *tau tokana* 'brothers' and such talk was entirely correct. Between parent and child, in-laws, brother and sister, or cross-cousins (*tau kave*) it would not be since those are all respect relationships.

Siblings of Opposite Sex

The relationship between siblings or cousins of opposite sex is dominated by mutual respect and a degree of avoidance. According to Geoffrey Niumama, a man should respect his sister and not call her by her proper name. One does not enter a house if an opposite-sex sibling is inside. If it is necessary to enter, one at least should go around outside and stay by the far door. On another occasion, I was told that it is acceptable for a brother and sister to be in the same house at the same time as long as they position themselves as far apart as is convenient and make sure not to touch each other. If a man needs to communicate with his adult sister, he should send an emissary rather than speak with her directly. He does not swear or speak loudly in her presence. According to another friend, Kaveia II, it is not acceptable for a sister to touch her brother's head, or vice versa. And a man may not marry *te tuohine* or *te kave*. This picture resembles that in Tonga, Samoa, and the central Polynesian outlier atolls of the northwestern Solomons and eastern Papua New Guinea. It differs dramatically from Tikopia and Anuta, where a brother and sister may be in the same house without supervision and even sleep under the same blanket (Firth 1936; Feinberg 2004).

Husband-Wife

According to several consultants, marriages used to be arranged between the parents of the bride and groom. Today, the couple is likely to have a say, perhaps even a decisive one. However, marriage still involves a major economic transaction, which would be difficult to complete if the parents did not approve. I was told that the husband's family typically pays about \$3,000 in Solomon Islands currency to the wife's parents; in return, the wife's family sponsors a feast that includes a large amount of food and at least one large pig.

The one wedding I had the opportunity to observe involved Chief Crusoe Kaveia's daughter, Vakataumako. Some weeks before the ceremony, my friend Simon Salopuka told me that the collection had reached SBD \$5,500, and it appeared that the families were on the verge of clinching a deal. Chief Kaveia arrived while I was talking with Simon and was still there when I left, apparently negotiating a date. The prospective groom was Simon's patrilateral cross cousin. Both the groom's paternal and maternal families were major contributors.

I asked Simon if anyone was *required* to contribute to the bridewealth payment. He replied that it is voluntary, but people look at it as a kind of investment. If one man contributes to another's bridewealth and the donor later has a son, the recipient's family will be expected to contribute to the donor's son's bridewealth payment. And if the couple to whom one contributes has a daughter who grows up and gets married, the donor will receive a share of the young woman's bridewealth payment. None of this is worked out according to a precise formula. Rather, one has a general sense that contributors will eventually get back their investment with "a little bit of interest." Simon pointed out that the Taumako have a history of making sophisticated calculations, owing to their long experience with *muhau* 'red feather money' (Davenport 1962) as a medium of exchange.

A husband and wife, after the birth of their first child, address and speak about each other using a system of teknonymy. Kaveia II calls his wife, Melody, "Nana Madlyn" 'Madlyn's mother', and Melody calls him Opā Madlyn 'Madlyn's father'. To use a spouse's proper name is considered disrespectful. However, spatial relations are not symbolically associated with social rank or ritual honor as they are on Tikopia and Anuta. Thus, it is fine for a man and woman to position themselves anywhere inside a house, or stand up while others are sitting or lying down. According to Kaveia, it is also acceptable for a wife to touch her husband's head.

Taumako's gender-based division of labor seems less rigid than on many Polynesian islands. Women commonly fish, occasionally work on canoe construction and repair, and, in a few cases from decades past, even became actively involved in navigation, voyaging, and inter-island trade. Most women, I was told, prefer to spend time caring for children and running the household, but it is perfectly acceptable for a woman to ask her husband to watch the children while she goes fishing.

Parent-in-law–Child-in-law

As elsewhere in Polynesia, in-laws should be treated with extreme respect. According to Kaveia II and Melody, one does not call a parent-in-law or child-in-law by name; a man

and his mother-in-law do their utmost to avoid each other. Melody described the relationship in Pijin, saying “*frait long hem*,” more or less, ‘they act as if they are afraid of one another’. Should a man and his mother-in-law meet somewhere, “*Hemi ran awei*” ‘She runs away’. Kaveia did not describe his relationship with Melody’s mother as *frait* ‘fear’, but he confirmed that they should not be in the same place at the same time. Other in-law relationships are characterized by respect, but avoidance is only required between a woman and her son-in-law. A man and his father-in-law may occupy the same house and converse with one another as long as they do so respectfully.

Confusion About Social Structure

Taumako agree on basic aspects of their social structure sufficiently well that their community operates fairly smoothly most of the time. People know where their gardens are located, which canoes they may use, and with whom to share the fruits of their labor. When one looks at details, however, there is a great deal of disagreement, and many Taumako readily acknowledge confusion. People disagree about how many “tribes” there are, and they tend to use the English or Pijin word since they disagree about the appropriate indigenous term for this unit. They disagree about how to determine “tribal” membership, who the “chiefs” are, how many there should be, and rules for succession.

Critical terms are *mata*, *tauova* (often pronounced *sauova*), *kaenga*, *hapapā*, and *pā*. In separate conversations, Albert Paikai and Barton Vehu agreed that *mata* and *tauova* refer to parts of the extended family or kindred—but to different parts: *te tauova* is the family as traced through males, or on the man’s side; *te mata* is the family as traced through females, or on the woman’s side. Thus, the F, FF, FM, B, Z, BS, BD, etc. are one’s *tauova*. The M, MM, MF, MZ, MB, Z, and ZD are *te mata*. This looks like the Anutan *kano a paito* and *kano a paito i te pāi o te papine*—the patrilineal and matrilineal kindred—respectively (Feinberg 2004). Another parallel might be the Samoan *tama tane* and *tama fafine*. However, rather than having formal roles in family decision making, as do the Samoan units, *mata* and *tauova* seemed to be primarily a means of describing the ways that various relatives are connected. A man from another island who marries a Taumako woman becomes part of his brother-in-law’s *mata*. A woman from another island who marries a Taumako man becomes a member of her in-laws’ *tauova*. A few people speculated that in earlier times people talked about *te mata* more and the *tauova* less than they do at present, possibly suggesting a diminution of women’s position within the social order. Such a view, however, was far from universal.

Later, I asked Simon Salopuka if the term *tauova* was used when he was a child. He said he never heard it and does not know where it came from. I asked about the explanation I was given by Albert and Barton, that the *tauova* consists of relatives on the father’s side while the *mata* includes relatives on the mother’s side. He agreed that their description accurately reflects how people today use the expressions. At first he seemed to suggest that patrilineal kin are more important in relation to matrilineal kin now than they used to be. However, when he got into specifics, it seemed that patrilineal relatives have been the most critical portion of the kindred, at least within living memory. He said unequivocally that one obtains one’s land from the father. When I mentioned having

been told that a certain young woman was having a house built on her mother's land, he was skeptical. After I reported exactly where the plot was located, he conceded that it might be from the mother's people and added that if one has an especially good relationship with the mother's brother (*ingoa*), that man may reward the niece or nephew with some land. However, it is the mother's brother who makes the decision, and it is not assumed that one will receive anything from that side of the family.

I reported having been told when I first got to Taumako that there are eight *kaenga* and seven chiefs, but then, at community meetings a few days later, people were talking about "sixteen tribes," each of which has its own chief. I asked what the Taumako word for 'tribe' is, and Simon could not tell me, saying that he was not even really sure what "tribe" means in English—a good anthropological response! I asked if *kaenga* refers to a village, a geographical area, or a group of people; he said unequivocally that it is a group of people. I mentioned having been told that Kahula, a village on Taumako's southeastern shore, is one *kaenga*, and he said that is because it contains one family. I noted that it actually has five families, and he replied, well, yes, but one of those families is clearly dominant—that of Chief Kaveia. I asked if the small areas occupied by extended families were properly called *hapapā*, a word that I had heard from others, and he gave me the term *te pā*.

Concern about confusion with respect to social structure was emphatically expressed during a lengthy conversation with a Taumako woman who was living in Lata, the provincial capital, and had come to visit family members who still lived on the island. She observed that the Taumako have a lot of confusion (her word) about such matters as chiefly succession (is it hereditary, by election, or some combination thereof?), land tenure, and land boundaries. In her opinion, the confusion has caused many disputes.

Encroachment of Market Economy

The Taumako have long been involved in inter-island trade. As early as 1606, Quiros reported the presence of large voyaging canoes as well as immigrants from other islands.⁴ And when Davenport studied the community in 1960, his consultants made it clear that they had been involved in a complex network of exchange for generations. Still, day-to-day economic activities most likely focused on subsistence production until well into the twentieth century. By the start of the twenty-first century, however, Taumako—despite geographic isolation—was clearly immersed in the world market economy. Islanders had been attending secondary school overseas and had traveled to places like Honiara, the national capital, in search of wage employment. They needed money for transport, school fees, and medical care.⁵ In addition, they now have a strongly-felt need for money to purchase fiberglass canoes, outboard motors, gasoline, flashlights, kerosene, knives, axes, monofilament fishing line, fishhooks, imported foods including rice and tinned meat, and more recently, generators, solar panels, and other much-desired luxuries. Opportunities to acquire cash on a small, isolated island with little flat land for commercial cultivation are limited, and the Taumako invest a good deal of energy in the pursuit of monetary resources. Part of the island's cash flow comes from remittances sent by relatives with jobs in other parts of the country: Taumako have held positions as deck hands,

police officers, nurses, teachers, and currently, one credentialed physician. On the island itself, *bêche-de-mer* and shark fin collection are the most lucrative pursuits—with the proviso that the Solomon Islands government periodically places closed seasons on *bêche-de-mer*. And one of the Taumako's leading motivations for the recent attempt to revive traditional canoe-building and voyaging is the hope that, if successful, they will attract tourists who wish to see and learn old Polynesian ways. While I was there in 2008, one man was in the process of constructing an elaborate multi-story rest house, evidently on the theory that “if you build it they will come.”

Immersion in the cash economy has exacerbated a tendency toward individual competition that appears already to have existed for some time. The cooperative impulse has not been entirely abandoned, as people do engage with friends and relatives in a variety of productive pursuits. Sometimes those assisting in a project are paid, either with money or more commonly by being fed. But sometimes they work together either because they enjoy the company or because it is safer and more efficient to work in teams. For example, one night I became aware that Kaveia II, his brother Basil Tavake, and Chief Kaveia's son-in-law, Independence, went to Taumako Beach on the north shore of the main island to hunt for *bêche-de-mer*. They did not get back until 3 AM, and when I awoke at five o'clock, they were already smoking the *bêche-de-mer* in one of their oven houses (*hale tunu*).

On another occasion, Melody and Kaveia II went to Tahua, an artificial island on the reef flat off the southwestern shore, to help build a house. Melody initially described the project as building a house for her “auntie.” In fact, it turned out to be a bachelor house (*holau*) being constructed for her patrilineal cross cousin (*kave*). The house belonged to Melody's FZH, and it was built on his land. The builders were not all close kin, and nobody was paid in cash for his/her labor, but all were given food. By the time Kaveia and Melody returned, the building was complete. This is exactly the pattern Dav-
enport described for house building a half-century ago.⁶

In Honiara, the Solomon Islands capital, access to cash is even more critical than on the home island, and kin relations, in some respects, are more complicated. Those few islanders who have steady, well-paying jobs typically rent accommodations and end up supporting large numbers of relatives, both near and distant. An example is Simon Salopuka, a physician employed at the national hospital. In 2008, Dr. Salopuka was renting a suite at BG Motel on Tanuli Ridge, a Honiara suburb. His suite included several small rooms opening into a common kitchen area, a small bathroom with toilet and shower but no sink, and a veranda. Over a dozen Taumako were staying there. A partial list includes:

- Dr. Simon Salopuka.
- Stanley Tehiahua, Simon's brother.
- Robert senior, Simon and Stanley's father.
- Robert junior, Simon's son.
- A third Robert, a man from another prominent Taumako family. He had been working as a deck hand on the ship, *MV Temotu* but was temporarily laid off

- while the ship is in dry dock.
- Janet Teurunga, a Taumako woman who had come to help look after little Robert.
 - Janet junior, Janet Teurunga's youngest daughter.
 - Barnabas, a student at Selwyn College, who was on school break. Barnabas's grandmother had some unspecified kin relationship to Simon.
 - Florence, Simon's matrilineal parallel cousin.

Honourable Stanley Tehiahua, in addition to being Simon's younger brother, was also Taumako's representative to the Temotu Provincial Assembly. He was better paid than most Solomon Islanders but, when visiting Honiara, still felt it necessary to stay with his brother rather than rent accommodations of his own. Robert, Simon's father, had come to Honiara a few months earlier and was awaiting a ship to return to Taumako. Simon's wife, Gelenta was away in Papua New Guinea where she studying for an advanced degree in pharmacy, and their daughter was overseas with her mother. Robert and Janet senior took a good deal of responsibility for little Robert when Simon was away—which, given the demands of his job, was most of the time. One of the women staying at the suite did the bulk of the cooking, but people made no effort to eat together. Rather, the cook typically prepared about fifteen bowls, with rice, sweet potato, taro, and noodles stacked on each one. She placed the bowls on a small table in the kitchen area. Residents then came to pick up their food and eat as they pleased.

General Characteristics of Kin

In a number of publications (Feinberg 1981a, 1981b, 1996, 2004, 2009, 2001, 2011; Strathern et al. 2002; Feinberg and Donner 2012) I have discussed the elements of Polynesian kinship. To varying degrees, and in varying combinations, I have found it to involve some notion of genealogical connection (what Schneider [1968, 1969, 1972, 1984] and his followers have called “shared substance”) and behavioral considerations (aka “code for conduct”). The appropriate behavior typically involves a construct that Hawaiians call *aloha*, a term with obvious cognates (e.g., *alofa*, *'ofa*, *aroha*, *arofa*, *aropa*) throughout Polynesia. It is commonly glossed as ‘love’ or ‘empathy’, but it must be instantiated in some form of economic cooperation or support. Kin are expected to exhibit *aloha* in their treatment of one another, and often someone with no genealogical connection can be incorporated into a kinship system solely on the basis of demonstrated *aloha*.

Taumako, like other Polynesian communities, draws upon these elements in determining who are and who are not kin, and the Taumako often incorporate elements of *aloha* into their behavior. In comparison with some communities, however, they downplay that element. For example, Kaveia II and his brother, Basil Tavake, often went together to collect *bêche-de-mer*, crayfish, and other marine fauna. They appreciated one another's company and occasional assistance. But each brother collected his own supply, and the wives did not keep track of their brothers-in-law's success.

Sometimes kin relations yielded still more starkly to commercial values. On a number of occasions I observed siblings selling vegetables or fish to one another, and I

even witnessed children selling fish to their parents—a type of interaction that would have been unimaginable on Anuta. When asked about it, my Taumako interlocutors expressed some mild embarrassment but explained that economic reality gave them little choice.

Title to land is typically passed from father to son, and someone who had been adopted onto Taumako, or whose father had married into the community, might not have access to enough land to make ends meet. Kin are expected to look out for one another and assist each other in hard times. However, siblings typically inherit separate plots of land, and nuclear families are economically independent. Brothers sometimes form unified political factions, but almost as often they become embroiled with one another in political or economic conflict. Children should look after their parents when they get old and have trouble fishing or working in their own gardens. But parents often complain that their children's assistance is inadequate. Taumako, with a population of around 500 people, is small enough that all community members could be considered one extended family. Yet family connections are often de-emphasized, except among the closest kin. Even immediate family members are often suspicious of one another. Accusations of theft abound, as do precautions to prevent it. And violent arguments in the recent past have led to serious injury and time in prison. Most of my interlocutors lamented this state of affairs. But they were acutely aware of the discrepancy between the world they occupy and the ideals they espouse.

Ambivalence

Most Taumako with whom I spoke were deeply conflicted about the values of kinship and the need to provide cash for themselves and their immediate families. They understood money's importance but recognized that preoccupation with money undermined the mutual support and unconditional cooperation that ought to be the cornerstone of kin relations. That ambivalence is illustrated by a conversation with my friend, Allen Ioki.

Allen asked me what I liked and did not like about my experience on Taumako. I answered honestly, mentioning among the negatives the degree of reliance on imported as opposed to locally-produced food, and the fact that virtually all transactions on the island seemed to require an exchange of money. I suggested that my comments should be taken as an expression of surprise, based on my experience in other communities, rather than as criticism of Taumako. However, he (like others) agreed with my observation, lamenting that Taumako no longer even recognize a special status for “brothers or parents”; that every time one wants anything one has to pay money. In what he regarded as a parallel theme, he also told me he was troubled by people's failure to show respect and signs of deference to community leaders such as the current and former paramount chiefs. Despite personal misgivings about certain leaders, he expressed commitment to the traditional system of respect. Allen opined that island life was different in the past, and he, like others, attributed the change to the *bêche-de-mer* economy that only emerged in the 1990s.

On another occasion, a woman, who was one of my immediate hosts, apologized for not feeding me better, lamenting that she and her husband were too old to work their

gardens effectively. I suggested that their children and grandchildren should take care of them. She began to cry, proclaiming that her stepson and his children neither “loved” nor cared for her! It should be noted that the feelings of suspicion and mistreatment were reciprocal, as my interlocutor’s step-grandsons complained that she and her husband monopolized access to whatever goods and money came their way.

Conclusion

In 1952, Sir Raymond conducted a follow-up study of Tikopia with the objective of updating the 1928-29 findings on which *We, the Tikopia*—along with several other monographs—was based.⁷ Firth and his collaborator, James Spillius, arrived on Tikopia in the aftermath of a hurricane and drought that had decimated crops. Owing to the famine and an accompanying epidemic, Tikopians found it hard to live by the dictates of *arofa* (the Tikopian cognate of *aloha*). Firth, in *Social Change in Tikopia* (1958) distinguished between manners and morals, suggesting that the Tikopians assiduously adhered to customary etiquette even as they secretly compromised their principles. When people visited their kin at meal-time, hoping that their relatives would be obliged to feed them, the hosts would often hide their food and pretend that they had none. Once their guests had gone, they would unpack the food and proceed with their meal.

In a sense, what I observed in 2007-08 on Taumako is comparable. Everyone agreed on the importance of *aloha* and lamented its diminution. Yet most felt constrained by economic pressures to honor its dictates largely in the breach. On Tikopia, however, the period of economic stress was temporary; after crops recovered, the status quo ante was, to a degree, restored. Taumako, by contrast, has for generations been involved in market-like transactions and is now intimately connected to the world market economy. Thus, the Taumako’s compromises on *aloha* are more permanent and thoroughgoing. Individual competition has been incorporated into their value system, and they often let it shine through *sans* apology. Their system has evolved in such a way that helping kin may be subordinated to material accumulation. Still, most Taumako remain ambivalent and pine for a golden age in which their community was run on Polynesian principles of kinship, predicated on *aloha* and respect for chiefs whose job it was to ensure adherence to those widely-shared ideals.

¹ This is not to say that the other islands ever were completely isolated. However, external contact—especially with non-Polynesians—was much more sporadic.

² Elsewhere (e.g., Nukumanu, Tikopia, and Anuta), *taina* is the generic term for sibling of same sex, regardless of whether ego is male or female.

³ In other Polynesian outlier languages, such as Tikopian and Anutan, *kave* is the term for any opposite-sex sibling or cousin.

⁴ Some of these may have been there voluntarily; others were apparently war captives (Markham 1904; Leach and Davidson 2008).

⁵ Medical care, itself, was provided free by the Solomon Islands government, but patients had to pay for their own transport to the provincial or national hospital. Furthermore, if it became necessary to stay for an extended period in locales away from their home island, they or their relatives had to pay for food and housing.

⁶ The house ostensibly was built for the eldest brother, but he soon left for Honiara with his paternal uncle. It was understood that in his absence the younger brothers could stay there; even their father might visit and sleep in the house occasionally. Women are not permitted to enter a *holau*.

⁷ Other book-length publications to grow out of that first study include *The Work of the Gods on Tikopia* and *Primitive Polynesian Economy*. Major portions of *History and Traditions of Tikopia*, *Tikopia Ritual and Belief*, and *Rank and Religion in Tikopia*, as well as a plethora of articles, were also based on that study.

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