

## Article

# The Art of Living as a Community: Profiguration, Sustainability, and Social Development in Rapa Nui

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**Abstract:** This article analyzes the challenges faced by the inhabitants of the island of Rapa Nui in connection with climate change-related environmental and socio-economic problems, and the survival of the islanders' cultural identity and their very sustainability. A qualitative research methodology was adopted, using observation and in-depth interviews within a life course approach. An innovative and creative methodology was employed, cross-referencing and comparing data from 2011 and 2020. This methodology has led to the further strengthening of a new concept in sociology and the social sciences in general: profiguration (intergenerational and interdependent socialization). Based on the results of this study, some analytically robust descriptions were made of the socio-cultural and environmental situation in Rapa Nui, and of an increasingly sustainable social development model. It is a model of social development that is on the way to being sustainable, intercultural, intergenerational, and promoted by the community.

**Keywords:** profiguration; societal challenges; social development; sustainability; socialization; qualitative methodology; life course

## 1. Introduction

This article analyzes the challenges faced by the inhabitants of the island of Rapa Nui in connection with climate change-related environmental and socio-economic problems, and other dangers that have always threatened the island due to its geographic isolation, as well as the survival of the islanders' cultural identity and their very sustainability. This island is said to be at the navel of the earth (Te pito o Te Henua) and was traditionally isolated, although it was later discovered and assimilated by western modernity. According to Corvalán [1], schooling on the island developed rapidly compared to what happened in continental Chile, and this played a key role in the westernization and Chileanization of the Rapa Nui population. However, adult and older generations also continue to be socialized in their own culture through shared individual and collective memory, of which the Council of Elders is paradigmatic. It is currently involved in social development and sustainability processes. At the end of 2019, the UNDP and other UN agencies (FAO, UNESCO, ILO, UN Women, and PAHO) started to identify the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Rapa Nui.

The debate on the concept of social development has been historically linked to the idea of economic growth, and therefore it has had controversial implications. According to Wallerstein's world-systems theory (world-system, center-periphery), the notion of social development was traditionally portrayed as an endogenous change occurring in a particular society; however, changes are also exogenous and strongly influenced globally on a world scale. Furthermore, the concept of development is usually closely linked to the notion of progress, as if changes flew only in one direction and were perpetually improving; yet, there is no such linear trend of continuous progress. Likewise, Wallerstein [2] advised that the notion of development emerged from an erroneous 19th century idea that social reality occurs separately across the political, economic, and sociocultural

spheres. Sztompka [3] (p. 216) therefore proposed that the processes of economic, political, and social (or cultural) development should be treated together in an interdisciplinary way. As Presa [4] (p. 103) indicated, development should not be confused with economic growth, since it is a multilinear process in which the deployment of the human capacities of the entire population must be taken into account, together with the equitable distribution of socially produced wealth, and the respect for or restoration of the ecological balance. Thus, after developmentalism received persistent criticism throughout the 20th century, an alternative post-developmental approach to social change has been advocated by the sociological imagination. Another alternative approach has been presented in the 21st century—a social development that is inclusive, communal, and holistic [5]. This concept of social development includes economic, political, sociocultural, health, and educational aspects. This is a form of social development that includes sustainable development, social welfare, quality of life, education, health, justice, equality, and equity—in short, human development.

This follows the postulates and actions of the UN in relation to social development and the indicators and reports of the UNDP (HDI) on human development [6]. In short, this is a multidimensional form of progress that includes the human development indices and policies, as well as policies aimed at overcoming multidimensional poverty which focus mainly on education and health. The definition of multidimensional progress provided by the UNDP is “a space for development regulated by certain limits: nothing that diminishes the rights of people and communities or jeopardizes the environmental sustainability of the planet can be regarded as progress” [7] (p. 2). It is also important to examine social interaction and participation in social sustainability [8].

According to Reyes [9] (pp. 134–135), the great postulates on theories of economic and social development have focused on major national or world conditions, emphasizing the international or global level). However, in his view, the concept of human development also includes the local community sphere. Along these lines, I propose a local focus of analysis for the Rapa Nui community, where social development can be analyzed as human development. As noted by Reyes, in general terms the development and social inclusion that human development entails are related to the active and effective participation of individuals, social groups, and the community. For social inclusion to exist, there must first be effective citizen participation, in the sense of social belonging and as a feature of development. This development is based on the concatenation of economic issues, the satisfaction of needs, the sustainable use of renewable natural resources, and the appropriate use of technology, while respecting culture and human rights. Sustainability as a new basic and integrative criterion may strengthen collective and solidary values that through contextualized and problem-focused educational practices can mobilize students [10]. Emerging sustainability challenges, such as livelihood development and climate change, require innovative and experimental ways of linking science, policy, and practice at all scales [11]. All these features are more feasible to generate and strengthen at the local community development level. For this reason, Rapa Nui has been chosen as a paradigmatic case.

## 2. Materials and Methods

From a theoretical and empirical perspective, the fundamental research question is this one: is it be pertinent to speak of social development in Rapa Nui? Other questions related to the main question are these two: What role do intergenerational relations and interculturality play in all of this? Is it important for sustainability to consider environment and community aspects?

Two objectives seem relevant to the study:

- (1) Conceptually review the area of social development to provide new intercultural and intergenerational considerations to complete it.
- (2) Analyze the social development of the Rapa Nui using key perspectives such as education, sustainability, and profiguration.

A qualitative methodology was considered to be the most suitable option to address the research questions and the objectives. This methodology was chosen in an attempt to apply a more humanistic

approach and to interpret human and social events from an experiential-relational perspective based on intersubjective perceptions, with a view to generating a vivid discourse that could provide a holistic response. Researchers are not always the best informed, at least not more so than the locals [12]. In total, seven interviews have been conducted. In 2011, I conducted four interviews on the island of Rapa Nui, in addition to observation and research on written materials. They were with relevant people from the island's politics, economy, education, and society (including men and women and the Council of Elders). In 2020, due to the circumstances of the pandemic (COVID-19), I have conducted three more interviews, all online. Two people coincide with those interviewed in 2011, and the third person interviewed in 2020 is a person from the Chilean scientific field who has also contrasted the evolution of Rapa Nui.

Observation and the analysis of documents, materials, interviews, and biographical accounts were conducted using a life course approach. This made it possible to establish and argue a decade's worth of analysis and comparisons to draw conclusions about social development in Rapa Nui. Upon a visit to the island in 2011, a study was completed in order to prepare documents and materials. This involved direct observation and four interviews, which yielded two accounts derived from a broad vision of and direct involvement in various areas of life of/in Rapa Nui, including politics; business; environmental, educational, and cultural responsibility; and leadership. All this was part of a framework of discursive (non-statistical) representation in relation to gender and the intergenerational issue.

Throughout 2020, due to problems caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the life course section was completed by three new online interviews. A variant of the life course was developed that was applied to a collective—in this case, the Rapa Nui community.

The life course approach studies the relationship between the individual and society, between individual lives and social change. It is an analysis of the life process that is constructed throughout life. This involves taking a nonlinear interconnected view of individual and collective lives in different historical, economic, cultural, and social contexts. According to Blanco [13], within life course theory macrostructural levels (institutional changes relating to roles according to age and age-status systems) are interwoven with microsocial levels (the individual responses of each subject).

A contextual (longitudinal) adaptation of the life course perspective was adopted on a community basis. It drew on the events that occurred in the past 10 years but was also related to the constructed biographical account. The three fundamental concepts of life course analysis were identified [13,14]: the trajectory, transitions, and turning points (or decisive moments). The trajectory is the life path, which may change throughout life. It is also the result of how transitions and decisive moments are addressed. Transitions are changes in status or situation, for example from youth to adulthood, or from adulthood to old age. Decisive moments or turning points are those moments in life at which a long-term qualitative change occurs in an individual's life course. They involve crucial events that can mark the transitions or the life trajectory itself in one way or another (the situation caused by COVID-19 is an obvious one in our case, among other critical moments).

The life course approach is based on five fundamental principles related to the three concepts that we have just discussed [13] (pp. 13–15): (a) The principle of lifespan development (over time). (b) The principle of time and place—this is contextual. (c) The principle of historical time—when crucial events occur, sooner or later. The COVID-19 pandemic, for example, due to its highly infectious nature also has very strong sociological implications. Since practically the entire world's population has been in lockdown in one way or another, caution is needed in terms of how it affects children, young people, adults, and the elderly. The pandemic has physically, socially, and emotionally disrupted people's own interpersonal relationships, in addition to their lives. Human beings are interdependent, vulnerable, and in need of affection, including close physical contact. (d) The principle of linked lives—human lives are interdependent; they rely on networks of shared relationships and influences. Educational dynamics (teachers-students, familial, family-work, and between friends [peers] and neighbors) can be developed within intergenerational relationships, which can reveal a wealth of perspectives and experiences. (e) The principle of free will (human agency)—people can shape their lives, but they do it within socially structured limits. While

individuals make choices and construct their own life course, there are links and causality between the individual and the structural, and they exercise this free will within a structure of opportunities (circumstantial and even structural constraints and opportunities).

### 3. Results and Discussion

#### 3.1. Social Development, Interculturality, and Education

Education is one of the pillars of inclusive social development, understood as human development that facilitates equity and quality of life. According to UNESCO, education seeks to promote free and responsible individuals. In sociology, education is understood as a fundamental agent of socialization, learning, and the development of social solidarity. Socialization processes take place throughout life and involve social integration into a community with certain values, norms, attitudes, rules of behavior, types of knowledge, etc.

Blancas [15] noted that education fosters a critical awareness to interpret the world, understand the situation in which we live, and act on it to achieve social transformation; education must combine action and reflection, since human beings educate each other, while being mediated by the world.

As Corvalán [1] (pp. 681–692) indicated, from 1917 onwards the educational processes implemented in Rapa Nui were colonial, evangelizing, and intended to impose western worldviews. From the beginning of the 21st century, a competitive school system was introduced in Rapa Nui that caused different types of socioeconomic and educational segmentations, which eventually involved ethnic aspects. Since most of the island's students were Rapa Nui and were educated in the different schools, Corvalán warned that there may have been a process of intra-ethnic differentiation that could later have some impact on the levels of cohesion and identity in Rapa Nui society. I believe that, even if this is a true solid argument, there are encouraging elements of creativity and innovation that lead to a certain interculturality [5]. This could offset these threats and facilitate inclusive social and sustainable development [16]:

“Interculturality in education has the purpose of understanding and respecting other cultures, valuing personal and collective enrichment by relying on one's own and others' contribution, in order to promote healthy coexistence between diverse cultures; this can be seen in the performance of the Lorenzo Baeza Vega School, whose mission is to promote the Rapa Nui language and culture. The aim of having a 'Rapa Nui Language Day' was to attract the attention of parents, families, authorities, and state institutions, to ensure that they would all contribute to revitalizing the language of the Rapa Nui Polynesian people.” (VHM)

Private subsidized schools, including the Colegio Hermano Eugenio Eyraud; the Colegio San Sebastián de Akivi; the Hormiguitas nursery school; and the state schools Jardín Integra, Jardín Lucy Mahatu Riva, and Jardín Hare Nā Poki organize various workshops relating to singing, Hoko (dance about historical events), crafts, and Tākona (body painting), among other activities. The students learn cultural concepts in these workshops that help them to better understand the activities.

The two public schools have a clearly integrated curriculum in relation to the Rapa Nui cultural context and language. The Colegio Lorenzo Baeza Vega is a school for Bilingual Intercultural Education, and the Liceo Aldea Educativa Rapa Nui Hona'a O Te Mana is focused on Rapa Nui art and culture, while also providing humanistic and scientific education, and technical and professional education in tourism and the agricultural sector, two of the main sources of wealth in Rapa Nui. In the context of intercultural education, the Rapa Nui identity is mainly developed in these two public schools, although all the educational centers on the island participate in community activities such as the Koro Nui Tupuna and Rapa Nui Language Day.

In addition to the formal educational system, education (socialization) also happens outside of schools, with cultural activities including the library and other leisure and free time activities such as traditional festivals. It is the community that educates and maintains the desire to preserve its own cultural identity from generation to generation.

Language Day, which is held in the first week of November, aims to promote the Rapa Nui language within the community and family. It started in 1991 (turning point) at the Colegio Lorenzo Baeza Vega, was also later adopted by the Liceo Aldea Educativa Rapa Nui, and at present (2020) the entire community and all the island's schools take part.

“Chilean regulations establish that if there is a high percentage of indigenous population, their education must include a subject focused on learning the local language. In this case, this is Rapa Nui, which is studied for two hours a week. But this is very little. That is why Language Day, November 9, is very important, as it encourages people to remember the language and use it as part of teaching and learning; the whole island is highly involved, and it is the main event of the year”(ROM).

The aim of *Koro Nui Tupuna* is to recreate art, sports, and cultural practices to promote cultural revitalization, respect for ethnicity, social coexistence, and integration. These activities are focused on students between the ages of 14 and 19 years old attending any of the island's schools.

In this way, intercultural education that goes beyond the school provides alternatives for social development that ensure ecological, social, and cultural sustainability. Social development in Rapa Nui in relation to education is based on a collective reflexivity which, following Castells' postulates [17], has been identified as the development of an identity project that promotes intercultural hybrid relations, articulating a new society based on “equality in difference” [5,18].

“Easter Island still keeps culture alive, ensuring that it is natural (...) for my children to want to learn how fishing was done in the past; that you can still listen if you can speak the language, in a way that is not restrictive; this is a special charm about Easter Island; one goes to Hawaii and they all speak English; one goes to New Zealand, and they suffer, because they have largely lost their language. We don't want that to happen to us. I am racially mixed, and I speak it as our generation speaks it: I speak it correctly in a traditional way. (...) I speak it in a more modern way, because I am from another generation, and there are some idioms” (LZM).

### 3.2. Social Development and Sustainability

The 2019 UNDP Human Development report referred to the question of how inequality will change in the future, and noted the importance of two radical transformations that will have a strong impact on life in this century: the climate crisis and technological transformation. At the end of 2019, the UNDP and other UN agencies (FAO, UNESCO, ILO, UN Women, and PAHO) started to identify the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Rapa Nui. This process includes the civil society and all the local institutions and bodies linked to the development of the island, with a view to analyzing the situation and proposing actions for its sustainable development. These actions include coastline recovery and the recovery of underwater ecosystems. Likewise, work relating to gender equality and against gender violence on the island is conducted jointly by public institutions and NGOs: Prodemu, Centro de la Mujer (Women's Center), Dirección de Desarrollo Comunitario del Municipio (the Municipality's Community Development Directorate), and Fundación Mujer Activa (Active Woman Foundation). There is a clear commitment to promote leadership, especially among young women, to ensure the consolidation of inclusive human development.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development highlights the importance that initiatives operate within the territory and involve local actors [19]. To this end, UN cooperation with Rapa Nui takes place in two stages: (a) articulating the 2030 Agenda with the local development visions of the AMOR Plan (named after its Spanish acronym) and (b) structuring the planning instruments and the identification of specific actions to enhance the island's sustainable development. The team in Rapa Nui is made up of actors from the municipality, the provincial government, the Consejo de Ancianos (Council of Elders), Corporación de Desarrollo de Isla de Pascua (CODEIPA) (Easter Island Development Corporation), and the Consejo de Carga Demográfica (Council for Managing the Demographic Load). The AMOR Plan was established in 2014 (as a 20-year communal vision) and refers to a Spanish acronym for the four axes that guide the sustainable social development of Rapa

Nui: self-sustainability, continuous improvement, the optimization of resources, and social responsibility (responsibility for and with being). This plan also includes the Rapa Nui Environmental Education Network led by the municipality, which includes 15 institutions, organizations, groups, cooperatives, schools, and kindergartens to develop a communal environmental education plan. This is a profigurative educational action, since adults and older adults teach the youngest, who further their learning and in turn teach their family, siblings, parents, and grandparents.

Calls for projects are also being made to promote initiatives for small farmers, such as the Fundación para la Innovación Agraria (FIA) (Foundation for Farming Innovation). These initiatives promote innovation in agricultural practices and products with cultural value and territory-based identity. Other examples include the E Toru Hanua Nua Mea association, which replicates the Manavai, a traditional cultivation method that allows inclement weather to be overcome [5]. All these processes that occur at the micro (local) level in Rapa Nui are processes of sustainable social development.

Along these lines, it is pertinent to ask: can Rapa Nui's claim to its own identity and culture be understood as sustainable social development? This question and the answer to it are key to promoting the scope of and potential for social development and sustainability, facing the threats of a rampant globalization and extreme consumerism, and promoting "glocal" alternatives.

The answer is in the affirmative, and examples include institutionalized cases in the daily life of Rapa Nui, in addition to Language Day and Koro Nui Tupuna. There is a massive planting of trees, organic farms, and agroecological practices.

"With the COVID-19 pandemic, the plan made by the Environmental Department has been expedited, as it helps to have small vegetable gardens in people's homes, supported by the slogan "I produce my own food." The Municipality offers technical assistance and many *lucas* [money] have also been made available for this" (ROM).

However, the impending challenge of an environmental crisis cannot be denied, and Rapa Nui's effort to avoid what has sometimes been called a potential environmental collapse due to the difficulty involved in garbage disposal and overtourism. In contrast, Hunt and Lipo [20], among others, have stated that the story of Rapa Nui is not one of ecological suicide but of resilience, in which the islanders employ innovative approaches. Some have gone even further and identified examples of tourism phobia, but an in-depth analysis should be conducted on the circumstances, contexts, causes, and effects caused by runaway, uncontrolled tourism that is disrespectful to the place (and the local people). There are examples of gentrification that have driven locals away. This has benefited only a few and not the whole of society [5]. According to Sequera [21], the influence of globalization is seen in touristification—predatory tourism which is fueled by the growth of platform capitalism.

In order to reverse this situation and consolidate the island's social development, in November 2017 the administration of the land of the Rapa Nui Park (representing 43% of the island's territory) was ceded to the Ma'u Henua Polynesian Indigenous Community, which watches over the archaeological heritage and the preservation of the Rapanui culture. At the Chile-Madrid Climate Summit, 2019 the Ma'u Henua community participated in the debates on the danger of extinction of indigenous peoples, who currently represent less than 5% of the world's population. According to Camilo Rapu (head of the community), maintaining a community's own culture within globalization is a complex task: "Part of sustainability involves protecting indigenous peoples because this great giant that is absorbing and standardizing everything is a new system that may collapse, and if it does, we are a life option to save the planet (...) We are taught to live in balance with nature and development" (Retrieved March 25, 2020 from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hNg1cBIItZmc#action=sharey>, <https://www.20minutos.es/noticia/4077112/0/comunidad-mau-henua-cumbre-clima-basura-botan>

mar-llega-nuestra-isla). The forty Rapa Nui professionals who lead the project have created more than 300 jobs and have improved tourism control, dispersing tourism pressures by implementing new heritage routes and doubling the park's income for the Rapa Nuicommunity:

"In view of the overcrowding of the island, a passport was implemented in 2018 [Law 21,070 (of March 2018) regulating the rights to reside in, stay in, and move to Rapa Nui] that only allows people to stay for up to a month [both tourists and continental Chileans]" (ROM).

In the case of Rapa Nui, based on the observation of the island and informants' accounts, it can be concluded that environmental awareness is highly important. The island's isolation and the COVID-19 crisis have exacerbated the fact that the island's population has almost disappeared. Islanders share some existing ecological tenets involving applied reflection, with slogans such as the well-known think globally, act locally, which are also framed in the sphere of globalized debate (glocalized), albeit using different parameters:

"[Comparing with the 2011 situation] The recycling plant is currently still working and has continued to operate by recycling and separating materials such as plastic, aluminum, paper, organic waste and electronic waste, which are shipped by sea to the continent directly to the company responsible for handling this waste."

"General awareness of recycling has improved in the community, including people separating their own waste and the creation of recycling centers in different areas."

"In relation to wastewater, houses, hotels and/or residential areas are now required to have their own treatment system according to health regulations." (JAH)

In short, social development is linked to sustainability, since there can be no human development if it is not sustainable. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, at the suggestion of the local government, tapu has been decreed as a form of quarantine in Rapa Nui (Pedro Edmunds Paoa has been the mayor of Rapa Nui since 2012 (sixth term). He was re-elected in 2016. Retrieved June 15, 2020 from EFEverde: <https://www.posibl.com/es/news/salud/chile-como-los-pueblos-indigenas-combaten-el-coronavirus-con-practicas-ancestrales-y-a-caballo-2182aac1>). Tapu is an ancestral method based on coexistence and respect for the rules of nature, which involves refraining from doing any activities for a certain period of time for the good of the community. In Rapa Nui, a clear search exists for alternatives that are respectful of the environment and the ecosystem; there is a true community awareness of what it means to live in harmony and balance with nature, to ensure that true social development can occur.

### 3.3. Social Development, Women and Profiguration

Social development cannot be understood if it is not through intergenerational interdependence. The commitment of all members of the community, from the youngest to the elderly, is crucial for enabling social development. Geographically speaking, Rapa Nui is the most isolated human population in the world, and it was colonized during the expansion of Austronesian peoples. Hernández, García-Moro, and Esparza [22] noted that the 52 different paternal surnames that existed in 1934 (census of Rapanui individuals carried out by the Franco-Belgian Mission) have now been reduced by practically half. This can be explained by the fact that, since the population started to open up more from 1966 onwards, there has been an increase in diversity and a decrease in internal kinship due to exogamous unions, although a strong native population base has been maintained despite the number of surnames being reduced.

The maintenance and consolidation of ethnic identity should ideally be more closely related to a form of cultural identification that expands across the community on an intercultural basis. This lead not only to further strengthening of Rapa Nui identity, but also to its sociocultural, inclusive, and sustainable development.

This can be seen as part of a slow-moving process that is closely tied across the different generations, a process where profiguration is essential. Intergenerational relations play a very important role in Rapa Nui. The type of socialization that occurs in Rapa Nui has been referred to as profigurative elsewhere [5,23]. While a prefigurative arrangement (starting from the younger population) seems to have become increasingly more significant in Rapa Nui society, it is true that it currently relies predominantly on a post-figurative or co-figurative culture (starting from adults and/or older adults). This is the result of a situation of resistance that remains, but this is qualified by elements of an identity-based project; to further this endeavor, the incipient change toward new elements that have come to be identified as making up a profigurative culture will be undoubtedly needed.

“With regard to young people who decide to continue their higher education on the continent, the majority return to the island after they have completed their courses, and they may be able to pursue the career they studied for, but not necessarily. Some professionals manage to hold state public offices. Others engage in agriculture, fishing, livestock, crafts and tourism-related jobs.”

“As an example, during the current pandemic the entire community saw the need to increase agriculture through the massive implementation of family vegetable gardens, in addition to the strengthening of fishing and animal farming, due to the cessation of tourist activities” (JAH).

As pointed out in previous articles [5,18,23], and according to the ideas of Margaret Mead [24], the conditions can exist in a new society of a prefigurative culture must be made the most of; this is a culture where the younger generations are highly trained and able to socialize the adult generations—for example, the young professionals and entrepreneurs who have revitalized the Rapa Nui Park, and other initiatives such as the NGO Toki Rapa Nui. Adult and older generations also continue to be socialized in their own culture through shared individual and collective memory, of which the Council of Elders is paradigmatic. In this way, a profigurative, intercultural, intergenerational education for all is promoted. This is one of the basic pillars for a respectful and overall integration.

“As for the younger generations, it can be seen that they’re doing quite well with technology in general, as they often use it to find information, without prioritizing the knowledge of the elders and older adults, who hold knowledge about a lot of things, including names and locations of stars in the sky, meaning of *kāiŋa* or territory, *hakaara* or genealogies, which are part of the essential principles and values of the Rapa Nui worldview. This is a key issue, which we will continue to work with the adults and the elderly, in order to transmit [these principles] to the younger generation and children, revaluing the wise people in the community.” (VHM)

One of the major problems for the social development of Rapa Nui, within the framework of intergenerational intercultural interdependence, is that of male violence against women. According to the Deputy Secretariat for Crime Prevention, the rates of violence against women reported in Rapa Nui are four times higher than in the whole of Chile. Between the end of 2019 and the beginning of 2020, Rapa Nui women demanded the repeal of the so-called 1966 Easter Law (Law 16,441), which deals comparatively lightly with crimes of male violence against women committed by the Rapa Nui. There is a widespread debate on the island in relation to defending both ancestral (cultural) traditions and human rights. However, this is in fact an artificial opposition, which should not be argued in this way. Upholding collective rights over individual rights and, especially, tradition-based rights over human rights, is culturally relativist as well as totally inadequate and contradictory.

Intercultural profiguration [5,23] is advocated within a dialogical framework of equality in difference. That is, violence 0 from 0 years old for all types of violence, including male violence against women. Social development in relation to gender equality in Rapa Nui is a profigurative work in progress among men and women of all ages (young, adult, and elderly). There is a demand for



Articles 13 and 14 of the Easter Law to be repealed. The Women's Center advocates providing mutual support, strengthening support networks, and de-normalizing and de-naturalizing violence. The coordinator of the Women's Center is Tiare Paoa. CaraYass and Allan Fuentes have written the song "Las Mariposas", from which a very illustrative fragment has been selected: "Ka 'a'ara to korua mata e te nga vi'e (wake up, women) He tau no to korua huru ena (your essence is beautiful) Ka hakaora haka'ou i te kuhane (revive the spirit) Mai roto i a korua (from within yourselves)" (retrieved June 15, 2020 from <http://www.rapanui.net/rapa-nui-conmemora-un-nuevo-dia-contra-la-violencia-de-genero.html?cbprofile=1>). To do so, there is a demand to bring to the fore the female role in their ancestral culture. This shows two sides of the same coin: there is an inherently patriarchal overview which leads to a form of male chauvinism that is increasingly contested by the role of women, who in turn play a traditionally decisive role:

"Women play a central part in this community; since time immemorial the territorial organization has focused on the importance of the role they occupy because they gestating and/or create society. It is not a mere coincidence that the terms used to name the territory and the land are the same used to designate the placenta and the uterus, that is, *Kāiŋa* and *Henua*. The territory and its components are conceived in a way that is homologous to the process of the gestation of life that occurs in women's wombs, since development ultimately depends on them (...) There is an imperative need to establish equal conditions for all human beings, providing a safe and fair environment for everyone, now and for the future" (VHM).

Social development in Rapa Nui takes the form of intergenerational and intercultural development. Profiguration is enacted through different cultural experiences that involve families. The new concept of profiguration [5,23] expands on the three types of societies and (socialization) cultures identified by Margaret Mead, which were at the base of a generational rupture that the brilliant and controversial anthropologist defined as planetary. I argue that there is a fourth mode of socialization and social development, called profiguration, which is related to the strengthening of intergenerational relations. Profiguration can attenuate and/or overcome the existing generational rupture, improving coexistence and relations between individuals. In addition to some of Mead's considerations, Norbert Elias's concept of figuration can also be called upon to reinforce the importance of human interaction, of interdependence between subjects, without separating individual and society, which form a continuum. Profiguration therefore promotes intergenerational interdependence in social relations and in human networks. In the exceptional situation of the COVID-19 pandemic, it has become evident that the island's community needs to take care of itself. This has transcended the age issue. A virus that is particularly threatening for the elderly (even though it attacks everyone) has given rise to a clearly profigurative perspective. Human vulnerability is counteracted by intergenerational interdependence; generations both give and take:

"Regarding the *Tapati Rapa Nui* festival [this is a cultural festival in which the whole family participates, where each family has to compete but in a cultural way], it has been carried on normally through the years" (JAH).

"*Mama Piru* died (...) she was one of these Rapa Nui born and bread women who lived in the countryside, near Tongariki. (...) She always went out to clean the shore; she would grab her bags, she would clean, then others would pick stuff up. That also made a deep impression last year (2019) and there have been several patrols to check the level of cleanliness on the coast (...) so there's the children, the adolescent, and then the parents" (ROM).

The older adults, the elders, also make a strong contribution. This comes from their experience of life and also of the vivid experience that intergenerational communication involves. In this sense, intergenerational relations must be furthered to ensure that *día logos* can convey true construction of knowledge [5]. Otherwise, the danger is that the elderly will lock themselves in their homes and be removed from decision making processes.

“The elderly meet in a dining hall called *Hare Koa Tiare* (...) they have lunch, talk, and spend their time painting and playing some parlor games. Activities have been suspended until further notice as a result of the pandemic.”

“The municipality supports this hall and provides food for the elderly; many of them live with their families, only a few are alone.”

“The Council of Elders *Mau Hatu or Rapa Nui* is represented by 36 wise people from the families who hold sociocultural authority. They are part of a Development Commission chaired by the governor, which also consists of the Mayor, the Navy, CONAF, National Assets, Heads of Services and five people from the community elected by the Rapa Nui people” (VHM).

Although there are tensions about this and some informants noted the danger of young people retiring or replacing the elderly, it is no less true that the Council of Elders plays a prominent role in Rapa Nui community life. This is the case both in connection with maintaining and developing cultural heritage and with providing advice to the island’s government.

Ultimately, social development in Rapa Nui must be framed in what I call profigurative socialization, as a form of joint, collaborative socialization that is not necessarily hierarchical and involves dialogue between the different generations in pursuit of figuration. Intergenerational solidarity relations between old and young take place within network-based, transversal, holistic socialization.

Profiguration must combine egalitarian, equitable aspects related to respect and to more opportunities for affective relationships that are also egalitarian, respectful, supportive, and longer-lasting. An issue of inclusive social development, of true human development, that is being worked on in Rapa Nui is gender equality and the eradication of gender-based violence on the island. I hold that the promotion of leadership, especially of young women, to ensure the consolidation of inclusive human development is not a prefigurative but a profigurative endeavor, since it is a decision collaboratively agreed on between young and old women (and men). This is happening more thanks to the experience and support of the older women than because of the initiative of young women. It is a paradigmatic case of a profigurative articulation of intergenerational interdependence in social development.

### 3.4. Social Development and Life Course Approach

Taking into account the five fundamental principles of the life course approach, the process of social development in Rapa Nui is building a solid foundation:

- (1) In relation to the principle of lifespan development, actions for the consolidation and enhancement of cultural identity and sustainability are increasing both quantitatively and qualitatively, and are a long way from being diluted by homogenizing globalization processes.
- (2) Regarding the principle of time and place, contextualization is a profigurative, intercultural, and sustainable framework, the AMOR Plan and the 2030 Agenda with the SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals) forming a well-established roadmap.
- (3) Regarding the third principle, of historical time, crucial events are happening at the right times and with a both reactive and proactive vision, which allows improvement actions to have a clear impact on the island’s social development. This is part of a complex and complicated history that has threatened ecological and human sustainability, which has accompanied and endangered the community and the island of Rapa Nui.

In relation to the “modern milestones”, a number of turning points can be identified, among others:

- the Indigenous Law (1993) by which the Easter Island Development Commission was created and the Council of Elders was legally recognized;

- the somewhat Disney-like worldwide release of the movie Rapa Nui (Kevin Costner, 1994), which really put the island and Rapa Nui culture on the map, for both good and bad, since it attracted necessary tourism but almost ended up becoming predatory;
  - the presentation of the documentary Being Rapa Nui (Susan HitoShapiro and Santi Hitorangi, 2007) at the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Affairs;
  - the setting up of the first recycling plant on the island (2011);
  - the transfer of the Rapa Nui Park, a World Heritage Site, to the Polynesian Indigenous Community Ma'u Henua, which has led to sustainable administration and tourism planning;
  - the issuing of a passport to ensure that continentals and tourists do not stay on the island longer than a month, thus curbing overpopulation (2018);
  - the repeal of Articles 13 and 14 of the Easter Law, in relation to gender equality and against male violence against women (2020), is expected;
  - the crisis of the COVID-19 pandemic can be considered a turning point in 2020, since it has revealed human vulnerability and the need to articulate interdependence with community sustainability, an additional enhancing element for profigurative, environmental, and human sustainability, as exemplified in Rapa Nui.
- (4) All of the above is also related to the fourth principle of linked lives, which is the fundamental principle of profiguration, since human lives are interdependent and occur across networks of shared relationships and influences. Dynamics involving education (teachers-students), family, family-work connections, friends (peers), and the community (Rapanui) can only be developed in a positive way within a profigurative form of socialization, where intergenerational relationships can reveal a wealth of perspectives and experiences.
- (5) The fifth principle, agency, is evident in Rapa Nui in relation to the general (sociological) idea that people can shape their own lives but do so within certain socially structured constraints. Individuals make choices and build their own life course; there are links and causality between the individual and the structural. They exercise their free will within a structure of opportunities (circumstantial and even structural constraints and opportunities which, as has been shown, are related to the community and to the insular nature of Rapa Nui). A profigurative form of socialization facilitates flexible, ample socialization and provides opportunities, albeit guided by a fine thread of the wisdom of life experience, without this being a constraint on freedom (as a post-figurative option would be, which would only operate from the elderly and the adults toward the young).

#### 4. Conclusions

A conclusion derived from this study in relation to the course of this decade and the prospects for the next decade is that it is pertinent to talk about social development in Rapa Nui. This is because structural and action foundations have been established to promote inclusive, sustainable, and intergenerational profigurative human development. It is clear that the island's community is not without its tensions and critical moments, but the foundations for social development have been laid.

Intergenerational relations play a key role in this process. This is promoted by the joint participation of people of different generations in the various organisms, institutions, and associations on the island. Profiguration and sustainability are the flagships of social development on Rapa Nui. This is enabled by a crucial combination that is at play: of the life experience, cultural identity, and environmental traditions brought to the fore by older adults; the creativity and plasticity of young people; and the preparation of young people and adults, all of it in relation to ICT (Information and Communication Technology) and ecological alternative possibilities. The green agenda, the AMOR Plan and the development of sustainable development goals for the next decade (2030) is the common objective of the different generations in the community. To conclude, this case study of the Rapa Nui people shows how social development is articulated in a profigurative way, through intergenerational relationships (Rapa Nui Council of Elders, the Women's Center, the Active Woman Foundation), interculturality (Education, Intercultural Bilingual School Lorenzo Baeza Vega,

Liceo Aldea Educativa Rapa Nui Hona'a O Te Mana, the Cultural Corporation -with Canal Mata or te Rapa Nui and Radio Manukena-, the NGO Toki Rapa Nui), technological advances (ICT; social media—Radio Manukena—and social networks; Municipal Library—Katipare Center; and the Internet BiblioRedes), and political organization (municipality, the municipality's community development directorate, the provincial government, the Rapa Nui Council of Elders, and the Easter Island Development Commission).

These have joined forces in a sustainable identity project for the island and its inhabitants, involving the natural and the human, the ecological and the cultural. The social development that all this entails is the basis for a continuously negotiated and interdependent, intercultural, and profigurative coexistence, intended to achieve inclusive development for community life in harmony and balance with nature and humanity itself.

Finally, the qualitative research carried out has demonstrated the usefulness of sociology to study the processes of social development at the micro level, in this case based on the island of Rapa Nui (Easter Island), which can be extrapolated to contextualized universal figurations. Norbert Elias considered the possibility of studying aspects of universal figurations within a community of a few thousand inhabitants, with noteworthy advantages: namely, the use of a small social unit as a focus of research on problems that can be found in a wide variety of larger, more differentiated social units. This makes it possible to explore these problems in considerable detail or, as Elias said, "Under the microscope." In this way, a small-scale explanatory model can be constructed of a figuration that is considered universal. Additionally, Elias advocated the use of qualitative, non-obstructive techniques marked by a historical profile [25] (pp. 83–84). So, the island of Rapa Nui is immersed in processes of social and intercultural development to ensure its self-sustainability and an optimization of resources through social responsibility. Likewise, this inclusive human development is an intergenerational collective process and reinforces social development by promoting a society of profigurative culture. All this is intended to address the threats that lie in wait for the island regarding identity, sustainability, and the cultural survival of its citizens.

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