After the demise of the indigenous rebellion in 1914, the Rapanui community began a campaign of active resistance against attempts to mold their ways of life to new socio-political patterns and norms. Their constant and varied practices to undermine and disregard the authority of the State and the functionaries of the “Compañía Explotadora de Isla de Pascua” (CEDIP) became significant obstacles for colonial powers, as well as marking the beginnings of the struggles for Rapanui civil rights in the 1960s.

Introduction

From the 1890s onwards, the Rapanui faced a new social and political reality on the island; one characterized by the significant consolidation of colonial forces (Cristino et al. 1984; Estella 1920). In the decade prior to this change, under the administration of Alexander Salmonds and the “Compañía Brander”, the demands of livestock production had been somewhat compatible with the spaces of political autonomy that indigenous peoples had conserved. For instance, patterns of livestock production had been compatible with an indigenous power structure based on an “ethnic king”. However, from the 1890s forward, those kinds of spaces became increasingly closed-in and corralled. Thus, towards the end of the 19th century, the Rapanui community became increasingly concentrated and virtually contained within Hanga Roa, while socio-economic patterns of livestock production became more restrictive (Cristino et al. 1984; Fischer 2001; Estella 1920; McCall 1976, 1980). During this period, the concentration of political power also crystallized in the figure of the Subdelegado Marítimo, or Maritime Sub-Delegate. This figure was at once the political administrator of the island while also, after the creation of “La Compañía Explotadora de Isla de Pascua” of Merlet (future property of the British firm Williamson & Balfour), the administrator of the company as well.7

Thus, the rebellion of 1914 occurred within this new, post-1890s, political and social context. An important rebellion against the Chilean colonial presence on the island, it was led by Rapanui indigenous and religious leader, Maria Angata. This uprising, which for the indigenous population constituted a direct challenge to the establishment of the new colonial regimen being imposed on the island, was also the last direct and open rebellion against these new forms of colonial rule. Inspired by mystical or messianic Christian discourses, Angata and her followers successfully threw into question the very foundations of foreign presence, while also taking control of the island and corralling in the CEDIP administrator on his lands in Mataveri. Their rebellion declared, among other things, total sovereignty over the island by islanders, and demanded the return of livestock and other property then in the hands of the Company (Castro Flores 2006; Cristino et al. 1984; Estella 1920; Routledge 1919; Stammbuch 2010; Van Tilburg 2003). No action of this scale or type would occur again on the island in the decades following the 1914 rebellion, and until at least the 1960s.

As discussed previously, the traditional Rapanui way of life underwent important transformations at the end of the 19th century. These transformations brought, as a consequence, new patterns of social and political relations on the island. While valuable studies...
exist that focus on the period stretching from the first contact between the islanders and Europeans in the 18th century up to the establishment of intensive commercial regimens of livestock exploitation at the end of the 19th century, many of these have lacked a focus on salvaging and exploiting the significant political role played by the Rapanui population during these years (Moreno Pakarati 2011).

“It’s a common error in the studies of Rapa Nui, to depict a passive island community in the face of the onslaught of modernity, colonialism, and the foreign exploiters of the island. The truth is that Rapanui society lived through an interesting evolution of their structures of political power, and rapid adaptations permitted them to confront these powers coming in from outside” (Moreno Pakarati 2011:53).

Moreover, the scarcity of documentation related to the years following the indigenous rebellion in 1914 have only made it more difficult to comprehend the diverse social and political processes occurring on the island during this time period (Moreno Pakarati 2011). This article, building from recent investigations on Rapanui society during the CEDIP period, presents new elements for analysis from this time period and moves towards a more profound characterization of the transformations of indigenous socio-political structures, while emphasizing the capacity of the Rapanui to both survive these transformations and actively respond to them.2

General Aspects of Rapanui Living Conditions

According to the census carried out by the Maritime Sub-Delegation between the years of 1926 and 1935, the indigenous Rapanui population rose from 356 to 445 inhabitants with a great part of the population involved in farming and livestock raising activities, either in family enterprises or as workers – temporary or permanent – in the Company (AIV 1926, AMM 1935). However, despite this growth, the majority of historical texts concur that the living conditions of the population during this era were very harsh. Without access to their ancestral lands, facing restrictions that prevented them from exploiting the island’s agriculture in any significant way, and struck by the periodic waves of illnesses brought by the arrival of new ships, the indigenous population faced a variety of shortages and many difficulties. The suffering of the population did not escape the authorities on island. They described it in terms that implied a neglected suffering, including their own. In 1926, Carlos Recabarren, the Maritime Sub-Delegate of Rapa Nui tells us the following:

“Sufre mucho él que suscribe, ver a tantas familias pobres, sus hijos heridos y muchas personas en esta isla han de comer por falta de trabajo y el tiempo malo. Ruego al Señor Director General del Territorio Marítimo de Valaparaiso, pida a la Sociedad […] una caridad para esta isla, tan abandonada de todo, pidiendo a sus afectores, anticipándole, los agradecimientos a nombre de la población” (AIV 1926).

However, neither the supposed suffering of the authorities nor their periodic campaigns for charity during this period translated into palpable improvements in the islanders’ living conditions. Even during the years when no famines occurred, the situation of the indigenous population could be characterized as one of systematic abandonment by the government and public institutions (Santana et al. 2011).

Healthcare is a prime example of this abandonment. Aside from lacking a hospital or a medical professional on Rapa Nui, the constant requests by authorities on the island for treatment and medical supplies were not answered completely ignored. In 1928, after more than a year in this position and following many requests to his superiors in Chile, Recabarren himself bore the responsibility of satisfying the urgent medical needs of the islanders during his sporadic trips to Valparaíso. He wrote:

“[…] Cuando llegué del Continente, no había ningún remedio, muchos enfermos y muchos muertos. Me puse en campaña con la Policía, traje bastantes remedios y propuse a entregar a las gentes y aplicar los remedios necesarios y combatir la fiebre hasta dando pugnares, […] aspirina, yodo, algodón y muchos otros remedios. Se completó la botica con otro regalo más que dio la Co Explotadora Isla de Pascua, unas pastillas que vendan el hogar y se hacen fogones que la fiebre y que haga dando pugnares, […] aspirina, yodo, algodón y muchos otros remedios. Se completó la botica con otro regalo más que dio la Co Explotadora Isla de Pascua, unas pastillas que vengan de Norteamérica que el año pasado también regalaron y que dieron muy buenos resultados, tanto para los leprosos como también para todos los habitantes de la Isla […]” (AIV 1928b).

[…] When I arrived from the continent, there were no remedies, but many sick and many dead. I embarked on a campaign with the police, I brought medicines and I started to distribute them among the people, applying the necessary treatments and fighting the fevers there were; administering pugnares… aspirin, iodine, cotton wool and many other remedies. The supplies were...

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[One who witnesses so many poor families suffers much, their naked children often go hungry for the lack of work and bad weather. I implore the General Director of the Maritime Territory of Valparaiso, to ask society… some charity for this island, which is so abandoned from everything and in the hope that he will do so, I advance the population’s gratitude.]

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complemented with another present donated by the Easter Island Development Corporation: some pills from North America and which last year were also given and gave very good results, both for those with leprosy as well as the rest of the island’s population...

Eight years later, Rapa Nui was still lacking the most basic sanitary infrastructure. At that moment, the islanders achieved better results by supplying themselves with pills. For example, Esteban Hito, a Rapanui, donated a “little house with two rooms” for the running of the island’s first polyclinic. When the inexperienced practitioner and health supervisor, Adolfo Dussaut, finally arrived, the Maritime Sub-Delegate Manuel Olaquiaga related the importance of the Rapanui efforts and contributions:

“[…] su llegada a esta isla no se contaba con un local para la atención de los muchos enfermos que requerían sus servicios, por lo que tuve que colocarlo provisionariamente por 6 días, en el antiguo local de la Escuela, hasta que el nato Esteban Hito cedió gratuitamente una caleta de dos piezas, en donde el practicante pudo instalar su Policlínico […] Con respecto a los servicios sanitarios, creo que sería conveniente para la Armada, designar una persona de mayor graduación que el sargento señor Dussaut, pues con ello se tendría una persona de mayores conocimientos profesionales […]” (AMM 1921c).

In the almost complete absence of public health policies, the most important “social conquest” of the “Temperamento Provisorio” (Provisional Temperament) of 1917 reached its most grotesque extreme with the construction of the leper colony. During the period of Maritime Sub-Delegate Exequiel Acuña, one of the medical reports by the doctor in charge of the Bapudano paints an image of the miserable conditions in which the people suffering from leprosy lived:

“[…] Un cuarto de madera en mui mal estado con 2 puertas y 3 ventanas” (AIV 1926). […] una habitación en extremadamente mal estado con dos puertas y tres ventanas. Here, 63 Rapanui, 32 men and 31 women, studied on different and often irregular days. During the year of 1926, the schoolteachers were Rapanui Mariana Atan and Andrés Chavez and their wages were paid by the Maritime Sub-Delegation.

Another important characteristic of Rapanui social life during this period was its extreme isolation. Beyond the activities of church and school, which gave the Rapanui the possibility of catching a glimpse of foreign life, the indigenous population lived in almost total isolation. This isolation, heighted by the inexistance

Miguel Fuentes
of communication with the continent and the prohibition of exchanges accelerated the cases of permanent abuse of the islanders by the authorities (Rapa Nui Work Group 2002). In spite of the adverse living conditions which the Rapanui faced during these years, the development of a small-scale peasant economy, displaying strong elements of traditional forms of production and exchange, ensured both their subsistence and their capacity to respond to State institutions (school, police, and registry office), including permanent or temporary workers in the CEDIP, as well as permanent workers, fishermen, and sailors whose production was geared towards self-sufficiency and exchange, and as workers inserted into the diverse State institutions (school, police, and registry office), including the hands of the Company (Castro Flores 2006; Cristino et al. 1984; Fischer 2004; Grifferos 1997). Thus, far from constituting a passive community before the depredations of colonial power, the island’s society was characterized by active opposition to the successive attempts to mold them according to new social and political patterns that were enforced following the defeat of the 1914 rebellion.

From the point of view of the colonial authority, the permanent opposition of the Rapanui could be conveniently “explained away” by alluding to the basic norms of “civilized life” which the indigenous population supposedly lacked, as well as to their supposed “natural” tendencies toward “savagery” and “immorality.” The Maritime Sub-Delegate Olalquiaga writes:

“Habiendo convivido con los isleños por espacio de 5 meses, he podido conocerlos perfectamente y deduzco que son verdaderamente flojos, pues, ésta gente no tiene iniciativas de trabajo ni de progreso, ellos son además incultos, todo sentimiento mutuo que es amor de madre ni de hijos, es y natural que no contando con los sentimientos primordiales de la vida, no cuentan con nada, ni siquiera con amor propio. Mis estudios profundos a lo largo de un cuarto de siglo, amontonando varios casos, habían demostrado que los Rapanui eran flojos, indolentes, no salía con frecuencia en las islas, no se daban cuenta de ser que es amor de madre ni de hijos, y es natural que no contando con los sentimientos primordiales de la vida, no cuentan con nada, ni siquiera con amor propio. Mis estudios profundos a lo largo de un cuarto de siglo, amontonando varios casos, habían demostrado que los Rapanui eran flojos, indolentes, no salía con frecuencia en las islas, no se daban cuenta de ser...”

(MAD 1936-22.)

as well as in multiple economic activities and characterized by the conservation of identity based on language and certain aspects of their kinship system. Similarly, the Rapanui exhibited a striking capacity to appropriate foreign religious influences and re-interpret them according to their own beliefs (Castro Flores 2006; Delsing 2004; Grifferos 1997). Thus, far from constituting a passive community before the depredations of colonial agents, the island’s society was characterized by active opposition to the successive attempts to mold them according to new social and political patterns that were enforced following the defeat of the 1914 rebellion.

Forms of Indigenous Resistance During the Period 1917-1936

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Labor and conditions, requesting CLPS4 per day for men and CLPS3 per day for women and child workers. They also demanded an improvement in the daily rations of food, hours of rest, and worker profit-sharing from the shearing. This text is reflected in a letter to Enrique Edwards from Carlos Recabarren:

“Señor Don Enrique Edmunds. Matatavy. Mui Señor mis y amigo. Pongo en conocimiento de Ud. que con fecha 30 de Julio del mes pasado los habitantes de la Isla de Pascua se declararon en guerla, pidendo aumento de salarios y raciones respectivamente, al Señor Administrador de la Cia Explotadora de la Isla de Pascua. Los guaquisiduos nombraron sus representantes a las siguientes personas: Pedro Atán, Daniel Chavez, Moises Tucki y Nicolas Paekomio para que se presentaran a esta Subdelegacion Maritima 0 hiciaran sus reclamos.” (AIV 1928:Folio 51(26)).

[...]

Civilization versus resistance, colonial regulation versus indigenous rebellion, this was the context within which the Rapanui political framework developed during these years. Caught between adapting to the precarious “colonial pace” which reflected the “Provisional Temperament” of 1917 and the need to confront the adverse conditions to which they were subjected, the islanders created a renewed spirit in the defense of their interests. Consequently, the Rapanui peoples’ development of a permanent strategy of not recognizing the authority of government agencies presented a continuous, and systematic, obstacle for the colonial authorities. Among other things, these practices constituted important antecedents for the emergence of Rapanui civil rights struggles led by Alfonso Rapu in later decades.

Strikes and Insubordination

Strikes and insubordination were some of the clearest forms of indigenous opposition to the island’s authorities that emerged during these years. By directly challenging the power structures consolidated after the defeat of the 1914 Rebellion, the Rapanui sought to subvert the very foundations of the colonial enterprise. For example, in July 1928, a massive strike broke out among workers of the Company. They demanded improvements in labor and conditions, requesting CLPS4 per day for men and CLPS3 per day for women and child workers. They also demanded an improvement in the daily rations of food, hours of rest, and worker profit-sharing from the shearing. This text is reflected in a letter to Enrique Edwards from Carlos Recabarren:

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One of the most outstanding features of the strike was the firmness and commitment with which it was carried out. The Rapanui publicly declared their intention to maintain their position until the administrator accepted all of their demands. In one of the strikers’ declarations, they made clear their disposition to prevent anyone who declined to support the movement from working, by force if needed.

“[...] Los nombrados más arriba [se refiere a los líderes de la huelga] se presentaran a ésta Subdelegacion a las 2.P.M del dia 5 de Agosto y esplesuraron los siguientes puntos. 1. Punto. Mejoramiento de sus jornales, hombres a razon de 45 diarios y su racion en cafè almuerzo, y comida, horas de almuerzo 11 A.M y comidas 5 P.M. 2 Punto. Mejoramiento de sus jornales para los niños y las mugeres 35 diarios y sus raciones y horas como los demas hombres. 3 Punto. No entrarán a trabajar ninguna persona, si el Señor Administrador no aceta nuestra petición. 4 Punto. Para los trabajos de la repa, se efectua la base de los fundaciones del colonial enterprise. For example, in July 1928, a massive strike broke out among workers of the Company. They demanded improvements in
voluntariamente, los trabajos de la administración y los trabajadores se sintonizaron el último hata que la Cía arregle definitivamente. 6. Punto: Si la Cía acepta nuestras condiciones y la de todos los habitantes de ésta Isla queda arreglado y todo el mundo volvió a trabajar tranquilamente. 7. Punto quedan en ésta Subdelegación las firmas de los representantes de ésta guélga jeneral. Señor Administrador; agradeceré al sud contestar sobre éste particular. Sin otro particular tener el agrad de saludar a ud mi ... y amigo. Carlos A.Recabarren” (AIV 1928b:Folios 51(26)-52).

[... Those named above [referring to leaders of the strike] presented themselves before the Sub-Delegation at 2 PM on the 5th of August and presented the following demands: 1st condition: Improvement of wages, the right to $4 a day for men, and a ration of coffee, lunch and food, lunch hours 11 AM and food 5 PM. 2nd-Condition: Improvement of wages for women and children, $3 a day wage and the same food rations and hours as the men. 3rd condition: No one is to work if the administrator does not accept our petition. 4th Condition: for shearing workers; to be applied during the months of October and November of the present year, $30 per hundred or $300 per thousand is asked per one hundred sheep, including respective rations. 5th condition: Those who want to work voluntarily, both administration work and rural work will be granted until the Company provides a definite solution. 6th condition: If the Company accepts our conditions and those of all the inhabitants of the island, the agreement will be binding and everyone will go back to work without any fuss. 7th condition: the signatures of all the representatives of the general strike are presented here at the Sub-Delegation and we demand the honorable administrator in advance for answering the particular mentioned here. With nothing else to add I send my greetings, and friend. Carlos A. Recabarren]

The duration of the strike also demonstrated its strength. Almost two weeks after starting, the workers achieved the first concession from the administrator of the Company: a rise in the daily wage to $3 a day for the men and $1.50 a day for women and children. However, unsatisfied with these concessions, some workers radicalized their demands.

“No Señor mio y amigo. La presente tiene por objeto de comunicar a Ud. de que hice llamar a los representantes de la huelga y les hice saber su resolución de solicitar aumento de los jornales, y que la Administración aceptaba con gusto dichos jornales. Los representantes, reunieron a la jente en la Plaza para comunicarles, muchos aceptaron el ofrecimiento de la Cía, para los hombres 35 diarios, para las mujeres y niños 15 1/2 diarios, otros plantearon el último hasta que la Cía arregle definitivamente. 6. Punto: Si la Cía acepta nuestras condiciones y la de todos los habitantes de ésta Isla queda arreglado y todo el mundo volvió a trabajar tranquila”. 7. Punto quedan en ésta Subdelegación las firmas de los representantes de ésta guélga jeneral. Señor Administrador; agradeceré al sud contestar sobre éste particular. Sin otro particular tener el agrad de saludar a ud mi ... y amigo. Carlos A. Recabarren” (AIV 1928b:Folios 51(26)-52).

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Fifteen years later and referring to this same issue, Olalquiaga commented on how generically the theft had become among the indigenous population, describing at the same time their strategies for concealing the act. “En vista del giro que tomaba el asunto, que al parecer ésta gente se encontraba dispuesta a no ceder y replicar todo ataque, hice que los empadronadores les tomaran los datos a los que quisieran darles, consiguiendo de esta manera los de algunos de ellos […]” (AMM 1926:20).

In view of the changes… which seemingly possessed these people not to give up and in order to drive off a full blown attack, I ordered the census officers to take the details of those who were willing to give them, in this way achieving the registration of some of them…

While a more profound study is needed to establish the frequency of indigenous acts of resistance during these decades, these events are important to outline because they question central elements of colonial power established on Rapa Nui after the indigenous defeat in 1914. In all respects, these events constituted the clearest and most direct challenges that State authorities and the sheep company had to confront during this period, at least until the rise of Rapanui civil rights mobilizations of the 1960s.

**Theft**

In addition to strikes and the serious outbursts of insubordination, the indigenous population disregarded the authority of colonial powers in other ways, including theft. While not a form of open confrontation with the colonial regime, the proliferation of this particular practice represented a permanent problem for the Maritime Authority and the Company. It is worth noting that the main victims were functionaries of the State, the Navy and the CEDIP. As Acuña relates in 1921:

“Los robos cada día con mas descaro, robándose ultimamente 18 piezas del forro de la chaquita de la Subdelegación, para que se formara una idea U.S. le comuniqué que me robaron, hasta el cordel del palo de bandera, privándome del único placer que tenía de hizotodos los días festivos la Bandera Nacional.” (AMM 1921:16).

[The thefts are increasingly more brazen, with the theft, in the last instance, of 18 pieces of the Sub-delegation’s coat lining; to give you an idea, they even stole the hamstring from the flag pole, denying me my only pleasure of raising the national flag.]

By not attributing strictly criminal tendencies to the thefts, authorities revealed an important measure of Rapanui rebellion and opportunism against the authorities. The case of the well-known “thief”, Felipe Teao, and his decisive manner was also mentioned specifically by Olalquiaga:

“Hecho el reclamo correspondiente el mismo día por Ines Teao […] llamé a Felipe Teao y le pedí explicara el cargo que se le hacia, a lo que inmediatamente me confesó que esto lo había hecho [el robo de un corte de gênero] para que yo no lo dejara salir en libertad [debido a que como recluso tenía asegurada su alimentación y otras garantías]. En consideración a su nueva falta y a su confesión espontánea […] le condené a 15 días mas de prisión, siempre con trabajo forzado, pena que cumplió con un buen comportamiento. Al terminar me pidió que no lo dejara en la Subdelegación, a lo que accedí gustoso, dejándolo de ordenanza de la Subdelegación, con $20 mensuales, pero a los 15 días de habérlo tenido como empleado, me vi en la necesidad de despedirlo, a causa de que durante su permanencia como empleado, se llevó un recipiente de fierro ensalzado y un balde de pertenencia de esta Subdelegación, por lo cual firmé compromiso de devolver o pagar estas especies […] Aparte de todo y no satisfecho este individo con todas las faltas cometidas, en la noche del día 3 de Febrero se presentó al Guardian Casas y al Marinero

Fifteen years later and referring to this same issue, Olalquiaga commented on how generically the theft had become among the indigenous population, describing at the same time their strategies for concealing the act. “Este mal del robo general en todos los isleños, a la igual que los indios, pero con la diferencia que ésta gente sama a su habilidad e injeno para robar, su idioma, que nadie lo sabe ni se lo entiende, de modo que cuando cometen un delito, se hacen los leos, no entendiendo lo que se les pregunta y nunca saben nada de lo que no les conviene, porque les conviene, entonces saben todo y entienden todo” (AMM 1936:22).

[Theft is engrained in all the islanders, equal to that of the indians, with only different that these people add to their ingenious ability for thievery their language, which no one knows or understands, so that once a crime has been committed, they are dumbfounded, not understanding what is asked of them and never knowing anything that doesn’t suit them, but when it does suit them, then they know everything and understand everything.]

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“En vista del giro que tomaba el asunto, que al parecer ésta gente se encontraba dispuesta a no ceder y replicar todo ataque, hice que los empadronadores les tomaran los datos a los que quisieran darles, consiguiendo de esta manera los de algunos de ellos […]” (AMM 1936:20).

In view of the changes… which seemingly possessed these people not to give up and in order to drive off a full blown attack, I ordered the census officers to take the details of those who were willing to give them, in this way achieving the registration of some of them…

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Jura, diciéndoles que yo le había mandado para que se sacara otras laces, porque iba a salir de la Escuela, y el Domingo 9, a la salida de misa en la Plaza “Libertad”, en presencia de mis subalternos y de muchos nativos, me confirmó lo dicho, que era verdad que yo lo había mandado a ello. Ante tan grave circunstancia, le hice apresuar y lo puse en el calabozo, de donde se fugó esa misma noche, llevándose entre otras especies, un par de pantalones de lona, sin que hasta la fecha sepa yo donde quiera dar raazones de él […] aunque yo he sabido que anda en el pueblo y aún ha mandado solicitar permiso para salir a pescar” (AMM 1936:6-7).

[Having received the corresponding claim on the same day by Inés Teao. I called Felipe Teao and asked him to explain the charge pressed against him to which he immediately confessed responsibility [for the theft of a cut of cloth] so as not to be set free [seeing as a prisoner he was provided with food and assured other guarantees]. In view of his offence and his spontaneous confession. I condemned him to 15 more days in prison, with forced labor, a punishment he completed with good behavior. At the end of his term he asked me to keep him at the Sub-Delegation, which I gladly accepted, keeping with him the Sub-Delegation’s ordnance of 20 monthly, but after 15 days of his services I saw it necessary to fire him, the cause being that during his stay as a worker, he took a glazed iron flask and a bucket belonging to the Sub-Delegation, items which he promised to return or pay costs… Furthermore, on the night of the 3rd of February with the dawn of the offences he had committed, he presented himself to the Caretaker Casas and the Sailor Jara, saying that I had sent him to retrieve a sailcloth suit from the school hall, and on Sunday the 9th, upon leaving Mass in “Liberty” Square and in the presence of my subordinates and many natives, he confirmed the latter, saying verily that I had sent him to that effect. Before such a grave slander, I had him arrested and put him in prison from where he escaped that same night, taking with him among other items a pair of sail cloth trousers, which until then had been responsible and able to trace and nobody is willing to testify his whereabouts… even though I know he is somewhere in the town having even applied for a fishing permit.]

The arrival of ships to the island presented another auspicious opportunity for theft, mainly targeting the ship’s marines. As Olañaguáca describes: “El día 14 de Febrero recaló en ésta el transporte “Maipo”, y como es costumbre de los isleños, llegando cualquier barco, van un cañarur sus tororos, camotes ó plátanos, por ropas, cigarrillos, comestibles ó licores, pero mucho más avanza para la seiscera la Escuela, y el aglomeraciones que se producen a bordo, para substituise lo que pueden, como sucedió en esta ocasión, cuyos protagonistas fueron Miguel Teao, Felipe Chavez y Gabriel Tuko.” (AMM 1936:8).

[On the 14th day of February the “Maipo” put into port, and as is custom of the islanders upon the arrival of any ship, they approach to exchange woodcarvings, sweet potato, bananas for clothes, cigarettes, food and liquor, but many others go to take advantage of the large gatherings produced aboard, to take what they can, as was the case on this occasion and whose protagonists were Miguel Teao, Felipe Chavez and Gabriel Tuko.]

Finally, livestock theft figured as one of the most frequent forms of robbery, and one that damaged the Company’s interests. On certain occasions, those robberies even involved the complicity of foremen and the police, who often had family ties to the perpetrators.

“For the theft of a robo de un cordero a la Cía. E. I. de Pascua con fecha 2 de Agosto, inmediatamente el Sr. Administrador me dio el aviso por teléfono, que su capataz Alberto Paoa sabía quien era y que por ser su pariente no comunicaba a él lo sucedido. Ese aviso lo sucedió. Ese aviso lo hizo Sr. Prefecto a la Cía. oficial, al Capataz, Alberto Paoa y a Isaias Fatti […] quien era el ladrón, según el denuncio y a quién el capataz apollia la noche del 3 de febrero […] y a Pedro Atan y a Marta Paoa de Fatti. Todos declararon que no había robo y que lo único que había traído era cuestión de celo y que entre Inés de Atan y Marta Paoa de Fatti […]” (AIV 1936b:Folios 169-97:170).

[The theft of a lamb was reported to the Company E.I. of Easter Island on the 2nd of August; the Administrator immediately informed me over the telephone, that his foreman Alberto Paoa knew who was the thief but had not reported it to me because of his relationship and nobody is willing to testify his whereabouts… even though I know he is somewhere in the town having even applied for a fishing permit.]

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While it is unclear whether the episode actually dealt with a domestic squabble, this incident highlights the high incidence of animal theft, and illustrates the high levels of mistrust on behalf of the authorities with respect to the indigenous Rapanui, including those who, like the foreman, occupied positions of responsibility within the Company.

Insubordination and Disobedience

One of the central concerns of the State authorities and the Company was the implementation of a series of ordinances designed to control the daily lives of the indigenous population. These had as their objective the regulation of the lives of Rapanui inhabitants — categorized as “thieves”, “rebellious”, and “lazy” — in order to force the inhabitants to abandon their “bad habits” and reach a “civilized” condition in their activities and appearance. With this in mind, Chilean functionaries deployed a series of disciplinary strategies on the indigenous population that ranged from coercive measures, including prohibitions, restrictions, and punishments, to others aimed at co-opting the island’s population. Beyond the already known restrictions on free circulation, navigation and the strict rules that prevented the Rapanui from leaving the island, these measures also included coercive strategies that prevented the indigenous peoples from walking the streets of Hanga Roa after nine at night and obliged them to perform “community work” called “fiscal Mondays”.

On top of that, fines were charged for failing to adhere to hygiene and cleanliness norms, and punishments were dealt out that ranged from forced labor, to whipping, and the shacking of prisoners.

The colonial institutions also spearheaded attempts to co-opt islanders, by attempting to feed a feeling of national identity among the islanders in the hopes of creating a framework for social consensus between the authorities and the indigenous population. Certain spaces of indigenous participation, under the watchful eye of the Maritime Sub-Delegation, were created in the school and the church. These included the creation of whistle bands made up of students who performed at public events, awards ceremonies for the most accomplished students, urbanization plans for the construction of houses for indigenous families, and the election of municipal and religious event representatives (AIV 1926; Folio 58; 1928; Folio 3920; AYM 1936-12).

In this context, the island’s authorities were not at liberty to confront the obstinacy of the islanders. When considered together, the emergence of strikes, insubordination, and the simultaneous and constant robberies, mainly of livestock, represented a tenacious resistance on the part of indigenous communities to the disciplinary measures of control implemented by the State and Company institutions.

Through cunning practices, the indigenous community even came to take advantage of the internal divisions of colonial power, thereby subverting it. Olalquiaga states:

“Los nativos bien confiados en el gran apoyo que tienen en los Sto. Oficiales y comandantes de la empresa, no tienen que todo reclamo acompañado de calumnias que hacen en contra del Subdelegado, es oído y creído, no quieren obedecer las órdenes que imparte la Subdelegación, haciendo ver que ellos no cumplen otra orden que la que les dijo el papá comandante” (AMM 1936:24).

The natives are trusting in the great support they have in the officials and commanders of the Navy, where all their grievances and slanderous complaints against the Sub-Delegation are heard and believed, and as a result refuse to obey the denunciations and complaints. With this in mind, Chilean functionaries deployed a series of disciplinary strategies on the indigenous population that ranged from coercive measures, including prohibitions, restrictions, and punishments, to others aimed at co-opting the island’s population. Beyond the already known restrictions on free circulation, navigation and the strict rules that prevented the Rapanui from leaving the island, these measures also included coercive strategies that prevented the indigenous peoples from walking the streets of Hanga Roa after nine at night and obliged them to perform “community work” called “fiscal Mondays”.

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desear debido tan solo a la falta de policía para hacer cumplir el Reglamento vigente. Los matrimonios que en nota anterior de cuenta a U.S., siguen separados como si el aduutero no fue un delito castigado por la ley” (AMM 1921a).

[I have the honor of informing you that the conduct and morals of the natives leaves much to be desired due to the lack of police to enforce the legislation currently in force. The marriage of couple that I mentioned in a previous correspondence to you are still separated, as though adultery was not an offence punishable by law.]

Fifteen years later, Olalquiaga still lamented the unsuccessful attempts of the authorities to remedy this “ill”, and even appealed to the islanders themselves to reach a solution to the problem.

“[…] En vista de la situación por que atraviesan estos matrimonios, que juntamente con ser imporpias, es hasta inmoral en algunos casos donde existen niños de cierta edad en que ya se dan cuenta de los malos actos de sus padres, que siendo casados viven públicamente los hombres con otras mujeres y las mujeres con otros hombres, comprendí que era necesario arreglar esta situación […]” (AMM 1936:6).

[In view of these new charges pressed by the Company, the determination, and resistance of the natives to hand over or kill the dogs, I summoned them all to the Sub-Delegation, however they never turned up at the meeting, obliging me to talk to them on Sunday in “Liberty” Square at 10 in the morning, making them understand completely, that I approved the Company’s resolution in all its parts, and which the Sub-Delegation also supports, that from this day onwards, the Sub-Delegation will ban all fishing permits, until the natives deal with those dogs.]

Further manifestations of indigenous disobedience can be seen in the relations of production. Here, the Rapanui were capable of confronting the western economic model with their own practices of production and exchange, influenced by ancient cultural traditions. In this sense, the preservation of their cultural heritage constituted, among other things, an important challenge to the establishment of work regimes that had been designed in accordance with the criteria of modern economic organization that Chilean functionaries and the Company wanted to impose.

“Es algo inano en los nativos no el trabajar, pues están tan habituados a la flora, que si tienen 10 hectáreas de terreno, sembran solo 3, lo suficiente para tener un poco de maíz, camotes y plátanos. Agregándole unas pocas sandías, todo lo cual es lo suficiente y lo necesario para todo el año, ayudados por cierto, con las figuras de las calles, porque hay días que estas gentes no comen otra cosa que brea verduras […]” (AMM 1936:12).

[In view of the situation experienced by these marriages, which are not only improper, but even immoral in those cases involving children of a certain age and who are aware of the deplorable acts of their parents; seeing as married men live openly with other women and women with other men, I saw it necessary to find a solution to the problem. In view of these new charges, I summoned to a reconciliation council in an attempt to reunite the marriages in disagreement, that is to say a council of good men, choosing, in particular, respectable individuals. In the effort undertaken by this council to come to a settlement, and for the fight for the desired objectives, proved unproductive.]

The Rapanui responded similarly to another of Olalquiaga’s decrees, produced on the occasion of the killing of livestock by dogs, which the Company claimed belonged to indigenous peoples. They ignored the orders of the Sub-Delegate and refused to kill or hand over the dogs.

“En vista de este nuevo denuncio de la Compañía, sus determinaciones, y la resistencia de los nativos para entregar o matar los perros, les llamo a todos a la Subdelegación a cuya citación no asistió nadie, viéndome obligado el Domingo ha hablarles en la Plaza “Libertad” a las 10 de la mañana, haciéndoles comprender en forma directa, que aunque todas sus partes la resolución de la Compañía, a la que se hacía solidaría esta Subdelegación y que a partir de esa fecha, la Subdelegación no le daría permiso a nadie para salir a pescar, mientras no terminaran los nativos con todos los perros […]” (AMM 1936:6).

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Unwillingness to work is inherent in the natives, since they are accustomed to laziness that were for they have ten hectares of land, they would sow only three, enough to grow a bit of maize, sweet potato and bananas, adding some watermelon, all of which is enough for the whole year, helped of course by the lstigs in the streets, because there are days that these people only eat figs. Neither are they worried about clothing, since they know these are sent as gifts by the Navy on the continent. When in want of some novelties, such as cigarettes and alcohol, which they excessively indulge in, they obtain what they desire by exchanging them for monkeys [carved figures], bananas, or sweet potato.)

However, in the same document, State functionaries recognized that the Rapanui capacity to develop successful and productive commercial activities afforded them not only subsistence but also a not inconsiderable surplus.

Conclusions

The 1914 rebellion of Angata was a direct confrontation against the consolidation of the colonial presence on Rapa Nui. As a product of this rebellion and the need to spearhead a new “colonial pact” between the State, the Rapanui, and the Company, the government established the nominally independent Maritime Sub-Delegate for CEDIP in 1915. At the same time, “the Provisonal Temperament,” signed in 1917, represented an important change in the framework of the island's existing social relations.17

The emergence of a more complex political system on Rapa Nui took on greater relevance during these decades. In contrast to the previous period that was characterized by a centralized apparatus of colonial power with a single political head, during these decades power split into two branches: the economy and political administration, with their respective charges represented in the administration of the CEDIP and the Maritime Sub-Delegation. These two branches supported and fed each other; the Sub-Delegation acting as the agent for the regulation of social relations and as the guarantor of the smooth functioning of the economic system, and the Company administration, at the same time, exercising a paternalistic authority over State institutions 18

From the perspective of the indigenous population, the workings of State institutions were a direct exercise of power, whether implemented through the Sub-Delegates, Navy missions, or the rest of the island's State institutions. In contrast to the previous period where power had been concentrated in the CEDIP administration and the influence of the Company did not cost them anything, even the clothes they use to dress themselves are sent to them as gifts, and their vices are obtained by exchanging monkeys [carved figures], so that they have nothing to spend their earnings on during the whole year. In view of these calculations, if they have to have ten hectares of land, they would sow only three, enough to grow a bit of maize, sweet potato and bananas, adding some watermelon, all of which is enough for the whole year, helped of course by the lstigs in the streets, because there are days that these people only eat figs. Neither are they worried about clothing, since they know these are sent as gifts by the Navy on the continent. When in want of some novelties, such as cigarettes and alcohol, which they excessively indulge in, they obtain what they desire by exchanging them for monkeys [carved figures], bananas, or sweet potato.)

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The 1914 rebellion of Angata was a direct confrontation against the consolidation of the colonial presence on Rapa Nui. As a product of this rebellion and the need to spearhead a new “colonial pact” between the State, the Rapanui, and the Company, the government established the nominally independent Maritime Sub-Delegate for CEDIP in 1915. At the same time, “the Provisonal Temperament,” signed in 1917, represented an important change in the framework of the island's existing social relations.17

The emergence of a more complex political system on Rapa Nui took on greater relevance during these decades. In contrast to the previous period that was characterized by a centralized apparatus of colonial power with a single political head, during these decades power split into two branches: the economy and political administration, with their respective charges represented in the administration of the CEDIP and the Maritime Sub-Delegation. These two branches supported and fed each other; the Sub-Delegation acting as the agent for the regulation of social relations and as the guarantor of the smooth functioning of the economic system, and the Company administration, at the same time, exercising a paternalistic authority over State institutions 18

From the perspective of the indigenous population, the workings of State institutions were a direct exercise of power, whether implemented through the Sub-Delegates, Navy missions, or the rest of the island's State institutions. In contrast to the previous period where power had been concentrated in the CEDIP administration and the influence of the Company did not cost them anything, even the clothes they use to dress themselves are sent to them as gifts, and their vices are obtained by exchanging monkeys [carved figures], so that they have nothing to spend their earnings on during the whole year. In view of these calculations, if they have to have ten hectares of land, they would sow only three, enough to grow a bit of maize, sweet potato and bananas, adding some watermelon, all of which is enough for the whole year, helped of course by the lstigs in the streets, because there are days that these people only eat figs. Neither are they worried about clothing, since they know these are sent as gifts by the Navy on the continent. When in want of some novelties, such as cigarettes and alcohol, which they excessively indulge in, they obtain what they desire by exchanging them for monkeys [carved figures], bananas, or sweet potato.)
State functionaries who operated with the approval of the administration and the police, proposed a fair framework of wage-labor relations of production established between the business and the Rapanui. As a result, the Company was able to dissociate itself from its previous reputation of governing the island, and instead, was able to concentrate on its main objective: the economic exploitation of the island and its inhabitants. All of this not only made it more difficult for the Rapanui to identify the Company that represented, at any time, a clear opportunity for them in the Company, which not only presented itself as a “social institution” that offered work and commercial opportunities for a large part of the population, but also played an important role in preventing a new social revolt such as the one in 1914.

Despite this, the indigenous population was not only capable of spearheading a profitable economic enterprise, but also of assuring their own subsistence and a significant level of economic independence, regardless of State institutions and the Company. Equally, the island’s inhabitants were capable of preserving and promoting local heritages which can be seen in the maintenance of their native language and a good number of indigenous cultural practices. Similarly, the adaptive capacity of the Rapanui to respond to the new conditions and ongoing and complex social relations was reflected in the prominent roles acquired by certain indigenous figures within a series of institutional spaces: the Sub-Delegation, the Church, the elections and the “firsts.”

Moreover, while caught between adapting to the situation imposed by the precarious “colonial pact” constituted by the “Provisional Temperament” in 1917 and the need to confront the adverse conditions to which they were subject, the island community, once again, renewed efforts in defense of their interests. The growth of practices that negated the recognition of authorities, such as rebellion, livestock theft, insubordination, and strikes, represented a continuous challenge to the workings of colonial power.

In some cases, the very precariousness of the island’s institutional structure and the existence of significant social tensions between the indigenous community and the colonial agents stimulated the Rapanui to organize formal movements to the point of facing a simultaneous confrontation with both authorities of colonial power: the State and the Company. This was the case, for example, during the general strike of 1923. During these episodes, which confronted the State and the Company, the indigenous population even came to threaten—albeit in a partial and limited sense—one of the main pillars of the colonial presence on Rapa Nui: livestock profits. At the same time, the process that integrated the Rapanui population under the framework of the Chilean State began to roll onward. State institutions, as well as the support given to the CEIDIP and the Catholic Church, all played important roles in the development of this process. Another significant factor as to this was the role played by the group of islanders mentioned above, who, collaborating closely with State institutions or the Company, came to act as real mediators between the population and the State.

To summarize, while the forms of resistance deployed by the Rapanui during the period 1917-1936 did not reach the intensity of previous decades, they were, in any case, represented, at any time, by a clear opportunity for them in the Company, which not only presented itself as a “social institution” that offered work and commercial opportunities for a large part of the population, but also played an important role in preventing a new social revolt such as the one in 1914.

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Notes
1. The Compañía Explotadora de Isla de Pascua, hereafter referred to as “CEDIP” or the “Company.”


3. Medical work was undertaken, during these years, by successive “practitioners” who established themselves on Rapa Nui as Navy functionaries.

4. The preservation of Rapanui economic practices of the traditional type mentioned occurred, even in the context of simultaneous processes of modernization processes that affected the island’s economy during these decades.

5. The Rapanui use of maize as a form of exchange connects to this was the role played by the group of islanders mentioned above, who, collaborating closely with State institutions or the Company, came to act as real mediators between the population and the State.

6. The Sub-Delegation enthusiastically mentions: “without any exception, they are a good and religious people who attend Church every Sunday and on festive days. They come clean and it is a pleasure to see their devotion and respect in the house of God” (AIV 1926 Folio 16).

7. The State functionaries who operated with the approval of the administration and the police, proposed a fair framework of wage-labor relations of production established between the business and the Rapanui. As a result, the Company was able to dissociate itself from its previous reputation of governing the island, and instead, was able to concentrate on its main objective: the economic exploitation of the island and its inhabitants. All of this not only made it more difficult for the Rapanui to identify the Company that represented, at any time, a clear opportunity for them in the Company, which not only presented itself as a “social institution” that offered work and commercial opportunities for a large part of the population, but also played an important role in preventing a new social revolt such as the one in 1914.

8. Among the group of Rapanui close to State functionaries we can mention, apart from Juan Tepano, were Juan A. Poloa, Pedro A. Pau, María C. Terevaka, and Nísia Polakos. In the case of islanders close to the CEIDIP the mostrics children of the following families stand out: Pasa Borner, Taki Kaituoe and from a later date, the children

9. In some cases, the very precariousness of the island’s institutional structure and the existence of significant social tensions between the indigenous community and the colonial agents stimulated the Rapanui to organize formal movements to the point of facing a simultaneous confrontation with both authorities of colonial power: the State and the Company. This was the case, for example, during the general strike of 1923. During these episodes, which confronted the State and the Company, the indigenous population even came to threaten—albeit in a partial and limited sense—one of the main pillars of the colonial presence on Rapa Nui: livestock profits. At the same time, the process that integrated the Rapanui population under the framework of the Chilean State began to roll onward. State institutions, as well as the support given to the CEIDIP and the Catholic

10. The preservation of Rapanui economic practices of the traditional type mentioned occurred, even in the context of simultaneous processes of modernization processes that affected the island’s economy during these decades.

11. According to the last census on the island were the following: Maritime Sub Delegate (1), general administrators (2), workers (4), labor (86), farmers (3), teachers (2), servants (7), carpenters (6), cooks (1), and fishermen (18). The total inhabitants in the census come to 384 and were composed of 83 men, 98 women, 160 male children and 67 female children. At the same time the census mentions 14 lepers, 110 infants and 57 school children. The term “labor” possibly refers to essentially domestic tasks (the workers in this case are only women) (AIV 1929a: Fols. 65-72).

12. The Rapanui use of maize as a form of exchange connects to this was the role played by the group of islanders mentioned above, who, collaborating closely with State institutions or the Company, came to act as real mediators between the population and the State.

13. There was still a significant number of workers on Rapa Nui, most of them not scheduled in the census but captured in the twice yearly reports to the Ministry of the State-Company duo, State functionaries who operated with the approval of the administration and the police, proposed a fair framework of wage-labor relations of production established between the business and the Rapanui. As a result, the Company was able to dissociate itself from its previous reputation of governing the island, and instead, was able to concentrate on its main objective: the economic exploitation of the island and its inhabitants. All of this not only made it more difficult for the Rapanui to identify the Company that represented, at any time, a clear opportunity for them in the Company, which not only presented itself as a “social institution” that offered work and commercial opportunities for a large part of the population, but also played an important role in preventing a new social revolt such as the one in 1914.

14. Despite this, the indigenous population was not only capable of spearheading a profitable economic enterprise, but also of assuring their own subsistence and a significant level of economic independence, regardless of State institutions and the Company. Equally, the island’s inhabitants were capable of preserving and promoting local heritages which can be seen in the maintenance of their native language and a good number of indigenous cultural practices. Similarly, the adaptive capacity of the Rapanui to respond to the new conditions and ongoing and complex social relations was reflected in the prominent roles acquired by certain indigenous figures within a series of institutional spaces: the Sub-Delegation, the Church, the elections and the “firsts.”

15. Moreover, while caught between adapting to the situation imposed by the precarious “colonial pact” constituted by the “Provisional Temperament” in 1917 and the need to confront the adverse conditions to which they were subject, the island community, once again, renewed efforts in defense of their interests. The growth of practices that negated the recognition of authorities, such as rebellion, livestock theft, insubordination, and strikes, represented a continuous challenge to the workings of colonial power.

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A fast yam to Polynesia: New thinking on the problem of the American sweet potato in Oceania

This variety highlights the problem that only a single potato species is not confirmed (Zaro 2007). From the southern Peruvian coast, agricultural field planting surfaces (but see Moseley & Feldman 1984). 1969:321). Knapp (1982) has also argued that raised artificial water-fed supplemented Peruvian irrigation works undertaken in South America were irrigation fields or reticulated raised beds anywhere in it would seem that sweet potato was not cultivated in selected as a variation on a Pacific cultigen. In particular, Parsons & Psuty 1975). West (1979) documents two artificially water-fed supplemented Peruvian irrigation

References


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