"IT'S THE SAME OLD SONG BUT WITH A DIFFERENT MEANING": COMMUNITY AND ETHNICITY IN SIKAIANA EXPRESSIVE CULTURE

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When I first arrived on Sikaiana in 1980, I had no intention of studying the local songs or dances. I had no training in ethnomusicology. I cannot play an instrument; I cannot carry a tune; and if at all possible, except under extreme duress or intoxication, I avoid dancing. But I found that songs and dances are important media through which the Sikaiana express themselves. Moreover, songs and dances reflect major processes in present-day Sikaiana social life including the replacement of traditional institutions by Western ones and the changes in these Western institutions as they are incorporated into Sikaiana's daily life.[1]

This article is not only about singing and dancing; it is also about social and political organization. Dancing and singing are one of the fundamental ways in which the Sikaiana maintain themselves as a separate community in the Solomon Islands and display their ethnicity to other Solomon Islanders in the multiethnic nation into which they have become incorporated.[2] The Sikaiana perform different dances and songs depending upon their audience. They present and define themselves differently in song and dance to other Sikaiana within their community than they do to other, non-Sikaiana ethnic groups. I label the occasions when the Sikaiana are singing and dancing for themselves "community events"; the occasions when they are performing for outsiders are "ethnic displays," although sometimes sociologists and anthropologists use the term "ethnicity" to refer to both kinds of activities. Of course, both kinds of activities are interrelated. In rehearsals for dance festivals in Honiara (the capital of the Solomon Islands to which many Sikaiana have emigrated), Sikaiana migrants interact with one another

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while practicing a performance for others. Moreover, these performances for others also reinforce the Sikaiana image of themselves as a separate community in a multicultural society (see also the articles by Petersen, Flinn, and Pinsker in this volume).

I will describe several kinds of performances that illustrate the manner in which singing and dancing are transformed and recontextualized to express contemporary Sikaiana concerns and identities, both to themselves and to others. In this process, the Sikaiana are not the conservative bearers of old traditions nor the passive recipients of Western ones. In maintaining their community and in presenting their ethnicity to others, the Sikaiana pick and choose activities from a variety of sources both within their own culture and from other cultures. Dances and songs are redefined and reintegrated into new contexts to express contemporary concerns and define present-day identities.[3]

Songs and dances are transformed and recontextualized in a variety of ways. For example, although the Sikaiana refer to many of the dances that they perform at art festivals and special occasions for other ethnic groups as their traditional culture or *"kastam" (kastom),* many of these *"kastom"* dances were learned from other Polynesian peoples earlier in this century. Borrowed songs and dances can be fully incorporated into the community to express communal values. Guitar songs, for example, are derived from an outside tradition but have been incorporated into Sikaiana life in a manner that reinforces a sense of community: they are performed mainly for the Sikaiana themselves. Similarly, traditional songs and dances can be used to express new identities in new contexts. When the prime minister of the Solomon Islands visited Sikaiana in 1982, traditional ritual was performed for him precisely as an example of Sikaiana traditions. Finally, the formation of a sports association in Honiara has contributed to an internal sense of community among Sikaiana migrants and serves to organize presentations of Sikaiana ethnicity to outsiders.

In developing their song and dance genres, the Sikaiana are cultural arbitrators combining traditional and outside genres and then recontextualizing them into an indigenous medium. In presenting their *kastom* songs and dances for others, they are curators, deciding what to preserve and how to display it.[4]

Historical Context

Sikaiana, a Polynesian Outlier in the Solomon Islands, has undergone intensive social and cultural changes as a result of Western contact. The

people are Polynesian with close affinities and contacts with Tuvalu (Ellice Islands) and other central Polynesian outliers including Nukumanu, Ontong Java, and the outer islands of Temotu Province (Santa Cruz Islands).

As early as the middle of the nineteenth century, Sikaiana had contacts with whalers, and in the late nineteenth century contacts with traders became important for the local economy. By 1900, trade goods, such as steel tools, pots and pans, flint lighters, tobacco, and trade cloth were necessities. In the late 1800s, Sikaiana was incorporated into the British Solomon Islands Protectorate, although the government's contacts remained sporadic until the mid-twentieth century. In 1929, the Melanesian Mission (Anglican) sent missionaries to the atoll, and there was a rapid and almost complete conversion to Christianity during the following decade. Following World War II, the protectorate government established a court, a local government, a medical clinic, a cooperative store, and a school. Sikaiana people migrated from the atoll not only to attend schools but also to work for wages in various professions and occupations.

Although the population on the atoll has remained at about two hundred or two hundred fifty people since 1900, the total Sikaiana population has almost tripled. Almost two-thirds of the total population has migrated to other areas in the Solomon Islands, notably Honiara, the capital. There they live among people from many other cultural and language groups.[5] Sikaiana migrants have become permanent residents in Honiara, and since World War II, Sikaiana children have been raised away from the atoll. Nevertheless, most migrants and their children maintain ties and loyalties to their home atoll. They visit the atoll, participate in Sikaiana activities, and encourage their children to marry other Sikaiana.

Both on the atoll and in Honiara, Western institutions are an integral part of Sikaiana lives. Christianity, formal education, political councils, and courts--unknown to the Sikaiana before 1930--are very much a part of their present-day social life. People attend church regularly and raise money for religious activities. To be called a Christian *(tama o te misoni)* is to have one's character praised. Parents send their children to school and encourage them to do well. Most people have worked for wages at least part of their lives, and some during their entire adult lives. Local elections are important events, sometimes contested with bitterness. If a dispute cannot be resolved in any other way, it is taken to court. Cases concerning libel, family disagreements, trespassing, public fighting, and land tenure were heard in the local court in the 1980s.

Most Sikaiana speak Pijin (Solomon Islands Pidgin), the lingua franca of the Solomon Islands, and some speak English. They read books, listen to the radio, and watch videos: one little boy is sometimes called Rambo, in honor of one of Sikaiana's present-day culture heros. A thorough and accurate study of present-day Sikaiana culture must include an analysis of all these institutions and practices. Although Sikaiana life was changed by the incorporation of foreign institutions, the Sikaiana also modified these institutions to serve their local needs, interests, and culture.

An Overview of Sikaiana Dances and Songs

In the past, singing and dancing were always important activities in Sikaiana life. They accompanied ritual and ceremonial events and were also performed for recreation. Today, people sing hymns in church, perform dances at weddings, and continue to dance for recreation in the evenings and at parties.

When I first arrived on the atoll in late 1980, many Sikaiana were concerned about the loss of their *kastom*. *Kastom*--the Pijin word derived from English "custom" that refers to Sikaiana traditional-culture--not only includes traditional ritual practices, which most Sikaiana are happy to have seen replaced by Christian rites, but also refers to traditional dances and songs. Younger people were interested in guitar music and Western-style intersexual, face-to-face dancing, which the Sikaiana call *"hula."*[6] Older people complained that younger people had not learned traditional dances because of their interest in these modern styles. Parents also complained that the close dancing of the *hula* resulted in premarital affairs, which are considered immoral. In 1980, as part of the preparations for holiday celebrations (which include a week at the end of November devoted to the atoll's patron saint, St. Andrew, and then two consecutive weeks during Christmas and the New Year), there were rehearsals in which older people taught traditional dances to younger people. Younger people participated in these rehearsals, although young bachelors were clearly more enthusiastic about *hula* dancing and the opportunities for romance it offered them.

Feasts are held during these holidays, often followed by dancing. During the 1980 holidays, the dancing started with older people performing traditional dances. But younger men took advantage of any lulls in the traditional dancing to move in with guitars. The older people later complained that they had been pressured to stop their tradi-

tional dancing and were pushed aside by younger people and their guitars. Eventually, after the love affairs of a large number of young people became public, these *hula* dances were curtailed by the atoll's church committee. By late 1981, *hula* dances were held only when allowed by the local church committee as part of a special feast or party.[7]

During my stay in 1980-1983, there seemed to be waning enthusiasm for the traditional dance genres. Young women still rehearsed and performed the "traditional" dances when an important dignitary. arrived at the atoll. For instance, in 1980 when the bishop of Mala'ita visited Sikaiana, there was dancing. In June 1981, Sikaiana sent a delegation of young women to dance at the consecration of a new bishop. Although mature men went as chaperones, none performed for the new bishop. Many of the dances performed for these dignitaries were learned from other Pacific Islanders in the early part of this century when the fathers and grandfathers of living Sikaiana worked on government vessels and met people from other Pacific Islands. The words of the songs are Polynesian but have no precise meaning in the Sikaiana language. A Sikaiana man explained the interest in these dances by saying that they look better than Sikaiana's own indigenous dances.[8] During my stay from 1980 to 1983, a Kiribati woman married to a Sikaiana man taught the young women many Kiribati dances, which also were performed on special occasions.

Late in 1981, people decided to perform a *puina,* a traditional song festival in which men and women broke into separate groups and composed songs critical of one another. These song festivals had been discouraged by the early missionaries and church leaders, who found parts of these performances too lascivious and felt some of the lyrics were counterproductive to the harmonious atmosphere they wished to encourage in a Christian community. These song festivals were performed less frequently after World War II: there was one performance in 1969 to commemorate the American landing on the moon, at least one other in the 1970s, this one in 1981, and none between 1981 and 1987.

Guitar songs became a topic of the songs composed for the 1981 *puina* festival. To tease the young women, some of the older men composed a song bragging that today's young women could easily be seduced by any young man who knew how to play the guitar. Although directed at the young women who had been involved in love affairs, the song also was a backhanded swipe at the younger men whose interest in guitar music and drinking was considered frivolous by their elders.

One more musical tradition that is important in present-day Sikaiana life is commercial music from Western countries, especially popular and

rock music. Most Sikaiana families have a cassette player and radio. Much of the programing on the national radio station of the Solomon Islands is Western pop and rock music.

In the period from 1980 to 1983, despite the disdain of some adults, guitar songs were, in my view, the most vibrant expressive activity practiced by the Sikaiana. Young people composed new songs to commemorate specific events, lament lost love, describe family quarrels, and ridicule one another for violating Sikaiana norms and expectations. Despite lack of enthusiasm for it from older people, the guitar music reflected the values and experiences of everyone. On leaving the Solomon Islands in 1983, I thought that the Sikaiana were losing interest and competence in traditional songs and dances. The 1981 *puina* was a rare occasion for composition in traditional style, but many men had difficulty in agreeing on the proper verse structure and tune. I suspected that guitar music would eventually supplant most traditional dances and songs and that guitar music might in turn be supplanted by the commercial music played on cassettes and the radio (see Donner 1987).

When I returned in 1987, I was surprised to learn that Sikaiana people living in Honiara, both young and old, both men and women, were meeting regularly to practice *kastom* dancing, including dances learned from other Pacific Islanders earlier in the century. These dance rehearsals did not include the entire Sikaiana population residing in Honiara, but there were about thirty or forty regular participants, which is a substantial portion of the population there. Moreover, people were practicing these dances without any specific public event in mind; they simply wanted to learn the dances.

The Recontextualization of Community Ritual into Ethnic Display

In 1982, the prime minister of the Solomon Islands visited Sikaiana. His visit reflected his interest in showing concern for the remote areas of the nation and a national policy that emphasized decentralization and local autonomy in decision making. The Sikaiana decided to greet him by reenacting some of their traditional rituals. During the British Protectorate period, the Sikaiana greeted visits by the resident commissioner in a similar manner.

At the prime minister's visit, the Sikaiana combined parts of quite separate rituals: they presented certain ritual songs and activities from the *teika llee,* and they performed the *kaitae hakatele,* a chant that traditionally was performed during the *manea* ceremonies. In addition, several other traditional dances were rehearsed and performed. Before

Christianity, the *teika llee* was performed when a large fish, turtle, whale, or other unusual animal washed ashore on Sikaiana's reef. One old woman who had witnessed the traditional ritual explained to me that the ceremony was performed to supplicate a spirit of the ocean and to prevent any harmful diseases or calamities the animal might bring. The *manea* took place when the roofing material of the main spirit house, *hale aitu,* was being replaced. In pre-Christian Sikaiana, both events involved the entire community and were held to ensure spiritual support for the atoll's welfare. By the time of the prime minister's visit, neither event had been performed for more than fifty years except as reenactments for visiting dignitaries.

The Sikaiana spent several months rehearsing these performances, usually on several weekday evenings and on Sunday afternoons. Most of the adults resident on the atoll participated, although, as usual in many community activities, the women were more reliable participants than the men. At first there was disagreement about the proper enactment of these ceremonies and the precise wording of the *kaitae hakatele.* Although the very oldest people had participated in these ceremonies when they were being performed as part of Sikaiana's pre-Christian ritual, the few people who knew anything about the rituals seemed to remember them from their more recent performances for visiting British dignitaries. Eventually, a version was agreed upon (taken from one of the few people whom I had trusted in collecting my own data about traditional Sikaiana culture).

The rehearsals were community events and to some extent reflected local politics. John Kilatu, a respected member of the community and a doctor, took the role of chief *(aliki).* Fane Telena, the oldest woman on the atoll and a member of one of the chiefly descent lines, performed the role of the female assistant *(sapai ulu)* who ceremonially dresses the chief in the *manea.* The choice of Fane was not surprising. She was old enough to have participated in these ceremonies when they were part of the atoll's ritual system. As a female member of one of Sikaiana's chiefly lines, she could claim traditional legitimacy in her role of helping dress and prepare the chief for his ritual duties. Kilatu, however, was not from a chiefly line. His choice as chief seems to be a result of the community's respect for him and Fane's reluctance to legitimate any one of the several men competing to be recognized as successor to the traditional chieftaincy. There is a longstanding controversy between several different lineages concerning legitimate succession to the traditional office of chief.

This performance for the prime minister also reflected broader pro-

cesses in Sikaiana social life. Traditional ritual was transformed into a modern context. Pieces of rituals were decontextualized from their former sacred purposes and redefined to represent present-day Sikaiana ethnicity to outsiders. Ritual events that once united the community. in its relationship with the sacred were combined and transformed into a secular event that unites the community in displaying a distinct ethnicity to the leader of their multiethnic nation.

The Incorporation of Western Music into a Community Activity: Guitar Songs

The Sikaiana have always been enthusiastic to learn songs and dances from others. A genre of songs known as *mako o te henua* comprises songs from other lands with words that are recognizably Polynesian but not Sikaiana. During the protectorate period, the Sikaiana learned songs in English. These songs can still be heard on Sikaiana, most often when men are drinking fermented toddy. “Pack up Your Troubles,” “You Are My Sunshine,” and “There Is a Church in the Valley” are popular English-language songs. The Sikaiana also know current rock and folk music from Britain, the United States, and Australia, in addition to the contemporary music of other Pacific islands, especially Papua New Guinea and Fiji.

In the 1960s, some Sikaiana, while attending schools and living in Honiara, began to play the guitar. They composed songs in the vernacular, but often the tunes were derived from Western songs. Most of the guitar songs comment on specific events in terms of Sikaiana values. The songs often use metaphor, *hulihulisala,* to disguise and enliven meanings. These guitar songs are mainly composed and sung by young unmarried men and women, *lautama,* although most people in the community are familiar with the songs and their themes. Several different generations of *lautama* have matured and married since the 1960s, and the songs composed in the 1960s and 1970s are not necessarily sung at present. When I returned to the Solomon Islands in 1987, I heard new songs that had been composed since I left in 1983 (see Donner 1987).

Guitar songs incorporate borrowed components, including the instrument and most tunes. The guitar songs, moreover, are performed during the *hula* dances between young men and women, an introduced style borrowed from Western dances. Nevertheless, guitar songs are basically an indigenous medium of expression. They concern specific Sikaiana events and people. Western institutions, although ever-present

in Sikaiana life, are rarely a central topic in these songs. As in traditional songs, metaphors are used to convey meanings. Young people compose their lyrics in the vernacular, even though many young male composers feel more comfortable speaking Pijin in casual speech because they have spent so much time abroad. Composing in Pijin would make the songs accessible to a broad audience throughout the Solomon Islands. But unlike Western popular music, Sikaiana guitar songs are not composed for a diverse audience; instead, the songs are composed specifically for the Sikaiana community. In Sikaiana guitar music, a foreign musical tradition is incorporated into Sikaiana life in a manner that emphasizes the values and relationships of the people within the community.

The Preservation of Community and Display of Ethnicity: The Vania Sports Association

The Sikaiana people share a language and a culture but reside in two separate locations: Honiara and Sikaiana. On Sikaiana, the atoll is so small that people of necessity participate in the same political, religious, and ceremonial institutions. Almost everyone attends Sunday church services and the community meetings that often follow. Holidays and other festive occasions, such as marriages, involve the entire population, as do special work projects on the school or church.

Sikaiana emigrants in Honiara visit with one another, congregate on holidays and at weddings to celebrate by drinking, dancing, and singing, and they prefer to marry one another. Many return to the atoll during their yearly vacations. But the Sikaiana community in Honiara is more amorphous than that on the atoll. They do not control their political and social institutions but share them with Honiara's ethnically diverse population. As increasing numbers of Sikaiana marry non-Sikaiana, more and more become distanced from other Sikaiana people. On the atoll, it is possible to come into contact with any and all other members of the community during the course of a day's routine activities. In Honiara, although there are several areas with high concentrations of Sikaiana families, such as Bahai Center and a settlement at Tenaru, many Sikaiana live in separate neighborhoods, where they are comparatively isolated except when they make visits in evenings and on weekends.

When I returned to the Solomon Islands in 1987, I found that in my absence the Sikaiana had developed several institutions and activities that united migrants living in Honiara. There were fund-raising activi-

ties to collect money for various projects affecting the Sikaiana community. The Sikaiana had also formed their own sports association to organize sports competition among themselves, to field teams in the various sports leagues in Honiara, to preserve Sikaiana traditions, and to organize the performance of their dances for others.

By 1987, the Sikaiana were holding frequent community fund-raising events. There were a series of events in the 1980s to raise money to build a new church for the Sikaiana families who lived together at the settlement at Tenaru, a few miles outside of Honiara. Then, in 1986, Sikaiana was hit by a very strong cyclone, Namu. Although no one was killed, most houses were destroyed and the taro and coconuts ruined. When I arrived a year later, the atoll was still dependent upon food supplies sent from Honiara. The Sikaiana living in Honiara had organized a disaster committee. Money was raised by "walkathons" in which each person who walked asked others to sponsor a pledge for the distance walked (sponsors included Sikaiana as well as people from other ethnic groups). The Sikaiana migrants also held fairs in which food, beer, fermented toddy, and raffle prizes were sold. In 1983, weddings and holidays had been the only occasions when large numbers of Sikaiana residing in Honiara gathered together to dance, sing, and drink; in 1987, fund-raising events provided another opportunity for Sikaiana migrants to congregate.

In 1987, the Sikaiana women formed two teams to compete in the Honiara netball league. Other teams in the league were formed around past associations--by former high school teammates, by people who worked in the same business, and, in a few cases, by ethnic groups. The Sikaiana teams were composed entirely of Sikaiana people except for one person from the neighboring Polynesian Outlier Ontong Java. One of the Sikaiana teams, Uila (Lightning), consisted largely of younger women; the other, Kaniva (Rainbow), was made up of more-mature women, many of them mothers. Both teams were divided into first and second teams. The teams practiced on most afternoons, and each had its own team colors and uniforms made by its members. Between the members of the two teams, there was usually a good-natured rivalry.

The Sikaiana teams organized their own fund-raising events to support their activities. Uila held Western-style dances in a local clubhouse. Kaniva rented video tapes and charged admission to see them and then charged for food at the event. Kaniva also held a walkathon.

During my stay in the Solomon Islands in 1987, the Sikaiana men living in Honiara, perhaps inspired by the example of the women, organized their own sports club, Vania, named after a large and distinctive

rock that rises above the shallow water on the reef at Sikaiana. Vania was formed to encourage and coordinate Sikaiana sport activities, including preparations for the Solomon Islands entries into the 1988 Olympics in Seoul and participation in various sports leagues in Honiara. Vania also sponsored *kastom* dance practices and performances.

Vania developed a much more formal administrative structure than did either Uila or Kaniva. It had a supervising committee, which held regular meetings and included a president, vice-president, treasurer, and secretary in addition to six committee members. Vania's fund-raising events were much larger and better organized than those of Uila and Kaniva; Sikaiana's representative to the National Parliament was invited to speak at one Vania event.

I attended Vania's organizational meeting held in June 1987. The organizers, mostly younger men in their twenties and thirties, conducted the meeting in Pijin rather than the vernacular.[9] The meeting lasted about three hours and concerned the purpose and activities of the sports club. A Sikaiana man who is a lawyer suggested that they incorporate themselves as a charitable trust. The committee set its membership fees--SI$5 for a committee member, SI$2 for a working person, less for members without jobs (US$1 = SI$2)--and made rules concerning membership. The activities organized by the club included sports and dancing.[10]

By the end of my stay in September 1987, Vania was successfully organizing events. Every Sunday after church service, Sikaiana people gathered at the St. Nicholas School sports fields, behind Bahai Center where several Sikaiana families reside and near the church where many Sikaiana worship. People came from Honiara and its suburbs (including outlying areas such as Tenaru and plantations managed by the Commonwealth Development Corporation), I estimated there were about two hundred people there on one Sunday afternoon, a substantial proportion of the approximately three hundred Sikaiana living in the Honiara area. The participants were almost entirely Sikaiana. There were round-robin matches in which teams of players from various neighborhoods (Kolali, Town Ground, Bahai, Tenaru) competed for small prizes. Women played netball; men played soccer. Refreshments were sold with the proceeds going to the organization.

I also attended two Vania fund-raising events. One was held at the Sikaiana settlement near the Tenaru River outside of Honiara. This area has a lot of open space and is preferred for large Sikaiana community events, including marriage exchanges. Another fund-raising event was

held in the yard of Vania's president, who lives in the Kolali section of Honiara. Both events were organized around similar activities. There was food for sale, including sausage, mincemeat, steak, pig, chicken, and Sikaiana-style taro puddings. A main attraction at such events is beer, which the organizers buy on credit from Honiara merchants and then sell or raffle at increased prices. The profit is turned over to fund-raising committee. Drinking alcohol is often a community, event for the Sikaiana and contributes to the enjoyment of festive occasions including marriages and holidays. The entrances to games and amusement areas were decorated with hibiscus and coconut leaf. At both Vania fund-raising events, Sikaiana dancers performed *kastom* dances that they were rehearsing as part of their participation in Vania. After the first few dances, people could request a dance for SI$2, with the money going to the sports association.

Vania is a hybrid, modeled on both Western administrative institutions and Sikaiana values. The organization is overtly bureaucratic, with membership fees, meetings and offices, a charter, and its incorporation as a charitable trust. It sponsors Western-style fund-raising activities including gambling, bake sales, and cooperative clean-ups. But the importance of alcohol in the fund-raising activities and the involvement of the community are indigenous and parallel behavior on the atoll during festive occasions. Although Vania sponsors the Western sports now popular among the Sikaiana, in particular soccer and net-ball, it has also encouraged Sikaiana sports (for example, *tautau,* a traditional style of wrestling rarely practiced). Vania also sponsors rehearsals of Sikaiana *kastom* dances. Members perform at weddings and at multicultural dance festivals in Honiara.

Sikaiana people are united by Vania's fund-raising events, Sunday sports competitions, *kastom* dances, and the sport teams. At the same time, the association channels Sikaiana interactions with other ethnic groups in Honiara. *Kastom* dances are performed both to raise money and to display Sikaiana ethnicity to outsiders; teams representing the Sikaiana compete in sports leagues with other Solomon Islanders. Externally, the sports association represents Sikaiana as a distinctive group, an ethnicity, to other Solomon Islanders. Internally, it has united the Sikaiana people residing in Honiara for the purposes of participating together in sports and preserving their community traditions. Both objectives are stated in an official document describing the founding of Vania. The English, although a little awkward, is clear (brackets are added to help clarify meanings):

> Perhaps before the establishment of the association, there is a little absorption of Sikaiana tradition, that is the usual way of life of enjoyment such as traditional dances, wrestling (tautau) and traditional communal activities by the young generations of today because they tend to [be] attract[ed to] the modern life of Westernization. Therefore it is the hope of the association that these young generations must restore their society's normal life thus with-holding [maintaining] the pride of the Sikaiana tradition and, the only way to prove this is, to perform traditional dances at night club show[s] in the capital and at arts festival[s] to tell the outside world that Sikaiana Islands has never lost its culture today.

Conclusion

Both in the past and at present, songs and dances have been central in Sikaiana life. The content of songs provides commentary on the cornmunity's social relations and cultural values. The performances of *puina* reflect the pervasive division in everyday life between men and women, while the content of the songs comments on events and people, often using ridicule to reinforce social norms. In a similar manner, many guitar songs describe contemporary events in terms of Sikaiana cultural values and expectations.

Song and dance can also reflect broader processes of change in Sikaiana social life. Many present-day performances reflect new ethnic and community identities as the Sikaiana have become part of a multiethnic nation. The Sikaiana take songs from a variety of sources and develop them into performances that express their current needs and interests. Shreds and patches from different cultures are stitched together into a contemporary pattern. Tradition is not so much "invented" as it is reconstructed. Guitar music, the *kastom* performances for the visitors and outsiders, and the formation of the Vania sports association are examples that illustrate how the Sikaiana actively develop new expressive forms and traditions.

In their musical presentations, the Sikaiana are both producers and consumers of a cultural activity. In contrast, they are consumers but not producers of the Western popular music played on the radio and on cassette players. The degree to which this Western music replaces indigenous musical performances in the future will reflect the powerful processes that are assimilating the Sikaiana into regional and international

sociocultural systems. But the continued strength of indigenous musical forms at present reflects the vigor with which the Sikaiana have tried to maintain and develop separate identities and a community within which they can control and develop their own expressive culture.

Culture contact and rapid culture change over the past sixty years have resulted in an increased Sikaiana consciousness of themselves as a distinctive community and ethnicity with special traditions that should be preserved and presented. They have incorporated Western institutions into their social life and as the result of emigration have incorporated themselves into the social life of a multicultural nation. Mostly with enthusiasm, they participate in new institutions and practices. But they continue to be concerned with developing ways to define new, distinctive Sikaiana identities, both within their own community and in their relations with other ethnic groups. Expressive culture, including dance, song, and sport, is an important medium for developing, maintaining, and presenting these new identities.

NOTES

This article was stimulated by the presentations and discussions at "The Arts and Politics" session organized by Karen Nero at the 1989 annual meetings of the Association for Social Anthropology in Oceania, held in San Antonio. I borrowed the "shreds and patches" line from Glenn Petersen's comments about Pohnpei. I also incorporated comments made by Eve Pinsker, some of which are acknowledged in the notes. The title is from a song by the Four Tops.

1. This apology and these issues are also discussed in Donner 1987 and Donner 1989. Although I consider my professional area of expertise to be social organization and change, I often find that in discussing these topics I turn to examples from dance and song. Readers, however, are forewarned about my limited training in ethnomusicology. I conducted my fieldwork among the Sikaiana people from October 1980 to July 1983 and from March 1987 to September 1987.

2. J. Clyde Mitchell's classic paper (1956) on ethnicity among African migrants begins with a discussion of a dance.

3. I am influenced by Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983). I think, however, that "constructed" is a better term than "invented," because the Sikaiana often use existing practices in their dance and song performances. The development of tradition has become a topic of considerable interest and controversy (see Handler and Linnekin 1984; Keesing 1989).

4. The term "curator" is used by Dalby (1983) to describe similar processes among the Japanese *geisha.*

5. There are about sixty different language groups in the Solomon Islands (see Tryon and Hackman 1983).

6. Sikaiana probably borrowed the term *hula* from Luaniua where, as in many Polynesian languages, it means "dance" (Salmond 1975a).

7. By the end of my 1983 stay, the church committee seemed laxer in its supervision of dancing at feasts and parties.

8. In these dances, the dancers form lines. Arm and hip movements seem to me much more elaborate than in most Sikaiana dances. Eve Pinsker has suggested to me that the choreography could have a very definite Sikaiana "accent," and this merits further study by someone trained in movement. She also made the astute observation that the popularity of these foreign dances is consistent with the value placed on novelty in many Polynesian and Micronesian societies.

9. As already mentioned, most Sikaiana males of this age group claim to be more comfortable speaking Pijin than the vernacular. Furthermore, the secretary of Vania. although born of Sikaiana parents, had been brought up on Ontong Java and did not speak Sikaiana.

10. During one meeting, Vania's members discussed whether breakdancing was an appropriate activity for its membership. People were concerned that some of the more suggestive movements of breakdancing might be found offensive, not whether the sports association should support nonindigenous dance styles. In fact, a young man did some breakdancing at one Vania fund-raising event.