Heritage Transactions at the Festival of Pacific Arts

Abstract: The Festival of Pacific Arts, hosted by a different Pacific Island state once every four years, is a prime site for the reproduction of the global discourse on heritage. Drawing on ethnographic research conducted at the past three festivals, this paper focuses on how the concept of heritage is employed at the Festival both as an instrument of statecraft and as a tool for the assertion of grass-roots political and economic agency. We conclude that heritage in the context of the Festival is a form of cultural practice involving relationships of power and inequality, expressed in transactions of ownership and value transformations that have become over determined by economic logic and the concept of property.

Keywords: Pacific Arts Festival; cultural heritage; cultural diplomacy; creative industries; anthropology of the state.

Introduction

The Festival of Pacific Arts is a major regional event hosted every four years by different Pacific Island states that are members of the Council of Pacific Arts and Culture (CPAC)[1]. The first festival was held in 1972 in Fiji and the last (the 11th festival) in Solomon Islands (2–12 July 2012). The next festival is to be hosted by Guam in 2016. The festival brings together people from across the Pacific to showcase cultural performances, the visual arts, traditional healing practices, navigational skills and other examples of local or indigenous knowledge and practice that are deemed iconic in terms of cultural heritage.

Since the inaugural Festival of Pacific Arts over forty years ago, there has been a remarkable political process of state-building in the region in which the festival has played a significant role. The festival has provided a forum for newly-forged independent nation-states to showcase 'cultural traditions as symbols of national identity' (Stevenson 2012, 1). At the same time, there has been increasingly aggressive expansion of global capital, with large-scale investment by powerful transnational corporations in the extraction of natural resources (logging, mining, commercial fishing), as well as the influx of global commodities, and the rapid adoption and innovative use of digital communication technologies. This has been accompanied by new configurations of power that have led to movement away from nation-states to 'corporate state assemblages' (Kapferer 2010, 130) where the institutional organisation of power is decentered and redistributed to other agencies, such as banks, churches, non-government environmentalist organisations, transnational corporations, charitable organisations and other bodies, including international heritage agencies.

Much has been written on past Pacific Arts festivals in terms of issues of identity politics and now well-debated ideas about 'the invention of tradition' (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983) and the 'authenticity' of cultural performances (e.g. Hereniko 1980; Kaeppler 1987; Stevenson 1993; Lewis-Harris 1994; Stevenson 1999; Moulin 2003, 2005; Konishi 2006; Kempf 2011). There has been some recent commentary on how the festival draws people into global flows of production and transnational capital (e.g. Glowczewski and Henry 2011), but relatively little has been written about it as a site of power in Oceania. In this paper, we explore the festival in relation to the role it plays in the production, uptake and transformation of 'heritage', not only as a concept but also as a form of discursive practice. Our analysis is based on ethnographic field research involving participant observation of staged performances, attendance at cultural workshops and other meetings, as well as open-ended interviews with delegates and officials from participating countries. While our focus in this paper is on the most recent festival in Solomon Islands, we have conducted comparative field research at two earlier festivals (in Palau in 2004 and American Samoa in 2008). In addition, one of the authors, Lawrence Foana'ota, brings to the discussion a deep knowledge and understanding gained from his role as an official member of the Solomon Islands delegation at these and earlier festivals. He was a member of the Pacific Arts Council representing Solomon Islands during meetings that were held in preparation for the festivals in French Polynesia (1985), Townsville (1988) and Solomon Islands (2011). He was the head of the delegation that participated in French Polynesia, where he also performed in the pan-pipe group as a replacement for one of the performers who became sick; he was deputy head of delegation for the Townsville festival and an official in the delegations at Palau (2004) and American Samoa (2008). Regarding the Solomon Islands festival, Foana'ota was also a member of the organizing subcommittee responsible for the contingents from the different provinces of the Solomons Islands who were participating at the festival. His first-hand experience as an official and performer on the festival stage constitutes an interpretive lens for the data collected through participant observation on the production and value transformation of the concept of heritage as both an instrument of statecraft and grass-roots political intention in the Pacific.

Heritage as a global discourse

Definitions of heritage and their limitations have been well debated as part of a global discourse fostered and reproduced in a plethora of conventions, charters, declarations, statements, principles and guidelines that have been initiated, adopted and promulgated by international organizations such as UNESCO and ICOMOS. As Ahmed (2006, 294) notes, UNESCO and ICOMOS have been at the forefront 'in defining common terminology and scope of heritage over the past 40 years, since the adoption of the Venice Charter in 1964'.

On the Australian front, a *Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Significance* was adopted in 1979 at a meeting in the historic South Australian mining town of Burra. This document was last revised in 1999. Now commonly known as the 'Burra Charter', it has proved highly influential in informing the development of definitions of heritage and heritage policy not only in Australia but also in other jurisdictions. It focuses on 'place' and provides a framework and guidelines for assessing the 'cultural significance', synonymously defined as 'heritage significance' or 'cultural heritage value' of places. According to Section 1.2 of the Burra Charter '*Cultural significance* means aesthetic, historic, scientific, social or spiritual value for past, present or future generations'. Waterton, Smith and Campbell (2006), who have analysed the discursive construction of heritage as expressed in the Burra Charter, argue that the construction of terms such as 'cultural significance' privileges the position of heritage professionals over other stakeholders by attributing fixed meanings to these terms, so that 'cultural significance becomes something that non-experts have to understand rather than contribute to' (2006, 350).

In Australia, many scholars, particularly those working closely with Indigenous peoples (e.g. Byrne 1991, 1996; Greer 1996; Greer, Harrison, and McIntyre-Tamwoy 2002; Pocock 2003; Harrington 2004; McIntyre-Tamwoy 2004), have grappled with the concept of 'heritage value'. They have criticised the limitations of definitions of heritage and how heritage has been conceptualised in both the national and international arenas. Today, as Ahmed (2006, 299) notes, in Australia as well as in the international arena, the scope of heritage and its definitions has 'broadened considerably from mere concern for individual

buildings and sites to include groups of buildings, historical areas, towns, environments, social factors and, lately, intangible heritage'.

In popular parlance 'heritage' is often used in an unreflective way as synonymous with 'culture', without attention to the baggage the term carries and the fact that a whole industry has developed around its management and protection. Some scholars, however, have taken a critical interest in this global discourse, which Smith (2006) refers to as the 'Authorised Heritage Discourse', in terms of the political and economic agendas and powerful corporate and nation-state interests that it serves (e.g. Graham 2002; Bendix, Eggert and Peselmann 2012; Bertacchini and Saccone 2012). Other scholars, in particular from the field of anthropology, have begun to explore how this discourse is adopted at the local level and the way heritage may be differently conceptualised and operationalized in different cultural contexts (e.g. see papers in van Meijl 2009; chapters in Hviding and Rio 2011; papers in Silva and Santos 2012; and Silva 2013).

Heritage as a form of value transaction

As a concept, heritage is inherently tied to the concept of value, not only because of the classificatory scheme or typology of values (scientific, historic, aesthetic, social, and so on) created by the heritage industry for the assessment of heritage significance, but because heritage as a transactable resource is harnessed to processes of value transformation. According to Marilyn Strathern (2004, 87):

> A transaction entails both an acknowledgement that it is possible to substitute for one set of values another set and a process of computation whereby each party measures the values against one another. This move encompasses emergent values (values are not necessarily given in advance but may be created in the course of the transaction) and emergent spheres of convertibility or substitution (people test out new possibilities, new resources).

Such processes of value transformation are observable at the Festival of Pacific Arts, particularly in relation to transactions involving practices and performances that have been showcased as 'culture' but at more recent festivals are increasingly being referred to as 'cultural heritage'.

Heritage is 'a new mode of cultural production in the present that has recourse to the past' (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1998, 149). According to the United Nations Special Rapporteur in the field of Cultural Rights, Farida Shaheed (2011, 4): 'Cultural heritage links the past, the present and the future as it

encompasses things inherited from the past that are considered to be of such value or significance today, that individuals and communities want to transmit them to future generations'. As many others have argued, the concept of heritage while referring to the past, really only has meaning in terms of values in the present (e.g. Tunbridge and Ashworth 1996; Greer 1996; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998; Lowenthal 1998; Graham, Ashworth, and Tunbridge 2000). What then are these values?

Heritage values, we submit, are not to be found in the typology of values informing the heritage industry and enshrined in international conventions and local charters such as Australia's Burra Charter, but in the dynamic transactions in which the heritage concept is actually produced and employed. Culture is transformed into heritage via a series of evaluative transactions between different parties along the value chain. What is important is the nature of the *relationships* between the various agents involved in these transactions. As Strathern (2004, 101) notes, 'it is relationships that render items transactable and present conversions have past relationships built into them'.

Who are the agents, the transactors, in these relationships? Who are the brokers in the game of cultural heritage in the Pacific? Heritage transactions inevitably involve relationships of power as those who work to transform cultural things into heritage are generally 'already in positions of relative power, especially politicians, while the management of heritage is likely to be handled by experts such as architects, archaeologists and museum curators' (Silva and Santos 2012, 439). Much of the game tends to played at the international level, where most resources for heritage protection and preservation are located. For example, Bertacchini and Saccone (2012) demonstrate that in relation to the whole period of activity of the World Heritage Convention, political and economic factors played an important role in the nomination and selection process of sites for the World Heritage List.

Yet, while the heritage industry is controlled by transnational and national elites, it is increasingly also dominated by local power brokers. As Scher (2002, 456) argues:

> Control over national or ethnic patrimony works to sustain power in the sense that those controlling the production and dissemination of culture are in a position to mediate between local constituency and the global agents of change, economic hegemony, or cultural imperial might.

Through international instruments such as the World Heritage Convention, and agencies such as UNESCO, WIPO and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community, nation-states draw on heritage discourse to craft internationally-endorsable national identities. Heritage has value for states, or agents of the state, because it serves as a *tool of power*. It also signifies potential economic and status value to those who can secure elite positions along the value chain. As Silva and Santos (2012, 438) note, 'heritage always breeds from power – the ability to create heritage and the ability to make it belong to some and not to others'.

Heritage as 'culture industry'

Recent years have seen the development of the field of 'cultural economy' or 'creative economy', the focus of which is the potential contribution of cultural activities to economic growth (Howkins 2007). Within this framework, culture is defined as an industry and the aim is to assess how various 'cultural industries', including the heritage industry, might operate as a vector for development. But what is, or are, the creative industries? The topic has generated much ideological debate about the labels 'cultural' and 'creative' and whether it is appropriate to term such activities 'industries'. Some prefer 'cultural industries', others 'creative industries', and there has been increasing circulation of terms such as 'cultural producers', 'creative entrepreneurs' and the 'creative class' (Pratt 2008; Miller 2009). UNESCO has weighed-in with an attempt to develop a common understanding by defining creative industries as '… the cycles of creation, production and distribution of goods and services that use creativity and intellectual capital as primary inputs' (UNCTAD 2010, 8). In its *Creative Economy Report 2010,* UNCTAD notes that the creative industries involve the interplay of various 'creative sectors' which 'range from activities rooted in traditional knowledge and cultural heritage such as art crafts, and cultural festivals, to more technology and services oriented subgroups such as audiovisuals and the new media (2010, 1).

The rise of the creative industries, including the heritage sector, has been accompanied by increasing international attention to notions of intellectual property and legal and administrative frameworks to ensure protection of the rights of 'cultural producers'. In other words, the increasing attention being paid to the

development of the creative economy has given rise to a tendency to focus on the maintenance and protection of reifications of culture and the development of regimes of 'property rights' rather than on cultural beliefs and practices as 'the ways of life of the inhabitants' of places (Miles 2008, 109).

The concept of 'creative economy' has been accompanied by an expansion of arts/heritage bureaucracies, the growth of managerialism and the proliferation of entrepreneurs and intermediaries, often employed on a consultancy basis, to provide advice to state agencies on how best to represent, protect, and market artistic production as national cultural heritage. For example, in the lead up to the Festival of Pacific Arts in Solomon Islands, a rash of reports was commissioned by various transnational agencies (e.g. Janke 2009; Leahy, Yeap-Holliday, and Pennington 2010; Roberts 2010; Lidimani 2011; Teaiwa and Mercer 2011). As Foana'ota and White (2011, 282) argue, international donors, actors and institutions and 'a complex array of global influences' make a significant contribution to 'cultural activities' in the Pacific. They stress 'the strategic importance of transnational relations for national culture in the postcolonial era'.

Transnational interlocutors play an important role not just in initiating cultural projects in the Pacific but also in promoting and circulating particular understandings of cultural heritage that define it in terms of a requirement for 'authenticity'. At the request of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO)[2] undertook a scoping mission to report on intellectual property and traditional cultural expression management for the festival. Indigenous Australian lawyer, Terri Janke was employed as a consultant to produce the report. One of Janke's (2009) recommendations was that the festival organisers prepare to combat the sale of 'inauthentic arts and craft'…or of 'fake craft' made overseas, by promoting the sale of 'authentic craft and products' via a Festival of Pacific Arts (FOPA) brand, or registered trade mark, owned by the Council of Pacific Arts. Janke also recommended that, as there was no law specifically enacted to protect Solomon Islands cultural heritage (although Western Province and Makira Province have Cultural Preservation Ordinances that include provisions for respecting traditional objects, taboo sites and sacred sites[3]), Solomon Islands should amend its *Copyright Act* as well as introduce a new law based on the Pacific Model Law. The *Model Law for the Protection of Traditional*

Knowledge and Expressions of Culture in the Pacific Islands is a draft model law developed under the aegis of WIPO and UNESCO for Pacific Island countries wishing to enact their own legislation. The model law was a topic of discussion at a symposium and workshops at the festival in American Samoa 2008. Guido Pigliasco (2011) provides an insightful discussion of how it is being revised, particularly in Fiji, to take into account local, grass roots realities and struggles.

The concept of heritage as 'cultural property' is built on economic principles and is part of a discourse that generally takes place at the level of experts, lawyers, economists, social scientists and others consultant advisors, often from the dominant larger Pacific Rim countries, such as Australia and New Zealand. While they may be inspired by social justice motives and see themselves as committed to helping cultural producers, these interlocutors are also, whether intentionally or not, agents in a game of statecraft in the Pacific that involves complex transactions in heritage as a cultural industry. As Hirsch and Strathern (2004) and others who have engaged with debates concerning the concept of 'cultural property' have argued, culture has increasingly been rendered transactable by being redefined as heritage. As heritage it becomes cultural property and is thereby, on the one hand, harnessed to state projects of bureaucratic management and, on the other, commodified and rendered subject to economic forces. Yet, as Rio and Hviding (2011, 7) point out in their introduction to *Made in Oceania*, there are frictions or 'inherent tensions in Pacific nations between the concerns of the state and the emergent or performative qualities of cultural heritage'. At the grassroots level this concept is being increasingly adopted as a means of pursuing the recognition of local struggles in the face of national and global agendas (Henry 2011).

Heritage as performance

The Festival of Pacific Arts provides a fertile ground, not only for transactions in heritage at the level of global intervention in statecraft in the Pacific, but also at the level of emergent grass-roots political action, where the power of heritage discourse is tested out as a new resource. Past Festivals of Pacific Arts have seen workshops on intellectual property rights and legislative regimes for both tangible and intangible

heritage protection, with much debate among participants on how cultural expressions might be at one and the same time shared, exchanged and protected from unauthorised reproduction.

These workshops abound with visiting experts in full performative mode, there to provide advice and to impart knowledge about legal and bureaucratic techniques for heritage protection and management. For example, at the Traditional Knowledge Symposium at the festival in American Samoa there was a session on 'Festival Management Rights and Cultural Protocols'. Concern was expressed about cameras, videos and cell phones around the festival. '100,000s of images are circulating the globe as we speak', said one participant.

Yet, performers from the various national delegations attending the festival can also be observed meeting to share ideas and talk about how they constitute and choreograph their contemporary dance productions, installations and other art works, how they build them from many different elements and influences, with apparently little angst about whose 'cultural property' particular forms might be, but with great respect for the relationships that are developed through such transactions in cultural forms. Festival participants engage in a dynamic process of cultural composition and performance, which entails the diplomatic development of relationships that challenge attempts by the corporate state to control dynamic cultural practices by capturing them within a heritage regime. We include in our definition of cultural performance the verbal presentations by festival participants in the programme of workshops and symposia that are organized as part of the festivals. The workshops and other meetings held at the festival are in themselves performative acts, just as much as the performances on stage (Figure 1). The Pacific Arts Festival held in 2012 in Solomon Islands provides a case in point. Skillful diplomacy was required in transactions not only among Solomon Islanders themselves, to enable them to successfully stage the festival, but also in transactions among the visiting delegates as they attempted to question cosmopolitan concepts of culture, cultural heritage, cultural industries, cultural rights, and so on, and strategically reinterpret them according to their own paradigms and aspirations.

The Festival of Pacific Arts in Solomon Islands

In spite of being deeply marked by political, social and economic stresses following the outbreak of armed violent conflict between militia groups (the Malaita Eagle Force and the Isatabu Freedom Movement) and the civil unrest between 1998 and 2003, during the 9th Festival of Pacific Arts hosted by the Republic of Palau in 2004, Solomon Islands bravely submitted a bid to host the 11th Festival of Pacific Arts in 2012. The bid was spontaneously prepared by officials from the Solomon Islands delegation in attendance at the festival in Palau[4]. Its success was announced with great fanfare at that festival, while the official flag was handed over to Solomon Islands at the following festival in American Samoa in 2008.

In contrast to the bids by other countries, the Solomon Islands document was simple, without any photographs or fancy plans. The bid was successful for a number of reasons. Among these was that, in terms of regional relations in the Pacific between Micronesia, Melanesia and Polynesia, it was deemed diplomatic to give a country in Melanesia the chance to host the festival. Solomon Islands and Vanuatu (which did not put in a bid) were the only two countries in Melanesia that had not yet hosted the event. Additionally, the representatives from Fiji and Papua New Guinea on the Arts Council supported the bid by offering to host the festival if Solomon Islands proved unable to do it. Thus, the Arts Council decided to approve the bid from the Solomon Islands delegation, even though the country had only just begun to recover from years of civil war.

Each Festival of Pacific Arts has a different theme chosen by the host country. Solomon Islands chose the theme 'Culture in Harmony with Nature'. Interestingly, given the recent history of conflict in Solomon Islands, the theme emphasised the threat of natural disaster caused by outside global forces and the need for people to reconnect harmoniously with nature. It did not reference the civil unrest or the possibility that the festival might serve as a way for Solomon Islanders to reconnect harmoniously in a socio-political sense. Perhaps a focus on environmental threats provided a means for diplomatically externalising social tensions. Certainly, hosting the festival was seen as an opportunity to represent Solomon Islands in a positive light to the world. The Prime Minister at that time, Danny Philip[5], commented that 'hosting the

Festival will help eliminate the negative image of the country to the outside world after the troubles we have gone through as a nation' (*Solomon Star* July 28, 2012).

It is clear that organising the festival required careful fielding of continuing tensions, and skilful diplomacy on the part of all those involved. Solomon Islands had hosted the First Melanesian Arts and Cultural Festival in June 1998 just a few months before violent armed conflict broke out between Guadalcanal and Malaita Islanders. If the Melanesian Arts and Cultural Festival served to transform 'ethno-cultural differences into aesthetic differences on stage', as Jari Kupiainen (2011, 187) contends, then this effect did not last long. While any festival may indeed have this effect, there is also always the potential (particularly given the stresses of organising such a complex event) that a festival fosters rather than neutralises inter-group conflict.

Diplomacy and statecraft

The Festival ostensibly celebrates unity[6], but also great diversity. For Solomon Islands with its nine provinces (and the Capital of Honiara which forms a 10th administrative district), within each of which there are different islands, political units and languages, organisation of the Festival was a mammoth task. Solomon Islands had eight years to put together its plans for hosting the 11th Festival of Pacific Arts after winning the bid in 2004. Unfortunately, the Chief Cultural Officer, Mr. Isa, who was responsible for planning and taking the lead in the preparations, retired from government service in 2005. As a result, preparations for the festival were left unattended. In 2006 after a new government was formed, Mr Robert Au was recruited to supervise the selection of cultural groups and lead the Solomon Islands delegation at the 10th Festival of Pacific Arts in American Samoa, with a view to him also overseeing arrangements for the 11th Festival in Solomon Islands.

However, although there was great excitement amongst members of the Solomon Islands contingent upon their return from the 10th festival in American Samoa, preparations for the next festival were again

delayed due partly to the unsuccessful application by Robert Au for the position of Chief Cultural Officer of the Solomons and partly to the national general election held in August 2010, which resulted in a change of government. The new government appointed Samuel Manetoali as Minister for Culture and Tourism, replacing Seth Gukuna, who had been involved in the country's participation at the 10th Festival of Pacific Arts in American Samoa and had received the festival flag during the closing ceremony.

Increasing public criticism and scepticism arose concerning the ability of the new members of the Culture Division of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism to lay the groundwork for the festival. A key concern was whether Solomon Islands had the necessary funds to cover the cost of the festival and whether it had the infrastructure to host such a major event. It was not until 2011 that the Ministry eventually selected and appointed a festival director, organizing committee and secretariat. This delay caused intense pressure, and public anxiety was exacerbated by the lack of funds for the activities of the various sub-committees. Their tasks included, but were not limited to, provincial visits to identify and select cultural groups, preparation of plans for the venues, identification and selection of contractors, upgrading of accommodation facilities, improving the transportation system in the capital, organising the catering and obtaining local materials for the construction of traditional houses at the festival venues (Figure 2).

In the light of the history of civil unrest and in order to be seen to be inclusive, the organising committee decided that the location of the festival should not be confined to Honiara but should include a satellite site at Auki on Malaita. Eventually it was also decided to build several other satellite sites, including at Gizo in the Western Province, Tulagi in the Central Islands Province, and at Doma in Guadalcanal, not far from Honiara. However, late during the preparation period, tensions erupted as reports circulated that Malaita had been axed as one of the satellite hosts: 'This has been described by a source as a slap on the face of the people of Malaita' (*Solomon Star*, January 13, 2012). Just six months before the festival, the premier of Malaita province, Edwin Suibaea, was concerned about whether his province would actually be co-hosting the festival as he had received no response from the organising committee to the Malaitan delegation's submission of a budget of forty million dollars. The Chair of the organising committee, Doreen

Kuper, eventually revealed to the *Solomon Star* that the committee had only been able to approve two million dollars for Malaita. Malaita festival coordinator, Mr Leaburi, was reported as saying:

> Malaita province is prepared to co-host and showcase true Malaita and its unique cultures and people to the region. And display the true festival theme rather than just artificial preparations like what's done in Honiara…This is golden opportunity to keep the mass population of Malaitans back on their Island rather than traveling to Honiara to cause other associated problems. (*Solomon Star*, February 2, 2012)

Clearly, the very process of organising of the festival, accompanied by the difficulty of sourcing adequate funds, places great pressure on any Pacific Island state that has volunteered to host it, and more so a nation-state recovering from civil war. Much diplomacy is required not only in managing delicate balances of power and representation within the nation-state itself, but also in fielding the external interests of other Pacific states and of the larger nation states of the Asia-Pacific rim willing to provide financial support to the festival host in the service of their own agendas[7]. As well as the delicate internal political diplomacy required to select which provinces and which groups would represent Solomon Islands at the Festival and to satisfyingly fund the different provinces hosting the satellite sites, the festival organizing committee also needed skills to negotiate with external cultural brokers and heads of delegations from the different Pacific nation-states to ensure that the visitors were suitably housed and cared for during the festival and that correct cultural protocols were followed.

Defining culture and heritage in festival workshops

In addition to delegations from each participating country, the state that is staging the Pacific Arts Festival is expected to host a programme of workshops and symposia proposed by various government and non-government agencies and community interest groups. For example, during the festival in Solomon Islands, workshops and symposia included: 'Building a Creative Economy', 'Art and Business', 'Youth, Heritage and Memory of the World', 'Arts for a Better Future', 'Filmmaking in the Pacific', and 'Literary Arts'. In addition, the Secretariat of the Pacific Community ran a Symposium on Cultural Rights (Honiara, Solomon Islands, 9–11 July, 2012) at which heritage was a key topic. The key note speaker, United Nations Special

Rapporteur in the field of Cultural Rights, Farida Shaheed, presented a paper to official delegates of the different Pacific Island States, discussing issues concerning cultural rights and access to heritage. This was followed by presentations from other experts and by representatives from Pacific states. For three days, the participants discussed definitions of cultural rights, how they fit in with other human rights, how they can be promoted, and how they relate to intellectual property and traditional knowledge. The Solomon Islands Minister of Culture and Tourism, the Hon Samuel Manetoali, in opening the symposium commented that 'cultures become commercial entities through the process of globalisation and expressed his concern for the disadvantage Pacific people face in sharing the benefits of this commercialisation' (Cultural Rights Symposium 2013, 1). The Minister cited the case of a lullaby from the Baegu people of Malaita that had been recorded by the band Deep Forest. He noted that the recording had made 'a significant amount of money with no benefit to the Baegu people' (Cultural Rights Symposium 2012, 1).

Yet, while experts and state bureaucratic elites take the lead, Festival workshops and symposia also provide a forum and opportunity for participants not only to consider concepts of 'cultural rights' in terms of 'property rights', but also to challenge the taken-for-granted assumption by the various brokers that the way to claim ownership of and the right to care for heritage is necessarily (or only) through processes of state level legislation, branding and bureaucracy. For example, at a number of festival events we observed people reflecting upon and questioning the meaning of the terms that UNESCO and ICOMOS and other international experts and state-level elites use (heritage, culture, property, rights). What do these concepts actually mean at the local/grassroots level?

At the Cultural Rights Symposium, the presenter from Palau, (Myjolynne Kim, CEO, Chamber of Commerce, Federated States of Micronesia) questioned assumptions about the notion of culture and how it is defined in the debates about cultural property (Cultural Rights Symposium 2013, 9–11). She said that the Palauan translation of the word 'culture' is *éreni*. During a Micronesian Cultural Studies course at the College of Micronesia, Chuuk Campus, when she had asked students what came to mind when they heard the word 'culture', the response was, 'the food that you eat, the clothes and jewellery that you wear,

traditional dances, traditional music' but when she asked them what came to mind when they heard the word *éreni* the answer was 'respect'. She then cited the definition of culture by Palauan scholar Joakim Peter:

> There is something in the cultural identities that sustain a group people as well as the individuals ... Sometimes we confuse cultural expressions and cultural performances which are the outcomes of culture and what is truly cultural because people will start looking for the physical manifestations of culture and focus on that as if that is the culture. More than anything else, culture is inside the people, it's deep within the soul of person and then it comes out in expressions, objects that we create out of that deep connection.

Similarly, at the forum on 'Building the Creative Economy' facilitated by the Pacific Institute of Public Policy at the festival, a participant from Malaita in the audience stood up and stressed a distinction between *kastom*[8] and culture that anthropologists have long noted in the Pacific (e.g. Keesing and Tonkinson 1982; Jolly and Thomas 1982; Lindstrom 1993; White 1993; Kupiainen 2000; Akin 2004; Kupiainen 2011; Darlgaard and Otto 2011). He said (to paraphrase): 'During the festival we use our culture but not our *kastom*. In the beginning we used to live our culture *with* our *kastom,* now we turn our culture into our arts to give away, to share, but we hold on to our *kastom*'.

The Festival of Pacific Arts brings intellectual debates about culture and heritage to the grassroots, allowing people to ponder over how such concepts might be taken up, localized and tactically used in addressing their own struggles to foster stronger collective identities and deal with the demands of the global 'culture industry'. Henry (2008) discusses this process in the context of cultural festivals in Australia and Dalsgaard and Otto (2011) have described it in relation to a cultural festival in Manus Province, Papua New Guinea. Darlgaard and Otto (2011, 142) argue that culture (*kalsa*) and *kastom* 'refer to different domains of action and valuation' and that political struggle is 'intrinsic to defining culture as heritage'. Defining culture as heritage fosters 'the intrusion of ideas of property into previously uncommodified areas of peoples' lives' (Busse 2009, 357). Fear about the loss of culture and tradition is pervasive at the Festival of Pacific Arts and feeds a discourse of property rights that increasingly treats culture as heritage and renders it a transactable economic resource, in spite of a widely held view among Pacific Islander delegates at the Festival that cultural practice and its material manifestations are, by definition, inalienable.

At the grassroots: heritage alienability and the marketplace

Outside the context of the formal workshops and symposia, the Festival is alive with people going about their business, participating in performances and engaged in transactions at the grassroots level, as if oblivious to the debates occurring among intellectual and bureaucratic elites and social reformers, whether they are conceptualized as agents of the state or parties 'beyond the state' (Li 2005). For example, the Festival provides opportunity for marketing of handcrafts that tend not to be recognised as cultural heritage in the official discourse, particularly if they do not feature in trade or economic statistics. Yet, such marketing practices sustain local knowledge and skills. The way distinctions are drawn between 'marketplace' goods and items exhibited and sold as 'fine art' at the festival, and how people distinguish things that are for sale from things they say 'should not be sold', has much to tell us about the political economy of heritage and how heritage value is constituted in practice. At the Solomons festival, many of the Pacific Island delegations distinguished between the goods they had brought for sale and goods that were 'for display only' (Figure 3). The delegation from Niue included a group of women who identified themselves as 'multi-talented' handcrafters. According to Rupina Morrisey (personal communication, 3 July, 2012), only some of the things they were making at the festival would be put up for sale. There was a *ti vae vae* (bedspread) on display at the Niue stall that would not be sold but would be taken back to Niue, because a *ti vae vae* is 'special', made in the style 'introduced by the Christian missionaries' as 'a gift of value', not usually a commodity for sale. In fact, such a bedcover, made from naturally-died cotton fabric with an appliquéd design representing the large leaves of the breadfruit tree, was among Niue's gifts to its Solomon Islands host at the festival opening ceremony.

Nevertheless, many of the performers, who attend the festival as part of the official delegations, rely on selling arts and crafts on the side to supplement their travel and living expenses at the festival and also to make some money to take home. In addition, artists and handcrafters from the host country flock to the festival to sell their wares. At the Solomon Islands festival, an official art and craft market was set up in the grounds of the National Art Gallery but there were also many unofficial street stalls (Figure 4). The handcrafters saw the festival as an opportunity to develop trade networks and personal connections with international dealers willing to purchase and market their goods overseas. It is often the transnational

handcraft dealers who advise the producers what will sell, materials and colours to use, how to adapt their products to what tourists will buy (for example, the creation of miniatures of objects so that they can fit into a back pack or suitcase). It is also such brokers who advise people on how to access trade networks in 'heritage' objects. At the Solomon Islands festival there were several stallholders selling artefacts (Figure 5). An 'artefact dealer' at the Art Gallery Market, however, emphasised that he was only selling replicas of objects. He had with him some traditional weapons belonging to his grandfather which he had separated from the replicas with tape, noting that they were just for display. A practical process of classification and valuation of objects according to syncretic conceptions of heritage informed partly by global heritage discourse but also by local values was observable in the festival village stalls and at various market sites. It is clear that while the Festival is harnessed to practices of statecraft, it also fosters rhizomic practices and processes of grassroots political action and economic production that strain against codifying and regulating projects of the state. Yet, at the same time such rhizomatic practices themselves contribute to the reproduction of culture as heritage and, in turn, heritage as transactable property. Grassroots practices and performances often work to unravel and resist universalistic definitions of heritage and the accompanying proposals for legislative and administrative protection regimes, but they eventually also become subject to 'the hegemony of property' (Busse 2009, 362).

Conclusion

While the Festival of Pacific Arts continues to foster the production of heritage in the service of nation-state identities, recent festivals have increasingly begun to support new corporate-state assemblages, where the market dominates and where 'the economic inhabits all modes of existence' (Kapferer 2010, 127). Thus, even though heritage value may not be conceived in overtly economic terms, and the economic may even be actively resisted in terms of definitions of heritage (as evidenced by the signs at the festival specifically classifying certain items as 'not for sale'), heritage has become subject to the hegemony of property. In concert with the 'creative industries', heritage has come to 'teleologically exemplify an economic logic or principle' (Kapferer 2010, 127).

The 11th Festival of Pacific Arts had a tremendous impact on the lives of Solomon Islanders who attended, whether as participants or spectators (Figure 6). Many of the artists, carvers, dancers and musicians today still talk about how much they enjoyed the festival and the new ideas they picked up at the event. For them the festival was not merely a showcase or display of heritage in terms of inherited cultural forms. It was also a forum for the imaginative, creative and innovative value transformation of such forms.

Significantly, hosting the Festival required finely-tuned skills of diplomacy to enable Solomon Islanders to pull together and overcome differences, tensions, misunderstandings and conflict between parties and to represent a strong collective identity to the rest of the Pacific and to the world. Transactions in culture (cultural property, cultural heritage, cultural industry, cultural rights) play no small part in the process of statecraft among cosmopolitan elites at the Festival of Pacific Arts, but visible also are transactions in heritage at the grassroots, with local artists, carvers, weavers, musicians, dancers and others at the performative frontline, not only fielding tensions between *kastom* and culture but also skilfully navigating contradictions between culture as the lived practice of everyday life, culture as heritage and heritage as property.

Notes on Contributors

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Lawrence Foana'ota OBE, started work at the Solomon Islands National Museum in 1972 and was appointed as Director in 1983. At the end of 2009 he retired as Director of after serving in the Solomon Islands Government for a total of thirty-eight years. He holds a Museum Management Certificate that he obtained from the East-West Centre, University of Hawai'i at Manoa, Honolulu, Hawai'i, a BA Degree in Anthropology from the University of Auckland in New Zealand and an MA Degree in Material Culture (Research) from James Cook University of North Queensland, Townsville. He was one of the founding members and the first Chairman of the Pacific Islands Museums Association (PIMA) Executive Board. He was honoured for the long and dedicated services to the Solomon Islands National Museum and the nation with the Order of the British Empire Medal by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II on 12th June, 2010. He was a member of the international research team *Pacific Alternatives* in collaboration with the Bergen University in Norway and James Cook University, Australia. He has written a number of articles on cultural issues that have been published and others awaiting publication. Currently, he is working as Administration Manager for Lion Heart Company, a private locally owned company. He currently an Honorary Member of PIMA Executive Board, a Commissioner of Oaths in Solomon Islands Government and an Adjunct Senior Research Fellow with the School of Arts and Social Sciences at James Cook University, Australia.

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Notes

1. The CMAC consists of 22 Pacific Island countries and territories that are members of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) as well as Hawaii, Easter Island, Norfolk Island and Australia and New Zealand (who were founding members). The Human Development Programme of the SPC serves as the Secretariat for the CPAC.

2. A United Nations Agency with headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland. The WIPO was established by international convention in 1967. Its primary role is to administer international treaties concerning intellectual property and to provide advice to party nations (about 161) with regard to formulation of their domestic intellectual property laws. The WIPO administers a number of different treaties. Among these is the *Berne Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works* (1886, Stockholm Revision, 1967; Paris Act 1971).

3. According to the *Western Province Preservation of Culture Ordinance 1989* it is also illegal to buy and sell traditional artifacts.

4. Lawrence Foana'ota compiled the document in collaboration with the-then Chief Cultural Officer, Mr. Henry Isa, Mr. Lindsay Kaua who was the Tourism Officer at that time, the late Charles Manata, the Chief Curator of the National Art Gallery, and Ms. Linda Keumi, an Artist from the Solomon Islands Artists Association. These were some of the Officials that were part of the Solomon Islands contingent at the Festival. The bid was written while the Solomon Islands delegation, accompanied by the Minister for Culture, Tourism and Aviation, Honorable Alec Bartlett, were already in Palau participating at the Festival. It was put together and typed up with the help of the Palau Festival Secretariat only a few days before it was presented by the Minister at the Arts Council Meeting.

5. The current Prime Minister is Gordon Darcy Lilo. He has served since November 16, 2011.

6. The theme song for the Solomons Festival is entitled 'One United Pacific', composed by by Kadiba Alu.

7. 'A total of SB$39.5 million was allocated for preparatory work this year of which SB$13.3 million was donated by the Republic of China (ROC) and the rest from the Solomon Islands Government' (*Solomon Star*, June 20, 2011).

8. As Aiken (2004: 300) defines it: '*Kastom* is a Melanesian Pijin word (from English 'custom') that, at its most basic, refers to ideologies and activities formulated in terms of empowering indigenous traditions and practices, both within communities of

varying levels of inclusivity, and as a stance toward outside entities. *Kastom* has long been an influential concept in Melanesia, especially island Melanesia, where in places it has been a key political concept and symbol for well over 50 years'.

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