FROM REBEL SONGS TO MORO SONGS:
POPULAR MUSIC AND MUSLIM FILIPINO PROTEST

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ABSTRACT

Rank-and-file supporters of the Bangsamoro rebellion (1972-1977) articulated their personal sentiments about the war in a genre called "rebel songs." The lyrics reveal that fighters' personal aspirations often diverged from the official aims of separatist leaders. This article examines how rebel songs transitioned into "Moro songs" in the post-martial law era and why they came to more narrowly reflect the movement's official goals of Moro unity and Islamic renewal. While Muslim separatists hinged their ideology on the concept of a shared religion and history distinct from the rest of the Philippines, the musical vehicle they approved to convey aspirations for political and religious autonomy was not, however, indigenous genres, such as tudtol *or* dindiken. *Rather, Moro songs set Magindanaon lyrics to the melodies of American folk, country and rock ballads—such as Bryan Adams's "Straight from the Heart"—to frame protests against the Philippine government's incursion into the homeland, the fight for religion and calls for Muslim unity. By endorsing this hybrid genre to broadcast separatist goals, the movement opened up a communicative space for its message to internal and external audiences, across cultural and national boundaries.*

Keywords: *Moro songs, Magindanao/Maguindanao, American colonialism, transnationalism, American music*

Muslim Filipinos in Mindanao experienced some of the most violent and repressive military measures of the Marcos regime during the era of Martial Law in the Philippines (1972-1986). Intense fighting between the Philippine military and armed separatists from

1973 to 1977 came to be known as the Bangsamoro Rebellion,[1] and caused a million Muslim Filipino civilians to flee their homes, 100,000 to become refugees in Malaysia and, approximately, 50,000 to lose their lives. At the height of the fighting in 1975, three-quarters of the Philippine Army were deployed in Mindanao to suppress separatist fighters who were willing to spill their blood for independence and freedom (McKenna 1996:234). One area of Mindanao in which much fighting took place was the region of Cotabato, now called Maguindanao[2] province, with Cotabato City as its political center. This region is the traditional homeland of the Magindanao people, second largest of several Muslim Filipino ethnolinguistic groups, and the focus of this article.

It was amidst political repression and violence that several new song forms emerged in Magindanaon musical practice. New genres, such as *dindiken*, *dayunday*, Martial Law songs and rebel songs, lamented over the loss of loved ones, protested against military incursion into Mindanao and praised for the soldiers fighting in the rebellion. While the content of these forms treated themes arising from the Martial Law experience, they also continued and diverged from Magindanaon musical styles through the process of hybridity. Rebel songs, in particular, took on strong political and cultural implications when it was adopted as the voice of the Bangsamoro movement.

Rebel songs were created by, and gained popularity among, the young fighters of the armed rebellion. These songsters took popular tunes, usually from American music and Filipino pop, and rewrote them with Magindanaon lyrics. The songs expressed the personal concerns of ordinary rank-and-file fighters, such as asking one's sweetheart to remain faithful and fighting for one's *inged,* or community. At first, they rarely articulated the separatist movement's official goals of unifying the Moro Nation (Bangsamoro) or promoting Islamic renewal (McKenna 1998:189). Sometime after the armed rebellion in the 1980s, rebel songs transitioned into "Moro songs" by more closely reflecting the official ideological concerns of the separatist movement. One of the original rebel singers known as "Johnson" became the most well-known singer of the later Moro song genre. Having joined the Moro Islamic Liberation Front and intensified his identity as a self-conscious and religious Muslim,[3] Johnson's songs of the late 1980s emphasized Islamic renewal, urged people to follow the teachings of the *ulama* (religious scholars) and expressed grief over the wrongs committed during the armed

rebellion. In this article, I will investigate how and why the stylistic conventions of American popular music became the platform, first, for rebels to express their personal sentiments; and, later, for the official separatist movement's articulation of collective political protest, ethnonationalist identity and Muslim unification.

This transcultural encounter—the productive moment of rebel songwriters hybridizing Magindanaon expression with American popular musical styles—brings together the historical realities of the American occupation of Mindanao (1903-1946), violent repression during the Marcos regime and the deployment and solidification of a pan-Islamic identity among Muslim Filipinos since the late 1970s. I am particularly interested in why this hybrid music became the medium for expressing separatist aspirations and Islamic renewal. How does this genre encompass certain visions of national, transnational and ethnonational identities, while excluding others in its process of hybridity? How do these songs represent both continuities and breaks with Magindanaon musical tradition? Why is this genre and not other indigenous forms endorsed by religiously-focused separatist leaders? I will address these questions—and, perhaps, raise others—while illustrating how the changing lyrical content of "rebel songs" in their transition to "Moro songs" reflected the shifting power dynamics of Cotabato City's political scene.

REBEL SONGS

Rebel songs, in their earliest form, expressed the sentiments of rank-and-file insurgents during the Bangsamoro rebellion. Thomas M. McKenna, in *Muslim Rulers and Rebels* (1998), analyzed the ethnonational struggle of Muslim Filipinos, focusing on Magindanaon society and politics, and important political events as they took place in post-Martial Law Cotabato City. By analyzing rebel songs in one section of his book, McKenna revealed the subtle discrepancies between the political aspirations, rhetoric, and official ideology of the Magindanaon political elite, and contrasted them with the concerns of ordinary adherents of the movement—the people who were most likely to lose their lives in the struggle (see McKenna 1998:186-191). "Rebel songs" may be understood as "hidden transcripts" (Scott 1990), writes McKenna, revealing the concerns of ordinary people, rather than the official ideology made public and controlled by the political movement's elites. This disparity,

he continues, emerges because "subordinates are never merely passive recipients of nationalist ideas (they may reinterpret them in various ways to incorporate their specific political concerns)…." (McKenna 1998:16). Rebel songs are crucial to understanding the separatist movement's complexity because "the dialogue between nationalist elites and ordinary adherents is distinctly asymmetric, with elites ultimately controlling both the production of nationalist ideas and the vehicles of their transmission" (McKenna 1998:16). Poor, young and often illiterate men sang these songs among their peers in separatist camps to express personal loss and desire, and not as a way to broadcast movement's message. McKenna identified two main types of songs—slower ballads that lament personal sentiments of loss and longing, and up-tempo songs which glorified the fighters and their leaders.

McKenna provides an example of the first type—an excerpt of a ballad expressing a young man's personal concern of being rejected by his love interest:

EXAMPLE 1 "Song I" (From McKenna 1998)

Manguda a inendan sangat I kamiskin nin. Uway den u inendan paninindeg ku inged, Jihad pi Sabilillah.	The young man whom you rejected Was a poor man, it's true. But now he's fighting for the homeland And offering his life In the struggle for the faith. (McKenna 1998:188)

The young man indicates his own incentive for joining the rebellion—improving his social standing by becoming a fighter to protect his community's religious rights.

Another example that fits McKenna's description of a ballad expressing personal concerns is one that I recorded in 2002 from a Magindanaon woman named Bai Not. Bai Not, a relative of Danongan Kalanduyan,[4] sang for me a song called "O Papanok," which used the melody of the traditional American folk song "Clementine." She said she had learned the song from "the old people" ("yung mga matatanda"), and was clearly not aware that the original tune came from an American folk song. While American folk songs such as "Clementine" circulated during the U.S. colonial occupation, the lyrics of this version clearly make reference to the violence in Mindanao during the rebellion.

EXAMPLE 2 "O Papanok" ("If I Was a Bird")
Transcribed and translated by Danongan Kalanduyan.

O papanok ako bo na munot ako sa sambel ka enduko kaganatan su kalido nu ginawa.	If I were a bird I will join the wind so I can leave the sadness behind.
O mataya, tayan ko na pakatutulanged ka ka lusa lundang a "peaceful" na kambalinganan kabon.	Oh my darling, my love please be faithful as I will be coming back (to you) when peace and order are restored.
O mataya, tayan ko na nandadalpan ko pan su inged sa kapalawan na mabimban su sagadan.	Oh my darling, my love I have lived in the mountainous place People I passed by were surprised.
O mataya, tayan ko na malido su pengganat ka makalipus sa palaw na mabimban su sagadan.	Oh my darling, my love It is painful to leave you As I pass by the mountain Those who see me will wonder.

In this rendition, the original tune is identifiable, but not completely intact. The song is at once familiar and unfamiliar, recognizable but transformed. Bai Not applies traditional aesthetics of singing, such as embellishing certain notes by sliding up to or down from others, and phrasing the melody by taking liberties with the rhythm and tempo. But otherwise, "O Papanok" clings to the song's original sentiment of melancholy, and its theme of love and loss. The repeated phrase "Oh my darling" is translated into Magindanao as "O mataya." This particular element—referring to one's sweetheart directly—breaks away from traditional Magindanaon poetry that makes *indirect* references to a love interest. Traditional songs of love called *bayuk* refer indirectly to one's love interest through metaphors, similes and hyperbole. For example, José Maceda, in his dissertation, stated, "Instead of referring directly to a woman, some kind of flower is mentioned" (Maceda 1963:192). Danongan Kalanduyan corroborates this: "We commonly used indirect meaning of words like 'flowers' which refer to women and 'thorns' refer to men. Nowadays, we use 'tayan' for sweetheart, or girlfriend" (Personal communication, 29 October 2009).

vvvvvvvvvvvvvvvvvvvvvvvvvvvFrom my own research, I have found that this direct way of referring to one's beloved in the lyrics of songs reflects the departure away from traditional Magindanaon courtship practices during the era of martial law.

Before the late 1960s, my interviewees told me, young men and women could not openly talk to each other, unless they were related by blood. Even mild flirtation with a young woman may lead her relatives to question the young man's motives, and, if he is a suitable match, to press him into asking for her hand. Increasingly since the late 1960s, the influx of American as well as Filipino movies and popular music containing different notions and articulations of romantic love impacted and continue to influence Magindanaon youth culture. Also, as more and more women became educated and worked away from home, they increasingly chose their own marriage partners. Adding to this, the uncertainty and possibility of death during the Bangsamoro rebellion created urgency among young men to secure the promise of their sweethearts to remain faithful and wait for their return.

While "O Papanok" expresses intimate personal sentiments, other rebel songs are up-tempo and inspirational, glorifying the war and its fighters. For this type of song, McKenna provides the example entitled "Mana Silan Cowboy" ("They Are Like Cowboys"). It takes the melody of Glenn Campbell's 1975 hit, "Rhinestone Cowboy,"[5] and depicts rebels as fearless male warriors, much like the image of American cowboys in the Wild West. I argue that this appropriation of the cowboy image distances the Muslim Filipino rebels from the stereotypical image of the "savage" Moro—a derogatory term derived from the Spanish word for Moor. This character, as a villain and menace, appears in the "moro-moros" of traditional Christian Filipino theatre and the legends and war films of the American colonial imagination. Philippine newspapers today still evoke these images and stereotypes when they refer to "Muslim bandits" or "Muslim rebels." The cowboy imagery in this song attempts to refashion the rebels' representation from a negative figure to a positive one that resonates with notions of freedom and resisting domination. The song both appropriates and subverts the musical styles and cultural images from the very forces that the fighters are supposedly resisting—westernization.

EXAMPLE 3 Rebel song "Mana Silan Cowboy"
("They Are Like Cowboys)
(translation from McKenna 1998:187)

Nineteen seventy-one Taman ku seventy-nine, Entu ba su lagun mayaw Pan su rebolusyon Siya kanu embala-bala A **inged** u mga Moro. Guden makating-guma Su Paminsakan.	From nineteen seventy-one until nineteen seventy-nine— Those were the years when the revolution was raging throughout the various communities of the Moros. It was the time when the Destroyer had come among us.
Natadin su mga manguda, Lu silan natimu u damakayu.	The young men at first were scattered, but they gathered together deep in the forest.
Mana silan cowboy, Di magilek masabil. Mawasa, mamala; Ulanan a sinangan Kanu mga lalan. Namba su paninindeg.	They are like cowboys, unafraid to be martyred. [They fight] wet or dry; They are soaked by the rain and scored by the sun along the way. These are the revolutionaries.

Rebel songs, like the young rebels themselves, did not express their personal aspiration using the official narratives of the separatist movement. McKenna states that the term "Bangsamoro," representing the assembly of Moro communities into the ethnic nation, or "bangsa," does not appear frequently in these early songs or in his casual conversations with ordinary people (McKenna 1998:190). Rather, the songwriters used the term "*inged*," a localized concept of community that referred to a face-to-face settlement rather than the larger sociopolitical collectivity of the nation. Writes McKenna, "Fighting for the *inged* is a collateral goal—one conceptually distinct from the nationalist project but germane to it" (McKenna 1998:190). Rank-and-file combatants sought to protect their *inged,* or home communities, while leaders sought to establish the geopolitical autonomy of Mindanao—the Bangsamoro homeland. Also, the rebel singers' sense of jihad and martyrdom for the sake of religion were understood as defending traditional cultural and indigenous Magindanaon lifeways, not only as a defense of Islam in general. To an ordinary Magindanao, to be a Magindanao is to be a Muslim—by defending Islam, they are protecting their

own communities.[6] As illustrated in Example 1, individual combatants joined the rebellion for other personal reasons as well.

The leaders of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), the first separatist organization established during Martial Law, advocated for an independent state for Muslim Filipinos on the island of Mindanao. In order to do so, they first needed to cultivate a pan-Muslim Filipino identity to unify the thirteen or so distinct Muslim cultural-linguistic groups; and second, an alignment with the rest of the Islamic world. McKenna traces the development of a "transcendent and self-conscious Philippine Muslim ethnic identity" to the American period when it was encouraged and facilitated by colonial authorities for their own purposes (1998:6). Leaders of the separatist movement, advocating for autonomy from the Philippine state, chose the politically loaded term Bangsamoro, or "Moro Nation," to represent all Muslim Filipinos. The use of the once pejorative term "Moro" is redeployed by Muslim ethnonationalists for impact and empowerment, but the move also discloses that there was little to bind these groups together before external pressures. Rather than reject the image of the Moro, Muslim Filipinos refigured its representation to unite the various cultural-linguistic groups. The provocative slogan "Moro not Filipino" defined Filipinos as Christians, colonial subjects of the Spanish, imitators of the Americans and invaders of the Mindanao.

As political power shifted from the secular MNLF to the religiously focused Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), rebel songs transitioned into *Moro* songs, reflecting this transfer of power. The term "Moro" and "Bangsamoro" became naturalized in the lyrics of Moro songs, as did ideas about unity and Islamic renewal. I will discuss contemporary Moro songs after the armed rebellion, particularly through the music of one man who was one of the original rebel singers. But before doing so, I will demonstrate how the practice of adapting foreign melodies with Magindanaon lyrics both continues and breaks with indigenous musical tradition. Then, I will explain why I think the stylistic idioms of American popular music powerfully expressed Magindanaon sentiments and aspirations emerging out of Martial Law and the mass-based Bangsamoro movement which followed.

TRADITIONAL SONGS BEFORE THE ARMED REBELLION

While fashioning Magindanaon songs from foreign melodies is not a recent phenomenon, adapting Western harmony and popular music rhythmic styles is new. Indigenous Magindanaon songs before the Martial Law era, such as *tudtol, bayuk* and *sindil* were sung solo and unaccompanied. These forms are explained and documented in Maceda's groundbreaking ethnomusicological dissertation (1963), and also in Clement Wein's published collections of Magindanaon songs (1985a and 1985b). There are several song examples in Wein that hybridize American and Filipino popular melodies with Magindanaon lyrics. Some songs called *sengal sa agama,* or religiously themed songs, use Arab-Islamic melodies, and may have been written before the twentieth century. While this connection between religious songs and Arab music melodies may seem obvious, I have found one *sengal sa agama* that borrowed the tune of an American (and Christian) melody. "Sigai (Messenger of God)" (1985a:100-1) borrows the tune of the song "Glory, Glory, Hallehijah (No. 117): Battle Hymn of the Republic,"[7] and the song extols the great deeds of the Prophet Muhammad during a religious battle. That religiously themed songs do not borrow solely from Arabic melodies demonstrates that Magindanaons do not adapt outside influences in a direct, singular way. Rather, "Sigai" is inspired by the warlike theme and grandeur of the "Battle Hymn of the Republic" melody, rather than its historical connection to the American Civil War or references to Christianity. The Magindanaons' flexible approach to interpreting and localizing outside influences appears later in Moro songs.

American folk songs were first introduced in Mindanao through the establishment of the public school system during the U.S. colonial era. Magindanaons and other Muslim (as well as non-Muslim) groups learned American folk songs in elementary school. For example, Usopay Cadar discusses a few Maranao folksongs that adapt American melodies with Maranao lyrics, such as, "Clementine," "Jack and Jill" and "The More We Get Together" (Cadar 1980:126-7). Wein's (1985a) collection also identifies four "new" folksongs sung mostly by the teenagers of his day. Two of these songs use melodies by the popular Filipino singer Eddie Peregrina during the 1970s. The Magindanao song "Malidu (Sorrow)" (Wein 1985a:64-5) uses the melody of Peregrina's "Memories of Our Dreams" (*Memories of Our Dreams,* Vicor

Records) and "Kinapanganakan" ("Telling the Parents") (Wein 1985a:72-3) uses the melody of "Mardy" (*What Am I Living For?*, Vicor Records). In this way, Magindanaons created their own meaning and meaningful expressions out of external influences delivered by mass media technologies.

While rebel songs continued the tradition of localizing foreign melodies into Magindanaon musical aesthetics, they broke with tradition in the use of harmony and the rhythmic and stylistic idioms of American popular music. This move projected Magindanaon music outward to the wider world using the globally circulated language of popular music. As I will discuss below, rendering Magindanaon songs in a popular musical style had significant ramifications from both within and outside of Magindanaon society in Mindanao.

MORO SONGS

After Martial Law, changes in the political context and lyrical content of rebel songs transformed them into Moro songs. While rebel songs express the personal experiences of rank-and-file Magindanaon fighters, Moro songs reveal more political references to the inclusive Bangsamoro identity and advocated for Islamic renewal. This shift, I suggest, reflects changing understanding, deployment and incorporation of official Bangsamoro ideology first introduced during the armed rebellion. The MILF, which took over the separatist movement from the secular MNLF, strongly emphasized Islam as part of Moro liberation. The lyrical content of Moro songs reflected this ideological move by emphasizing the official aspirations of the MILF, rather than the personal motivations of rebel fighters. Moro songs solidified Bangsamoro identity, advocated for Islamic renewal, protested Western imperialism, and invoked love and pity for the homeland, while continuing to use globally circulated melodies and musical styles of American popular music.

I first heard the songs of the famous Moro singer Johnson in 2003, while I was conducting dissertation research on the *dayunday*[8] in Maharlika Village, Metro Manila's largest Muslim enclave located in Taguig City. Bai Not, the same woman who sang "O Papanok" for me, lent me a cassette tape of a lone male singer accompanying himself on a Yamaha DX-7 keyboard.[9] The quality of the cassette tape was already several

generations old, making some of the lyrics difficult to understand and transcribe. I recognized some of the melodies, including Bryan Adams' 1983 hit song "Straight from the Heart." Since most of my research was on indigenous musical genres, such as *kulintang* (gong-drum ensemble) and *dayunday* (musical drama), these Magindanaon songs in a popular music style with upbeat tempos, lively rhythms, catchy melodies, and harmonic accompaniment captured my interest.

Over time I identified most, but not all, of the melodies used by Johnson: "Red River Valley," an American folk song from the late 1800s;[10] "Sealed With A Kiss," which first hit the American Billboard Hot 100 in 1962;[11] "Crying Time," written by Buck Owen in 1966 and popularized in the Philippines by Victor Wood in the early 1970s; "El Cóndor Pasa (If I Could)" by Simon & Garfunkel,[12] "Ang Bayan Kong Sinilangan (Timog Cotabato)"[13] by the Filipino rock group Asin; and "Indung Indung," a popular Indonesian song sung by Titie Sa'id.[14] These songs represent a number of musical genres including Pinoy folk rock; American folk song; American popular music from the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s; and an Indonesian pop song. In some of his songs, Johnson adapts these tunes into the rhythmic and walking bass style of Johnny Cash similar to "I Walk the Line" (1956) or "Cry Cry Cry" (1955). This seems to be Johnson's signature style during the late 1980s, and, perhaps, why he chose the stage name "Johnson."

Johnson's song called "Inged Ko a Mindanao," or "My Homeland of Mindanao" uses the opening of the melody of the Filipino hit song "Ang Bayan Kong Sinilangan (Timog Cotabato)," or "My Land of Birth (South Cotabato)" by Asin (*Masdan Mo ang Kapaligiran*, Vicor Records, 1978). Asin ("Salt") is a folk rock (Christian Filipino) group of the 1970s that popularized the use of ethnic instruments and sang about sociopolitical issues. Their well-known song opens with *kulintang* and a bamboo jaw harp, explicit musical references to the indigenous music cultures of Mindanao. The song itself is sung in Tagalog, the national language, lamenting the political troubles in Cotabato City. The vocal aesthetics, melancholy melody, harmonic progressions and rhythmic accompaniment are in a folk rock style.

Johnson's version makes a melodic reference to the opening melody of the Asin song, but does not use the whole melody, harmonic progression, rhythmic idioms or instrumentation characteristic of folk rock music. Also, he does not seem compelled

to make self-consciously Philippine Muslim musical references by including the *kulintang,* or jaw harp. Both songs address similar issues in the lyrics[15] and both identify Mindanao as the land of their birth, chronicling the violence because of the struggle over religion.

EXAMPLE 4a Exerpt from "Ang Bayan Kong Sinilangan (Timog Cotabato)" by Asin. From the album *Masdan Mo ang Kapaligiran*, Vicor Records, 1978. (My translation)

Ako'y isinilang sa isang bayan ng Cotabato. Kasing gulo ng tao, kasing gulo ng mundo. Dahil di magkasundo sa relihiyon at prinsipyo, nagkagulo.	I was born in a town called Cotabato. As the people are disorderly, the world is also in turmoil. Because of disagreements in religion and principles, there is mayhem.
Ang bayan ko sa Cotabato kasing gulo ng isip ko. Di alam kung saan nanggaling, di alam kung saan patungo. Kapatid sa kapatid, laman sa laman Sila-sila ang naglalaban, di ko alam ang dahilan ng gulo.	My hometown of Cotabato is as troubled as my mind. It doesn't know where it came from, nor where it is going. Brother to brother, flesh to flesh, They are the ones who are fighting— I don't know the cause of their troubles.
Bakit nagkaganon, ang sagot sa tanong ko. Bakit kayo nag-away, bakit kayo nagkagulo? Prinsipyo mo'y igagalang ko kung ako'y iyong nirespeto. Kung nagtulungan kayo, di sana magulo ang bayan ko.	Why did it become that way, the answer to my question. Why are all of you fighting, why did you all create turmoil? Your principles I will respect if I am respected by you. If you helped one another, there wouldn't be trouble in my hometown.
Sa bayan kong sinilangan, sa timog Cotabato Ako ay namulat sa napakalaking gulo Dahil walang respeto sa prinsipyo ng kapwa tao Kapwa Pilipino ay pinapahirapan mo, ang gulo.	The town where I was born, in south Cotabato I was raised in a great conflict Because there's no respect for the principles of their fellow man. It's fellow Filipinos you cause hardship for.

The narrator in Johnson's song positions himself within the fight: "Let us pray for God's help above, That I won't be afraid of the fight for religion, Because in my land we take a strong stand, So that I'll be removed from the path of death." By contrast, the

narrator in Asin's song seems to place the blame elsewhere: "I was born in the land of Cotabato, The people are disorderly, and their world is also in turmoil." According to Asin, the fighters, presumably both Christians and Muslims, are the ones to blame: "Brother to brother, flesh for flesh, they are the ones who fight, over things without knowing, the cause of their troubles." Asin's song does not put these struggles in a larger historical context, leaving out the role of the Philippine government in the political battles.

EXAMPLE 4b "Inged ko a Mindanao" ("My Homeland, Mindanao") by Johnson. Translated and transcribed by Ruhaina and Dennis Guiaman.

Inged ko a Mindanao, Na siya ko den ba pimbata Siya ko den ba inuyag, ni Ina endo si Ama. Na ya ko den nambamatan i garasay so madakel ka pedtabunan sa lido, kuntela no agama.	My homeland, Mindanao This is where I was born This is where I was given life by my mother and father. I glimpsed the hardship of the masses, The fight over religion has left an affliction.
Diko mambo tantangan, taman na diko makatindeg Su madakel a kaumis ko inged ko a Mindanao. Ka pedsambi sa kadato, na endo kapulo no pangkatan Na dusa a kapalangapan, Hadapan ko kadenan.	I won't stop until every last youth has stood his ground in my land of Mindanao. We will change of leaders up to the highest level, And their sins will be waiting to be judged in front of God.
Katanudan ko pamon i minatay den si kaka Ka mimbuno sekanin ko kuntela no agama Na i uli ko sa baya U mataden den so inged Ka ikaya ko si kaka Da den uli sa walay.	I remember the death of my (older) brother. He was killed in the fight for religion. I will bring his corpse to paradise because I am ashamed to bring him home.
Mangeni-ngeni tano sa kadnan a mapulo	Let us pray for God's help above
Na di yako kagilikan ko kuntela no agama	I am not afraid of Islam's enemy.
Ka iganat ko sa inged so bagelo paninindeg Ka pidsan ako pengganat talan sa kapatay.	I will leave my homeland with strength of defense. That I won't be afraid in the fight for religion.

In addition to tunes adapted from American and Filipino popular music, Johnson's music also uses melodic material which bypasses these two metropoles altogether. The Indonesian pop tune "Indung Indung (Mother, Mother)" that Johnson uses was never filtered through the Manila-based media, but rather through trade with nearby Malaysia. While the lyrics of "Indung Indung" and Johnson's song differ, they do touch on similar themes of peace in the land, the unity of Muslim people and Islam.

EXAMPLE 5 "Endong Endong"
("Mother Mother") by Johnson.
Transcribed and translated to Tagalog
by Ruhaina and Dennis Guiaman.

Sa ganggula no inged tano	What is happening in our land
Pamikiren sa mabagel	Let's think about well
Sa panunden i kalilintad	How will we have peace
Dalepa no madakel?	In a place like this?
Pamikiren su kalilintad	Think about peace
Ingedo manga Islam	In the land of the Muslims
Duwan-duwan tano den tanan	Have pity on all of us
O ditano mamagayan	If we don't gain independence
#chorus#	#chorus#
Manga guro manga ulama	Teachers, Muslim scholars
Magidsan so madakel	Like (the rest of us) the people
Edsabenalan so kapiginged	Let us try now for the
Kapamagayon no madakel	Freedom for the masses
Lailaha ilallah	There is no God but Allah
Muhammed Rasullulah	Mohammed is his messenger
Namba i kadenan tano	He is our Lord
Nakalilintad kano madakel	who will provide peace for the masses

Johnson's rendition is very interesting because the accompanying drum or rhythmic pattern is not unlike a typical Magindanaon *dabakan* (drum) beat. Because of the distortion on the tape, I could not assess whether the drum was being played live or on a synthesizer, but it was definitely not a preprogrammed beat one would commonly find on a keyboard. The tempo is faster than Titie Sa'id's "Indung Indung," and much livelier. While Sa'id's version is quite tranquil, with minimal accompaniment, Johnson punctuates the melody with syncopated rhythms and off-beat

chords. Many of Johnson's arrangements use offbeat chordal accompaniment in a sort of "oompa" style. He takes the melody and some aspect of its emotional expression, and arranges it into his own musical style. In this way, I believe that Johnson continues a musical process of localization similar to the Magindanaon folksongs I discussed above. Also, delivering his message in a pop music style attracts listeners beyond Magindanaon rebels and separatists.

The following example, for which I cannot identify the original melody, narrates the history of the Bangsamoro people.

EXAMPLE 6 "Singanin no Madakel"
("The Will of the Many") by Johnson.
Transcribed and translated
by Danongan Kalanduyan.

Mga lusod ko sa tiyan Ka pakikineg kano den Ebpalas palasen ko Endadalay no Singanin no madakel.	My fellow relatives, please listen as I will relate the history of the Bangsamoro people.[16]
Singanin no madakel I kambaya-baya tano Ka di nilan kalilinian I matunggad su agama Ko ingedu Bangsamoro.	The Bangsamoro people, Our freedom… We cannot afford to lose our homeland just because they won't have peace.
Nakauma su Espanyol Ko ingedu Bangsamoro Sa kawanan su sundang Siya sa biwang su krus A ibpanagu ko inged.	When the Spaniards arrived in the place of the Bangsamoro people, (Only with) a sword in the right hand (And) a shield in the left hand they faced their enemies.
Enduken no maputi A tupo nu Imperialists a namugaw ko Espanyol asal nilan bo makuwa Su ingedu Bangsamoro.	Why did the whites (foreign invaders) Descendents of the (American) imperialists drive the Spaniards out? As long as they took over the Bangsamoro homeland.
Iganat ku Espanyol taman ku Melikano Tenemuga su lugo madakel i nasabil ku ingedu Bangsamoro.	From the Spanish time until the coming of Americans too much blood shed and too many people killed in the land of the Bangsamoro.

(Example 6 continued)

Nalabiyan na dadtem Su kadakelu nasabil Gunaden makatingguma Kinakamal i Marcos Asalu Imperialist	Over taken by the clouds the number of those who died (defending God), more bloodshed. The Marcos dictatorship was being supported by the Imperialists.
Adidi duwa nin den Su mga kaunutan Da silan makaingat Da nilan kasabuti I nadtalimbutan silan	They sacrificed for the sake of others, for their companions. They (the Philippine government) didn't care, they didn't consent, they cheated the Bangsamoro leaders.
Kuntela no agama a A sangat a talimbuten Ya nilan bo inipayag Satebped bo a kalatas Pinirman lu sa Tripoli	The enemies were real cheaters. This they admit in the paper that was signed there in Tripoli.
Su mga Bangsamoro a naninindeg ko inged Da silan kagileki Da silan kalbayug Jihad Fi Sabilillaah	The Bangsamoro people defending their homeland. They are without fear, they won't back down, they will be martyrs.
Sa yanilan pedtindegan na La ilaha ilallah Mohammed Rasullulah Ya tano den tindegan La ilaha ilallah Mohammed Rasullulah	They stand for Allah and Prophet Mohammed. There is no God but Allah, Mohammed is his messenger. We shall all stand. There is no God but Allah, Mohammed is his messenger.

The song reconstructs the history of the Bangsamoro people for the youth who did not experience the rebellion, asking them to support the separatist movement. It is a history lesson in song that is very different from dominant Philippine narratives which have cast Muslim Filipinos as inherently troublesome and aggressive. In framing the Philippine government as the new intruder, continuing the Spanish and American invasions, the songs call on the youth to action. The youth are reminded of the sacrifices of the rebels, that the Philippine government cheated them in Tripoli[17] and that they are fighting for their religion.

Johnson's songs "Ulan-ulan nu Ramadhan," sung to the tune of "Sealed with a Kiss," urges Muslims to observe and respect religious practices during Ramadan. The song is also didactic; it instructs Muslims to follow the teachings of the *ulama,* or religious scholars, who studied in the Middle East.

EXAMPLE 7 "Ulan-ulan nu Ramadhan
(The Month of Ramadan)" by Johnson.
Transcribed and translated by Hamid Tanggo.

Masla ko ginawa ko, su ulan-ulan Ulan-ulan nu Ramadan Di tano lipatanan Kano timpo nin, kapedsagad din Pangagudan tano	This month is dear to me The month of Ramadan Let's not forget During this season, We have to take care of this month.
Adidi duwa nin den, su manosia O dili den makikineg Ko langun den nu gusiatan Nu mga guro, mga Ulama Makikineg tano	O, how sad the people If they don't listen To all of the sermon Of the teachers, of the Ulama. Let us listen.
Chorus Adatan su Ramadan Enggulanen su suguan Su kadenan a mangampon Mangampon ko kalimbanan	Chorus Respect Ramadan. Follow the commandments (orders). God is the one who forgives, forgives the sins (the wrongs).

By so doing, the song is consistent with the separatist movement's goal of Islamic renewal. But it also reveals that there is a need to implore people to respect formal Islamic practices. Even today, there is some ambivalence about restricting traditional Magindanaon funeral and wedding rituals, because they are considered "un-Islamic" by the *ulama*. Many reject the notion that Magindanao have to give up all of their traditions and favor those of Arab culture. In other words, ordinary people are able to draw a distinction between Islamic religious practices and Arab cultural practices (see also McKenna 1998:226-229).

While the MILF approve of Moro songs, they oppose an indigenous genre which they consider "un-Islamic." Like rebel songs, the popular stage show called *dayunday* emerged during Martial Law, but as entertainment, not as protest music. The MILF and the

ulama disapprove of, and, in some cases, ban *dayunday* performances because of its perceived sexual openness. The *dayunday* depicts flirtation and scenarios of romantic love and courtship between men and women, and often rural or urban poor attend its performances. Like the MILF, educated and cosmopolitan Magindanaons "do not consider *dayunday* as a culture because it is un-Islamic," and dismiss it as a kind of lowbrow entertainment (Email correspondence, 24 February 2008). From a musical standpoint, it is perplexing that *dayunday* is considered less of a cultural form than Magindanaon pop tunes. Indeed, *dayunday* singers are the only ones to preserve the centuries-old tradition of singing *bayuk,* deeply metaphorical indigenous love songs. Muslim Filipino filmmaker Guiterrez Matalam Mangansakan shared a similar concern when he stated, "We are very proud that the Moros have never been subjugated by colonizers, but who are [sic] colonizing us now? Tayo rin [Ourselves]." He asks, "Napatay ba ni Madonna ang *dayunday*? Hindi! Napatay ba ni Sharon ang *dayunday*? Hindi! Ang nakapatay nito ay fatwa ng mga ulama" ["Did (listening to) Madonna kill the *dayunday*? No! Did Sharon (Cuneta, a famous Filipino singer) kill the *dayunday*? No! What's killing it are the prohibitions of the ulama"] (Pastrano 2004:1).

By contrast, romantic love, as a theme, seems to be completely absent in Johnson's songs of the 1980s. "Love," in Johnson's Moro songs, is rendered as love for the Bangsamoro homeland, asking for God's love/pity, a mother's love/pity for her son who has to fight the battle, love of one's faith—all cultivating sentiments that express the need to protect their lifeways and gain independence. One of Johnson's songs, in what seems to be a karaoke version, is available on the video broadcast website YouTube.[18] Johnson is featured dressed in fatigues, playing his keyboard on a remote mountain and surrounded by his fellow uniformed combatants carrying arms. The song, like Johnson's other Moro songs, implores Magindanaons to remember the wrongs that occurred during the rebellion, to pity the people left behind and to unite with the Bangsamoro nation as a whole. It is a call-to-action, an appeal addressed to Bangsamoro youth, to the Magindanaons who fled to Manila and did not directly experience the rebellion and those who left the Philippines to work as overseas contract workers since the 1970s. Johnson's songs are attractive to and enjoyed by listeners outside the Bangsamoro movement's immediate reach. Indeed, YouTube's instant worldwide broadcasting capabilities has facilitated access to Moro songs.

EXAMPLE 8: "O Ko Ina Ko Ina"
("O Mother, My Mother") by Johnson.
Transcribed and translated by Danongan Kalanduyan.

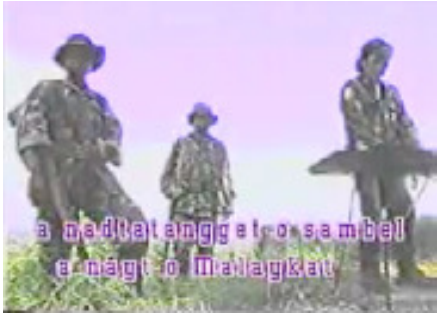
O ko ina ko ina	Oh my mother, my mother
Na pakikineg ka ina	Listen mother
Ka bpagudas aku ina	I'll be leaving mother
Sa luwa pan gkakaleben	I'll live there
Dalepa Ligawasan	At Ligawasan
Ingeda Penjihadan	The place of the Jihad
O ko ina ko ina	Oh mother, my mother
O sin sa gemanat aku	I am leaving now
Na da ka bu paguguliang	Please don't cry
Ka basi di bun mauget	Maybe it won't be long
Na makambalingan aku	Before I return
Ku hadapan nengka ina	To stand in front of you
O ku ina ko ina	Oh mother, my mother
Kena bu ya malgen	If not only for
Su suguan nu ALLAH	ALLAH'S command
Na di lagen di ku tikan	I can't afford to endure
Sa makabpipitas tanu	To be separated from you
Ina ku a papedtayan	My beloved mother.

The second part of the song evokes pity for this soldier and his mother who must claim his body.

O makineg engka ina	When you hear mother
Saki bo da makauli	That I'm unable to return
Na angay ka kaunutan	Go to the leader
Ka kuaka su bangkay ku	To claim my body
Bangkay ku a nasaheed	My martyred body
Bangkay ku a matenggaw	My cold corpse
Na luwa kun nu ilebeng	Bury me on
Ku embalakan nu lalan	The crossroads
A maka suti a lupa	The holy land

While the catchy and recognizable melodies may capture a broad appeal not only across the different ethnolinguistic groups that make up the Bangsamoro, the use of the Magindanao language renders most of the songs, and, perhaps, the message, specifically Magindanao. While a few other Muslim Filipino languages and

dialects are considered to be mutually intelligible (Cadar 1997:82), the lyrics are distinctly recognizable as Magindanao and are not understood by all the different cultural-linguistic groups. Islamic religious expressions and reference in the songs unite the different linguistic groups. At the same time, words and phrases, such as referring to God as "Kadenan" rather than "Allah," render some of the songs specifically Magindanao, rather than broadly Muslim or "Moro." The ways by which audiences actually do understand or do not understand the lyrics need to be analyzed. Since Moro songs have found popularity on YouTube, future study of this phenomenon may answer some of these questions.



Johnson Ampatuan video "O Ko Ina Ko Ina" available on YouTube.

Johnson Ampatuan video "O Ko Ina Ko Ina" available on YouTube. Close-up of Johnson playing the electronic keyboard.

CONCLUSION

During and after Martial Law, Magindanaon music transformed to include expression in a popular musical style. Rebel singers wrote Magindanaon lyrics to well-known tunes of American and Filipino pop to express their personal sentiments and goals during the armed rebellion. An analysis of rebel songs demonstrates that ordinary adherents do not simply absorb and follow the separatist movement's official ideology, but sometimes joined it for personal reasons like proving their worth to unrequited love-interests, social mobility and protection of their families.

Musically, rebel songs drew from an existing tradition of adapting foreign melodies. However, adopting the harmonic and rhythmic styles of pop music in Moro songs shifted this process from one that was localizing—one that made the outside legible and understandable to internal audiences—to a process that voiced and projected the more global political and religious aspirations of Magindanaon separatist leaders. While official separatist ideology, interwoven into these songs, claimed to refuse outside influences into Magindanaons' homeland, to me the Moro song's hybrid form revealed a complex engagement with dominant Christian Philippine society and the West, rather than a complete rejection of their cultural influences. Nevertheless, Magindanao does not adopt or adapt to either Western or Arab-Islamic cultural elements in a straightforward or monolithic way. Moro singers selectively adapt the stylistic conventions of American popular music and transform them into Magindanaon expressions.

Audiences worldwide are attracted to the style and sounds of American-influenced pop and rock. By setting these lyrics to well-known melodies, Moro songs attracted and were attractive to listeners outside of Magindanaon communties in Mindanao, Magindanaon youth who were born after the rebellion and those who fled Mindanao for Manila or other countries. Indeed, many commenting on Johnson's video "O Ko Ina Ko Ina" on YouTube made clear that, although they could not understand the words, they appreciated and enjoyed the song.

Conveying these messages in a mass culture media and the musical language of popular music, the Magindanaons engage with the wider world, and thus, communicate their message widely. By endorsing this hybrid genre of Magindanaon lyrics and popular

music to communicate separatist goals, the movement has opened up a communicative space for its message to internal and external audiences, across cultural boundaries. In his book on popular music and politics in Southeast Asia, Craig Lockard has shown that, by using this mass mediated musical form "distinct social or subcultural groups have helped position themselves in the society, in the process working toward defining their status and social identity" (Lockard 1998:15). Separatist ideologues were not concerned with Anglo-American cultural imperialism in the musical sound, but only the content, lyrics and message. This is evident in the way that the MILF and religious figures disapprove of the *dayunday* because of its depiction of romantic love and sexuality between men and women, even though the music and the poetry are indigenous and directly evolve out of Magindanaon tradition. Lockard also writes, "Pop culture generally accords greater emphasis to the communicative capacity of its performances and products than to their critical appreciation; it follows the aesthetics of reception more than of creation, hence normally producing cultural products designed and made less from the creative drives within the artist than for the tastes and needs of the audience" (Lockard 1998:9).

In recent developments, Moro songs have gained some worldwide attention through the technology of YouTube. A new "King of Moro songs" named Datu Khomeini Camsa Bansuan emerged as a YouTube sensation sometime around 2007. He remakes several of Johnson's songs, such as "Singanin no Madakel," "Ulan-Ulan no Ramadan" and "O Ko Ina Ko Ina." In 2008, Khomeini and his group played at Greenhills (a popular shopping area) in Metro Manila to a mixed audience of Filipinos, some Christian, some non-Magindanaon Muslims and Magindanaons.[19] Again, many users comment on YouTube although they cannot understand the words, they enjoy his music, singing, performances and charisma. Stuart Hall asserts that, in popular culture, "There are points of resistance; there are also moments of supersession. This is the dialectic of cultural struggle" (Hall 1981:228). Now that Moro songs circulate beyond the Moro world, outside of the control of separatist leaders, it remains to be seen how audiences and the genre will be transformed.

NOTES

[1]For a more detailed historical analysis, see McKenna's *Muslim Rulers and Rebels* (1998).

[2]An older spelling of Magindanao still appears as "Maguindanao," even in official usage.

[3]Informants tell me that Johnson became more religious later in life, using his vocal talents to chant the *azan* (Islamic call to prayer). According to one source claiming to be his nephew, Johnson still sings at wedding celebrations and, occasionally, political rallies.

[4]Danongan "Danny" Kalanduyan is a well-known Magindanaon *kulintang* musician and ethnomusicologist living in San Francisco. He has been my mentor since 1998, and has facilitated much of my research on Magindanaon music and culture with his relatives in the Philippines.

[5]Fred Panopio also adapted this music in a famous parody of the song, "Ang Kawawang Cowboy." The Tagalog lyrics poke fun at the cowboy image when it is appropriated by an extremely impoverished narrator.

[6]For example, when they ask if I know how to speak Muslim, what they are really asking is if can I speak Magindanaon.

[7]The tune was composed by William Steffe around 1855. The lyrics were written by Julia Ward Howe, and first published in *The Atlantic Monthy* on 1 February 1862. The song became popular during the American Civil War.

[8]The *dayunday* is an indigenous form of theatre in which three singers, two men and a woman or, sometimes, two women and one man, enact a song-duel simulating a courtship battle (Talusan 2005).

[9]According to a professional keyboardist friend, the use of this electronic keyboard dates the recording of these songs to the late 1980s when the Yamaha DX7 became widely commercially available in the Philippines. Some of the songs were likely written earlier and rerecorded by Johnson.

[10]This song was popularized by Jules Verne Allen's 1929 "Cowboy's Love Song" (Victor 40167, 28 March 1929) http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Red_River_Valley_(song).

[11]Sung by Bryan Highland, the song was written by Peter Udell and Gary Geld. It hit the charts again in 1972 when Bobby Vinton recorded it. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sealed_with_a_Kiss.

[12]This song in itself has a long transnational history—according to Wikipedia, it was taken from the zarzuela *El Cóndor Pasa* by the Peruvian composer Daniel Alomía Robles written in 1913 and based on traditional Andean folk tunes. Simon and Garfunkel wrote their own lyrics to the melody and released it in 1970 on their *Bridge Over Troubled Water* album (Columbia Records). http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/El_C%C3%B3ndor_Pasa_(song).

[13]From the album *Masdan Mo ang Kapaligiran* (Vicor Records), 1978 by Asin.

[14]Dr. Ali Jihad Racy, one of my dissertation advisors and an expert on musics of the Middle East, informed me that the Indonesian version of the melody is taken from a well-known song in the Arab world entitled "Tal'ahmin Bayt Abuha" made famous by the late Iraqi singer Nazim al-Ghazali.

[15]Asin's song in turn makes reference to the patriotic song "Bayan Ko" written by José Corazón de Jesús. It begins "Ang bayan kong Pilipinas" ("My country the Philippines") and also depicts a land in crisis, but due to foreign interference rather than domestic political struggles.

[16]Literally, "singanin no madakel" means the "will of the many," but here it refers to the Bangsamoro people.

[17]The Tripoli Agreement of 1976 between the Philippine government and the Moro National Liberation Front.

[18]http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4bM0rI0p5dY. At this time, this is the only Johnson song that appears on YouTube. Users upload videos and audio of their choosing and other users comment on them. I am able to read the comments of different viewers from around the world, some of whom indicate that they cannot understand the words, but enjoy Johnson's song. Some people who commented seem to be Muslim Filipino, but not Magindanaon-speaking. Out of twenty-eight comments, only three seem to know who Johnson is. The "uploader" mistakenly titles the song "Maranao song."

[19]Khomeini did a duet with Queenie Padilla, the daughter of famous actor Robin Padilla.
See http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TxoJqdI9Hrc.

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