

Music, Dances, and Videos:

Identity Making and the Cosmopolitan Imagination in the Southern Philippines



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Abstract

This ethnography examines the processes in which rooted but overlapping forms of cosmopolitan engagements implicate the Tausug imagination of collectivity. It investigates Tausug expression of connection and belonging as they find themselves entangled into global cultural flow and caught up in the state and secessionist politics of attachment. Utilising methodological and theoretical approaches engendered by visual and material anthropology, the ethnography locates rooted cosmopolitan imagination in the works and lives of creative but marginalised and often silenced Tausug cultural agents engaged in street-based production, circulation, and consumption of popular music and dance videos on compact discs. The ethnography follows these cosmopolitan expressions as they are being imagined, embodied, reproduced, and shared by and across Tausug communities in the Zamboanga peninsula, the Sulu archipelago, and beyond through the digital spaces of the internet and cross-border flow of the videos. How the translocality of imaginaries reflected on the videos play out in everyday life and the broader politics of representation are demonstrated here as vital to the understanding of Tausug imagined community as an open, flexible, and dynamically engaging Muslim society despite long-standing political turbulence and economic uncertainty in their midst. Saliently, the thesis argues that Tausug cosmopolitanism cannot be reduced into a phenomenon driven by the expansive currents of Western-led globalisation. Rather, Tausug cosmopolitanism constitutes both continuity of and departure from past forms of translocal connections of Zamboanga and Sulu, which as a region was once integrated to a pre-colonial Southeast Asian emporium and continually through varying ways of connectedness. Old and new global processes come into play in shaping the everyday production of Tausug imaginaries inevitably rendering Tausug identity formation as a trajectory rather than an unchanging fact of being. Drawing from the Tausug ethnographic experience, the thesis contends that rooted cosmopolitanism does not necessarily constitute a singular condition but rather a contested and distinctively multifaceted phenomenon.

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Map 1. Locating Zamboanga, Jolo, and Sitangkay.

For
Alber Husin
1976-2013

Introduction

Making Videos, Identity, and Cosmopolitanism

Bearing a pocket-size digital video camera, a flimsy tripod, and a mobile phone fitted with an mp3 player and loudspeaker, Eting, a street seller, worked his way on a wobbly jetty that launches motorboats from the coast of Zamboanga City to the chain of islands dotting the Sulu Archipelago and the Philippine-Malaysian borders in Mindanao. Nearly halfway to the edge, he stopped and marveled at the breathtaking sight before him – a calm bluish sea sparkling under a bright mid-morning sun, boats cruising the horizon, and the soft grayish outline of volcanic islands farther at a distance. “*Malingkat in byu! Yari na kita mag-shooting!* (What a stunning view! We shoot here!)” Eting, speaking in a mix of native Tausug and vernacularized English, hollered towards Ajing and Nurmadji, both wedding performers, who were standing at the steps of the jetty. Eting was filming Ajing, a fellow Tausug, perform a *pangalay*, a dance widely revered by Muslim communities in Sulu and Zamboanga. Nurmadji, a Muslim Sama, was to do a lip synch of a Tausug *sangbay* (a song accompaniment of the *pangalay*) that the three recorded earlier. Ajing, already appeared on several *pangalay* video compact discs (VCD) circulating around the sidewalks and flea markets of Zamboanga and Sulu. Nurmadji, is doing his first video but aimed at leaving a cool impression with his *sangbay* of Bollywood’s *Chiki Chiki Bum Bum* Hindi music video that he vernacularized and re-titled into *Chiki Dum!*. “Right, let’s begin shooting!” Ajing, wearing the customary Tausug ensemble of silken *badju lapi* (front opening shirt) and green *sawwal kantiyu* (loose trousers), shot back at Eting as he moved towards the far end of the jetty. Nurmadji, donning a thick cold weather jacket and a Rastafarian hat made globally famous by Jamaican reggae singer Bob Marley, followed Ajing. Eting then began mounting the camera on the tripod whilst beckoning me to hold the mobile phone, turn up its volume, and play the mp3 recording of *Sangbay Chiki Dum* to guide Ajing’s



Figure 1. Eting, the street seller and video maker, films wedding entertainers Ajing in heritage dress and Nurmadji donning a Rasta hat on a shaky jetty in Zamboanga.

pangalay movements and Nurmadji's lip synching (see Figure 1).

Eting, Ajing, and Nurmadji are three of the hundreds of creative agents involved in widespread production and circulation of popular vernacular dance-music videos in Zamboanga and Sulu. I set out to investigate their enterprising project whilst serving as sound and recording technician in the course of my yearlong fieldwork from late 2009. My goals were to examine the possible implications of broadly accessible consumer digital media on local cultural production and reproduction, the politics of appropriation, and their place in the discursive construction of Tausug Muslim identity as they find themselves increasingly entangled into the phenomenon of “global cultural flows” (Appadurai 1996, 1990; also Lash and Urry 1994, Clifford 1992, Friedman 1994, Beck 2002, Van der Veer 2004). I posited my fieldwork objectives with critical consideration of the competing ideological forces that are also currently engaged in the cultural production of belonging and identity in Mindanao. On the one hand, armed secessionist movements seek to consolidate and transform multilingual areas of Mindanao where Muslims are majority into a Bangsamoro (Moro nation) body politic that associates with the global Islamic ecumene (Frake

1980: 316, Tan 1994)¹. On the other, the Philippine state has pursued a sustained but fumbling effort of integrating Muslim Mindanao communities into its vision of a broader multicultural, multi-faith, and multi-linguistic Filipino nation that aligns with the non-secular democratic world. A closer scrutiny of these contrasting nationalist imaginations, however, reveals a remarkable degree of similitude between them. The two sides pursue homologous sentiments of nationalism that are far from ethnocentric but more reflective of the cosmopolitan sensibility of coming to terms “with the evaluation of differences within the nation” (Fardon 2008: 239). Both the Philippine state and Moro rebels open up to “the possibility that everyone is a rooted cosmopolitan, attached to a home of his or her own, with its own cultural particularities, but taking pleasure from the presence of the other, different, places that are home to other, different, people” (Appiah 1996: 22). Inherent in these competing nationalist imaginations are contrasting sense of rooted cosmopolitanism and of being cosmopolitan patriots with ethical responsibility towards the world (Appiah 2006). Each adversary envisions a collectivity of multilingual and multicultural communities that is mindful of their variegated roots and desire for trans-local connections.

Nonetheless, the state’s and the rebels’ cosmopolitan notions of the nation stopped right at each other’s visions, ending where each other’s imagined nation begins. These positions illustrate that when similar ideals of rooted cosmopolitanism actually exist on the same competitive political field, they complicate the notion of cosmopolitan nations and the case for patriotic cosmopolitans. The problem further unravels when we begin to ask which of the two contrasting discourses of belonging have won the acceptance of the local communities they implicated. One wide-ranging ethnographic work on armed separatism amongst the Maguindanao-speaking Muslims of Cotabato in Central Mindanao indicated that subordinate Muslim response to the imagined Moro nation are reserved even as they share a “common discursive framework” with the secessionist movement on the matter of sentiments against the state (McKenna 1998: 280). Whilst the struggle for Moro nationalism had gained broad support, everyday cultural expressions of collectivity in the form of mythologies, village performances, as well as audiocassette circulation of local music,

¹ This thesis deploys the terms ‘secessionism’, ‘rebellion’, and ‘independence movement’ in describing Muslim nationalist struggle in Mindanao in consonance to wide ranging public and academic characterisation of the phenomenon (e. g. Glang 1969; Gowing and McAmis 1974; Tan 1977, 1990; Premdas, et. al. 1990; McKenna 1998).

have little resonance with the idea of a broad Muslim national community envisioned by movement leaders (Ibid., 7, 280). The same fate could be said of the Philippine state as evinced by its failure to fully resolve the question of Muslim integration into the Filipino society. Inauspiciously, national popular media consumption in the Philippines is generally skewed towards performances and filmic imaginaries rendered in a national language dominated by Tagalog, and in English. These consumption patterns often leave out hundreds of other Philippine linguistic groups inaudible and invisible in the national consciousness². On the rare occasion that communities around Sulu and Zambonga get featured on national television, they are often reduced into subjects of the secessionist war or troublesome unfamiliar Muslim others. Against this grim backdrop, the videodiscs produced and circulated around the remote islands, slums, and side streets of Sulu and Zamboanga take a subversive character when contrasted to the invisibility, inaudibility, and otherness of Muslim communities in national media representations, and as such have consequences to the politics of cultural representation in the Philippines. They also bring to the fore other questions. Why have state and rebel discourses of cosmopolitan nations failed to fully animate the imagination of the constituents they seek to integrate? What do these problems reveal about the dynamics of cosmopolitanism in Muslim Mindanao? How do these dynamics implicate the notion of rooted cosmopolitanism? I raise these questions not as a counterpoint to the analytical concept of rooted cosmopolitanism but precisely because I see it as vital to the analysis of identity construction in a culturally and politically contested locality like Sulu and Zamboanga. The salient matter that I intend to examine in this work is the possible limitations as well as other possibilities that this approach can offer in the analysis of community and belonging.

The scene at the jetty I illustrated earlier suggests that other cosmopolitan processes are implicating the social construction of belonging and identity amongst subaltern Muslim communities in Mindanao. If we consider the importance of mass mediation in the formation of “imagined communities” and “imagined worlds” (Anderson 1983; Appadurai 1990, 1996), ordinary people such as Eting, Ajing, and Nurmadi also play critical roles in the cultural production of identity in Sulu and

² The Summer Institute of Linguistic, which for decades had conducted several surveys and studies on languages across the Philippines, identifies 177 languages in the Philippines. The number was also reflected in a survey conducted by a National Statistics Office population survey in 2010.

Zamboanga in their work as dance and music video makers. The videos they make capture the music, dances, heritage dresses, landscape, and the multilingual geography of the region as well as other trans-cultural processes permeating everyday life in Zamboanga and Sulu. They engage local performance traditions, trans-local cultural imaginaries, global tools of reproduction, and perceptions of identity. At the jetty, the amalgamation of global cultural processes into local imaginaries can be viewed in stark terms with Eting's filming of Ajing performing a *pangalay* in a heritage dress whilst a Sama man donning a Rasta hat and cold weather jacket rendered a vernacular version of a *Bollywood* pop music. In the flea markets and sidewalks where their videos were eventually sold a few months after filming, several more videodiscs on display are discrepantly labeled as *Tausug* and *Sama* songs even though they actually meld local performances with music, sounds, and images coming from global entertainment capitals in the United States, Southeast Asia, South Asia, Europe, and the Middle East. Songs about armed resistance and lamentation of the long running secessionist war in the region do circulate on the videodiscs but not necessarily in adherence to the nationalist discourse fomented by Bangsamoro or Filipino ideologies. Most of the videos come across as creative expressions of grassroots yearning for peace built upon the principles of pan-Islamic solidarity, interreligious understanding, and global fraternity. Few other videos express a disturbing side to the idea of belonging with songs and images that align with the aims of extreme and violent bands of global jihadists. Furthermore, several other performances on the VCDs are based on pop music that originally circulated around *Tausug* and *Sama* communities in the neighbouring state of Sabah in Malaysia revealing that the pre-colonial ties of the people on both sides of the borders endured even under the era of postcolonial nation states and nationalist insurgencies. How the trans-locality reflected on these videos play out in everyday life and the broader politics of representation, I argue, is paramount to the analysis of identity construction of local Muslim communities in Mindanao. In this thesis therefore, I intend to examine the processes in which rooted forms of cosmopolitanism implicate the social construction of identity as they are imagined, embodied, reproduced, and shared by the Tausugs of Sulu and Zamboanga in the form of digital music videos. The ethnography explores the production, sharing, and consumption of the videos and how these engage with identity politics within a cosmopolitan context.

Videodiscs and Community Making

The production and circulation of the videos in Zamboanga and Sulu exemplify the growing vibrancy of digital media production in globalising provincial corners of the world. A similar phenomenon is duly noted, amongst others, in ethnographies investigating digital videos crafted and distributed by indigenous peoples in the highlands of Bolivia (Stobart 2011) and Ecuador (Floyd 2008), the struggling artists of Nigeria (Larkin 2004), Hmong refugees in the United States (Schien 2002), and stateless Shan people exiled along the Thai-Burma borders (Jirattikorn 2011). These reports point to the materialisation of videos featuring heritage and popular music, dances, and stories in the language and perspectives of marginal collectivities largely excluded or silenced in the formation of the broader national community. Produced and consumed at relatively accessible costs, digital videos emerge as a pivotal instrument of imagination widely shared within communities largely shut out by more powerful forces directing the course of nation building. The material existence of digital videos spawn the emergence of a potent mediating force that enabled peripheral communities to confront the socioeconomic burdens they faced as well as amplify awareness of the shared features of their collective identities (Floyd, 40; Stobart, 223). Underscoring the political potency of digital videos is their deployment by an armed opposition waging a long running insurgency against a military junta in Myanmar (Jirattikorn, 20). Paradoxically, the materialisation of these videos was made possible by a wider trans-locally constituted social process summed up in the notion of “electronic capitalism” and a trans-national infrastructure of intellectual property piracy that the globalisation of corporate media inadvertently created (Appadurai 1996, Sundaram 1999, Athique 2008, *also see* Larkin 2008: 289). In a sense, the social production of grassroots videos offered recent scholarship on digital mediation an empirical site for understanding how local communities perceive new modes of imagining their community, organizing networks, creating spaces of interactions, retelling history, as well as spurring economic activity (Coleman 2010, Lanzelius 2006, Miller and Slater 2000).

In variable ways, the conditions and consequences surrounding the phenomenon of digital video consumption in the ethnographies I cited above generally resonated with the production and circulation of music and dance VCDs in

Zamboanga and Sulu. As in the Bolivian Andes and on the streets of Nigeria, an infrastructure of piracy and second hand entertainment goods coming from industrialized metropolis helped enable the production, circulation, and consumption of Zamboanga and Sulu videos. The materialisation of the videos can be tracked back to late 1990s when cheap China-made models of digital disc players designed for Video Compact Discs (VCDs) flowed through bargain bazaars across the Philippines making it accessible to a broad range of consumers. The importation of equally cheap but used television sets euphemistically called “Korean Surplus” complemented the flooding of the disc players. In late 2000s, equally cheap digital media players for Digital Video Disc (DVD) also emerged replacing most VCD playback machines. Videomakers, however, prefer recording their music videos on VCDs that run on DVD players since they are far cheaper to produce. Nevertheless, the emergence of bargain shops for cheap VCD-DVD enabled machines and used televisions precipitated the spread of these gadgets to marginal areas of the country such as the slums. People in remote islands and hinterlands that remained un-served by the central power grid of the Philippines made contraptions that tap electricity from truck batteries to run home electronic equipment, turning TV sets and digital playback machines into household fixtures across the country. Flowing in along with the down market digital playback machines and used TV sets were affordable second hand desktop computers with disc recorders and pirated moviemaking software that made it possible for street sellers like Eting to mass produce their own videos. With a price range that usually fits an eight to a tenth of the average daily earnings, people are able to access, own, circulate, and share the discs in fairly massive quantities and regularity.

The spread of digital electronic equipment and software have significant implications on grassroots participation in the cultural construction of community in the region. They spurred massive production of local dance and music videodiscs rarely heard or seen on national television or radio broadcasts. Through these global tools of mediation, minority communities that do not necessarily adhering to the secessionist movement or the state were able to create and share a vision of their community, a concept of their social world, and a picture of their identity. Strategically, the videos served as a cultural medium on which local communities communicate and define their relationship amongst themselves, with the contrasting

collectivities envisioned by the state and the rebels, and to the world. Yet, they also raise other questions. To what extent is this production driven by the phenomenon of globalisation and its underside, the media infrastructure piracy? Is it possible to know if this ongoing episode of trans-cultural processes connected to previous forms of trans-local connections of the region? How do global media flows implicate local identity formation of Muslim communities, particularly the question of being Tausugs, in Sulu and Zamboanga? I submit these questions in relation to my overarching concern on knowing what other dynamics and agents were possibly left out in the concept of rooted cosmopolitanism.

In accordance to the limitations of my fieldwork, this ethnography is drawn primarily from my engagement with Tausug performers and video makers rather than from all the linguistic groupings in the region. I followed them as they interact and collaborate with other linguistic groups in the region in the course of making music and dance videos. Through my Tausug friends' engagements and video productions, I draw insights of the broader characteristics of the Muslim social world in Sulu, Zamboanga, and beyond their provincial borders, in ways that engage with the analytical concepts of cosmopolitanism in anthropological analysis.

Conceptualising Cosmopolitanisms

I approach this study in accordance to a strand in cosmopolitan theory that critically addresses the many possible ways on which local and national collectivities defines and redefines their relationships within, between, and beyond themselves in the course of their entanglement with global processes. This strand reflects an earlier exhortation by Paul Rabinow (1986) for a rethinking of the analysis of the transnational phenomenon towards the particularity of the cosmopolitan experience rather than its universality (*also see* Robbins 1998: 1). It moves beyond the emphasis of normative and classical notions of cosmopolitanism that seeks strategic understanding of the universally moral and international order (Nussbaum 1996, Mignolo 2002, Held 1995) towards knowing how the global experience is being lived by particular agents, in specific places, and along certain historical trajectories (Rabinow, 258). Often referred under the descriptive category of the “new cosmopolitanism” (Hollinger 2001), this strand however has been discrepantly

illustrated in the cosmopolitan lexicon in complementing and contrasting ways. Bruce Robbins referred to it as “actually existing cosmopolitanism” to illustrate cosmopolitan precepts that are not “merely an abstract ideal, like loving one’s neighbour as one self, but habits of thought and feeling that have already shaped and been shaped by particular collectivities, that are socially and geographically situated, hence both limited and empowered” (Robbins, 2). Benedict Anderson exemplifies an aspect of actually existing cosmopolitanism in literary works of third world patriotic intellectuals engaged in the production of newspapers, novels, and representations of popular performance that exemplifies an “open-to-the-world” imagination of national identity (Anderson 1998: 117). Anderson offered several examples, amongst them the iconographic indigenous theatres that does not only perform its own but includes in its repertoire vernacular versions of Shakespearean theatrical classics such as Hamlet and The Merchant of Venice.

Anderson’s articulation of cosmopolitanism in pluralist works of nationalist cosmopolitans complements with Anthony Kwame Appiah’s notion of “cosmopolitan patriots” that I illustrated early on in this chapter. Becoming a patriot does not necessarily negate the cosmopolitan ideals of connectedness but rather it is imperative for rooted cosmopolitans to express allegiance to the homeland, family, tribe, ethnicity, the nation whilst expressing loyalty to human kind (*also see* Appiah 1997: 623). The notion of “rooted cosmopolitanism” has been contextualized in various settings as the following three brief examples covering experiences in both western and developing worlds as well as a third situation that sways between them. Bruce Ackerman deployed the term in his polemical reflections of the need to articulate an idea of constitutional loyalty in the United States that does not adhere to mistaken sense of nationalism but mobilises a critical mass of Americans to “express fundamental liberal truths - truths that might allow them to penetrate the parochial barriers that divide them from one another and the rest of the world” (Ackerman 1994: 535). Richard Werbner applied the notion of rooted cosmopolitanism to include those whom Appiah has failed to consider, public servants whose public cosmopolitanism advances the cause of justice and the betterment of their people (R. Werbner 2008). Werbner draws example from the life and death of highly respected statesman in Botswana who helped transform his society by transcending deep-seated ethnic division and leading his people to an open horizon of patriotism and

cosmopolitanism through the promise of good governance and multi-cultural citizenship. Jean Francois Caron (2012) sees the workings of rooted cosmopolitanism in the efforts of Canadian intellectuals to negotiate amongst a multicultural French, English, and indigenous citizens of Canada to take steps in universalizing historical events and local myths (Caron 2012: 358). These efforts, Caron notes, forms part of an overarching vision to construct a Canadian national culture that celebrates the idea of universalizing and intertwining of diversified cultures that make up the country's component constituents.

Homi Bhabha proposes an even more grounded illustration of rooted cosmopolitanism that builds on and at the same time moves beyond politically inclusive patriotic intellectuals by locating cosmopolitan practice in marginality, a space that he refers to as a site for “vernacular cosmopolitanism” (1996). Bhabha reflects on vernacular cosmopolitanism in reaction to universalist but ultimately exclusive and narrow vision of a borderless cosmopolitan community that locates cosmopolitanism above and in contradiction to people's desire of establishing belonging to a family, clan, tribe, ethnicity, or the nation. Bhabha laments that these exclusively universalist notions of cosmopolitanism “readily assumes the ‘givenness’ of commonality” and everyone's “emphatic self” without taking into account the hard and tragic reality that millions of people flee their homes due to internecine wars and poverty precisely because there are no easy forms of egalitarianism (Ibid.,193, 200). For that matter, Bhabha proposes a “cosmopolitan community envisage in marginality”, a border space akin to Appiah's postcolonial vision of a patriotic cosmopolitan who sees affiliation to the state, country, town street, business, craft, profession as only “one amongst many circles narrower than the human horizon” (Appiah 1996: 29, Bhabha 1996: 195). Refining further the concentric circles on which cosmopolitan subjects can thrive, Bhabha's idea of cosmopolitanism in the margins “somehow stops short (not falls short) of the transcendent human universal, and for that very reason provides an ethical entitlement to, and enactment of, the sense of community” (Ibid., emphasis in the original). For Bhabha, cosmopolitanism does not constitute a vision of a “good society or virtuous world” but envisages an “affective and ethical identification with globality premised on the need to establish a subject of transhistorical memory” (Ibid.). In such vision, the cosmopolitan community necessarily includes struggling third world women, tribal, and peasant

communities left out by development as well as migrant labourers, refugees, minorities of the nation states, and others whose lives were flayed by greater forces in and beyond the nation states.

Bhabha's understanding of vernacular cosmopolitanism has been critically rearticulated in the analysis of social phenomenon that on surface appear to be disjunctive expressions of parochial and universal worldviews. By definition, Pnina Werbner notes, the concept of vernacular cosmopolitanism is an "oxymoron that joins contradictory notions of local specificity and universal enlightenment, seeks to conceptualize apparent opposites—cosmopolitan patriotism, rooted cosmopolitanism, cosmopolitan ethnicity, working class cosmopolitanism and discrepant cosmopolitanism. Such combinations emerged in the act of questioning postcolonial and precolonial forms of cosmopolitan consciousness and travel" (Werbner 2006: 7, *also see* Werbner 2008a: 14).

Theoretical articulation of the notion of vernacular cosmopolitanism, however, is not limited to the politics of identity of marginally situated agents that Bhabha expressed. Another variation of vernacular cosmopolitanism refers to cross border forms of cultural expressions that were subsequently localised and indigenised as a consequence of a long historical processes spanning across the antiquities to the present. Sheldon Pollack (1998) offers a comprehensive illustration of this dynamic, which he calls "the vernacular cosmopolitan" by tracing the formation of an expansive Sanskrit literary cosmopolis encompassing South Asia and Southeast Asia from the fifth century BC. Cosmopolitan vernacularisation unfolds in the localisation of Sanskrit epics by discrepant writers across the Sanskrit ecumene into their respective native cultures over time (*Ibid.*, 7). Mamadou Diouf (2002) offers a contemporary account of vernacular cosmopolitanism in the way globally dispersed Senegalese Sufi Murid traders sustained their cultural and local Islamic roots to Senegal whilst taking advantage of the opportunities and challenges posed by globalisation. Diouf tracts the trajectory of the diaspora and concludes that diasporic Murids are able to keep their vernacular roots whilst being trans-locally situated by maintaining their deep cultural attachment to Islamic orthodoxy or at least the localised version of Islam and deeply held trading values historically rooted in Senegalese colonial and postcolonial experience in peanut production and circulation.

By adeptly negotiating with the demands of globalisation and keeping their old trading values and vernacular Islamic tradition, the Murids “organized a unique cosmopolitanism consisting in participation but not assimilation, thus organizing the local not only to strengthen its position but also to establish the rules governing dialogue with the universal” (Diouf 2002: 117). The Murid experience offers a frame for understanding how Islam with its universal moral message and discrepant traditions (for instance, Sufi orders, the schools of law of the Mad’hab, the array of Shia denominations) have been simultaneously globalised and localised (Werbner 2003; Eickelman and Pistocari 1996:138; Cooke and Lawrence 2005:16). These dynamics in turn provide insightful models for knowing the many ways on which cosmopolitanism is made vernacular and the vernacular made cosmopolitan. In recent years, the vernacularisation of the universal moral message of Islam moves on to new engagement with the emergence of popular preachers in local televisions and radios as in the case of the rise in popularity of cassette and television evangelists in Egypt and Indonesia (Hirschkin 2001, Hoesterey 2012).

Conceptualisations of situated forms of cosmopolitanism have been formulated in discrepant ways to the point of being faulted by its own advocates as an oxymoron, particularly in the case of vernacular cosmopolitanism for conjoining seemingly paradoxical ideas of local specificity and universal enlightenment. These conceptualizations, however, bring to the table of anthropological theory some sense of clarity in knowing that “the global and the local not as polarities but as mutually implicating principles that influence relations and identities across boundaries as well as within them; production, memory, pleasure, anxiety, wherewithal are ‘glocal’ phenomena” (Rapport 2006: 23, *also see* Beck 2002). In more cases than not, the production of identity and ideas of belonging are generated not in isolation but in connection with global processes whilst global processes implicates the construction of identities. As Thomas Turino suggests in concluding his ethnography examining the dynamics of nationalism and cosmopolitanism in popular Zimbabwean music, “cosmopolitanism is not, and does not necessarily have to be, ‘global’; rather, it is one type of cultural formation amongst many” (Turino 2000: 354). To sum up, the common thread that strings together the idea of new cosmopolitanism is that it rejects the idea of oppositions between the cosmopolitan and the local as it contends: “there is no cosmopolitanism without localism” (Beck 2002: 19). I have noted above that

these discrepant strands in the conceptualisation of the new cosmopolitanism complement and contrast though not necessarily mutually exclusive. Each of these strands resonate with the cultural affairs animating the lives of music video makers, performers, sellers, and consumers that I investigated as well as illustrated in all five ethnographic chapter of this thesis (Chapter 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6).

Cosomopolitan Imagination

To account for the social world being envisioned by Sulu and Zamboanga video makers, I use the term “cosmopolitan imagination” as Gerard Delanty (2006, 2009) proposed. For Delanty, the term refers to the articulation of the processes of “cultural framing” by which a social world oriented towards openness and renewal is constituted (2006: 31). It alludes to the “communicative frameworks of social interpretation” of the weaving of trans-located cultural models into the fabric of society (Ibid., 40). It illuminates the ways in which local agents harness global phenomena in forming their social world. It illustrates that the global does not simply stand outside local social world but is also right inside it, expressed as well as enmeshed in imaginative and creative ways in the cultural production of society. In a sense, the cosmopolitan imagination shows how global processes implicate and renders the social world “an open horizon on which new cultural models take shape” (Ibid., 27). Whilst focus on the global processes in the local, this analytical approach does not regard global phenomenon as an overwhelming force that undermines the local experience but takes into account the centrality of reflexive and internal processes in the making of a globally attuned social world (*also see* Beck 2002). Critical cosmopolitanism, the conceptual frame holding up the notion of cosmopolitan imagination, sees the “relations of Self and Other that pervade the social world are constituted within the broader context of the world” (Delanty, 40). It is critical of views that narrow the conditions of cosmopolitanism into trans-local mobility, global intellectual exchange, or worldwide network or modes of connectivity of information, things, and commodities (Castells 2000, Urry 2003, Hannerz 1996). Furthermore, it is also critical of views that limit the dynamics of Self and Other and the constitution of social world in isolation from “globally filtered processes of communication” (Delanty, 37). A key dimension of cosmopolitan imagination is that it mediates the human experience of universality and particularity as they play out when situated

agents encounter trans-local processes.

Critical Cosmopolitanism

From the viewpoint of critical cosmopolitan theory, cosmopolitanism can arise not only in metropolitan regions or globally integrated local economies but even amongst marginal societies that open up to global processes. Critical cosmopolitanism recognizes that cosmopolitanism does not occur exclusively under the terms of universality or conditions of plurality but can emerge in any society for as long as its constituting agents open up to varying cultural processes outside their own community. Central to the analytical concerns of critical cosmopolitanism is tracking the way agents integrate into their own cultural frames those complementing and competing cultural models swept in from other parts of the world. For that matter, critical cosmopolitanism does not consider the social world a given or reducible to “concrete identities” but by itself a field of cultural contestation (Ibid., 25). In fact, Delanty pointed out that “cosmopolitanism makes sense only as a site of tensions in which different principles and orientations are played out (Delanty 2009: 15). In this regard, competing and complementing cultural models streaming through global processes are very much at play in the making of local social worlds. These cultural models provide local agents the frame for “self-problematisation” of the characteristics of their society, and once integrated into the everyday life they spawn new cultural forms that in turn create new discursive spaces laying the basis for the transformation of their social world (Delanty 2006: 35). Delanty qualifies this analytical model as a “processual conception of the social” and the cosmopolitan imagination as a consciousness that “entails a view of society as an on-going process of self constitution (Ibid., 40). Delanty fashions this framework from the idea of “self production of the society” that Alain Touraine (1977) advanced when he proposed a view of society as “a system of social relations, of debates and conflicts, of political initiatives and claims, of ideologies and alienation” rather than merely “a system of norms” or “a system of domination” in earlier conceptualization of it (Touraine 1977:30; Delanty, 40). Delanty expands Touraine’s view by factoring in the global cultural processes impinging on the discourse of society. In this context, Delanty introduces the idea of “global publics” as situated agents who play pivotal roles in the discursive production of social worlds (Ibid., 27). The global publics are not just

actors in the global political arena but can also be located within national communities. In fact, the national community is as much a construct of agents attuned to discourses of identity that may have trans-local origins, for instance the concept of nationalism in post-colonial societies as a multi-faith, multi-linguistic, and secular Philippine nation, are as much influenced by ideologies shaped by political ideas that branched out from European enlightenment (Anderson 1983, Corpuz 1989). So do the idea of Bangsamoro as a collective expression of Muslim nationalism in Mindanao, and the imagination of the Tausug as not merely a language in Sulu and Zamboanga but a social, cultural, and political identity. As Delanty noted, “it is no longer possible to see national societies or any particular social form in terms of autonomous actors isolated from the global context. The global public is inside as well as outside national publics and is the central dynamic in cosmopolitanism, conceived of as an opening up of discursive spaces and which has a critical function in shaping the social world” (Ibid., 37).

The extension of the global publics into local social world has profound implications on the concept of “people-hood”. From this point of view, people-hood is “defined in and through global communication” where the “abstract category of the world” bears upon its construction as a local or situated identity (Ibid., 30, 37). In other words, people-hood is not merely constituted utilising local resources or formed in processes isolated from world affairs and global communication of the meaning and concept of identity. Seen from the vantage point of critical cosmopolitanism, people-hood is in fact constructed through the “interplay of self, other, and world” (Ibid., 41). As the local become global publics, it also complicates the cultural production of people-hood. Agents attune to global discourses of people-hood take with them discrepant models of belonging into their social world that may compete and clash once translated and applied as basis for the imagination of identity. Precisely how these competing cultural models of belonging are integrated and communicated in everyday terms is a central concern of this ethnography. As pointed out earlier, such everyday terms of communication can be located on music video discs circulating in the flea markets, slums, and streets of Sulu and Zamboanga.

Cosmopolitanism in Sulu and Zamboanga: Continuity or Departure?

This thesis largely agrees with Delanty's concept of critical cosmopolitanism but takes a critical position of his privileging of modernities and globalisation as the primary context of the cosmopolitan imagination. Whilst claiming that the dynamics of cosmopolitanism can arise in "relatively closed" and "earlier" societies in moments when they opened up to global processes, Delanty stresses that it is "only with the enhanced momentum of globalisation and more extensive modes of communication that it takes on specifically cosmopolitan significance" (Ibid., 37-38). By implication, this view imposes levels and intensities of cosmopolitanism, and implies that some societies are less cosmopolitan than others, which I believe undermines the very claim of critical cosmopolitanism as an analytical "approach that shifts the emphasis to internal developmental processes within the social world rather than seeing globalisation as the primary mechanism" (Ibid., 27).

The way the cosmopolitan imagination is lived in Sulu and Zamboanga highlights the difficulty of making distinctions of the intensity of cosmopolitanism, especially when we begin to examine the origins of global consciousness embedded and embodied in local heritage music and dances. By referring to these dances and music as heritage my aim is not to valorize even as some Tausugs and the state do by incorporating them in touristic representations and academic instructions as sanctified legacies of the nation's indigenous ancestors. Rather, my usage of heritage is born out of recognition that these performances are linked to the region's cosmopolitan past that may have transformed as they were being reproduced across time. My intention is one of deep respect for past and present agents who cultivated and used them as resources for cultural production in a contested but open cultural field that is Sulu and Zamboanga. My view in a way reflects a comment from James Clifford (2004) of heritage as a "self-conscious tradition... performed in old and new public contexts and asserted against historical experiences of loss. It responds to demands that originate both inside and outside indigenous communities, mediating new powers and attachments: relations with the land, amongst local groups, with the state, and with transnational forces" (Ibid., 6). In Zamboanga and Sulu, the translocal features of the heritage dances and music that I am showing in Chapters 3, 4, and 5 can be tracked back to the period when it was integrated with Hindu influenced maritime emporium that stretched from the Bay of Bengal to the Western Pacific during its antiquities

(Chapter 1). The integration of current global Islamic consciousness in identity discourses in Muslim Mindanao could not be divorced from early forms of Islam that came through from the Malay peninsula. The cosmopolitanism of the older social world of Zamboanga and Sulu lives today in the very word that the constituents of the region use in referring to the “world” - *dunya*. The word, which is widely shared across the Malayan region that includes Mindanao, was vernacularized from Hindi’s *duniya* and from Arabic’s *dunya*. In this case, the question that has to be raised is whether the acts of global openness in Sulu and Zamboanga represent a departure or continuity from older experience of cosmopolitanism in the region. This question is particularly salient if we take into account Delanty’s (2006) own qualification of the term cosmopolitanism as a condition that signals “self-confrontation, incompleteness; modernity concerns the loss of certainty and the realization that certainty can never be established once and for all” (Ibid., 38). Answering this question provides a better understanding on whether the construction of the Tausug identity is more of a trajectory than a settled idea of belonging.

How the cosmopolitan imagination shaped the cultural production of identity in Sulu and Zamboanga is central to the discussions covered by the seven chapters of this ethnography that I summarize below.

Chapter 1 presents the location, subjects, and methodology of the study as well as makes a case that cosmopolitanism in Sulu and Zamboanga is a continuing and a transformational phenomenon that can be linked to old pre-colonial translocal connections of the area. The chapter also takes into account the ethical value of collaborative research in view of my fieldwork position as sound recording technician for performers and video makers whose lives, stories, and creative productions form the material of this thesis.

Chapter 2 contrasts the imaginaries featured by grassroots producers of Tausug videos with state and rebel imagination of the Tausug social world. These disparities set my argument for the role of competing cosmopolitan imaginations in shaping the discursive formation of the Tausug imagined community. Dominating this discourse is the state, which has mobilised mass publications and mass education as communicative instruments in defining the Tausug as a predominantly Muslim ethnic

group that forms part of a multi-faith, multi-ethnic, and multi-cultural Filipino nation.

Chapter 3 investigates the motivation driving current grassroots interest in producing culturally conflated music VCDs. Citing conversations I had with VCD sellers and makers in Zamboanga, I will illustrate that these productions are but a recent episode of a long running practice of musical recordings inspired by a Tausug tradition of holding spectacular performances in wedding celebrations.

Chapter 4 examines the trans-local features of live and VCD renditions of *pangalay* (dance) and its repertoire of vocal (*sangbayan*) and instrumental (*kulintang*) music accompaniment. The culturally conflated characteristics of *pangalay* and their media representation, I argue, indicate that the cosmopolitanism of Tausug communities is widespread and enduring to the point of being animated in bodily ways.

Chapter 5 delves into the methods of production and mode of integration of cosmopolitan worldviews on Tausug music videos. In examining both processes, I pay attention to the difficult circumstances surrounding the creative practice as well as the lives of their creators whilst living under conditions of violence and hardship. Through their lives and creativity, I illustrate the productive roles of ordinary people and their contingent ways of producing videos in the making of rooted cosmopolitan worldviews. In closing, the chapter reflects on the notion of cultural improvisation and its potential use in enriching the concept of rooted cosmopolitanism.

Chapter 6 expands preceding discussions on the improvisational methods of VCD production to dynamics arising from the distribution and consumption of Tausug VCDs as a premise for examining the reach and limits of the imaginaries they promote. I focus my attention on the intricate practice of un-authorized copying of VCDs amongst VCD makers and its productive implications in the imagination of the Tausug community. The chapter discusses such practice in relation to the broader issues of media piracy as well as the corruption of public infrastructures in the Philippines.

Finally, Chapter 7 concludes that the cosmopolitan experience in Sulu and

Zamboanga constitute both continuity and departure from past forms of trans-local connections in the region. The cosmopolitanism of the region is instrumental in ushering the transformation of ideas of self and other, sociality and identity. As global processes implicate everyday life and shared imagination, the idea of Tausug identity can be appreciated as a trajectory rather than concrete unchanging notion of being. These processes underscore the idea that rooted cosmopolitanism does not mean a singular experience but a distinctively multifaceted phenomenon.

Chapter 1

Fieldwork in a Cosmopolitan Locality

My interest in investigating the material relevance of vernacular music videos in identity making started at a refugee camp not in Zamboanga or Sulu but in a war-torn community of Central Mindanao in 2004. I was then conducting an ethnographic fieldwork on continuing episodes of conflict-induced displacements generated by the long running Muslim secessionist war (Canuday 2009). In one of my camp visits, I encountered a group of refugees huddled around a television and a disc playback player watching what appears to me a home video of local pop music. The pictures are shaky, the lighting too bright whilst the sound quality discordantly off key but when I looked around the camp, the crowd, young and old, were blissfully singing along as the lyrics of the song rolled out at the bottom of the screen in karaoke-style. I asked one of the viewers what made the videos interesting? “We could sing the music, they are in our language, the performers are our people,” a man answered. I saw the scene before me as a celebration of self-representation by a community engaging and connecting with each other in meaningful ways through a music video of local performances, which like their lives, were invisible and inaudible to the national consciousness. As I pointed out in the previous chapter, vernacular music videos from the Muslim regions of Mindanao are rarely heard or seen in national public or commercial radio and television broadcasts. The familiar language and images on the video offered the people in the camp a material for sharing a deep feeling of belonging.

As I went on conducting fieldwork and travelling around the Muslim populated areas of Mindanao, I made it a point to pick up a VCD at local bazaars. Within a few months, I gathered nearly two hundred titles of these discs and realised the ubiquity of local video practice in the area. After watching nearly all of them, I realised that the imaginaries portrayed on the discs could not simply be narrowed down to expressions of belonging to the homeland. I noticed two distinctive but disjunctive patterns that prompted me to reconsider my presumption that the materials

solely exemplify an expression of native identity. Whilst many of the videos were packaged as representations of ethnicities in the trading centers where they circulate, they also contain images and music that are universally familiar. In Central Mindanao, many of the discs I collected are sold as *Maguindanao Music* and *Maranao Songs* reflecting the disparate linguistic make up of Muslim communities in the region. Some of these video tracks, however, featured a broad array of images that include Top 40 American pop artists, snow cap alpenes and smooth rolling meadows typically shown on Hollywood imageries of European landscapes. Few other videodiscs are circulated as Bangsamoro music against sound-altered news footages of fighting in the Middle East or the Muslim regions of Central Asia. In Zamboanga, the videodiscs are offered as *Tausug Rock Music*, *Yakan Songs*, and *Sama Acoustic* capturing the linguistic distribution of the city and the broader region of the Sulu archipelago but conflated on them are performances in Bollywood and Malaysian productions. I also found interesting mix of music videos coming from the neighbouring provinces of Basilan, Sulu, and Tawi-tawi in the Sulu Archipelago and beyond the borders with Malaysia. Amongst them, a six-minute video clip of a man performing *pangalay* with pop disco version of *Oh My Darling Clementine*, the venerable American folksong, as music. At play on these imaginaries are seemingly disjunctive but at once vernacular and culturally conflated expressions of identity.

I pushed the videos aside to pursue research on community dislocations but thought of the discs as potential materials for an ethnographic analysis of Muslim Mindanao imaginaries that I can do in the future. When I started my doctorate at Oxford, I caught a clip of the *Pangalay-Oh My Darling Clementine* VCD on the Internet whilst searching for latest news reports from Zamboanga. That clip led me to a vast array of videos featuring *pangalay* performances conflated with dance steps from American MTV, Bollywood productions, and elsewhere. The clips and the mixed bag of videos that I gathered earlier from Zamboanga enticed me to pursue fieldwork in the city and formulated questions on the making and sharing of Muslim imaginary shaping around the videos. With the conflated videos on the discs and internet in mind, my return to Zamboanga made me realise that the seemingly disjunctive videos I gathered earlier actually fit into the broader pattern of conflation and disjunction in the landscape and soundscape of the region. Right at the airport unfurls a ubiquitous colourful banner declaring Zamboanga as *Asia's Latin City*. The

banner looks rather poignantly disjointed as it sits against an airport architecture inspired by the intricately carved prow of *paraw* and *lepa* (Sulu trading and residential boats) that had sailed across Southeast Asian seas for millennia until state border patrols and motorized boats ended their usefulness. The notion of Zamboanga as Asia's Latin City actually encapsulates a tourism campaign capturing material and visceral legacy of Spanish colonialism that includes an eighteenth century fortification, street layout, canals, and colonial houses that still stands downtown. The campaign underscores the *Chabacano*, the dominant local language that emerged and evolved in the process of conflation of Spanish and an array of native tongues in the course of 300 years of Spanish occupation³. *Asia's Latin City* runs along the theme of east meets west, a cosmopolitan imagination officially promoted by the state.

Overlapping the state discourse of cosmopolitanism are everyday expressions of translocality permeating the sights and sounds of Zamboanga. An early morning walk near the waterfront down town offers a disjunctive sense of provincialism and cosmopolitanism of the city and its surrounding areas. Amidst the silence of night just shortly before dawn, the melodious chanting of the *adhan* (call to prayer) echo simultaneously from the loudspeakers of half a dozen mosques breaking the nightlong silence across the stilt houses at the waterfront. Soon after, as the stars begin to fade and the faint rays of sunrise breach the night skies, church bells chime in. When the calls to worship recedes, as if on queue, radio and television news and music broadcast in English, Tagalog, Tausug, and Bisaya begin bursting out loud from the homes and filling the streets. About an hour later, when darkness fully recedes and the skies shifts to aqua blue, boys in their official white school shirts, and veiled and unveiled little girls rush along the street where an eighteenth century Spanish fortification still looms on their way to school. Clearly visible from the historic fort a mile away are large yellow wooden launch boats and ocean going steel ships moored to a dock right at the seafront of the city centre. On the docks, men unload goods

³ The emergence of the *Chabacano* is rooted from cosmopolitan history of the language. It emerged in the course of Spanish ambitious project of building a military fort and establishing Zamboanga as its naval base in Mindanao in the seventeenth century. Language scholar John Lipski notes that in the course of two centuries of fort construction, the Spaniards brought in officers from the Iberian peninsula as well as people from its other colonies in the Philippine islands (Lipski 1992: 200-201). Lipski hypothesizes that the melding of the population eventually precipitated the evolution of the *Chabacano* as a language (Ibid., 210).

shipped in from a scattering of islands across the Sulu archipelago down south and farther beyond the Malaysian borders of Sabah. A short walk from the dock stands the city hall, a two-floor hardwood edifice crested by a tower bell, which American colonial agents built in 1903 as headquarters for its military government in Mindanao. A little further away from the downtown area, Shiite and Turkish Islamic schools open their gates to local as well as foreign students.

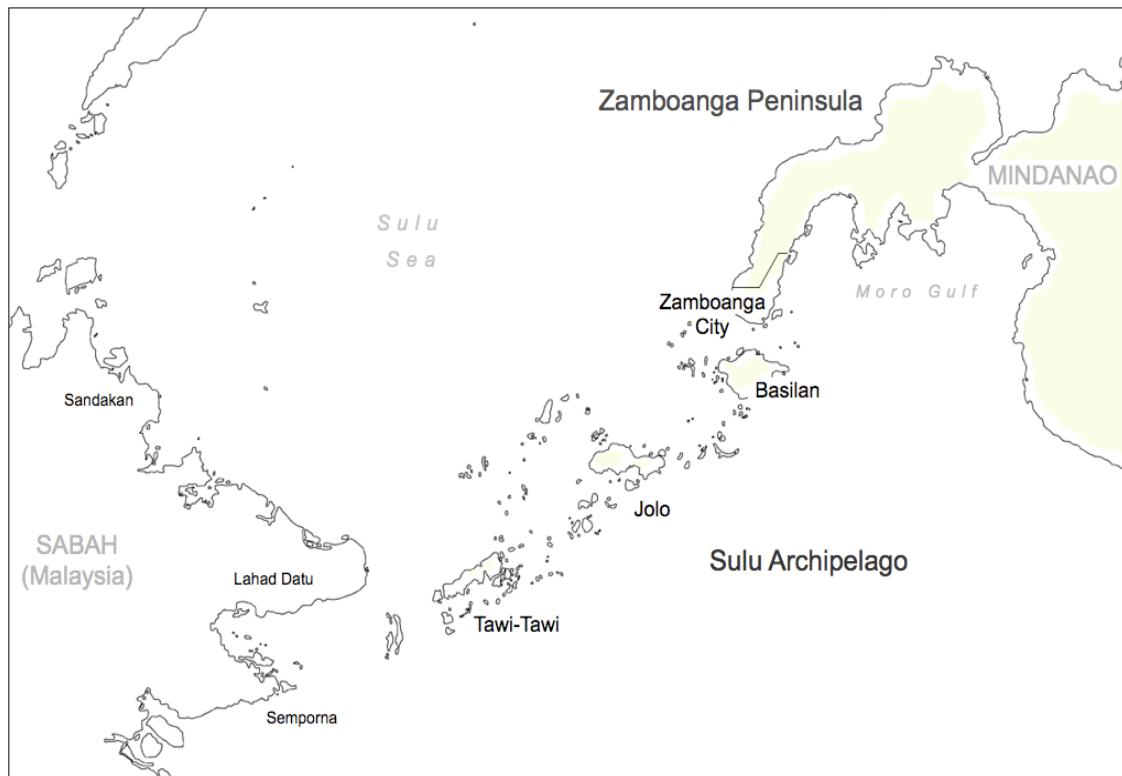
Alongside everyday expressions of trans-locality, powerful geo-economic and political forces are also at play in Zamboanga and Sulu. Rows of canneries exporting sardines to Japanese, European, and American markets sit on Zamboanga's coastline whilst plantations of copra and seaweed for export spread across surrounding countryside and island communities. Next to the canning factories sprawls the military camp that hosts a contingent of American soldiers deployed both in Zamboanga and Sulu since 2002 as part of the United States global war on terror. The government assigned Zamboanga a special status of a "Freeport", a legal designation that offers multinational industrial operations tax incentives for investing in the city. Boat travel from Zamboanga to Jolo at night means cruising a sea route flooded with intensely bright search lights of multinational fish trawlers. The city of Jolo, despite its provinciality, is in itself directly connected to the world beyond the national borders. Jolo serves as a transshipment point for regular ferry connections between the littorals of Zamboanga and Sandakan in Malaysia. A couple of towers built during the Spanish occupation in 1878 still stand outside the docks of Jolo. The historic towers though were littered with bullet holes and grazes, grim reminder of a horrific violence that rocked the town following intense armed encounters between government forces and Muslim rebels nearly a hundred years later in a secessionist war in 1974. The violence, which I will be discussing later in this chapter, reshaped the region in ways where we can further examine the complex feature of trans-locality in the region.

The images and material representations I described above reflect what Arjun Appadurai calls "disjuncture", a condition precipitated by a rapidly globalising world amidst complex ways on which ideologies, the media, finance system, technology, ethnic identities, and technology have expanded (1996: 33). Conditions of disjuncture is evident in the concept of translocality, a situation that Appadurai formulates to capture the reconstitution of notions of locality amidst recent reality of rapid and

increasing globalisation of flow of things, people, ideas, and cultural imaginaries. Under conditions of globalisation, the local can no longer be seen as denoting bounded and un-contested space as subjectivities occupying them are increasingly becoming attuned to the world, and therefore translocal. Mark Johnson (1997, 1998), who did fieldwork investigating notions of gender and sexual diversity in Jolo, locates the translocal in Sulu in the framing of ideas of “ethnicity, gender, and sexual comportment” amongst transgendered gay men, locally ascribed as *bantut*, even whilst many of them have actually never left the place. Johnson argued that the *bantut* articulation of identity was shaped by their encounters and experiences as transgendered gay men beyond Sulu, attesting that “translocality is as much about fantasy and imagination, a traversing of conceptual spaces, as it is about the actual movement of goods or people” (1998: 696). Johnson applied his conceptual frame of translocality amongst Tausug gays in Sulu but in as much as they suggest the embodiment of locally situated subjectivities attuned to the world, his observation can be extended to the broader experience of people in the area no matter their sexuality, social, or class orientations. Furthermore, looking beyond the conceptual frame of globalisation as producers of translocality, the disjunction of imageries proliferating down the streets of Zamboanga and Sulu I argue is not necessarily a recent phenomenon. Rather I contend that they form part of long running but complex episodes of cultural melding and differentiation that were instrumental in shaping current social conditions of the region. This chapter will explain the historical and political backgrounds that produce a translocal mis-en-scène in Zamboanga and Sulu. Towards the end, the chapter discusses the visual methodological approach that I adapted to partially capture the complex processes that engendered the cosmopolitanism of these places.

Social Geography of Zamboanga and Sulu

Zamboanga encompasses a densely populated peninsula of about three and a half million people in the western coast of Mindanao whilst the Sulu archipelago, home to around a million and a half people, make up a chain of 500 islands stretching all the way to the watery borders of the Philippines and Malaysia. Administrative subdivisions instituted by the Philippine government on both areas in the 1950s propelled the evolution of the region into subdivided political districts with the



Map 2. Geographical spread of shared Tausug, Sama, Yakan, Chabacano, and other communities in the Zamboanga Peninsula, the Sulu Archipelago, and the Malaysian state of Sabah.

archipelago broken up into the provinces of Basilan, Sulu, and Tawi-tawi. The Zamboanga peninsula, meanwhile, was cut up into the provinces of Zamboanga del Norte, Zamboanga del Sur, Zamboanga Sibugay, and the cities of Zamboanga and Pagadian. Zamboanga City sits at the far southern end of the peninsula but within its confines the social lives of people with diverse cultural roots intersect. The city serves as the economic and political hub of the region by virtue of its strategic location as host to an international airport and seaport as well as of the largest military facility in Mindanao. Furthermore, my informants trace the origins of their families to smaller towns in the region before resettling in the city due to internecine conflicts that I will discuss later in this chapter. As a shorthand allusion to the region, I will constantly refer to the city as Zamboanga and the Sulu archipelago as Sulu.

Both Zamboanga and Sulu are linguistically, culturally, and religiously diversified. In the Zamboanga side of the region, the population includes indigenous Subanu minorities who regard the rugged highlands north and beyond the borders of

the city as their ancestral land. Many Subanu, which has a government surveyed population of about 200,000, embraced Christianity but continue to practice ancestral beliefs alongside. In terms of politics and numbers, Chabacano-speaking Christians dominate Zamboanga but Tausug, Sama, and Yakan speaking Muslim communities also form a substantial population. A government census in year 2000 placed the number of Chabacano speakers to nearly seventy percent of the city's 800,000 people but an aggregate of Tausug, Sama, and Yakan Muslims comprise about 27 percent of the city population. Yet whilst minorities in Zamboanga, Tausug speakers are the majority in Sulu; Yakan serve as the main group of people in Basilan; whilst Sama form the dominant constituents of Tawi-tawi (see Table 1).

Table 1. Tausug, Sama, and Yakan Population Distribution.

Province	Language Group	Population*	Population Percentage*
Sulu	Tausug	528,391	85 %
Basilan	Sama**	172,600	54 %
Tawi-Tawi	Yakan	137,458	42 %

** Aggregated population of variant Sama ascriptions (Sama Dilaya, Sama Dilaut, and Sama Abaknon) in the Census.

* Source: National Statistics Office 2000 census.

Tausug and Sama communities also extend to the coasts of Sabah, particularly around the areas of Semporna, Lahad Datu, and Sandakan although many of them value the island villages, towns and provinces within the Sulu archipelago as their *hula* (homeland) (Sather 2002, Hilsdon 2006). Nonetheless, the lives of Tausug, Sama, and Yakan are intimately entwined, knitted together by kinship, neighbourhood, common economic and social circles, and Islam. Tausug producers craft Sama, Yakan, and Chabacano music videos whilst those of other linguistic groups also write Tausug songs blended with Arabic, Malaysian, Filipino, and English words. Be they Sama, Tausug, or Yakan, they travel to various islands in Sulu, Basilan, and further down south in Tawi-tawi to perform at weddings, sell VCDs, or visit relatives and close friends, further extending insights of the region as a linguistically and culturally variegated but interwoven place. Not all Tausug, Yakan, and Sama, however, regard themselves as Muslims even as an overwhelming majority of them are (Johnson 1997: 46). To some degree, Zamboanga and Sulu mark the point where Christian dominance in the Philippines start and end. Conversely, both

areas form part of the outer reaches of an Islamic ecumene that extends from the eastern coast of North and Central Africa to the littorals of Southeast Asia. The unique position of Zamboanga and Sulu as a provincial community situated in the crossroads of Islam, Christianity, and geo-political forces entangle its constituents to varying dynamics of trans-locality and trans-ethnicities.

Viewing Cosmopolitanism from Barangay Mariki

Within Zamboanga, my fieldwork revolved mainly around the flea market and a string of slum communities downtown where many of the music video performers and producers I engaged with reside. I did not live in the slums during my fieldwork due to difficulty of arranging an accommodation but regularly spent time with my informants there. One slum community where I normally hung out was Barangay Mariki, a neighbourhood of 6,000 families whose homes rise on wobbly stilts precariously planted on an estuary at the waterfront of downtown Zamboanga. The entire *barangay*, a fundamental political unit in the Philippines, covers a tight place of only about three hectares of a much larger estuary but has an elected governing council headed by a chair as well as its own primary school, market, jetty, social and recreation centres, and at least half a dozen mosques. Homes and social facilities of Mariki are all linked by a labyrinth of narrow wooden and cement-mixed planks that serve as the streets of the community. The formation of Mariki as a barangay was engendered by the broader political developments in Sulu that also implicates Middle Eastern government interests. Before a series of secessionist violence gripped much of the Sulu archipelago in 1970s, there actually was no Mariki. The place forms part of the estuary at the edge of a larger village called Rio Hondo with a few houses on stilts built by a small band of Sama families who had been living there for a generation. Coinciding with violent upheavals across Sulu, the sparse collection of Sama houses off the watery edge of Rio Hondo and other dwellings lining up the shores of Zamboanga expanded into sprawling slums. Government census captured these historic resettlement processes in the remarkable shift of Zamboanga population from 199,901 in 1971 to 343,722 persons in 1981. Eventually, the fighting in Sulu subsided following a government and Muslim rebel peace agreement in the late 1970s. In connection to the accord, oil rich Middle Eastern states also worked with the Philippine government to address underdevelopment issues that had partly fuelled

the uprisings in the Muslim regions. With sponsorships from the Foreign Ministers of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference, the Philippine government transformed the estuary off Rio Hondo into a “Sahaya Village” (Village of Light) housing project as part of an amnesty package for rebels who gave up fighting. The completion of the project precipitated further expansion of the place with new arrivals from across Sulu and the Zamboanga peninsula, subsequently prompting the government to constitute it as a self-governing *barangay*.

At the time of my fieldwork, Barangay Mariki has grown into a sprawling slum constituted mainly by Tausug and Sama refugees of the Sulu wars. Some of the survivors of the 7th February 1974 seige of Jolo told me stories of their harrowing escape from the crossfires of government and rebel street battles. Seared in their memories were how they and a thousand other desperate men, women, and children dashed to the Jolo wharf as gunfire buzzed above their heads only to find out that all boats, their last and only way out, were all gone⁴. Many were able to sail away by desperately hailing down a few passing Japanese trawlers that in turn brought them to Zamboanga. Other refugees secured boat rides to Sabah. Those who survived and whom I conversed with decades later in Mariki said that they will never forget seeing the dramatic sight of Jolo burning behind them as the last boats that whisked them out sailed farther away. A number of those who fled to Zamboanga settled in its slums including that of Mariki, working menial jobs as porters in the city wharf or market. Others earned a living pirating audiocassettes of Hollywood music or selling locally recorded native songs in the flea market. Still others linked up with relatives who fled to Malaysia and used their connections to trade goods across borders, through legal and extra-legal channels offered by smuggling. The conditions that created and sustained Mariki as a community are trans-locally in flux. They illustrate a community brought together by searing violence fought in the name of Muslim nationalism on one hand and preservation of the integrity of Philippine national territories on the other but tempered by the cosmopolitan intervention of Islamic countries. These connections are playing out in Mariki in intricate ways, offering a picture of a situated form of cosmopolitanism that can be examined in ethnographic ways. To get the sense of cosmopolitan connections in Mariki, it is necessary to

⁴ The 1974 siege of Jolo reportedly left as many as 2,000 people dead and displaced some 60,000 residents (E. San Juan 2010: 519).

situate the area within the broader history and dynamics of connectedness of Zamboanga and Sulu.

Connectedness of Sulu and Zamboanga

A trove of excellent literature tackled the question of identity in Zamboanga and Sulu, forming a wide-ranging scholarship that defines and describes in thick ethnographic and epochal historical details the socio-geographic landscape of both areas. Fieldwork for most of these studies were conducted in the 1950s to early 1970s, a period that can aptly be described as a golden age of social research in Zamboanga and Sulu. An array of American, European, Filipino, and native Sulu researchers conducted cross-disciplinary enquiries around the region and linked up together in the Coordinated Investigation of Sulu Culture (CISCU), an academic centre at the Notre Dame of Jolo College. With articles written by visiting and native scholars, the centre published at least five volumes of multi-disciplinary researches in *Sulu Studies* journal, one of the more important resources on the area. The scholarly enterprise that CISCU started under the stewardship of Belgian-born then Catholic priest Gerard Rixhon (1972) was partly instrumental in the production of rich ethnographic accounts on Sulu life. To cite a few, American anthropologist Thomas Kiefer wrote about Tausug political organisation and armed inter-family conflicts in the 1960s (Kiefer 1970, 1986, 2001) whilst H. Arlo Nimmo, also an American, produced works on the boat dwellings as well as the cosmology of Sama Badjao communities based on earlier fieldwork in the 1950s (Nimmo 1972, 1994, 2001). Bruno Bottignolo, an Italian, follows through Nimmo and captures Badjao life cycle events in his own ethnography (Bottignolo 1999) whilst David Szanton, another American, examines the material culture of varying linguistic communities of the region (Szanton 1972), to cite a few. Local academics such as Juanito Bruno also produced accounts of the Tausug social world emphasizing the native point of view (Bruno 1975) of rituals whilst Bin-Ghalib Jundam and Jose Sabalvaro documents life cycle events (Jundam and Sabalvaro 1978) and the interface of Islamic and customary laws (Jundam 2005).

Fine as these works are but the nearly exclusive emphasis on the rootedness of identity formation in Zamboanga and Sulu tends to push earlier documentation of the

region's trans-local interconnections hazily into the background. They are to some extent reflective of what George Marcus appraised as social analyses that view "the world of larger systems and events ... as externally impinging on and bounding little worlds, but not as integral to them" (Marcus 1986: 166). These works most often left out the broader cultural processes that have been shaping local affairs. On the surface, one can argue that these thinking may likely be a product of the theoretical and methodological streams of the time, when cosmopolitanism and trans-locality were hardly thought about in social or political analyses. Yet much earlier scholarship on Sulu and Zamboanga did not actually overlook the intricate balance between connectivity and indigeneity of local cultural processes. Whilst there were hardly any references to the term cosmopolitanism in older literature, the evidence of trans-local connectedness of the place is evident in its social and economic affairs. The 1950s to the early 1970, the years when fieldwork for these studies were conducted, everyday life in Zamboanga and Sulu was actually a picture of cross-cultural, cross-border, trans-located economic openness if we return to published newspapers, magazines, souvenir programmes, and official provincial government resolutions that I gathered at CISCU and the Sulu museum. For instance, a leisure page of the August 17, 1963 issue of the weekly newspaper *Sulu Star* advertised local adaptation of *The Mikado*, a nineteenth century London comic opera set in Japan. The pages of *Sulu Star* in the 1960s were filled with stories and local cinema advertisement showcasing Filipino films alongside great Hollywood classics such as *The Ten Commandment*, *Cleopatra*, *My Fair Lady*, *The Sound of Music*, and so on. At the archival section of the Sulu Museum, I came across a 1955 Provincial Board resolution noting a national government classification of Sulu as an economically excellent "A-one" province due to substantial revenues generated from profitable trading ventures with the then British territories in North Borneo. A resolution issued the following year noted that the volume of trade carried out by Sulu merchants with North Bornean merchandising houses had substantially "increased to such an extent that it has become a dominant factor in the economic life of the people of Sulu"⁵. The lucrative earnings generated from such trade prompted the provincial board to petition foreign affairs department

⁵ I quoted this passage from the 15 August 1956 minutes of the special meeting of a three-member Sulu Provincial Board headed by the Sulu governor. A file of the minutes, from the 1950s to the 1970s, is kept in the library of the Sulu Museum in Jolo.

to establish a Consular Office in the city of Sandakan in Borneo “to take care of the needs and legal interests of the Sulu traders”.⁶

Apart from trade with neighbouring borders, Russian cargo ships also made port calls in Jolo’s “Chinese pier” to load up copra produced across the coconut plantations of Sulu. Fishing trawls from Taiwan, Korea, and other countries scour the fish-rich waters of the Sulu Sea up northwest and the Celebes Sea in the southeast. These everyday scenes of cosmopolitan relations that news and official papers documented from the fifties to the early seventies, however, were generally absent from ethnographic or historical accounts. The few instances that these broader economic, social, and cultural linkages were noted come across as either coincidental or subsumed to particularised narratives of indigenous cultural systems (Kiefer 1986: 9). Practically, connections were relegated to the telling of an ethno-history marked by fierce and valiant warriors of an enduring Muslim polity that withstood and continued to resist the onslaught of “Western imperialism” (Gowing and McAmis 1973: ix). Essentially, many of these works regarded identity making as a territorial affair tied up to the struggle against colonialism and Western intrusion. Earlier social investigations, however, had not always left out the intricate balance between connectivity and indigeneity of cultural productions and political formation in Zamboanga and Sulu. Pioneering scholarships were in fact attentive to global processes and forces that implicated the social and political formation in both areas and the broader Muslim communities in Mindanao.

Old Cosmopolitan Movements

Reviewing seminal scholarship on Sulu and Zamboanga inevitably leads to the archives given the rich history of social investigations in the area. It is not my intention to present new materials on Zamboanga and Sulu history but rather discuss widely cited archival materials of local identity formation with a keener eye on the narratives of connectedness that were either taken for granted or pushed into the background. Doing so reveals the continuing episodes of openness and connections

⁶ The discussion on Sulu revenues from the Sabah ventures highlights the entry on page 261 of the minutes of the Sulu provincial board special meeting on August 14, 1956.

that are sometimes obscured when analysts frame identity formation in Sulu and Zamboanga as exclusive and isolated local affairs.

Tausug as an ascription is hardly captured in archival chronicles of life and people in Sulu. For instance, Alexander Dalrymple (1774), a British East Indies Company agent who established political and trading relations with the Sultanate in Sulu, had not mentioned *Tausug* at all in his published reports but referred to the people of the Sulu archipelago as the *Sooloos*⁷. In the late nineteenth century, Ferdinand Blumentritt, a Czech scholar who published several studies on linguistic diversity in the Malayo-Polynesian region, referred to the people of Jolo as *Guimbahanon* but named those in the wider Sulu island chain as *Moros*. A 1903 *Census of the Philippine Islands* ordered by the Philippine Commission, a colonial administrative body set up during the American occupation in the early twentieth century, identified an array of Moro linguistic groups in Sulu and other parts of Mindanao but still does not mention the *Tausug*⁸. A 1916 Census initiated by the Department of Anthropology and Ethnology at the University of the Philippines categorised the people in Sulu as *Moros* but subdivided them in to two groups, the *Samal* and the *Sulus*, with a caveat that languages spoken by the people associated with both groups are actually more diverse (Beyer 1917: 68)⁹. Scholarships on Sulu point to a 1915 American military paper, the “*Constabulary Monograph of the Province of Sulu*” written by US Army Major Charles Livingston, as the source document that formulated an etymological reference of the Tausug as people (*tau*) of islands surrounded by rough and swift flowing streams of sea currents (*sug*) (Warren 1981: xix)¹⁰. The ascription was then picked up by other colonial government writers

⁷ Dalrymple incorporated the idea of *Sooloo* sovereignty in a corpus of legal arguments submitted before an English magistrate in the eighteenth century. Dalrymple argued that the realm had not been effectively controlled by the Spanish colonial administration in Manila and was open to British mercantile interest. Dalrymple managed to establish a British East India Company-financed military and trading base in the southern Sulu island of Balambangan and had the Company installed him as chief of the island (Dalrymple 1774: 15-16).

⁸ The United States Bureau of the Census published the document in four volumes in 1905.

⁹ Beyer speculated that in terms of population count, people whose languages were associated with “*Sulu*” were likely the most numerous and the constituent at the core of the old Sultanate (Beyer 1917: 69).

¹⁰ Warren notes that the Livingston monograph forms part of the Beyer-Holleman collections of original sources in Philippine Customary law kept at the Library of Congress in Washington, D. C. and the Philippine Studies Program at the University of Chicago (Warren 1981: 366).

(Orosa 1923: 67)¹¹ and gained widespread usage especially within the anthropological community with its inclusion in the 1955 Human Resource Area Files (HRAF)¹². Since then, the Tausug as identity ascription is widely used as unit of analyses in both ethnographic and historical accounts on the region. Eventually, the people embraced the ascription with leading native Tausug ethnographers and historians adopting the term (e.g. Tan 2005, Jundam 2005, Bruno 1975).

Moreover, the cosmopolitanism of the broader Sulu archipelago and the Zamboanga peninsula are also evident in the archival records. Two widely cited literatures on Philippine Muslim ethno-history, the *Studies in Moro History, Law, and Religion* and the *History of Sulu*, were subsequently published by Najeeb Saleeby in 1905 and 1908 as part of an American colonial ethnological survey on which he served as a deputy. It is tempting to dismiss Saleeby as an insidious colonial agent doing the bidding of what was then a rising imperial power but a closer look into his personal background and career shows that he embodied a cosmopolitan man more than a colonialist caricature. Saleeby was a Christian Orthodox Arab who grew up in Lebanon, established close ties with the local clergy who helped him with his education, and eventually trained for medicine in the United States. He then served as military doctor for the American forces that invaded the Philippines in 1898 (Majul 1963). Saleeby later quit the US military but was appointed as superintendent of schools and legislator of a Moro Province administering American colonial affairs in the Muslim areas of Mindanao from 1903 to 1914. Rather than return to the United States following Philippine independence in 1946, he stayed and died in 1967 at his home north of the country where he retired.

¹¹ Further on, Orosa divided the *Tausugs* into two groups in accordance with the general environment of their abode and way of life, the *Pariano* or “people of the landing” for coastal communities engaged in fishing, pearl diving and inter-island trading; and the *Guimbahanon* for the “hill people in the interior” (Orosa 1923: 67)

¹² HRAF classified the *Tausug* as the dominant inhabitants of the Sulu archipelago on the basis of language, “degree of *Islamisation*”, political superiority, and subsistence practices (HRAF 1955, Vol. 4: 1738-1739). HRAF noted that the *Tausug* as a language is more akin to *Bisaya*, the language spoken by the people in Central Philippines rather than with the rest of the *Moro* groups in the Sulu chain of islands or mainland Mindanao (Ibid., 1738). On the notion of prestige and superiority, HRAF took as fact a view from Kuder (1945), an American colonial officer in Mindanao, that the *Tausug* “consider themselves the superior *Moro* group because they were the first to be *Islamised* and achieved the highest and most extensive political development” (Ibid., 1739) in the Sulu chain. In terms of subsistence, the document essentialised the *Tausug* as “primarily agriculturists” compared to their neighbouring *Samal*-speaking communities who are “fundamentally fishermen” and with “weakly developed” knowledge in agriculture (Ibid., 1739-1740)

Saleeby's ethno-history weaved together official Spanish military chronicles; Catholic missionary letters; and previous American scholarship with local oral history; mythology; scripts (*jawi*), and a set of mythical and genealogical records of a long succession of sultans called the *tarsila*. Out of these materials, Saleeby presented a pre-Islamic picture of Sulu and Samboangan (an ancient name of Zamboanga) as a realm originally occupied by a group of people who shared material cultures with the Dayaks of Borneo and the Manubus (Manobo) of northern Mindanao (Saleeby 1908: 155). Overtime, as Saleeby noted, the population of the region was enriched by a wave of Sama influx from Juhur (Johore) and later of Bugis and the Ilanun from elsewhere (Ibid., 157-158). Migrations from Menangkabau, Palembang, and Malacca followed earlier migration waves to Zamboanga before moving on to intermarry and take leadership positions in Sulu¹³. Saleeby noted that across time these migration stories were embedded into local mythologies with rich references to a pantheon of Hindu deities as well as early Malay rulers born of parents with Indian descent who supposedly travelled with European conqueror Alexander the Great to Sulu (Ibid., 155).

When the trading centres of the Malayan and Indonesian archipelago converted into Islamic polities in the thirteenth century, social formation in Sulu also underwent dramatic transformation. Arab missionaries who had significant roles in those conversions eventually made their way to Sulu and played a key part in the establishment of a Muslim sultanate with the natives leading its core institutions. Before and amidst these episodic migrations from the Malayan peninsula and the Indonesian archipelago, Chinese traders that sailed onboard junks with manufactured goods and migrants from Southern China were a constant presence in the trading ports of Sulu. Furthermore, Saleeby noted that "since time immemorial" Sulu sailors ventured for gold dust wax, dyes, saltpetre, slaves, and food products from the bigger islands of Mindanao, Luzon, and the Visayas in the Philippines; silver, scented woods, and porcelain from China and Japan; gunpowder, cannon, brass, copper, iron,

¹³ Saleeby genealogical and historical analyses was subsequently alluded to specifically cited by succession of American travelers, scholars, as well as military and civilian colonial agents writing their memoirs on the Philippines and particular issues concerning the Muslims of Sulu and Mindanao (Barrows 1905: 16, Worcester 1914, Anderson 1939: 295-299; Forbes 1945: 273; Malcolm 1936: 38-42).

rubies, and diamonds from Malacca and Brunei (Brunei); and pepper and spices from Java (Saleeby 1908: 137).

Saleeby saw Sulu as a realm defined not only by external traders moving in but rather an economic hub with multiple trading connections. On the whole, Saleeby's historiography of antiquated Sulu offered an early view of the way ancient inter-insular migration, inter-marriages, and inter-cultural exchanges amongst natives and succeeding Malay and Arab migrants drove the cultural diversification of Sulu and their formation into a Muslim sultanate. In Saleeby's narrative, cosmopolitan relations set the motion for identity formations in Zamboanga and Sulu as multi-cultural enclaves that successively embraced Hindu and Islamic orthodoxies whilst maintaining ties with ocean going Chinese traders. Saleeby pointed that commercial ventures in early nineteenth century Jolo exemplified these links noting that the "Chinese merchants have complete control" of both trade and travel in the area, "commanding all avenues of commerce" (Ibid., 138). The dominance and lasting presence of Chinese traders in Sulu were exemplified in the way the locals referred to the docks of Jolo as a "Chinese Pier" (Ibid., 134). Centuries of maritime trade and inter-insular population movement shaped and reshaped the social and religious fabric of a distinctive but connected linguistic communities in Zamboanga and Sulu. Saleeby himself did not use the term cosmopolitanism in his historiographic portrait of Sulu, and neither have other scholarships on the region in his time. His description of Sulu, however, closely resembles that of recent scholarship of trade, cultural, and social connections amongst the people in the littorals of the Indian Ocean. If we follow Saleeby's illustration, the cosmopolitan experience of the littorals of Sulu and Zamboanga reflects what Simpson and Kreese described of the Indian Ocean as a region where the old and new "social networks of neighbouring people overlap, intersect, but clearly also differ (2007: 5). In Saleeby's illustration, Sulu is a continually shifting but globally tangled political landscape dating back to the region's antiquities. These entanglements set into motion the formation of polities in Zambaonga and Sulu. Overlapping, intersecting, and diversifying communities of Tausug, Sama, Yakan, and Chabacano defined the landscape of both Sulu and Zamboanga. Connectedness is a continuing and transformational phenomenon in Zamboanga and Sulu, implicating the social construction of the region's people as a culturally diverse but inextricably linked communities.

Cosmopolitanism and Colonial Expansion

Postcolonial criticisms rarely commented on Saleeby's background as colonial agent but at his failure at recognising few other patterns of trans-locality that drove the formation of sociality in Sulu and mainland Mindanao. Amongst these analysts, two historians, Cesar Majul of the University of the Philippines and James Francis Warren of Murdoch University in Australia offered by far a more extensive appraisal of his work, producing in turn their own widely cited works on Muslim identity formation in the Philippines as I will illustrate later. Majul, who wrote an introduction to a 1963 reprint of Saleeby's *History of Sulu*, argued that Saleeby actually missed the connections of local processes of Islamisation to Chinese traders (*Majul 1963: xii*). Majul noted that an array of Sulu oral narratives actually suggest a "reasonable possibility" of Islam spreading to Sulu by way of Chinese junks that brought in Arab *makhdhum* (Islamic missionaries) from the ports of Southern China even earlier (*Ibid.*). Majul cited a 1310 AD grave of an Arab Muslim missionary on Mount Dato in Jolo as possible evidence of early Arabic presence coming on the sails of Chinese trading boats (*Ibid.*).

Moreover, Majul quoted extensively from Saleeby's account of valiant raids and assaults on Spanish occupied towns and enclaves as basis for piecing together his own celebrated and historical narrative of an unfettered Muslim resistance against colonial aggression. Such opposition, Majul asserted, subsequently led to the social and political formation of disparate Muslim communities in the Philippines into a Moro nation (Majul 1973), a product of unfettered resistance against colonial aggression. Warren who produced two works, *The Sulu Zone* (1981) and *Iranun and Balangingi* (2002), on the political dimensions of trading in the Mindanao realm of the old Southeast Asian emporium cast doubts on Saleeby's and Majul's narrow reading of the Moro raids as patriotic acts of anti-Spanish colonial resistance isolated from trans-local processes of the period. Warren argued that such historiographies negated the entanglement of Sulu and Maguindanao piracies to geopolitical dynamics in the early period of European capitalist development and expansion that implicated sixteenth through nineteenth century maritime trading in Southeast Asia. Analysing archival records of the origins of items and slaves that went through British colonial

port in Singapore, old Spanish chronicles, and Dutch mercantile reports from the archive, Warren mapped out expansive Moro raiding targets that covered areas beyond Spanish claimed territories. These raids stretched out from the northern reaches of the Philippines down south to the Papuan region, and were targeted in a manner that would disrupt one European trading or colonial network and favour another (Warren 2002: 54-55). Furthermore, the plunder and slave taking were carried out whilst competing Dutch, British, German, and French mercantile interests and colonial agents crafted trade treaties with both sultanates (Warren 2002, *also see* Laarhoven 1989). These treaties signify the ascendant position of the Maguindanao sultanate as a centre of the Mindanao realm of Southeast Asian maritime emporium with Sulu as close rival. As these competing sultanates grew in power and influence over the realm, Warren contended that they set forth the process of identity formation with the Maguindanaon at the core of the sultanate in Maguindanao, and the Tausugs in Sulu.

Whilst Spain remained the principal antagonist in a tangled tale of colonial aggression and mercantile relations, it also ushered the formation of new cosmopolitan connections not necessarily by design but rather as a dynamic arising from historical contingencies. Spain was floundering as an empire at the dawn of the seventeenth century following the humiliating rout by the British of its fabled Spanish Armada in 1588. The ramifications of that defeat reverberated in its newly occupied but barely protected colonies in the Philippines. The Spanish colonial project in the Philippines received the least support from a cash-strapped empire that saw little profitability from the islands compared with the gold treasures it could siphon off from its colonies in the Americas (Pilapil 1961). At one point, a Spanish royal council had advised their sovereign to abandon its distant Philippine possessions but eventually reconsidered and reframed the design of the colonial project into a Christian mission aimed at saving native souls (Pilapil 1961: 128). Yet whilst the Spanish crown decided to retain the Philippines as a colony, it also had pushed it into the fringes of its possessions through indirect rule by a viceroy in Mexico and meagre military and bureaucratic support for colonial state building (Corpuz 1989). Nonetheless and amid lack of technical support from mother Spain, the Spanish colonial authority in Manila pursued its battles in Mindanao disastrously at first but gaining ground and successes as the centuries progressed. Inevitably, Spanish

relentless efforts at subjugating Muslim Mindanao transformed the geopolitical configuration of the area in complex ways rather than simply narrowing its world into unbending resistance to Western colonial conquest that Majul or Saleeby contended.

In *Sulu Zone*, Warren noted that the Spaniards concentrated their meagre and outdated firepower against the sultanate of Maguindanao, leaving the sultans of Sulu unmolested to prosper from plundering, raiding as well as sustained trading with the Chinese and other European merchandising interests. To keep the Sulu sultanate at bay, Spanish colonial authorities in Manila signed peace treaties with a succession of Sulu sultans and established Zamboanga as a military outpost it had tenuously held in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries but turned into a reliable base at the end of the eighteenth. The Spaniards also tried defending Zamboanga by building a fortification we now know as Fort Pillar, an episode that inadvertently opened a new front of cosmopolitan connections in the region. It took the Spaniards more than a century to finish the fort and in the process deployed Jesuit priests who oversaw the construction as well as soldiers, bureaucrats, and people from its other colonies. Overtime, the new arrivals established a multi-cultural community comprising of themselves, the Sama, Yakan, Tausug, and Subanu-speaking natives who had earlier rooted themselves to the area. The fort helped Spanish forces and its subjects withstand successive attacks by trans-local alliances that included, amongst others, those between Sulu and Makassar maritime raiders, that of the Maguindanao and Dutch agents, and the British imperial forces (Majul 1973: 133). Overtime, Zamboanga grew in significance as a Spanish military base and springboard for its campaign against Maguindanao and Sulu. Moreover, Zamboanga served as Spain's jumping point in spreading lurid intrigues against rival European interest as was apparently the case when Sulu natives attacked a British mercantile settlement on Balambagan island at the south western edge of the Sulu archipelago in 1775 (Warren 1981: 26-27), an area that the Spaniards claimed but unable to defend militarily¹⁴. In the eighteenth century, the Spaniards

¹⁴ Alexander Dalrymple, the agent for the East India Trading Company, reported about the stream of European port calls in Jolo island, the seat of the Sulu sultanate, as he laid out a case against Spanish claims over the realm and for British trade expansion to the area (Dalrymple 1774). Dalrymple managed to convince British authorities and the East India Company to establish a settlement in the island of Balambagan, few miles off the coast of Sulu as a British trading base in Southeast Asia. The move, however, heightened tension amongst European trading companies opened what historians believe as opportunity for the Spanish colonial agents to sow intrigues and agitate Sulu natives to seize the British settlement in Balambagan in 1775 (Tarling 1993: 27).

succeeded in disrupting the linkages that the Maguindanao sultanate had with the broader Southeast Asian Maritime trade and other European mercantile interests. By cutting off the Sultanate of Maguindanao from trans-local relations, the Spaniards gained inroads into the Muslim heartland in Muslim Mindanao even as its grip over the area remained tenuous. Whilst Maguindanao stood unbowed to the very end of Spanish conquest, the campaign precipitated its decline. Some Sultanate leaders capitulated to the Spaniards creating deep-seated rift between themselves (Abinales 2000).

A weakened Maguindanao sultanate meant an open opportunity for the Spaniards to shift its meagre resources and resume the campaign against Sulu. In 1844, the Spaniards invaded Jolo and began a campaign of pacification by propping up sultans who bowed to their will. As was the case in Maguindanao, Spanish authority in Sulu remained tenuous but established a lasting material imprint in Jolo by building a fortification right at the heart of the city in 1878. Though the Spaniards would unceremoniously evacuate the fortification as well as all of Jolo eleven years later when the Americans ceded the Philippines from Spain, the building would continue to stand today near an area that people come to call the “Chinese pier”. The docks serve as shipping point for goods and people coming from other parts of the Philippines and beyond the colonial borders. American colonialism did not end centuries of trans-local linkages of Sulu and Zamboanga but rather transformed them. Whilst trading relations with the Europeans declined under American colonialism, Sulu remained integrated to global politics and economy. Meanwhile, Zamboanga was opened to even broader international trade and travel connections following its designation as capital of a colonial Moro Province that the United States established in 1903 (*also see* Philippine Commission Reports 1904). As an American colonial capital in the Southern Philippines, Zamboanga was positioned “in the direct route connecting China, Manila, and Australia” and in “direct communication with Manila, Hongkong, Singapore, and Australia, and is gradually diverting the trade of Mindanao from Jolo” (Philippine Commission, 138).

Scholarship After Saleeby

Land and underwater archaeological finds and analyses published in recent decades supported the written records of older but continually transforming cosmopolitan affairs in the region. Ocean going boats and an array of Chinese-manufactured artefacts dug out in 1978 from beneath waterlogged shores of Butuan, a small city on the northern coast of Mindanao offered new perspectives of the emergence of Sulu as a polity born out of cosmopolitan trade and trans-local cultural connections. The excavation of the Butuan boats and assemblage of artefacts dating between 320AD to 1250AD produced later analyses identifying Sulu as a halfway base for maritime ventures originating from an older trading port of Butuan en route to the greater Hindu kingdoms of Srivijaya and Majapahit (Hontiveros 2004). Overtime, the settlement in Sulu grew and developed into a sophisticated polity whilst the port of Butuan slipped in long, slow but steady decline. Historian Kenneth Hall (2011), citing studies of eleventh to fifteenth century Chinese Ming and Sung dynasty artefacts recovered around Sulu and Zamboanga, suggest that Sulu was part of intricately linked commercial zones that extends farther afield to the Arabian sea (2011: 33)¹⁵. Moreover, archaeological survey around the old Spanish fortification in downtown Zamboanga yielded porcelains, ingots, and other manufactured items shipped out from the production houses of Southern China during the Ming and Yang dynasties, a period traversing the centuries of Islamisation and Spanish colonialism in Mindanao (Spoehr 1973). The discovery of a wreckage of a thirteenth century Chinese junk in Lena Shoal off the coast of Palawan in western Philippines further opened researches on the probable routes on which the ships of the old maritime world may have traversed. Archaeologist Frank Goddio (2012) situates the voyage of the sunken junk to wider fifteenth century maritime trading routes that include the seas of Sulu and which Chinese writers compiled to guide sailors coming from

¹⁵ The *Chu-fan-chi*, a compilation of travel accounts on twelfth and thirteenth century Chinese and Arab trade, offered one of the earliest though brief ethnographic sketch of the openness and interconnections of an archipelagic country north of P'oni (Borneo) that sailors and merchants called Ma-i. The document, compiled and written by Song dynasty trade agent named *Chau Ju-kua*, narrates of Chinese junks sailing and dropping anchor down the waters fronting chiefly homes that also served as barter centres for insular traders in the archipelago. In these port calls, the sailors usually find the chiefs "in a habit of using white umbrellas" whilst waiting for them to wade on shore and sell porcelain, trade-gold, iron censers, lead, coloured glass beads, and iron needles for trade (Zhao, Hirth, and Rockhill 1911: 159-160). Native merchants would then take the goods to other islands, returning only as late as nine months with a shipment of yellow wax, cotton, pearls, tortoise-shell, medicinal betel-nuts, and yuta-cloth (abaca textiles) to repay the Chinese traders still anchored with their waiting ships (Ibid.).

China¹⁶. These reports further lend credence to Saleeby's historiographic analyses of the broader connections of Sulu in antiquities as expressed in oral and mythical accounts of the region.

Saleeby's, Majul's, and Warren's analyses of Muslim responses to colonialism clash but their views essentially converge in recognising the trans-located forces implicating the process of local identity making in varying periods of Muslim history in Mindanao. The trans-locality of Saleeby's analyses is evident in his illustration of the political and social formation of antiquated Sulu and Zamboanga. Warren demonstrates the links of local Muslim colonial history to global mercantile processes. Whilst arguing that Muslim communities in the Philippines evolve into a distinctive nation in the course of struggle for freedom against Spanish colonialism and Christian conversion, Majul contends that their status as a multi-ethnic Muslim nation in a post-colonial world has become entwined and tangled with the Filipino nation. Majul's idea of multi-ethnic Muslim Moro nation arising within a religiously diverse and transnational post-colonial Philippines, though unstated, is recognisably a cosmopolitan vision of a nation-state. By implication, Majul views the Philippines as a culturally multilayered state shared by the Filipino and the Moro nations, each group comprising varying ethnic groups. To some extent, I see Majul's advocacy for a Moro national community within a Philippines shared by varying nationalities reflect a critical argument offered by Eric Kaufmann in identifying as a cosmopolitan visionary with "those who seek a trans-ethnic universality which eschews the cultural domination of any ethnic group are *cultural* cosmopolitans, even if they confine their project within the boundaries of a particular state" (Kaufmann 2003: 362).

The analyses of Saleeby, Majul, and Warren differ on matters concerning the rise of Muslim identity but taken together, they provide a comprehensive understanding of the continuing but transformative episodes of cosmopolitan engagements in Zamboanga, Sulu, as well as the broader Muslim community in the Southern Philippines. Their writings imply that Zamboanga then and now bears all the

¹⁶ One of these documents is the *Shung Fêng Hsiang Sung*, an anonymous compilation of navigational theory and information of areas covered by old maritime trade routes from China to broad parts of Southeast Asia and the Arabian peninsula. Written in 1430, the document, which archeologist Franck Goddio located in the Bodleian Library at Oxford, offered detailed information on Chinese sailing routes spanning the Malabar coast, Yemen, the Red Sea, South China, the Indonesian archipelago, the Sunda islands, all the way to Sulu (Goddio 2012: 6).

contradictions of a cosmopolitan locality deeply integrated into the global economy, trans-located Western military, and geopolitics. Yet, the sense of cosmopolitanism in the region could neither be confined to its current state of global integration nor multiculturalism but reflects varying episodes of trans-local connections in history as exemplified by the linkage of its pre-Islamic social constitution to the wider Southeast Asian maritime emporium. The area's global links further expanded with the coming of Islam in the thirteenth century. The rise and fall of an old Muslim sultanate to ambivalent political relations with European colonial merchants in the eighteenth, the American military in the nineteenth, and the post-colonial Philippine state in the twentieth centuries indicate a continuing and transforming cosmopolitanism in the region. That cosmopolitan transformation can be observed from the rise of Moro Muslim nationalism reliant on both local and international Muslim support as well as ideas of national collectivity emerging from the Middle East.

The Trans-locality of Mindanao Conflict

Accounts on the roots of secessionism in Mindanao are varied and often influenced by the politics or scholarly orientations of their writers but one converging theme that can be drawn from them is the trans-locality of the political field on which it played out. A reported murder of Muslim military recruits by their own trainers on Corregidor Island off the coast of Manila in March 1968 is usually identified as the watershed event that sparked the rebellion (May 1984, Majul 1986: 40, Vitug and Gloria 2000). The recruits were killed after uncovering and then refusing to execute a secret presidential plot that would have clandestinely deployed them to the Malaysian state of Sabah in advance of a full scale Philippine invasion. The horrific details of both the killing and the Sabah invasion plan were exposed in the Philippine Senate, and were viewed to have subsequently awakened latent sentiments of Muslim discrimination by a Christian dominated national government in Manila as well as centuries of colonial subjugations eloquently described by Saleeby and Majul in their respective works (Glang 1969, Gowing 1977). The murders sparked public outrage and mass protests that in turn flourished into a secessionist struggle. Subsequently, a militant Mindanao Independence Movement was formed with Muslim politicians and aristocratic families at its helm. By mid-seventies, however, the group began unravelling. Politicians amongst its ranks forged deals to stop fighting in exchange for

presidential appointments, funding their candidacies in town and provincial elections, as well as extending cash and development packages for themselves and their constituents. Younger followers of the movement, however, rejected the deals by forming more expansive political organisation under the banner of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) in 1969.

The MNLF would take the war into the global arena and prompt the Organisation of Islamic Conference to issue a resolution offering their concerns to Philippine military assaults in Muslim villages (Majul 1986: 40). In the course of the struggle, the MNLF gained a seat before the OIC as an official observer and recognition as the representative of the Bangsamoro people. Muslim Filipino historian Samuel Tan of the University of the Philippines history department would call this episode the “internationalisation of the Bangsamoro struggle” (1994). As Tan notes, the MNLF won moral, logistical, and financial support from Middle Eastern and Malaysian leaders allowing the group to establish a base in the Middle East and train its fighters beyond the jungles, islands, and flood plains of Muslim Mindanao. Leading field commanders of the movement travelled and trained for warfare tactics in Sabah, Malaysia and Tripoli, Libya, with the latter bankrolling the movement at one point in the 1970s (Tan 1994: 78). The internationalisation of the Bangsamoro struggle forced Philippine officials to negotiate with then Libyan leader Muammar Qaddafi to withdraw his support from the rebels and talk peace with the MNLF in Tripoli in 1976 and Indonesia in the next few decades.

Like its predecessor, however, the MNLF eventually splintered into several groups starting from the late 1970s. One of these groups, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front based in Central Mindanao, eclipsed MNLF achievement in building a trans-local base for its secessionist struggle. Factionalized as they are, each faction claims of being rightful heirs to the sultans and followers of the Maguindanao and Sulu sultanates who waged centuries of unbending resistance to colonial powers, effectively drawing mythical links of current political agenda to the chivalric past. The claim goes that in the course of this historic struggle, disparate ethno-linguistic communities that embraced Islam in the thirteenth century began congealing into a collective identity that forms the core of a Moro nation that distinguishes themselves from the Christianised Filipino communities in other parts of the Philippines. The

sentiment was encapsulated in a 1999 secessionist publication published in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia titled the *Bangsamoro Under Endless Tyranny* with the aphorism, “If Filipino was a child of colonialism, Moro was the offspring of anti-colonialism” (Jubair 1999: 14). In constructing the idea of the Bangsamoro, the MNLF and their successor groups melded two cross-continental ascriptions that emanated from within Southeast Asia and Europe. The Portuguese originally used the term *Moro* in referring to Southeast Asian Muslim communities at the time of its conquest of Melaka in 1511 (Buendia 2005, also see Corpuz 1989: 46). The Spaniards subsequently adapted the ascription in referring to the Muslims of Mindanao but as a pejorative allusion of their contempt against Moorish Muslims that invaded the Iberian peninsula in year 711. The Americans re-contextualized the term Moro into a legal identity by calling the colonial military administration it had established in the Muslim and frontier areas of Mindanao as the *Moro Province*. In essentialist but strategic terms (Spivak 1988), the MNLF and its adherents fused the notion of the *moro* with a widely shared Southeast Asian term for a nation, the *bangsa*, to construct the notion of the *Bangsamoro* as self-ascribed identity for the Muslims of Mindanao. The group invoke both Western and Malay notion of indigeneity as primordial basis of Bangsamoro identity and argued that the intellectual core of the Filipino imagined community is a colonial imaginary that they do not share. This thesis uses the terms ‘Moro’, ‘Bangsamoro’, and ‘Muslim communities’ interchangeably in referring to the collective nationalist Muslim identity in Mindanao on the premise that local agents do so themselves.

The evolution of the secessionist movement from a protest group to a meaningful nationalist ideology happened not in isolation from the political events affecting the broader Muslim world. Rather, the notion of nationhood in the Mindanao secessionist agenda was inspired, enabled, and sustained by the ascendance of Arab nationalism in the Middle East starting in the 1950s, the sweeping rise of Maoist-Leninist activism across Philippine universities in the mid-1960s through the 1970s, and internal political dynamics within the country (McKenna 1998). The spread of Arab nationalism happened around the time when Muslim students from Mindanao began streaming to Islamic universities in the Middle East with scholarship grants from wealthy oil states around the region (Cline 2000: 119). The distinctive hand of trans-located agents and events in the formation of nationalist sentiments in Sulu, Zamboanga, and Mindanao illustrates that local discourses of nationalism were

intricately embedded in a cosmopolitan arena on which they were shaped. These processes had profound implications on the imaginaries of local belonging and broader connections materialised in the music videos emerging in the streets and slums of Sulu and Zamboanga. They indicate that colonial and postcolonial politics re-ordered but never put an end to cosmopolitan engagement in Zamboanga and Sulu, even in the making of a nationalist identity. More importantly, they also offer a context for examining rooted forms of cosmopolitan imagination.

Fieldwork in Uncertain Times: Approaching the Field

It may be fair to ask, how can a community beset by violence and uncertainty be regarded as cosmopolitan? How is it possible to consider a volatile political locality a viable area for the examination of material expressions of rooted cosmopolitanism? I have to say that my fieldwork was not without complications on matters of security. In fact, I was not able to shake off fears of getting kidnapped, assaulted, caught by bullet in a cross fire, or left victim to bomb explosion all throughout the year I was in Zamboanga. My sense of vulnerability is born out of the political reality of the place. Around the time of my fieldwork, abductions for ransom money, beheading of kidnapped victims, bomb explosions, armed skirmishes between government forces and dissident groups, and election-related violence were on the rise. Three volunteers of the International Committee of the Red Cross were abducted and taken captives for nearly ten months by an armed group in nearby Basilan Island. A few more foreigners were being kept in the jungles of Sulu province. These abductions form part of a wave of kidnapping incidents where the victims were not just foreigners but also local traders, public school teachers, students, and street vendors. In Jolo, a Tausug teacher was kidnapped and then beheaded by an armed gang demanding ransom money. Apart from kidnapping, security conditions in other parts of the region were precarious. During my yearlong stay, human rights campaigners reported a government military assault that destroyed a mosque and killed a local clergy in a remote Sulu community just a day before the feast of the *Eid'l Fitr*. Another story talked about dozens of people killed whilst praying in the mosque that was bombed by the military on the day of the *Eid'l Fitr*. The region's military commander, speaking in a public forum, quashed talks of mass deaths but confirmed the assault saying that it was a mission aimed at scuttling a band of rebels

gearing up for a supposed siege of Jolo in a brazen attempt to repeat the bloody 1974 MNLF attack. Half way into my fieldwork, a bomb aimed at the Sulu governor went off at the arrival gates of the Zamboanga airport. Nearly everyday, Zamboanga newspapers published reports of a killing or two in the city and Sulu.

Multiple sources including my friends in Zamboanga and Sulu cautioned me against staying for fieldwork, saying that wandering around places they themselves avoid would not be a wise idea. A few slum communities in Zamboanga where I intended to hangout have rough reputations of being havens to criminal gangs. If Zamboanga has several horrific episodes of street violence, I was told the situation in Sulu is far worse with greater incidents of kidnappings and bloodshed. Amidst warnings of peril from friends, I conducted my own risk analysis by making a short trip to Zamboanga to learn for myself the feasibility of conducting fieldwork in the area. For briefings, I decided against going to the police or the military, which in my view has consistently offered dubious public evaluation of criminality as evinced by their failure to end kidnappings. Instead, I enquired from key officers of critical institutions such as the universities, clergy, and development agencies who themselves are facing kidnapping threats but have not given up looking for ways in keeping Zamboanga secured. Those I conversed with reassured me that whilst there was indeed a burst of kidnappings particularly in the year before I started fieldwork, the worse is actually over. Officials at the Ateneo de Zamboanga University, a Jesuit run institution, which agreed to host my stay and whose students were amongst those kidnapped, briefed me that an inter-faith effort involving the local clergies, Muslim religious, and community leaders have jointly linked up with government authorities as part of a broad social response against kidnappings and criminality. Religious and neighbourhood leaders initiated campaigns appealing to the moral and ethical responsibilities of their followers to help address kidnappings eventually contributed to the dramatic drop of abduction incidents. With these assessments, I pursued fieldwork in Zamboanga but held off travel to Sulu until conditions warranted a visit. I eventually made it to Sulu a few months before I ended my fieldwork with a wedding performer serving as my guide and protector. I stayed for a couple of days visiting the provincial museum and the archives of the Notre Dame Coordinated Investigation of Sulu Culture (CISCU). Whilst I was wrapping up my fieldwork, I began receiving invitations and assurances of protection from my informants to take

part in the making of music videos and attend weddings in Sulu. This time, rather than security it was time that worked against me. The invitations and offer of protections underscored the deep desire of local constituents to establish broader connections amidst the failure of state authorities and the secessionists to stabilize law and order in the region.

Notwithstanding the safety issues that I encountered, security uncertainties did not stop anthropologists before me from braving Zamboanga and Sulu. In practically all cases, they find themselves in the welcoming and protective arms of their gracious hosts. For instance, American anthropologist Harry Arlo Nimmo in the 1950s spent months on end with seafaring Sama Dilaut on their residential boats sailing across the Sulu Sea amidst concerns over proliferation of firearms and gun battles between small bands of armed men and the government constabulary (Nimmo 1972). At about the same time and just as some politicians began articulating early sentiments of secessionism, Charles Frake, also an American, worked in the hinterlands of the Zamboanga peninsula studying Subanen language (1964) and ethnobotanical practices (1961) as well as ventured into the scholarship of Sulu identities (1996). Another American anthropologist, Thomas Kiefer, spent two years in the interior of Jolo island at the height of violent conflagrations between outlawed armed men and the police as well as of revenge killings. He left Sulu safe and sound along with a treasure trove of ethnographic details that helped him analyse the dynamics of Tausug violence and political organisation (Kiefer 1986). Even as talks of secessionism pervaded the political air of Sulu in the 1950s through the 1960s, Filipino anthropologist Wilfredo Arce pursued ethnographic fieldwork in Jolo, offering a portrait of Sulu political leadership (Arce 1983). In the 1980s, a period when the violence set off by secessionist wars of the seventies lingers, Italian anthropologist Bruno Bottignolo (1999) worked amongst the Badjaos whom Arlo Nimmo had engaged earlier though positioning himself further south in the town of Bongao in Tawi-Tawi province for his doctorate thesis at Oxford. In the 1990s, British ethnographer Mark Johnson conducted fieldwork on Tausug gender relations and homosexuality in Jolo for his doctorate at University College London. Johnson spent his formative years with his missionary father and family in Zamboanga. When he went back for fieldwork, he decided to travel further south into Jolo, defying a rising trend of kidnapping targeted at foreign clergy. He found himself under the protection

of Tausug host who designated people to be with him even at night to ensure his safety (Johnson 1997:17). Whilst he felt it not wise to take his wife and children to Jolo due to the security situation, he entrusted them to neighbours and friends in Zamboanga and visited them every fortnight (Ibid.).

The experiences of visiting anthropologists who came before me showcase not only the Tausug acts of openness but also their commitment to the welfare and protection of fieldworkers - strangers that they are - who knocked at their doors for help. In such engagement, it is conceivable to imagine these constituents extending their hands to fieldworkers fully conscious that their hospitality will somehow contribute to the production of knowledge on the nature of the human condition that we social researchers ask about and the community also wishes to understand. Relations cultivated by anthropologists and informants, people of differing cultures accepting each other's otherness as they come and live together even though briefly with an understanding that these engagement can eventually lead to a production of new knowledge. As Pnina Werbner states in her reflexive account of the relationship between anthropology and the new cosmopolitanism, "as travellers and strangers, anthropologists rely on the hospitality and welcome of the people they study. Paradoxically, then, it is they who, as cosmopolitan hosts, enable the emergence of a shared cosmopolitan dialogue" (Werbner 2008b: 25).

The Cosmopolitanism of Native Anthropology

What if the fieldworker like myself is a native, would the engagement cease to be cosmopolitan? How is it to become a native fieldworker and how is it to become a cosmopolitan fieldworker? Should both fieldwork positions necessarily be in oppositions? In addressing these questions, I look towards critical assessments of anthropological paradigms that frame the loci of ethnographic enquiry into a dichotomy between the emic and etic, the exclusivity of insider and outsider, and the fixity of the positions of the observer and observed. In this context, the question of "how native is a native anthropologist" (Narayan 1993: 671) is tied up with the question does a travelling fieldworker "really make anthropologists into cosmopolitans" (Werbner 2008b: 49). I share with Narayan's reflection about herself writing as someone "who bears the label of 'native' anthropologist and yet squirms

uncomfortably under this essentializing tag” (Narayan 1993: 671, emphasis in original). In practice, native anthropologists like travelling anthropologists would realise that “the loci along which we are aligned with or set apart from those whom we study are multiple and in flux” (Ibid.). “Factors such as education, gender, sexual orientation, class, race, or sheer duration of contacts may at different times outweigh the cultural identity we associate with insider or outsider status” (Ibid.). Our fieldwork positions often shift “amid a field of interpenetrating communities and power relations” (Ibid.) and that “standing on shifting ground makes it clear that every view is a view from somewhere and every act of speaking a speaking from somewhere” (Abu-Lughod 1991: 141). Precisely because of such reality, “our ethnographic strategies are also shaped by the subject’s situations, their global as well as local perceptions, and their demands and exception to us” (Josephides 1997:32). The claim of being a native anthropologist is not an unproblematic anthropological paradigm. The very idea of a native anthropologist is in itself often qualified by those claiming such identity. Abu-Lughod for instance notes that whilst some native anthropologists claims that to be “whole, others qualify themselves as “halfie” in reference to those who lived, educated, grew, and possessed citizenship from a country not of their ancestry (Abu-Lughod 1991).

Anthropologists like myself do not even belong to such category of native anthropologists being someone from my home country but not necessarily doing fieldwork in my own society and cultural background. Nonetheless, a common thread that can be made on how we as anthropologists conduct ourselves in fieldwork, whether native or not, is that we go to the field bearing in mind a theoretical and methodological frame produced in the wider universe of anthropological discourse. As we write, native anthropologists – like our travelling counterparts – simultaneously engaged in the trans-located world of scholarship even as we experience the everyday life of the local. When we emerge from the field and write, our ethnographic illustrations are most often and evidently shaped not only by the voice of our subjects but also by the hybridity of the concepts that inform the theory, methods, and language of anthropology. I contend that to become a native anthropologist is to actually strive for cosmopolitan thinking. The anthropological encounter, therefore, is a global engagement even for anthropologists who choose to examine the dynamics of their own society or even their family. As Jonathan

Friedman puts it “that from the point of view of anthropological practice, the appearance of global perspective is contained within the self-consciousness of the ethnographic act itself... it requires that the anthropologists understand his or her objective position in the larger system” (Friedman 1994: 3). Part of that larger system, I contend, includes the broader theoretical and methodological innovations in social research, consequently generated by the long history of anthropological practice.

Anthropology as articulated by Immanuel Kant does not presuppose an anthropologist that is native or foreign but a scholar who seeks to know what it is to become human. In “Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View”, Kant envisions a discipline that breaks from an isolated view of a person and offers a “way of thinking in which one is not concerned with oneself as the whole, but rather regards and conducts oneself as mere citizen of the world” (Kant 2007: 241-242). This point has been interpreted in various ways but for Nigel Rapport it suggest that anthropology must view the ‘human’ as a “complex singularity” in the sense that in the real world every person lives their life in ways that transcend “proximal categorizations and identifications of nation, ethnicity, class, religion, gender, locale, and so on” (Rapport 2006:24). In other words, anthropology at its core is a cosmopolitan discipline because it seeks to know and offer an understanding of our common humanity. By viewing local constitutions through the prism of other social constitutions, most often in the form of but not limited to cross-cultural comparisons, “anthropology may claim to be a cosmopolitan discipline because its subject matter is not of closed societies but interethnic interaction across permeable, blurred or situationally marked cultural and social boundaries” (Werbner 2008b: 55).

Arguably, conducting fieldwork beyond one’s national borders does not make an anthropologist cosmopolitan in as much as transnational mobility cannot necessarily be associated with cosmopolitanism by the fact of travel (Hannerz 1992, Vertovec and Cohen 2008). For Webner, the measure of cosmopolitanism or knowing the failure of engaging in cosmopolitan terms on the part of anthropologists lay in the practice of fieldwork. Werbner points out that at a certain time in anthropological history, anthropologists celebrated the idea of fieldwork as an engagement limited to the familiarization of both broad and intricate features of

another culture whilst maintaining “the disciplinary aim” of remaining a “passive, invisible, fly-on-the-wall observer” hoping that “their presence will be disattended to, and that it will not change the culture they study” (Werbner 2008b: 49). In many cases, the cosmopolitan message of cross cultural understanding and knowing about our common humanity only commences once the fieldwork experiences are taken back and articulated in metropolitan centres. By taking a detached and objectivist attitude in writing about meaningful cross-cultural encounters in ethnographic fieldwork, the discipline was instead opened to “postcolonial condemnation for its complicity with Western hegemony” (Ibid.), of being “handmaiden of colonialism” (Asad 1973: 16), “apologist of colonialism” (Turner 1971:1), “child of Western imperialism” (Gough 1968: 403), and “orientalism” (Said 1978). These criticisms in turn trigger vigorous debate in the anthropological community with one side questioning the very purpose and right of ethnographers to write about the Other, sidestepping the disciplinal rationale of anthropology to know the fellow human being. Adam Kuper, in a critical commentary, notes that the debate inspired the production of a “library of books” arguing how anthropology legitimized colonialism (Kuper 1994: 544-545). Kuper points out that some of these writings offer extreme and problematic assertions that only a native ethnographer must speak for the natives and that a foreign researcher must only serve as interpreter and medium for the native and their agenda, never mind the need to produce knowledge for humanity through explanations (Ibid.). Whilst not denying the need to listen and establish solidarity with the struggling, Kuper argues that ethnographers need not end up limiting the terms of anthropological engagement to the political programmes of their subjects and confine anthropologists to serving as spokesperson for particular ethnic groups when “there could be no single true account of a cultural event or a social process” (Ibid., 542-543). Such position effectively abandons anthropological aims of enriching humanity’s understanding of the Self by knowing the Other and precipitated the “de-cosmopolitanisation” of anthropology (Werbner 2008b: 54).

On the other hand, Werbner also laments the rarity of finding anthropologists from developing countries conducting fieldwork beyond their own national boundaries and nearly exclusive attention to knowing the “internal other” (Ibid., 53). But then, many third world anthropologists who choose to study societies within their national boundaries are also grappling with the postcolonial question of what it is to

become a nation. That motivation is partly driven by enduring implications of the social and political re-alignment of local communities altered by the colonial project. The end of colonialism actually opens opportunity for local communities to interact, dialogue, and discover amongst themselves the dynamics behind inherent differences in language, faith, spirituality, ancestral genealogy as well as a latent but common desire to imagine a national community. I can speak of such desire amongst scholars in Mindanao, my home region in the Philippines, who in the past few decades mapped about three dozen indigenous ethno-linguistic groups and Muslim societies in the region precisely because of the lack of academic clarity on the diversity and commonality of its people¹⁷. The ethnographies they produced offered critical understanding on how the Philippines can be imagined as a nation amidst such diversity. Local ethnographers who generated these understandings choose to dialogue with the wealth of social theories generated by a cosmopolitan academia. For instance, the analytical lens of communicative action theory articulated by German social theorist Jurgen Habermas was used to examine the contested and negotiated concepts of indigenous Arakan Manobo land tenure in the eastern region of Mindanao (Gaspar 2012). Theories of political ecology and the reflexive writings of Nancy Scheper-Hughes (1992), amongst others, were deployed to understand efforts of native clans on the slopes of Mt. Apo - the highest peak in the Philippines - to regenerate what is believed to be a disappearing culture amidst relentless pressures from aggressive government development projects and a communist insurgency (Alejo 2000). On both counts, the idea of the Philippines as a state and a nation founded on cultural diversity and respect for difference is made clearer and the anthropological knowledge a little richer.

The question of knowing the nation, as Kwame Appiah notes and which Werbner herself has quoted extensively, is that by returning to our cultural roots we deepen our knowledge of our selves and reflect the knowledge with others so we can engage in the spirit of cosmopolitan relations. In a sense, cosmopolitanism is lived by those “who first make parochial interpretations of culture, religion, and ethnicity in

¹⁷ Mindanao-based scholars Rudy Rodil (1993) and Karl Gaspar (2000) typologised communities in the region into three general groups of people: the Moro for the Islamised indigenous communities; Lumads in reference to non-Islamised but earlier inhabitants of the region; and the majority Filipinos who are mostly Christians and migrants from other parts of the archipelago. Rodil divided the Moro ethnographic constituents into 13 groups whilst the Lumads are subdivided to 21 groups.

order to transcend them and assert wider cosmopolitan values” (Werbner 2008a: 15-16). The need to understand where and how we belong offers a platform on which we can locate and articulate our place in the world. It is a desire driven by the need to know local roots so we can be in a better position to engage communities beyond our own.

Visual Methods and Tausug Video Culture

Earlier in this chapter, I cited a series of archival and recent works illustrating the trans-locality of social and political life in Zamboanga and Sulu. Many of these works revolve around extra-ordinary events and the lives of sultans, leading politicians, and revolutionaries that offer broad insights in the historical development of Sulu and Zamboanga alongside and in connection with other global processes. A few ethnographic analyses of the Tausug society drew from the viewpoints of ordinary people and produced admirable literature though presented in ways that isolate them from larger social, cultural and political processes pervading and shaping community life in Sulu and Zamboanga. No doubt that these investigations left wide ranging impact in the discourse of identity, serving not only the agenda of scholarship but also of political agents such as the secessionist movements. The question, however, is how have the masses filtered and framed these notions of identity? How do these analyses relate to the Tausug sense of local belonging and relations with others? What possible fieldwork approaches might help in capturing the vibrancy of the region’s trans-located connections and expressions of local belonging.

Fortunately, this day and age of fluid, widespread, and far reaching flow of images, sound, and media technology offers a more favourable condition within which to examine these questions apart from what was written by earlier analysts and beyond asking what people say about their notion of selves and of the other. As Terence Turner contends in his own investigation of indigenous rights campaign videos produced by the Kayapo of central Brazil, the “global expansion of telecommunications, coupled with the availability of new and cheap forms of audiovisual media, above all video recording, has given rise within the past two decades to an unprecedented phenomenon: the appropriation and use of the new technologies by indigenous peoples for their own ends” (Turner 2002: 75). The use of

audio visual media by grassroots communities in Zamboanga and Sulu can be regarded as far more ubiquitous compared to the Kayapo video project that Turner documented mainly because they were produced, circulated, and consumed in massive numbers not for the purpose of rights campaigning but as part of an everyday popular grassroots media production, circulation, and consumption. Their ubiquity offers an ideal condition for knowing the way the people actually conceive, produce, and share imaginaries of their own community and that of the Tausug other than in material terms. Their materiality forms part of local material culture that can be situated “within the larger conception of culture” (Miller 2005: 4) in the Tausug society. As Marcus Banks writes, ethnographic “attention paid to the materiality of the visual image, and the materiality of its context, can serve to illuminate the distinctive texture of social relations in which it is performing its work” (Banks 2001: 51).

I indicated earlier that I have actually purchased around two hundred discs from the markets and side streets of Muslim Mindanao in my previous fieldwork. In those purchases, I briefly engaged the sellers with enquiries about the identity of the VCD performers and producers, how they were able to procure the videos, how much interest they generated from consumers, and who usually buys them. From those enquiries, I recognised a small cottage industry sustaining the production and circulation of music video discs. They also offered me clues on how to position myself as fieldworker in a politically sensitive and security problematic environment. On field and as planned, I started by interacting with music video sellers as a regular client, and through them meet up and established closer relations with producers, performers, and consumers. By engaging with video sellers and makers through the methodological means of “deep hanging out”, as Clifford Geertz (2000: 107) would say about the enterprise of participant observation, I was able to move and negotiate my way into the broader social world in which the music videos materialised. From these engagements, I followed the processes and the social relations by which Tausug imaginaries are conceived, produced, reproduced, and reflected upon by the community. By hanging out, I managed to gain access on the planning, filming, editing, reproduction, and circulation of the VCDs as well as learned about the extent by which they are shared. To cover the consumption end of local video practice, I joined avid consumers as they play them out at home or their work places. In addition,

I elicited the views of my informants using the videos I gathered from the market to situate the videos in the broader cultural practice of the community as well as their outlook of the world beyond their own. As Sarah Pink suggested, knowledge can be “produced in conversation and negotiation between informants and researcher, rather than existing as an objective reality that may be recorded and taken home in a notebook, camera film, or tape” (Pink 2007: 98). I executed my fieldwork plans down to the last detail, which had helped me meet up with not only the consumers and producers from Zamboanga but also those based in Sulu who regularly came around. It also made me understand the fluidity of the categories of producers, sellers, and performers as many of them either inter-change or do all these roles. In the course of my hanging out, however, the people began expecting more from our engagement other than conversations or with me tagging along as they plan, film, reproduce, circulate, and make use of their videos.

Inadvertently, I myself raised the expectations of my informants primarily because of the technology I deployed for fieldwork. In conducting video elicitation, I made use of my laptop computer because of the ease of setting it up and the ability of its batteries to last up to four hours without topping up for power. I also carried around a handy digital playback sound recorder and camera in my pocket, which I thought would be useful and easy to reach if my informants would allow me to make use of them. Computers turned out to be precisely the tools that the producers and performers in Zamboanga use in mixing and recording their music, as well as in editing their videos. High-resolution digital cameras were in high demand for photographing performers or scenes that would grace the cover sheet of the videos once they were sent out to the sellers. Whilst the equipment was accessible in their community, most producers do not own one and are unable to afford them. Whilst they earn some money from the videos they produce, their total earnings for a month can only cover a third of the price of a lower end laptop computer available in the shops. Producers and performers obtain access to computers by renting them from local studios or wealthier friends and acquaintances. Even if they were able to rent a computer, they would have to pay the person who would do the actual recording and mixing of music, skewing the cost of production. On top of that, they would also have to pay rent for musical instruments, microphones and sound systems, sound mixers, and the video camera for filming. For covers, they would normally rely on

photography studios, further raising the cost of production. I was repeatedly told that if they only have a computer or a camera of their own, it could at least help lower the cost of production because all that they will be worrying about is the rent for sound systems and musical instruments.

As I went on hanging out with the sellers, producers, and performers, we started renegotiating the terms of our engagement though in informal ways. The first group of performers and producers that I established intimate relations with recruited me to their enterprise and brought me into their production team as a sound recording technician with expectations that I would not be paid for but shared information and recordings of their musical and video creations. I accepted my informant's offer but declined requests for video editing because I did not have the right software for it. Yet even as I agreed to serve to record their music, I actually had no knowledge on sound and digital musical recording. In the middle of fieldwork, I studied the functions and techniques of mixing music on the Garageband musical recording software pre-installed on my computer. Online tutorials, however, made learning easy so in a matter of a week I was able to take on the job, at first fumbling but improving as I carried on. Towards the fourth month of my year-long fieldwork, I also acquired other equipment such as portable sound mixer, recording cables, as well as a hand-held Flip video camera that some producers would sometimes borrow from me. In time, word spread amongst wedding artists and producers that myself, the one with a computer, was available for music recording, and that I also have a Flip camera to share. In the course of my yearlong fieldwork, I collaborated with ten different production teams and recorded nearly a hundred songs and musical instrumentals. In recording, we would usually take our respective equipments to the living room of one of the producers and stay up all night from a few days to a month.

Even whilst I pursued my newfound fieldwork position as sound recording technician, I also accepted offers to photograph them and their performances to be used as pictures for the cover sheets of the VCDs. Other producers would borrow my camera and shoot music scenes out of it. Often, they would keep their footages on my hard drives and ask only for a copy of the raw footages on video discs which they would then transfer on to other computers for editing. In doing this collaboration, I did not engage my informants in a manner that reflects the methodological approach

of “shared anthropology” or of “audiovisual reciprocity” that Jean Rouch (2003: 44) alluded to and advanced by his adherents in the area of research, production, exhibition, pedagogy, and social action (e.g. Ginsburg 1995: 65; Hikiji 2010, Turner 1990). What I did was participate in an already existing and vibrant local “video culture” (Pink 2007: 98) in the streets, slums, and island communities of Zamboanga and Sulu. These music videos are intimately woven into Tausug social life as everyday object that not only raised self-awareness but also sustained them economically and politically as a community.

Fieldwork and the Video Camera

From the outset of my fieldwork, I knew of the vibrancy of the Tausug video culture but notwithstanding that knowledge did not take with me any video camera until months later. I also refrained from proposing a collaborative production with my subject as an ethnographic strategy. I was extra conscious of the ethical and practical issues surrounding the deployment of media technology in ethnographic projects just as Sarah Pink illustrated from her fieldwork on notions of gender amongst agents surrounding the practice of bullfighting in southern Spain (Ibid., 45). Pink has assumed an extensive use of video amongst those intimately engaged in bullfighting and had planned to position herself as a videographer in the hope of blending in with the visual practices of the people through the video camera. Once on field, however, she realised that stills camera, not videos, were the preferred media equipment of the people prompting her to shift her medium of fieldwork engagement to photography. She then began participating as a photographer in bullfighting events along with other photographers who were amongst her informants (Ibid.). Conversely, Gemma Oorbitg-Canal (2004) encountered just the opposite experience in her fieldwork amongstst the Pume of Venezuela. Oorbitg-Canal went on field without planning to do visual research but ended up discovering the centrality of photographic elicitation to her research after serving as consultant for a group of Belgian documentary filmmakers. The filmmakers gave Oorbitg-Canal a camera to photograph the local people but after showing her informants the photographs she took of them, she elicited even more interesting stories that she has not gathered from exclusively verbal interactions. Oorbitg-Canal saw the value of photography as “an ideal medium for reconstructing the imaginary sphere and the invisible processes of social realities

we were researching” (Ibid., 29).

My use of stills and video cameras resonates and contrasts with that of Pink, and Oorbitg-Canal. I knew of a relatively extensive video practice in Zamboanga and Sulu based on the music video discs I gathered in my previous fieldwork but intentionally left video camera and collaborative video production out of my plan. In this regard, I heeded Sarah Pink’s relevant advise that “the appropriateness of visual methods should not simply be judged on questions of whether the methods suit the objectives of the research question and if they fit well with the local culture in which one is working” (Pink, 43). Pink’s reminder squares rather succinctly with the issues confronting me as I was weighing my option of conducting fieldwork amidst security issues in Zamboanga and Sulu. Whilst I am sure that people use video and still cameras extensively, it is rather unclear how the community actually accept strangers with videos and still cameras shooting them. For me, the question not only revolves around subjective discussion of ethical and cultural propriety of taking media technology to the field but an objective assessment with real implications on my own security. A friend, a photojournalist, was tragically gunned down moments after photographing people basking under a setting sun on the docks of Jolo. Police investigations went nowhere leaving that killing without any answers. His killing, however, happened amidst broader television news and newspaper portrayal of Sulu and Zamboanga as a region caught in deep misery and tragedies spawned by kidnappings, bloody family vendettas, and secessionist wars. I was viewing the matter as an existential imperative. I saw it fit to tread carefully on deploying audiovisual technologies, particularly that of stills and video camera but in the end it was the community who encouraged me to acquire still and video cameras in the course of our creative collaboration.

Critical Issues on Collaborative Research

By its nature, ethnographic projects are generally collaborative. Banks reminds us that “the researcher’s very presence amongstst a group of people is the result of a series of social negotiations, some formal (such as obtaining visas and research permits from government agencies), most informal (establishing trust, giving gifts, saying ‘please’). At the point at which a camera – stills, cine or video – is

produced, even if no explicit permission is sought, the researcher often relies on a tacit agreement between herself and research subject formed through earlier contact” (Banks 2001: 119-120). Nonetheless, several anthropologists, particularly those oriented towards visual social research, chose to explicitly define as well as problematize the notion of collaboration beyond social negotiations arising from practical demands of fieldwork. Collaboration in this sense engages research subjects to participate in actual production of media representation of their own society and cultural practices, mostly in the form of video documentaries, as expressions of people’s empowerment forming alongside anthropological enquiry on the nature of the human condition. From the 1970s through the 1990s, subsequent collaborative projects were produced and documented by anthropologists, which includes that of the “Video in the Villages” project initiated by Amazonian Indians and the Centro de Trabalho Indigenista in Sao Paulo, Brasil (Aufderheide1995); Sarah Elder and Leonard Kamerling with Inupiak and Yup’ik Eskimo communities in Alaska (Elder 1995); as well as that of Turner with the Kayapo (1990, 1992). Faye Ginsburg sums up the rationale of such fieldwork approach this way: “because the assaults on indigenous people have been so severe, these current efforts to reassert a cultural and historical presence through a widely accessible media form are particularly important, because their self-consciousness about cultural production suggests a close parallel to the project of anthropology” (Ginsburg 1995: 64). Yet these fieldwork positions also precipitated sceptical commentary on the power relations surrounding the claims of empowerment. Jay Ruby, for instance, argued that behind these collaborative claims he sees “Western” anthropologists actually engaging in “paternalistic intervention” by the fact that they themselves conceive, secure funding, and provide training and equipment to make these collaborations possible (Ruby 1995: 79). Reality, however, indicates that indigenous people themselves are unable to obtain and sustain the means for video documentary projects representing their community precisely because the severity of the assaults on their lives left them in a politically and economically precarious situation. As Ruby writes, “the idea of a collaborative production presents us with some interesting conceptual problems. For a production to be truly collaborative the parties involved need to be equal in their competencies or have achieved an equitable division of labor. Involvement in the decision-making process must occur at all significant junctures. Before we can judge a film as a successful collaboration we need to know about the mechanics of the production”

(Ibid., 80-81).

Terence Turner, however, pushed back rather strongly against Ruby's critical assessment accusing him of taking an unfairly Foucauldian position that sees power and domination in academic engagement aimed at making representations of the Other, especially when those conducting the investigation are researchers from the West. "This nonsense has been allowed to do enough damage—a present instance being to persuade Jay Ruby that we should abandon the effort to represent the reality of other cultures and restrict our attempts to discover, describe and understand social reality to ourselves alone, lest we incur the moral stain of making Others into effects of our power. Of course this is always a danger, but the source of the danger is our own actions and the social, ideological, political and economic regimes with which we align ourselves, not with representation as such" (Turner 1995: 103). On the other hand, the problem of representation cannot simply be swept away even if non-western anthropologists initiate collaborative works with indigenous communities in their home countries. In fact, without the overwhelming focus on the supposed problem arising from western anthropological engagement in collaborative work with indigenous communities other relevant issues of representation are brought to the surface. One of these is that we cannot uncritically assume an alignment of universal anthropological aims for academic understanding of the nature of the human condition with the political agenda of our research subjects. As stated by Carlos Flores, a Guatemalan anthropologist who has done collaborative filmmaking amongstst indigenous Q'eqchi' Maya in Alta Verapaz in his home country, the enterprise "is a complex exercise that is not free of risks and contradictions. Differences in existential and political contexts inevitably mean that each party will have different expectations about the whole project. These mismatches, unavoidable in any cross-cultural interaction, derive from the ways in which the identities and needs of the participants have developed. Despite good intentions, the collective construction of a text with multivocal characteristics could easily end up disguising new and sophisticated forms of cultural appropriation where the aims of sharing are only an illusion" (Flores 2004: 41).

I believe that the arguments stated by all sides of the collaboration debate do matter and are valid. Yet the problem of power relations and difficulty in ensuring the

same readings of the outcomes of collaborative engagement comes with the territory, whether western or non-western anthropologists were the ones engaging with indigenous communities. If we disabuse ourselves of the idea of the West being always the producers of representations or harbingers of misrepresentations, we might be able to see that there can be other ways of doing collaborative media engagement in an ethnographic setting. These other forms of engagement will not necessarily cast away every critical argument against collaborative media productions but they can set the terms of engagement as well as relations of power to be more transparent and explicit. I engaged with my informants aware of these complicated questions. Through constant negotiation, my informants and I were able to shape explicit but unwritten terms of sharing our equipments as well as the products of our creative collaboration.

As I noted above, this engagement was not born out by design or specific precept of collaboration. My research funding was rather limited and certainly never enough to fund a collaborative film documentary or musical productions. I did not finance our collaboration although there had been times when I offered to buy lunch for everyone involved or paid up the petrol of vehicles that my informants themselves borrowed from friends when we moved around to record music or shoot videos. On other days, my collaborators paid for my dinner and transportation. A few other collaborators insisted on paying me, and because I consistently refused they made it up with gifts as well as nearly unfettered access to their homes. In terms of equipment, I offered the use of my computer, Flip video camera, single lens reflex camera, and small portable music mixer whilst my collaborators provided all other expensive devices such as musical instruments, sound system, power supply, and recording venue in addition to carrying out the reproduction and circulation of our creative products. My informants practically shouldered the production costs of our collaboration illustrating not only the possibility of pursuing fieldwork without engaging in “paternalistic interventions” that Jay Ruby (1995: 79) has pointed about the power relations at play behind collaborative video projects. In several instances we ended up lending each other’s devices and exchanging the products of our collaboration.

As I will be presenting in Chapters 4, 5, and 6, my informants made use of the images I myself took as well as the music records they wrote but I captured and blended digitally in consonance with the everyday practice of video production, circulation, and consumption that sustains them economically and culturally. I used the sound and images we collaboratively produced to inform and illustrate this thesis, present them in academic forum, submit for publication, and share with colleagues. In other words, my informants and I agreed to share the materials and the right to use them in accordance with our respective enterprises. I deployed them for the purpose of the academy, and they for the cottage entertainment industry that is the source of their incomes. We shared the product but not the outcomes. It also shows that the anthropological aim of representing the Other cannot always be aligned with the agenda of the people even as we deal with the same raw materials. In Zamboanga, my friends and I just agreed that these would be the terms of our engagement.

My engagements with the people in relation to this ethnography was born out of the exigencies of fieldwork, no different from previous approaches that earlier anthropologists had done in the field before me. What sets my experience apart, but only to a certain extent, from collaborative anthropological fieldwork of the past is that I was doing fieldwork at a time when digital video production, reproduction, and circulation technology were noticeably more ubiquitous. Digital videos have become deeply embedded in people's social lives compared to the 1980s or the 1990s when these were just becoming accessible to marginal communities though not at a massive scale. Today, audio-visual technology is massively ubiquitous and accessible to people in the slums as well as remote islands and mountains making it possible for communities to bridge the funding and technological gap that anthropologists used to offer. Their ubiquity and embedded-ness in the practice of everyday life allowed me to examine notions of belonging, connectedness, and identity in the imaginaries that people themselves produce and circulate from the slums, the streets, and other grounds that can be described as marginal localities. As pointed out again by Sarah Pink in another piece, "new media invite new methods of social research, new ways of presenting and viewing research, and new ways of creating reflexive texts" (Pink 2004: 4).

Temporal Technologies

Yet even as new technologies offer new ways of understanding the agency of our subjects and as a medium of engaging with them in fieldwork, it also raises the question of the temporality of things that are “new”. I am aware that with the speed on which new media technology advances and changes, the VCD as material medium for expressing imaginaries will ultimately be set aside as soon as the masses get hold of the latest widely accessible innovation. As Banks has noted, technological shift can precipitate losses and distortion in the aspect of the materiality of visual images and with it the “ability to comprehend or uncover its place in human social relations is also lost or distorted” (Banks 2001: 61). This thesis does not argue with such observation but proposes to look at another dimension of social relations engendered by the materiality of shifting media technology. On some occasions, as this thesis will show, the Tausug practice of recapturing of old musical productions first mediated in phonographs to audiocassettes, and eventually to VCDs in Chapter 3, the desire of the community of media producers is to link the imaginative work of their generation to those who came before them. This suggests that the meaning behind the imageries and images projected on fast and qualitatively shifting media technology would not leave any indelible mark that can help us identify social relations and practices engendered by their transformations. Whilst this thesis covers a snapshot of material expression of identity, it also seeks to capture a point in a continuity of social practice of crafting imagination of identity and of the world. In some cases, imaginaries that materialised in older forms of media technology are merely shifted to new media forms, linking imaginations of the same social world in the past to acts of imaginations at the present. To be clear, technology is not the subject of this ethnography but rather the social agents who creatively deploy them for the purpose of reproducing their ideas of belonging and broader relations in the process of constructing an identity across time and generation.

“Manre-record”: The One Who Records Us

As I collaborated with the community in producing music videos that is as much theirs as it was my research, my identity also shifted. My position as sound recording technician, photographer and owner of video camera changed our

relationships from a fieldworker who merely asks questions, records conversations, and writes on scratch notes, to a production team member of an existing music video production, circulation, and consumption practice. It allowed me to cultivate deep and meaningful relationships with my informants. I was treated as one of the peers and invited into their homes, in intimate family rituals such as weddings to take photographs and videos, as well as divorces to serve as witness. I found myself being told intimate family problems and secrets as well as shared with aspirations for themselves and their community. In a sense, people looked past my identity as anthropologist and outsider. Rather I morphed into someone whom the community identified as “*manre-record*”, the “*one who records*”. The transformation of my identity was made explicitly clear to me one sunny morning when I with one of my informants went to record songs in the slums of Arena Blanco, a seaside community in the outskirts of Zamboanga. As we were approaching the house of one of the performers who commissioned us, a little boy who was sitting by a balcony of the house suddenly craned his neck to take a harder look at us. As soon as he recognized me, his eyes lit up before running back into the house shrieking, “*Yari na ka manre-record! (The one who records is here!)*.”

Chapter 2

Ballads Against the State: The VCDs and the Cultural Politics of Representation

Mornings at the flea market of Zamboanga are usually slow. People avoid venturing out into the street and soak themselves under an intolerably oppressive tropical sun. As the blistering temperature rises above 30 degrees at midday, the alleyways of the market literally sizzle. The mood, however, gradually changes after three in the afternoon when the sweltering heat recedes. As the air cools, fruit, vegetables, clothes, and fish sellers begin pouring to the middle of the inner market roads that everyone avoided few hours earlier when the scorching sun was high up in the sky. Soon, buyers move and huddle their way to the array of vendors haggling for the cheapest price they can. With a pervading air of cheerfulness, the market bustles into life. That sense of festivity is further enhanced by loud cheerful VCD music that vendors play from their stalls on the sidewalks. The blustering sound echoes beyond the gates of the market and can be heard even before one enters the facility. On a typical day, ten VCD machines are simultaneously played with their volume pumped up to the hilt as vendors compete to attract the attention of customers whose primary purpose in going there is to buy food. In between or at the end of their market ventures, market goers often stop by the VCD stalls to check or buy the latest of the music they sell. Those with the loudest music usually attract the most number of customers.

The market is located at the heart of the city, sitting right next to the City Hall, police headquarters, commerce district, and the seaport. The market is modest in size, big enough to host separate blocks of high roofed trading buildings and a grid of small roads but small enough to accommodate thousands of vendors and consumers who come in everyday. The market used to face the wide-open waters and islands at the Basilan Straits and further behind the horizon, the Sulu Sea, the hometowns of many of its vendors. Parts of the southern end of the market, where many of the VCD vendors congregate, used to be an open shore and an easy access point for fishers and

travelers shipping in goods from Basilan, Sulu, and farther off from Sabah through the vast Sulu Sea. The shore and that easy access point, however, vanished following a reclamation and expansion project of a nearby seaport in the 1980s. Since the waters had been pushed back, what was once a shore is now a sprawling field of concrete, what was once a landing for goods coming in from the Sulu Sea is now a long wall dividing the market and the highly restricted wharf. Near that wall lines up even more VCD stalls where I met Manz, one of the sellers.

Apart from selling VCDs, peers recognized Manz as one of the more prolific lyricists and singers of *Tausug* ballads in Zamboanga. He had composed about a hundred of the songs featured on the music videos he and others in the market are selling. Yet he does not only sing or compose ballads, he also writes fictions. One story he has written appropriated an old Tausug style and structure of storytelling called *kissa*. Tausug *kissa* appropriates Sufi-influenced retelling of the exegesis of the Koran (Rixhon 2010) and vernacularizes the Arabic term, *Qisas al-anbiya* or the popular hagiographic literature (Riddel 2001). Composers and balladers I met in Zamboanga and Sulu refers to *kissa* as a more expansive literary and oral practice of telling romantic stories of heroes, martyrs, myths, legends, and epics. As commonly practiced, the telling of *kissa* is sung and performed at weddings and the annual *Hilaya* festivities, the vernacular term for the Muslim world's feast of the *Eid'l Fitr*. Older renditions of the *kissa* revolve around the lives of Muslim prophets or the martyrdom of brave Tausug warriors of the past. Manz, however, is departing from those. He sets his *kissa* in the age of antiquities and tells the story of four brothers consumed by acrimony and deep-seated animosity but in the end redeemed themselves through the emotionally raw power of reconciliation.

The "*Kissa sin 4 Mag Langgung*" or the *Kissa of Four brothers*, the title of Manz's work, is an allegorical commentary on complex episodes of Zamboanga and Sulu violence and an allusion of the critical constituencies whom he believes are currently playing influential roles in the shaping of the political landscape of the region. These four constituencies, he explains, are the Tausug and the broader Muslim community in Mindanao, Christian Filipinos, indigenous people, and the contingent of American military deployed to pursue its global campaign against terror in Zamboanga and Sulu since 2002. Manz says he wrote the *kissa* as a metaphorical

illustration of the complexity of violence in Zamboanga and Sulu, which most often mobilize all four constituents. Manz, who sometimes refer to his work as a *kissa of peace*, dreamt of publishing it to share his message across a broader readership. Manz's *kissa* carries all the trappings of a rooted cosmopolitan novel, locally situated but attuned towards the propagation of universal human morality of peace and reconciliation that is all too relevant in the wake of unrelenting episodes of tumultuous violence in Zamboanga and Sulu. Manz had looked for sponsors from amongst wealthier and politically connected Tausug but there were no takers. All he received was an offer to print him a couple of copies on an ink jet printer and a book-like binding. Nonetheless he took the offer and one copy was returned to him complete with a cover picture portraying an idyllic imaginary of Sulu in the antiquities symbolised by an isolated native hut foregrounding a lush wood covered field (*see* Figure 2). He cherished the book like a treasure tucking it safe into one of his chest of drawers at home.

Yet whilst Manz failed in securing a publisher for his *kissa*, he was more successful in popularising ballads he wrote and recorded on video compact discs. Politicians, producers, and artists sought and hired him to write election campaign jingles, love songs, slow rock music, that were then produced into music videos. Manz, in fact, has written more than a hundred songs, many of which conjure the imageries of Tausug values, romance, homeland, beliefs, and relationships with other constituents of Sulu and the broader world. By producing his ballads as music videos on VCDs, the wide reach of electronic media opened up for Manz an opportunity to speak and participate in the imagination of a Tausug collectivity. VCD productions and circulation produced by Manz comprised just a few of thousands of digitised Tausug ballads and folk rock music sold in the streets of Sulu and Zamboanga. With VCDs, Manz and other Tausug music video makers like him succeeded in sharing his imaginaries of the Tausug society, which they would not have possibly done on a mass circulated book.

Manz's failure in getting his novel published but success in producing ballads for music videos made me think of the complementary ideas on the instrumental roles played by "print capitalism" (Anderson 1983:18) and "electronic capitalism" (Appadurai 1996: 8) in imagining communities. Print-capitalism, according to

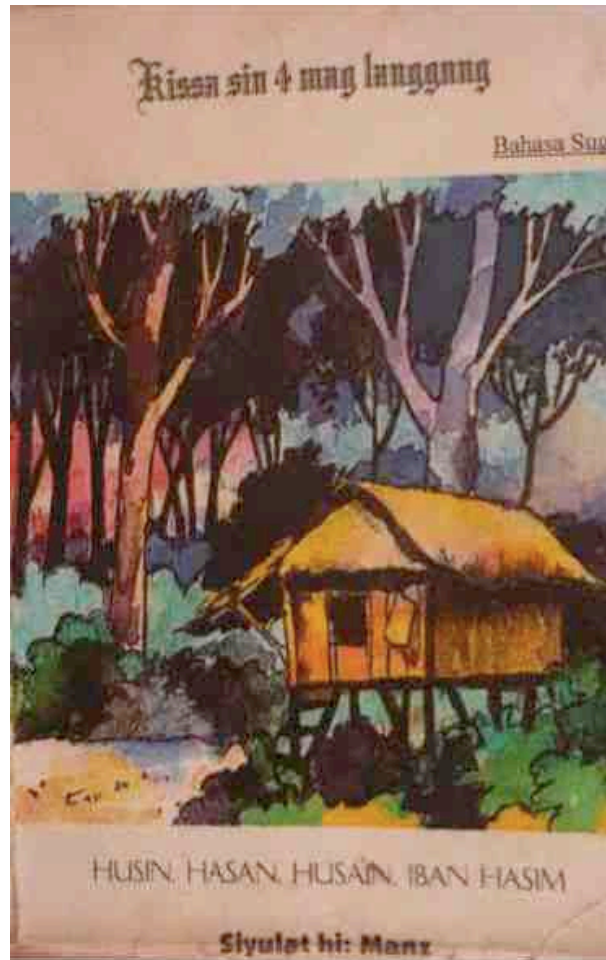


Figure 2. An ink jet printed copy of the book, “Kissa of the Four Brothers”, written by Manz Hapil.

Benedict Anderson, “made it possible for rapidly growing numbers of people to think about themselves, and to relate themselves to others, in profoundly new ways” (Anderson 1983:36). The mass production of novels, newspapers, journals, and other print materials made it possible for broad swaths of people, who have never met or known each other, to converse and reflect about the message on a common text, then mobilize themselves as a national collective in ways never imagined before the advent of the print revolution (Anderson 1983: 27-36). Noting the great advancement in media technology under conditions of globalisation, Appadurai expanded the argument that Anderson raised by pointing to the emergence of electronic forms of mass media that have not only shaped the idea of a national collective but altered the extent, levels, and the imagination of the constitution of a community beyond bounded notions of nation. As Appadurai contends, various forms of electronic-

capitalism have intensely “powerful effects” (Appadurai 1996: 8) not unlike those of print forms of media but in ways that are far more expansive. They enable transnationally located individuals to mobilize as global grassroots sodality championing the universally moral imperatives of human rights, feminism, or the Islamic *ummah*, to cite some (for examples, Mandaville 1999; Werbner 2003, Eickelman and Anderson 2003, Anderson 2003, Friedman 2009). Precisely because of the speed, breath, and depth of electronic media flows, they also begin to transform local imaginaries. Situated agents who never left their place or formed transnational sodalities were able to find ways of utilizing electronic forms of mediation in imagining their respective communities as I pointed out in the series of ethnographic examples of VCD productions in Bolivia, Nigeria, Ecuador, amongstst others in Chapter 1. In a sense, the VCDs of Tausug ballads are outgrowths of the electronic media revolution that Appadurai has explained. The ballads and its videotaped versions emerged from within marginal but globally connected and rapidly globalising localities of Zamboanga and Sulu. This chapter examines how local agents in Muslim Mindanao tap into the global structures of electronic capitalism to produce and reproduce imaginaries of the broad contours of the Tausug community. In doing so, the chapter examines how the conflicting politics of state formation and secessionism are influencing the way Tausug video makers are making use of global cultural flows. Given the tense politics of Muslim identity construction in the Philippines that I described in Chapter 2 and earlier here, it also raises questions about the extent by which local imaginaries produced and mediated through the cosmopolitan tools of electronic capitalism are shared or contested by Tausugs. On that point, the localisation of the cosmopolitan tools of electronic capitalism inevitably raises further questions on how the political tensions defining the process of identity making in Zamboanga and Sulu implicate the cosmopolitan ideals of peace, justice, and universal human morality.

Between the Global and the Nation

As I noted above, the VCD ballads are outgrowths of an electronic media revolution arising from interstices of the Philippines. The productive and subjective agents behind their production are exposed and predisposed towards local integration of globally circulating technology and imaginaries such as folk rock music and

videotaped imageries of other places, bodies, cultural representations, and views. Yet they are also mindful of their obligations and responsibility to their community, Islam, and the conflicting demands of nationalism discrepantly promoted by secessionist rebels and the Philippine state. These video producers flexed their mind and opened themselves up to global cultural processes but at the same time also allowed themselves to be pulled inwards by the essentialising ideology of nationalism disparately promoted by state agents and rebel forces. As discussed in Chapter 1, being Tausugs, these video makers shared homes, economic base, and social circles with other cultural agents and linguistic communities in their region but at the same time kept a clear view of their own community. Such locally self-conscious but globally attuned and politically accommodating agents and sites of cultural production resonates with what Homi Bhabha (1994) calls the “Third Space”, an in-between location that can “open the way to conceptualizing an *international* culture based not on the exoticism of multiculturalism or the diversity of cultures but on the inscription and articulation of *hybridity*” (Ibid., 38, emphasis in original). The *inter* in this sense, Bhabha notes, means “the cutting edge of translation and negotiation, the *in between space* - that carries the burden of the meaning of culture” (Ibid.) A critical feature of the third space is a negotiated, inter-subjective, and hybrid concept of culture and identity that does not necessarily fix and bound cultural imagination but rather offers a site in which signs and codes are often “appropriated, translated, rehistoricized, and read anew” (Ibid., 37, *also see* Bredin 1996: 172).

In identifying the social agents occupying the third space, Bhabha points to subaltern agents, a term he usually reserves for marginalised minority groups whose very presence and actions compel dominant institutions such as the state to self-consciously redefine its constituents so as to consider them in the construction of the nation. The notion of subaltern in this sense presupposes productive, dynamic, and active agents notwithstanding their marginality. Subalterns occupy spaces that Bhabha also calls “interstices - the overlap and displacement of domains of difference - that the intersubjective experience of *nationness*, community interest, or cultural value are negotiated” (Bhabha 1994: 2). This “interstitial” community of subalterns “disturbs the grand globalizing narrative of capital, displaces the emphasis on production in ‘class’ collectivity, and disrupts the homogeneity of the imagined community” (Ibid., 2, 231). Bearing in mind these complementary frameworks of

imagined communities and the agency of interstitial communities, I will move on to examine the contrasting effects of printed texts of Tausug literature circulating in Philippine publication houses and schools on one hand, and the Tausug ballads emerging and circulating as VCDs in Zamboanga and Sulu on the other hand. The contrast can help us appreciate how one particular subaltern community tap and harness a global industrial technology to mass reproduce ideas of locality, community, and identity in ways that simultaneously engages and counters state as well as separatist representations of Muslim identity in Mindanao.

Local Narratives as National Heritage

To be sure, there are several printed representations of Tausug narratives familiar to Tausug communities. Finding broadly circulated texts with deeply symbolic value by which a swath of Tausug people can engage, converse, reflect, and mobilize as an exclusive social collective is difficult despite the existence of powerful essentialising rhetoric of a long-running secessionist movement in their midst. There are no mass printed novels where Tausugs can project themselves, whatever their class, stature, and social orientations, as collectivity as it was for instance of the imagery of the *Noli Me Tangere* novel written by Filipino patriot Jose Rizal that Anderson claims to be critically instrumental in the imagination of the Filipino national community (Anderson 1983: 26-28, 35). At least two newspapers, printed medium that Anderson points to, have played a crucial role in the imagining of the Indonesian national community, did emerge in Sulu but both have already folded, one in the 1970s whilst the other in the 1990s. Even the narratives of these newspapers do not seem to define an exclusive imagination of the Tausug community. The two Sulu newspapers assiduously and emotionally discussed problems and conditions pertinent to the local Sulu provincial community and the socio-political dynamics of the larger Philippine society. The *Sulu Star*, a newspaper that saw print from the 1960s to early 1970s, even scoffed at reports about local campaigns for the independence of Sulu from the Philippines as shown in a short April 22, 1961 editorial:

“New reports of the past week carried stories of a movement, or uprising, on the part of a small minority to detach Sulu from the Philippines and to make it an independent country.

We believe that the news value of this story can be categorized by (the) word, rubbish!!!

The people of Sulu are just as loyal to the Philippine government as are the people of any other province, and news-stories of this type simply serve to discredit this before the country. We hope we have heard the last of such nonsense as we dedicate ourselves to the task of raising Sulu to one of the top ranking provinces of the country.”

Local Scripts as National Writings

Some might point to the *Jawi* scripts, old forms of writings in the courts of the old Sulu sultanate, as a cultural resource that can symbolically and instructively produce a powerful material for the imagination of the Tausug community¹⁸. After all, several recently published facsimiles of the *Jawi* scripts pointed out that these were actively utilized in the writing of memos and treaties that eighteenth and nineteenth century Sulu sultans signed up with Western trade and colonial agents. The problem, however, is that these scripts are as highly esoteric today as they were in the past. The old Sulu sultanate never instituted a programme of mass literacy or passed on the Tausug technology of writing to the masses. The scripts are hardly accessible even from amongstst the intellectual leadership of present-day secessionist movement¹⁹. Judging from the published accounts of the *Jawi* scripts, the interest of decoding them is confined within the ambit of scholars, many of whom based in the University of the Philippines, and their collaborators in the communities. When the *Jawi* writings finally saw the light of mass printing in recent years (Tan 2005), they were no longer understood as the exclusive historical experience of the people of Sulu or that of the Tausug. The scripts have been thoroughly absorbed and integrated by Philippine education agencies into its broad collection of national literatures of oral narratives gathered from across a hundred different linguistic communities in the

¹⁸ Dr. Samuel Tan, now a retired professor of history at the University of the Philippines and a Tausug native speaker, is a leading scholar of the Sulu *Jawi* scripts, known in Sulu as *Surat Sug*.

¹⁹ Tan (2005) writes that he had found 300 pages of *Jawi* documents from the United States National Archives in 1974 and some more documents in the Philippine archives and records office. He first published a monograph of the scripts in 1996 and later published a two-volume documentation of scripts under the auspices of the National Historical Institute in 2005.

country²⁰. They were effectively utilized as material resource that supports the imagination of the Filipino community as nation of broadly diverse people, languages, and cultures bound by common social, political and cultural histories.

In recent decades, the state and allied nationalist institutions in the publication industry and education sectors have sponsored a series of transcriptions, translations, and publications of Tausug oral narratives into English, the medium of instruction at Philippine schools. These projects produced English versions of *kissa*; Koran inspired poems known as the *tarasul*; poetic romantic passages such as the *baat*, *liyangkit*, and *sindil*; and lyrical music called the *paggabang* and epic stories of martyrdom encapsulated in the recital chronicles of the *parang sabil*. Through transcription, translation, and publication, many of these texts are now widely accessible to the broader Filipino community. Through such process, the Philippine government was able to absorb these old Sulu narratives as part of historic literatures of the state as it was with the *Jawi* scripts. To illustrate this point, I will briefly discuss the fate of oral *parrang sabil* chronicles of martyrs who died fighting against colonialism. A more popular version of the *parrang sabil* narrates of the martyrdom of Panglima Hassan and Hajji Jikiri in the early years of the American occupation in the 1900s. The bravery and martyrdom of both men were celebrated mainly within the confines of family gatherings and community celebrations such as weddings and religious festivities. In the 1970s, the Sulu provincial government officially declared these local narratives, along with other Tausug ballads, poems, and dances, as part of the intangible heritage of the province and of the Filipino people. Today, the sharing of these narratives were no longer limited within the confines of Tausug sociality but have become part of the meaningful cultural resources of the broader Philippine society. For instances, at the Jesuit-run Ateneo de Zamboanga University where I established a base in the course of my fieldwork, I would often see students mastering the romantic chronicles of the *parrang sabil* of Panglima Hassan and Hajji Jikiri to pass their courses on Philippine “cultures”. Several other *parrang sabil* texts and forms of Tausug oral narratives had been transcribed and translated as part of the

²⁰ Whilst Tan (1994) values his Tausug heritage and wrote critical comments on the government’s militarist approach in addressing secessionism in Mindanao, he has strongly invested and linked his scholarly endeavors toward the construction of the Philippine state as a nation of cultural diversity. He himself noted this commitment by declaring that his expansive work in transliterating and analyzing the *Jawi* scripts is “one of mission and vision to help in a modest way the Muslim struggle for social justice and destiny they deserve as part of the Filipino national community” (Tan 2005: xvii).

textbooks for social and cultural studies. Many of these textbooks were published under the auspices of state-sponsored National Historical Institute, Cultural Center of the Philippines, and the University of the Philippines Press as well as of privately funded publishers such as the Ateneo de Manila University Press of the Philippine Jesuits and the Notre Dame University Press of the Philippine province of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate. These state and private-run publishing bodies are national institutions sharing the nationalist mission of gathering “dispersed historical narratives of diverse and often unrelated communities” (Gupta 1997:191) and recast them into a national heritage. Taken out from its located performance spaces at weddings, family gatherings, and community and religious feasts, the old oral chronicles of the *parrang sabil*, now form part of cultural resources that helped sustain the imagination of the Philippines as a national community. In their English and published forms, the *parang sabil* and other Tausug oral poetics have become part of the cultural heritage of the Filipino nation. In a sense, the Tausug narratives in their printed and mass circulated forms were effectively integrated into the states of “politics of representation” (Clifford and Marcus 1986: viii, Zenker and Kumol 2010).

Whilst the wealth of Tausug narrative tradition is being transcribed, translated, and reproduced by Philippine publishing houses, it is difficult to find published versions that had evoked a deep sense of patriotic passion within the Tausug community. Oral narratives that were transcribed and published were more useful in sustaining the imagination of a Filipino national community rather than of a Tausug sociality. Something different, however, is happening with electronically mediated texts and images of Tausug ballads on the VCDs. These were not transcribed, translated, published, and reproduced in a national scale yet are circulating widely but exclusively amongstst Tausugs in Zamboanga, Sulu, and further beyond. It is common to see copies of VCDs peddled at sidewalks, makeshift stalls in the market, and little stores in Muslim neighbourhoods in Zamboanga, Sulu, as well as in other cities of the Philippines with a growing Muslim and Tausug population. In Zamboanga, several people buy VCDs. There were instances where I have to squeeze in and compete with other Tausug buyers to get copies. In my year-long stay in the city, I collected more than a hundred VCD titles, many of which revolve around universal but locally familiar and endearing themes of femininity, anti-colonial struggle, political dysfunction, perceptions of injustices, heroism, aspirations,

secessionism, and the exegesis of Islam. Amidst the lack of paper-based text of mediation and tools for collective imagination, the VCDs emerged as the chosen tool of mediation especially in poor and obscure Tausug communities. These mundane discs served as the mediating tools where people who never met face-to-face get the chance to collectively see, experience, and reflect on the same set of texts that is both exclusive and familiar to the everyday life of people who grew up in Tausug-speaking households. Utilizing the benefits of electronic capitalism, the VCDs are very much a medium reinvented and cultivated by the subalterns of the state as part of the mundane practice of everyday life. To further illustrate my point, I will return to the everyday scenes at the VCD section of the old public market of Zamboanga where I spent much of my time cultivating friends in the course of my fieldwork.

Selling in the Market

The condition of the Zambaonga market exemplifies life at the interstice of the nation state. The buildings are rapidly decaying and ill maintained after new and bigger trading facilities were built in other parts of the city. Nonetheless, thousands of vendors flock here daily. The market offers them their only means of earnings amidst the scarcity of formal jobs in the city or elsewhere in the Philippines. Tausugs who sell in the market were largely refugees from past and recent secessionist wars in Sulu, Basilan, and other parts of the Zamboanga peninsula. I counted about thirty VCD vendors in the market. Many of them installed their stalls at sidewalks outside the buildings, competing for narrow spaces with those selling other dry and wet goods. Many VCD sellers stake claims on spots covered by sidewalks and entranceways because the more comfortable stalls inside the buildings are beyond the reach of their meager resources. “The stalls inside are extremely expensive. We could not possibly afford even a fifth of their rent,” one of the vendors selling goods outside the market buildings told me. Vendors in the passageways also pay rent but at considerably reduced rates. In this cramped space, they set themselves up a small table, a board to hang the discs, and a shelf that holds their cheap second hand Korean or Philippine-assembled 14-inch television set and China-made DVD and VCD players.

Poorer vendors who cannot afford the reduced rent at the sidewalks and entranceways display their goods, albeit illegally, right in the middle of the inner roads of the market. Since they block roads and sell without license, market authorities and the police constantly drive them away. Still, they persist. “The crackdown do not happen everyday, anyway. We just have to be alert and quick in folding our goods, and always ready to run away when they (the police) come,” a vendor in multi-colored Rasta hat told me. VCD sellers consider themselves fortunate because they can easily collect their goods if they have to run compared to those who sell fish, fruits, and vegetables. In the pecking order of social status in the market, the VCD vendors can be located between the marginal and the poorest vendors who cannot even afford a small foldable stall to display their goods. For both marginal, VCD, and poorer vendors, however, the difficult struggles to claim a space in the market no matter how cramped and untenable, vending is still worth the effort because thousands of people shop there daily given its strategic location at the heart of the city. “People come here everyday, and I found the best spot where people can immediately see my goods,” declared another vendor, selling goods near the gates of the market. This, in a sense, makes the market a kind of an interstitial space with subaltern agents actively establishing their presence whilst simultaneously being squeezed at the heart of a globalising provincial city but in the margins of economic development.

A Ballad of Military Occupation

Thousands of Tausug ballads, love songs, folk rock music video discs flood the side streets in and around the market. Many of the Tausug VCDs carry titles that read, amongstst others, as “Tausug Ballads”, “Tausug Love Songs”, “Tausug Songs Selection”, “The Best of Tausug Slow Rock”, “Sounds of Sulu”, and “Badidil - The Original Tausug Composer”. The ubiquity of VCDs labeled as representative of Tausug cultural productions suggests how such form of electronic mediation spurred social articulation and popularization of ballads, imageries, and imaginaries of a Tausug social formation. For about a year that I was hanging-out with the vendors, I noticed one VCD repeatedly being played and reproduced, an hour-long *parrang sabil* ballad called *Kissa kan Hadji Ban* (Kissa About Hadji Ban). I asked a VCD seller why they keep playing the Hadji Ban ballad and was offered a rather

straightforward answer, “because people never get tired buying it”. Hadji Ban was a respected village leader who became a commander of the secessionist Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) in Sulu. He was killed in a fierce gun battle with government forces in the town of Indanan during the height of a massive Philippine military deployment to quell the rebellion in the 1970s. People honoured him in ballads that referred to his death as a *parrang sabil*, a martyrdom. This particular *parrang sabil*, however, has not been printed nor included in the *parang sabil* collections studied in Philippine schools but is being celebrated as one of the finest acts of Tausug bravery on a VCD titled, *Kissa sin Hadji Ban* (The Kissa of Hadji Ban). The *kissa*, which has folksy musical chords on synthesizer as accompaniment, begins with the *Suratu Al-Fatiha*, the opening words of the sacred Koran and ends with a faint voice of a man reading an *ayat* or Koranic verse providing an aura of sacredness to the Hadji Ban *parrang sabil*. In the *kissa*, the balladeer presents Hadji Ban as a young but fearless leader who fought the Philippine army even though he knew they were outnumbered and outgunned.

Listening to the Hadji Ban *kissa* with Manz in the market one afternoon, I asked him who wrote the ballad and where it came from. He could not say exactly who but based on stories passed on to him the ballad dates back to the 1970s. Legend had it, he says, that the ballad was first performed during wedding celebrations around Tausug communities in Sabah where several of the MNLF fighters retreated following tragic reversals of initial secessionist victories in the mid seventies. The Hadji Ban *kissa* gradually made its way back to Sulu from Sabah through wedding performances. As the ballad circulates, someone recorded it on cassette leading to countless reproductions. Eventually, some of these reproductions reached the public markets and side streets where they were peddled as entertainment goods. Through the years, many more copies of the tapes were made and circulated. In the advent of computer technology, the tape recordings were later digitized and sold as part of the VCD collections circulating in the market. For Manz listening to *Kissa sin Hadji Ban* made him think of Sulu as a haven of patriotic and self-less warriors. It helped him place his own experience of the war through the eyes of the secessionist fighters and value the cause they were fighting for. It offered him a memory of valiant Tausug warriors who fought a military occupation and rooted him back to Sulu. Manz was an infant when his parents spirited him and his siblings out of Sulu at the height of the

war that Hadji Ban fought. His parents, however, preferred not to get involved with the war by moving away far from Sulu but the ballad eventually caught up with them in Zamboanga. Manz says he fell in love with the ballad the first time he heard of it on a cassette, because it made him understand the distinctiveness of their identity that heroic warriors like Hadji Ban died for. Growing up as a child in Zamboanga, Manz would memorize the Hadji Ban ballad by heart and would perform it at relative's weddings. He believes that the ballad inspired him to pursue a career as lyricist and composer of Tausug music, a path that would establish him as producer of popular Tausug imaginaries.

Memories of Social Suffering

VCD recordings of the Hadji Ban ballad offered Tausugs a shared medium to talk about, reflect on, and be inspired by as a community. The ballad embodies the idea of martyrdom in the persona of Hadji Ban but in ways that the state and its allied institutions were unable to follow and claim. Unlike the published and nationally circulated versions of the older *parrang sabil*, the ballad of Hadji Ban is inaccessible to the broader Philippine constituents. Being regarded as martyr to the secessionist cause, the inherent limitations of VCD reproductions and circulations within and around Tausug communities signals a break from the dominant Filipino narrative of *parrang sabil* as a Philippine heritage. In its current form and reach, the ballad can be regarded as a subversive imaginary that evokes a painful memory of military occupation but at the same time inspires people like Manz to think about their community in distinctively patriotic terms. By utilizing the brutal wars of the seventies as material for composing a *parrang sabil* not meant for sharing with the broader Filipino community, the ballad of Hadji Ban becomes local “construction of pain” (Das 1997: 67-92) where incidents of horrific Tausug experience of violence were given distinctive meaning instrumental to the production of Tausug consciousness. The power of the Hadji Ban *kissa* to simultaneously evoke the painful memory of military occupation as well as the sense of allegiance to community illustrates the political nature of popular music videos openly circulating in the streets and markets of Zamboanga and Sulu. I saw the politics in this painful narrative of military occupation and community allegiance visualised on the covers of one of the Hadji Ban VCD recordings I picked up from the market. The image on the cover

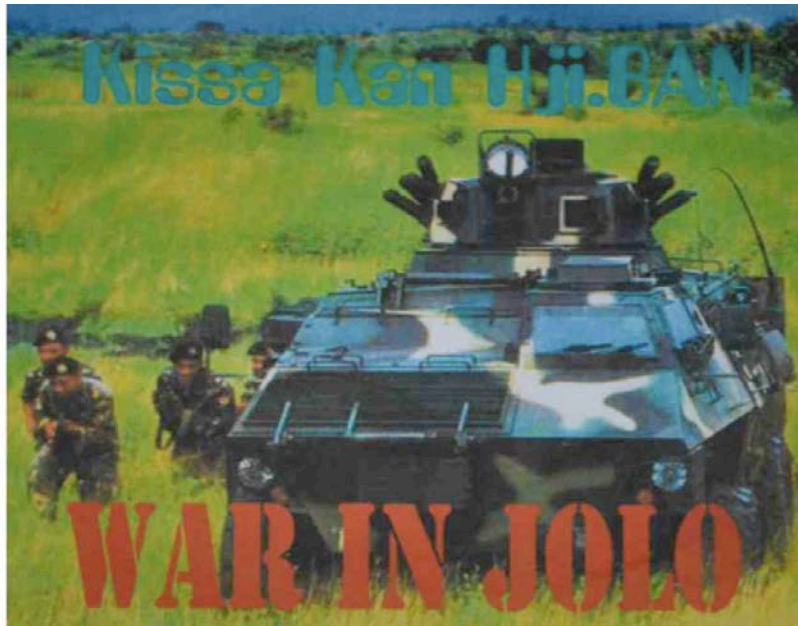


Figure 3. Cover of the *Kissa Kan Haji Ban* VCD.

shows a military tank and rifle totting soldiers swooping down a grass field super imposed with a bold-lettered phrase: “*Kissa Kan Hadji Ban: WAR IN JOLO*” (see Figure 3).

The Hadji Ban kissa is only one of them. Two other works illustrating the political power of VCD ballads are the songs, *Mujahidin* and *Bikutan Massacre* (The Massacre of Bicutan). The first song, *Mujahidin*, hailed members of the MNLF as *jihadists* claiming their place in the pantheon of martyrs as brave warriors who fought for Muslim freedom in Mindanao. The second indicts the government for its bloody handling of protesting Muslim detainees in the penal facilities of Bicutan in the suburbs of Manila. Both songs, however, appropriated the musical score of a folk rock song, *Balita* or the “News”, which had once dominated the pop music charts of the Philippines in the 1980s. *Balita*, which was originally written in *Tagalog* by a band called *Asin*, or the *Salt*, depicts a longing for peace amidst recurrent news of armed conflicts and other forms of horrific violence in some parts of Mindanao. Saro Bañares, the band’s leader who grew up in another Mindanao town affected by the violence of the 70s, wrote the song as a lamentation to the rapid spread of communal anarchy in the region. Notwithstanding his oft-repeated calls for peace in his music, Bañares died violently, shot in a bar, at his hometown in the 1990s. The appropriation of a *Tagalog* musical score to *Tausug* shows that such practice is not a one-way process, with only the state absorbing local narrative traditions in ways that dislocate

them from its local source. The case of *Mujahidin* shows the reverse of that process, wherein Tausug music video makers appropriated an iconic national pop culture music like *Asin's Balita* in ways that also dislocates the music as a popularly shared national imaginary by making them distinctively their own in a powerful play of language and disjuncture of memories and images.

Language and the Disjuncture of Memories

I grew up from another part of Mindanao listening to *Balita* on popular radio. A testament to the song's popularity is its usual inclusion in the musical repertoire of pub house performers or Friday night drinking gatherings at some street corners in my relatively peaceful neighbourhood. Whenever I hear this song, I am actually being pulled back to my childhood with an image of a neighbour gently plucking the strings of his guitar and with mates drinking on a shared glass of rum singing along. Many amongstst the Filipino generation who grew up at the height of *Asin's* popularity in the 70s and the 80s will likely know the lyrics of the song by heart and often think of it as a social realist composition that is meaningfully expressive of Filipino patriotism and desires for national unity. When I heard the song played in Tausug with its lyrics revised to reflect the grimmer social realities of Sulu, its meanings changed and reflected the simmering anger in Tausug communities. I felt that part of my childhood and teenage memory were disjointed with the revision of the message of the original song to unfamiliar lamentations. The sense of disjuncture I felt underscores the differential power of language, particularly a heritage language like that of the *Tausug*, in a contested social arena.

The ballads of *Mujahidin*, and *Bikutan Massacre* are not transliterated versions of *Balita*, the popular Filipino pop song, to Tausug. Rather they served as a medium by which the Tausug is imagined and deployed as a language of resistance. The ballads in this context highlight the political significance of language as it lies within the “nexus of social and cultural relationships” (Grillo 1989: 21). Language assumes identification of sociality and through that identification suggests that it is in “various ways relatable to political processes” (Frazer and Cameron 1989: 21). Precisely because of the political nature of language, it can be used as “indestructible barriers” for differentiating collectivities (Kaviraj 2009: 313) especially in situations

where contestations between national and regional agents are significantly intense (Sonntag 2009). Unequal relations of power inspired local agents in Sulu and Zamboanga to tap the political power of language by writing ballads lamenting sufferings in their midst. These lamentations were often expressed in allegories in the sense that Smadar Lavie reconstructed its meaning as a framework for understanding what she calls the “poetics” of Bedouin performers in Israeli-occupied Mzeini desert in the Middle East (Lavie 1990). Allegories, Lavie states, are “texts telling an individual story to convey a lesson for the whole group, a private story that attempts to represent the collectivity as a whole” (Ibid., 29). As individual stories made whole, allegories are often presented as “fragmentary form of inscription simultaneously serving two purposes – poetic expression, and didactic-political lamentation of the heroic past, now almost disappeared but to be reincarnated at some point in the eternal future” (Ibid.). In other words, allegories are expressive forms of representations that selectively resurrect and redeploy stories of the past to reconstruct current experience of pain as well as offer a vision of the future. Through allegory, the makers of Tausug lyricists and performers are able to craft powerful imageries that links current violence and secessionist struggle in Sulu to the heroic anti-colonial struggles of the ages. The politics of these allegories are particularly evident in the way *Mujahidin* and *Bikutan Massacre* were written as well as contested by other Tausugs. The first song, the *Mujahidin*, forms part of a music video collection of 14 songs performed by Tausug artists named Mike-Mike under the label, Ken Recording Studio of Jolo. The song, which I transcribed and arranged in 23 lines based on karaoke style sub-titles crawling down the video screen, runs seven minutes long, goes this way:

<i>Sungna kamo mari tianghugi ini</i>	Come, everyone listen
<i>In lapal tunis kabtangan sin mga kabataan</i>	This music is the word of the youth
<i>Da indi kahatihan niyo, hangkan ku kiyalang</i>	Here you will know, why I am offering this song
<i>In kahalan sin hulah, hulah natu kalasahan</i>	About our homeland, our beloved homeland
<i>MinSuPala lingkatan sumping sin mujahidin</i>	Beautiful Minsupala, wellspring of the mujahideen
<i>Gatus tahun na nalawa kawaun ta magbing</i>	Gone for a hundred years, we must take it back
<i>In binay bayan pasambuhun</i>	Rise up in every community
<i>In panji natuh patindugun</i>	Raise our banner
<i>Magluwas lungsad di hundungan</i>	Struggle without end

<i>Bang way pa kaadilan (insha Allah)</i>	Until justice comes (By will of God)
<i>In hulah ta bihayaun landu naharubilu.</i>	Our homeland is in the midst of great turmoil
<i>Piyagparintahan sin satruh in kita pissuku</i>	Oppressed by an enemy ruler
<i>(Masha Allah)</i>	(God has willed it)
<i>Hangka bangsa, mag baug bug.</i>	People unite, make a stand
<i>Pa satruh kita ma-isug.</i>	Be brave before thy enemy
<i>Sarang muti in Bukug ayaw in tikud tikud...</i>	Bare thy bones, not thy soles (feet)
<i>Agaran natuh in nakurah sin kita maas batah</i>	Follow our leaders, young and old
<i>Ha supaya in kita malappas daing ha bala.</i>	We can cast this plague away
<i>In pamanduh sin Islam</i>	The teachings of Islam
<i>Ilaw ha katigidluman</i>	Is our light in the darkness
<i>In Kamulya Qur-An hinagun ta padduman</i>	The Holy Koran is our compass
<i>Bin sin kamaasan ha mga huling bata</i>	Our forebears left our generation a lesson
<i>In hulah ta liyummuh sin milikan kastilah...</i>	That the Americans and Spaniards debased our country...
<i>In kapatutan nalawah</i>	That our rights were taken away
<i>In muslim himinah</i>	That Muslims were disgraced
<i>Oh! Muslim dunguga in kahalan sin Hulah</i>	Oh! Muslims listen to this song of our Homeland

The lines above offers an allegory of domination, a lamentation of how their homeland descended into “great turmoil” after a succession of colonial powers “debased” their country and “disgraced” their religion. The song takes the secessionist mantra that the *MinSuPala*, an amalgamation of the first few letters of the sprawling southern Philippine regions of *Mindanao*, *Sulu*, and *Palawan* is a “beautiful” Muslim homeland that was lost and must be taken back. In titling the song, *Mujahidin*, its producers deployed the sacred metaphor of martyrdom as a rhetorical device that would locate present-day secessionist fighters to the pantheon of martyrs in the old great historic struggles against colonialism. On that premise, the song imagined *MinSuPala* as a “wellspring of the *Mujahideen*” who would fight to the death and reject any thoughts of running away as it exhorts every fighter to “bare thy bones, not they soles”. Whilst the allegory is deeply emotional and locally contextualized, the visuals used in rendering the seven-minute music video are intense



(a)



(b)



(c)



(d)



(e)



(f)



(g)



(h)

Figures 4 (a-h). These selected images from the *Mujahidin* VCD show juxtaposition of local and global images that includes (a) cheerful poses of the artists, (b) the sacred script of the Al-Fatiha, (c) an anti-American protest in downtown Jolo, (d) a burning corpse, (e) and bearded men, (f) from a bootlegged copy of a Chechnyan rebellion video, (f) a banner of a local rebel group, (g) September 11 events in America, (h) and a home in Sulu apparently destroyed during a local military assault.

and discordantly disjunctive in a sense that it weaves together a great array of global images of violence into the local allegory of resistance. The video opens with a collage of cheerful photographs of the artists before moving to a picture of the Islamic sacred creed of the *Al-Fatiha* and then the images of the mountains, forests, and waters of Sulu (see Figures 4 [a-h]). In the line celebrating the idea of *Minsupala* as “wellspring of *Mujahidin*”, the video shows pictures spliced from news images of local Muslim rebels and the as well as Chechnyan rebels in the battlefield. The video goes on with a juxtaposition of the images of a man being set ablaze, bearded Chechnyan rebels, a street protest against American military presence in Jolo, and the emblem of the MNLF. The video goes on with a United States flag superimposed on a grainy map of Sulu and Basilan denoting American troop deployment in the region. Within the fifth minute of the song, videos of houses and farms damaged by artillery fires in Sulu are juxtaposed with a succession of clips showing heavily armed Filipino and American soldiers maneuvering to battle, helicopter gunships and military planes taking off from an airfield, and a thick smoke billowing from a World Trade Center building in flames. Amidst a steady flow of images of the September 11 events, Philippine and American soldiers, and Jolo and Middle Eastern protests, the video cuts to news clips of the dreaded local kidnapping group – the Abu Sayyaf - showing off their high caliber firearms. An image of a fireball in what appears to be a guerrilla ambush on a field in Chechnya served as climax to the video. In full circle, the video closed from where it started, the picture of the sacred script of the *Al-Fatiha*, the mountains and waters of Jolo, and the collage of cheerful pictures of the artists. The video shows not only that its producers appropriated national pop culture but they also gathered global images to locate the local ballad of resistance into the politics of worldwide jihad.

Like the *Kissa sin Hadji Ban*, video sellers constantly play the *Mujahidin* video, at the very least six times a day, in the market during my fieldwork. People flock to buy a copy and sellers make sure that they have enough to meet demands, suggesting that the video is widely shared around Tausug households and are playing significant roles in the imagination of the Tausug community. There were also, however, critical reactions, which offered me a view of Tausug music video production as a contested terrain of cultural appropriation. That contestation was made evident to me in a *Mujahidin* video elicitation I conducted with Ka Taib, a

leader of a Tausug populated barangay of Mariki in downtown Zamboanga. I sought for Ka Taib because apart from being a barangay leader people in the market recognized him as a founding member of the earliest Tausug folk rock music band in Zamboanga and Sulu in the late seventies. In his younger days as a teenage folk rock musician, Ka Taib himself composed several collections of Tausug soft rock ballads that were later recorded on cassette tapes and sold in the market. His reaction to the *Mujahidin* ballad is one of incredulity, disapproval, and protestation.

“Who made this?” Ka Taib asked me during a video elicitation interview with him amidst stacks of Tausug VCD collections at the living area of his home in Mariki. I was hoping he would know being a widely recognized pioneer of Tausug folk rock bands in Zamboanga and Sulu. He, too, has several Tausug VCD collections stacked neatly on a corner shelf in his living room. I told Ka Taib that I have not met the performers but told him: “You can actually see their names and pictures in the opening and closing graphic of the video. They say that they come from Jolo.” Ka Taib, however, was oblivious to what I said. He rested his chin on his thumb then shook his head before exclaiming, “This is unbelievable! Our band actually composed this song 20 years ago.” He then rose from his seat and gestured, “Wait here.” When he came back, he brought with him a stack of cassette tapes and picked one that reads, “*Minsupala Lingkatan*” (Beautiful Minsupala). He tried playing the tapes on a cassette player but the machine did not work. Instead, he began humming the song because he could not fully remember the lyrics having not sung it for years. As he hummed, the lyrics gradually came back to him. He then asked me to play the VCD again and sung along. Then, he suddenly stopped singing, bit his lips and growled, “They changed parts of our song!”

I would, however, learn later when I gathered the full lyrics of Ka Taib’s song that the composers of *Mujahidin* did not exactly change the original version. They merely rearranged the sequence of the stanzas of the song and added two more lines, those alluding to Islam as “*light in the darkness*” and the Koran as “*our compass*”. Overall, the rhetorical structure of the song was kept intact. What I noticed, however, was that Ka Taib seemed more disturbed with the images he saw in the *Mujahidin* video. The visuals dislocated his memory of the song and found their meaning far too different from what they had originally intended with *Minsupala Lingkatan*. “Who are

these bearded men? Why would they flash an MNLF flag on the video? Why is the image of the burning Twin Towers in America here? Why are there American soldiers here? What in the world have we got to do with the wars abroad” (in reference to the Chechnyan footages), he asked. He reclined himself on his seat and told me, “When we wrote this song, it was never about a call to arms. True, we want to write and sing a song that exposes the turmoil in Sulu but our purpose was to remind people that beyond this turmoil, Sulu has a glorious past.” Ka Taib went on and recounted a short history of the making of *Minsupala Lingkatan*.

The lines of *Minsupala Lingkatan* were taken from a poem written by a journalist working in a government radio station in Sulu during the tumultuous seventies. The journalist passed the poem to Ka Taib’s band, *Binhi* (the Seed), in Zamboanga, explaining that it was his ode to the colourful past of Sulu. Ka Taib shared with the journalist the sentiment that Tausugs who grew up in Zamboanga after the events in the seventies must have already forgotten Sulu and the romantic stories of warriors and martyrs that made them identify to *Lupah Sug*, the name of Sulu as known to Tausugs. Ka Taib said he was part of a Tausug generation forcibly whisked out of Sulu, a painful experience still fresh in his mind. He was 14 years old when he and his large family made their dramatic escape from Sulu as it was burning. He still remembers the sound of gunfire and screaming coming nearer to their home in Jolo when his late father, a Philippine presidential adviser for Muslim affairs in Sulu back then, decided that they packed up and head to the “Chinese Pier” to find a boat sailing out. The family, which included his cousins, uncles, aunties, siblings, and his father’s three wives set out to the port under the cover of darkness but as soon as they stepped out of their house they could hear bullets zinging above their heads and mortar fires obliterating and setting houses ablaze. They carried on to the seaport, tightly clinging to each other as they trailed along the beach fronting the city centre with a hundred other fleeing people. From there, they saw the city being engulfed in flames under the night sky. He swore that he would never forget that day, February 7, 1974, and would always think of Sulu and its grand history wherever he might end up. On the wharf, the boats were all gone but thousands of refugees, many of whom children and elderly, kept coming. Ka Taib, his family, and thousands of other fellow refugees on that pier did manage to leave Jolo and sail towards Zamboanga but only after his father signaled a distress call to a passing Japanese cargo ship.

Ka Taib's reaction to the conflict, however, was tempered by fact that his late father actually held a high political post in government. When the *Minsupala* song was passed to him, he viewed it as an opportunity to honor and remember his homeland. The memory of Sulu that Ka Taib wished to remember was not the massive 1974 MNLF assault and the ideals of secession but the grandeur of the "beauty" of his homeland, which had inspired the warriors of yore to defend it against Western colonizers. He said that when they included the line celebrating *Minsupala* as "wellspring of mujahideen", they were referring to Sulu martyrs who fought the Spaniards and the Americans. "As you can see our song was not about the MNLF or these bearded rebels from wherever. Our song is simply a call to the youth of our generation, that they may remember our land and our magnificent history," Ka Taib told me. The way Ka Taib imagined the Tausug community is not too different from Homi Bhabha's concept of the Third Space, a notion of a hybrid but well defined collectivity which "makes it possible to begin envisaging national, anti-nationalist history of the people" (1994: 38). Ka Taib deployed a popular Filipino pop music in a way that links his sense of being Tausug to the rest of the Filipino community but at the same time professes a deeply patriotic sentiment with the Tausug community and history as the defining core of such sensibility.

Notwithstanding Ka Taib's displeasure, the music he appropriated from the Filipino rock band, *Asin*, was re-appropriated by a generation of Tausug performers after him. The way others in his community read the meanings of the ballad of *Minsupala Lingkatan* was entirely out of his hands just as it was for *Asin's* slain composer, Saro Bañares, when Ka Taib and his friends appropriated his song. Whilst Ka Taib and his cohorts do not see themselves as agents of secessionism, the new generation of artists who recorded *Mujahidin* perceived the events in the region differently and made these views evident in their appropriations. Influencing their view is the unrelenting episodes of violence that made the vision of secessionism more relevant and resonant. Whilst Sulu provincial officials managed to rebuild²¹ its communities after the burning of Jolo, they however failed to end the fighting.

²¹ I based this point from the flurry of rehabilitation and rebuilding reports discussed in Jolo provincial resolutions in 1974. The provincial government also continued to issue reports detailing progress in Sulu.

Instead, the province has been engulfed with violent episodes of family vendetta killings, incidents of bomb explosions, a string of kidnappings, and gruesome beheading incidents. The number of rebel groups has multiplied and further complicated by the emergence of kidnap for ransom gangs. During the last four decades, government continued mounting military offensives on rebels, kidnappers, and criminal gangs. In recent years, an American military contingent came and used Sulu as training ground for hunting suspected global terrorists mingling with the locals in a jungle environment. Subsequently, Sulu and Zamboanga was thrust into the global politics on the American-led war on terror and made it to world news reports as one front of the multinational anti-terrorism campaign. The globalisation of the conflict in Sulu subsequently inspired local video producers to produce imageries of their condition using global imaginaries.

Reimagining Global Images

As events turn to worse in Sulu, *Bikutan Massacre*, the second music video appropriating *Asin's Balita* emerged from the VCD stalls at Zamboanga's public market when I started fieldwork in 2009. *Bikutan* is essentially a requiem for 22 suspected terrorists and kidnappers from Sulu jailed in the penal facility of Bicutan, a sub-urban area at the outskirts of Manila. In a six-minute video, the ballad of the *Bikutan Massacre* celebrated the deaths of the inmates as acts of martyrdom that must be emulated by Muslims in Mindanao as shown below:

<i>Oh... mga bangsa Islam</i>	Oh... countrymen in Islam
<i>aun ini kalangan sin mga bata bahgo</i>	Listen to this song about these youths
<i>Na jail ha Bikutan</i>	Jailed in Bicutan
<i>Bangsa moro nagbuno</i>	Warriors of the Bangsa
<i>Sin kapatut naglugto</i>	Fighters for rights (and)
<i>Mahardika agama</i>	Freedom of religion
<i>Angan anganun nato</i>	Let us honor them
<i>Malugay na in jaman</i>	Since the ancient days
<i>Mindanao ha ka Islam</i>	Mindanao is an Islamic land
<i>Piyalian in baran sin mga gagandilan</i>	Wounded were these warriors

<i>Surga in maksud</i>	Heaven was their goal
<i>Ha satro di manaikud</i>	From enemies they did not retreat
<i>Puddang awal jaman</i>	With blades sharpened by time
<i>Madawhat in maksud</i>	Great is their mission
<i>Bata bahgo nasaggaw</i>	These youths were seized
<i>Malawa ha laum hula</i>	Casted away from the homeland
<i>Pikilan hilo hala</i>	Such a troubling thought
<i>In baran nabinsana</i>	Their bodies were ravaged
<i>Nagpangadji natuyo</i>	We now learned with rancor
<i>Misan ha laum pissuko</i>	That amidst deep cruelty
<i>Nag bulansang sin baran</i>	Their bodies endured
<i>Ha Islam nagtabarro</i>	They died for Islam
<i>Nag pikilan in satro</i>	The enemy planned
<i>Mamuhinga manglunggo</i>	To break their will
<i>Nagtipun na sin kusog</i>	They gathered their forces
<i>Ha islam hipamuno</i>	Declared war against Islam
<i>Nag massacre nag teargas</i>	They massacred, they (lobbed) teargas
<i>Nag lakab na in dugo</i>	Blood flowed
<i>In nasahid sugana</i>	The martyred went to paradise
<i>Nurul in napuso</i>	Virgin angels were their reward
<i>Pangatayan piyalian</i>	With our hearts wounded
<i>Ha satro diyugalan</i>	By this abominable enemy
<i>Di namo kalupahan</i>	We will never forget
<i>Sambil pa hinapusan</i>	To the very end of time
<i>Baran mo sandihayan (saddiya)</i>	You must prepare yourself
<i>Ayaw haman hamana</i>	Without tarry
<i>Muslim daiyos ha dunya</i>	To a coward Muslim of the world
<i>Way surga kaniya</i>	No paradise for him
<i>Kaput kaw kasipugan</i>	Shame on you
<i>Ikaw in gagandilan</i>	You remain a warrior
<i>Minsan baran mapanggisan</i>	Even if your body shall perish
<i>Mahinang pamulansang</i>	You shall inspire us
<i>Taimanghod ko tumtuma</i>	My brothers remember
<i>Kalo kaw malimaya</i>	You can be free

<i>In dunya malawa da</i>	This world will come to pass
Ahirat talia	There is a world beyond
<i>Subay kaw di mapahil</i>	You must never give up
<i>In Tuhan mo adil</i>	Your God is just
<i>Taimanghud mo nasabil</i>	Your brothers were martyred
<i>Ha Bikutan massacre</i>	In Bikutan massacre
<i>Allahuakbar in tumtuma</i>	Remember that Allah is great
<i>Umatubang ha Kafir</i>	Face the infidels
<i>Marayaw in maparrang</i>	Martyrdom is sweeter
<i>Dain sin sumurrender</i>	Than surrender

The deep sense of indignation allegorically expressed in this ballad links the events in Bikutan to the broader violence in the Muslim regions in Mindanao. It implied that this violence was systematically sponsored by a state antagonistic to Muslims as evinced in the line “the enemy planned/to break (thy will)/ they used force/ waged war against Islam/ they massacred, they lobbed teargas”. People in the Muslim enclaves of Mindanao, which was merely alluded in *Mujahidin* and *Minsupala Lingkatan*, was explicitly expressed as “Bangsa moro warriors” fighting for Muslim liberation from an oppressive Philippine state. Furthermore, the song squarely referred to the slain inmates as “martyrs” whose death will be rewarded with “virgin angels” in paradise. The song makes the call to arms and mocks anyone rejecting a fight a shameful and “coward Muslim.” The song repeatedly returns to the allusion of the splendour of martyrdom and the justness of resistance as it ends by bringing back in the *parrang sabil* narratives of fighting to the death.

Whilst the lyrics are militantly localised, the video used on this VCD is disjunctively global. The producer, who goes by the name of Omar, ripped scenes from the globally celebrated Hollywood film, *Black Hawk Down* (2001). The film featured the dramatic defeat of an American contingent in a battle with a Somali gang on the dusty streets of Mogadishu. The *Bikutan Massacre* video, parts of which I illustrated in Figures 5 (a-d), begins with pictures of a poverty stricken community and corpses rotting on a Somali desert featured in the opening scenes of the Hollywood film. The *Bikutan* video then cut to scenes of ragged-looking Somali armed men fighting the world’s mightiest army in a fierce gun battle. The disjunctive



Figures 5 (a-b). *Bikutan Massacre* VCD inserts the texts of local allegory of martyrdom over clips taken from the Hollywood film, *Black Hawk Down* (2001). These selected video grabs from the “*Bikutan Massacre*” VCD shows pictures of (a) a supposed Somali corpse in Somalia’s desert, (b) a Somali gang member falling in a battle scene, and (c and d) a brave Somali man fiercely fighting the mighty American military. Transliteration of the Tausug text on Figure 4(a) reads, “Martyrdom is splendid/ Compared to surrender” whilst on Figure 4 (c), “You must never desert/ God is just.”

combination of a Tausug song and scenes from a Hollywood war film illustrate the many possibilities of local re-imaginings with the use of global tools of electronic mediation. On the VCD, Somali spaces and bodies and American military power played up in a Hollywood imagination of real events served as representational images for visualizing as well as exaggerating the many episodes of violence in Sulu as well as perceived martyrdom of the jailed “*Bangsa moro*” Muslims at Bicutan. The VCD producers captured and reinserted Hollywood imaginaries as a visual metaphor for the ailing condition of Sulu, and with it weaved their own imagery of fearless martyrs springing from the yoke of oppression. For advocates of intellectual property rights, such an act can be viewed as nothing but a case of digital theft, a point that I will elaborate in Chapter 6. Yet it cannot be denied that processes beyond the discourse of intellectual property is also happening in this case. Under a

globalising world, the practice of appropriating one's cultural product by another has actually become much more common and pervasive. As Inda and Rosaldo argued, the mobility and the ease by which subjects travel, things swap places, and images drift across the globe created a condition of "cultural juxtaposition and mixture" that opened up opportunity for a great number of people to experience the "imagined realities of other cultures" (2002: 11). Amidst these instances of juxtapositions and odd mixtures, the global flows of digitized objects may also "follow weird circuits, not merely center to periphery" (Peters 1997: 91). In the case of the VCD productions in Zamboanga and Sulu, the strange ways by which global images flowed opened opportunities for local agents to utilize Western imagination of pain in crafting their own medium for social catharsis. In this particular instance, they choose a Hollywood allegory of America's shameful military debacle in Somalia as a medium of visualising their own painful socio-somatic experience.

Localizing Global Imaginaries

VCD music performers and producers in Zamboanga and Sulu actively and creatively took advantage of the benefits of global circulation of electronic media and through it the trove of cultural imaginaries it is holding. They selected, manipulated, mixed up, remade, and re-presented imageries produced by global industrial media and then fitted them to local sets of imaginations and political narratives. By utilizing the global structures of electronic capitalism, they are able to produce and reproduce shared imaginaries of the broad contours of the Tausug community as well as visualize the conditions ailing them. The rhetoric on some of the VCDs, in particular the idea of exhorting local Muslims to kill and die for the sake of the Tausug constituency or of the Bangsamoro nation, suggest an attempt at eliciting what Anderson calls "deep, horizontal comradeship" (Anderson 1983: 7). They did so, however, by weaving local allegories of lamentations, heroism, and martyrdom with political images and cultural imaginaries adrift around the world. Through such acts, they were able to unleash the potency of VCDs as a powerful medium for crafting and projecting their own imagined community. These dynamics suggest that local agents do not passively absorb and accept global and national streams of imaginaries heading their way. In many ways, they used these imaginaries to set the stage for their participation in "complex and elaborate symbolic politics" (Crain 1997: 292). They

represent a case of utilization of electronic means of representations at the margins of the state (Das and Poole 2004) and the periphery of the global ecumene (Hannerz 2002: 37, *also see* Hannerz 1989) by local agents whose agency made the exercise of situated forms of cosmopolitanism more recognizable. Yet these internal strategic cultural and political achievements are not at all uncontested within the Tausug community.

Given the tense and violent politics of recent Muslim identity construction in the Philippines the imaginaries that video makers produced and mediated opened it up to questions and contestations by those who disapproved of them as the defining imageries of the Tausug community. More often than not, the agenda pursued by some of the video makers follow a secessionist vision of Tausug and Bangsamoro identity in Mindanao, a claim not necessarily supported by all but rather contested. Others in the community were critical of the choice of pernicious images, such as the September 11 events, brutal warfare in Chechnya, coldhearted burning of human remains, and other malevolent pictures adrift on the transnational field of electronic capitalism. Apart from exposing the contested terrain of Tausug video making practice, these issues also reveal that local pliability to the imaginaries of other cultures need not always result into a production of open and tolerant imagination of sociality.

The way global images and imaginaries were deployed in some of the videodiscs shunned the promotion of the cosmopolitan ideals of peace, tolerance, openness, and universal morality. Instead, cosmopolitan technologies were used to endorse and advance violent forms of resistance in a manner that reveal the disturbing possibilities of situated forms of cosmopolitanism. Notwithstanding such troubling possibilities, it still is relevant to note that the grassroots project of locality and identity construction in Zamboang and Sulu were made possible and imaginable by the clever use and manipulation of digital instruments and images adrift across the globe. It shows local subjects responding as well as taking advantage of large-scale social processes in “culturally specific ways” (Inda and Rosaldo 2002:5). In this case, Tausug video makers simultaneously experience and re-appropriate other cultural imaginaries through the circulation of global digital media technology into the context of their lives. Relevantly, Coleman notes “whenever and wherever individuals and

groups deploy and communicate with digital media, there will be circulations, reimaginings, magnifications, deletions, translations, revisionings, and remakings of a range of cultural representations, experiences, and identities” (Coleman 2010: 488). On this end, Coleman suggests, it is our task to know how, where and why these phenomena happened (Ibid.).

Conclusion

This chapter contrasts the imaginaries featured by grassroots producers of Tausug videos with state and rebel imagination of the Tausug social world. These disparities reveal the competing cosmopolitan imaginations in shaping the discursive formation of the Tausug imagined community. Dominating this discourse is the state, which mobilised mass publications and mass education as communicative instruments in defining the Tausug as a predominantly Muslim ethnic group that forms part of a multi-faith, multi-ethnic, and multi-cultural Filipino nation. Such notion can be accounted from state-sponsored publications and instructional materials that celebrate Tausug material culture as living expressions of indigenous pre-colonial cultural heritage of the Philippines. On the surface, state narratives appear to support conceptual arguments that imagine postcolonial states built upon pre-colonial societies as exemplary indicators of cosmopolitan nations. A different picture emerges, however, when these are viewed against the geographic division of the Philippines into metropolitan-provincial regions and national conversations about majority-minority populations.

The state’s pluralising discourse actually reduces the Tausug society into a provincial component of the Philippine nation. The themes of Tausug music videos emerging and circulating around the streets, slums, remote villages, and flea markets of Sulu and Zamboanga did not necessarily share the state’s provincialising representation. A sampling of the VCDs that I gathered present imaginaries of Tausugs that is not simply a provincial constituent of the state but rather a trans-locally thinking society. They conflate heritage and recent local performances with trans-locally shared pop culture. They localise nationally familiar performances to make them even more meaningful and attuned with local experiences. They harness globally drifting images as well as digital entertainment technology such as the VCDs

into a medium by which they project their imagination of the Tausug social world. By partaking in the transnational flow of electronic mediating instruments such as the VCD, the voices of this grassroots enclave were made more visible by revealing in imaginative ways how and what it means to be a constituent of a marginal community implicated by geopolitical forces and global media flows. Yet these expressions of openness and inclusivity do not necessarily guarantee a vision of society that upholds cosmopolitan principles of peace, justice, and universal human morality. Rather they reveal a disturbing side of situated cosmopolitanism in which the global flow of imaginaries were used not necessarily to advance the cause of civil society for justice, peace, and tolerant community (*also see* Calhoun 2008).

As I noted above, some of the videos I gathered from the market splice up Tausug ballads of martyrdom with globally circulating images of rebels in Chechnya detonating roadside bombs, the New York towers burning during the September 11 events, American soldiers routed by Somali militias, and Sulu street protests against US troop deployment in Southern Philippines. Such videos show that whilst trans-local flow of media open up a productive cultural field for cosmopolitan frames of thinking about belonging, they can also be used by local agents to either buttress violent home-grown ethno-religious struggles or comment on inequality in their midst. They show the disjuncture of local response to global cultural flows and lay bare the tensions arising from discrepant cosmopolitan practices particularly when the agents deploying them do so for political ends.

I would say, however, that whilst the repertoire of performances recorded on VCDs is imbued with politics, not all performances recorded on it are reducible to secessionist ideology. In this chapter, I selected music videos with political themes to examine how the secessionist discourse of Muslim identity is articulated in popular imaginaries. Nonetheless, the cultural politics of representation is just one area of cosmopolitan expressions in Sulu and Zamboanga. As Mahon (2000) notes, much of the research on cultural consumption was focused on local practice of manipulating cultural products for purposes of resistance or in negotiations with powerful forces in their midst (*Ibid.*, 468-469). For that matter, Mahon reminds us that expressive cultural productions are certainly part of the means in which marginalised agents used in producing political critiques but “we risk producing a one-sided and mechanistic

view of complex artistic productions” if we do not consider the aesthetical dimension and goals that inform their work (Mahon 2000: 479). To capture these points, succeeding chapters will examine other everyday, non-militant music video productions that also proliferate on the streets, market, and slums of Zamboanga and Sulu. From there, it will be possible to recognize how global media productions are localised in ways that allow their producers and consumers to imagine a flexible and open but well defined Tausug society.

Chapter 3

Weddings and Videos: Localising Global Cultural Flows

One breezy November morning, I was hanging-out at a VCD section of the Zamboanga market when I noticed an elderly vendor pulling out a box of old audiocassette tapes from underneath a table that holds his goods. On the labels of the cassettes, I could read the handwritten word “*Kissa*”, the collection of epical, fictional, and sanctified oral and poetic narratives of Sulu martyrs and extra-ordinary people that I briefly discussed in Chapter 2. I asked Ka Jul if I could see his cassettes. Without hesitation, Ka Jul handed me a tape in a case adorned with a pen and ink picture of a winged creature that has a body of a horse and a head of a man flying high above a row of mosque domes. “That is a *kissa* about the life of *Burak*, the *Kurah Sambalani* (white winged horse). He is a servant to Allah. When the Prophet Muhammad ascended to the heavens, he rode on the back of the *Sambalani*,” he told me as he wiped some dust off the case with his aging but still sturdy hands. The *kissa* audiocassette that Ka Jul handed me formed part of an array of vernacular oral renditions of Sufi-inspired exegesis of Muhammad’s prophetic life in the hagiographic stories of the *Qisas al-Anbiya* originally told in Arabic.

Ka Jul went on rummaging through the box, pulled out two more cassette tapes, and thrust them both into my hands: “Here are more *kissa*. Actually, I have been selling them here for years. These are my leftover stocks. They sell very well before the VCDs began appearing.” This story made me curious of how the VCD productions actually evolved in Zamboanga and Sulu so I pressed him for more information about previous mediation practices in the market, in particular where he might have obtained his large collections of *kissa*. “Some were brought to me by the performers. Others, I transferred them from my old phonographs to the cassettes.” Beaming with a knowing smile, he added: “I have a dozen more records of *kissa* on phonographs which I could transfer on cassette tapes. If you are interested, I could bring them here so you could choose the music you want. You better come back tomorrow.”

The following day, Ka Jul waited for me with his goods wrapped in a large plastic shopping bag. He opened the bag and pulled out about a dozen cassettes and seventeen pieces of high fidelity stereo phonograph recordings, pictured in Figure 6. The discs were all in bad condition with their delicate vinyl surface scarred and scratched. Moreover, the sleeves were all gone but fortunately I could still read the titles printed on the labels stuck on to the core of the records, which Ka Jul said were purchased by his family in the market of Sulu sometime in the 1960s. Some of the titles were in English: *The Muslim Musical Heritage: The Ten Commandments Story*; *The Sulu Musical Souvenir*; *Sulu Muslim Culture*; and *Muslim Musical Ballad*. Another record read, the *Sulu Gabbang Troupe*, in reference to a collection of ballads accompanied with heritage instruments such as the *biyula*, a locally made violin with horse hairs as strings; and the *gabbang*, a xylophone fashioned from narrow strips of bamboo. Sixteen of the phonographs are records of *kissa* whilst the seventeenth is a *luguh*, another form of Sufi-inspired ballads sung in extremely high octave and falsetto voices. On the labels of the phonographs, I recognized some *kissa* titles and names I saw on the VCDs. “Were these the same performers who recorded the VCDs you are selling?” I asked Ka Jul. He replied, “Well, some people found it profitable to transfer them on VCDs, and then sell them back here at the market. Some of those performers recorded new *kissa* on VCDs and sent someone to distribute them here. As I also told you yesterday, I transferred some of the songs from these records to cassettes” (see Figure 6).

My conversation with Ka Jul enlightened me to the fact that VCD music production did not simply emerge in Sulu and Zamboanga amidst the ascendance of a modern, globalizing digital media culture. It has a history. The recordings constitute a recent episode of a long-running but hardly visible street-based, subaltern practice of live reproduction of heritage performances that meld older forms of globally expansive narrative traditions in Islam with the narrative tradition in the communities. To a great degree, they exemplify the characteristic of a “vernacular” cosmopolitan practice (Werbner 2008b: 18, Pollack 2002) that is “marginal” (Bhabha 1996: 195) even as they are also “grounded and particularistic in origin, but universalising and culture-transforming in aspiration and effect” (Kahn 2008: 271).



Figure 6. Ka Jul shows surviving copies of old family-owned Tausug *gabbang* and *kissa* phonographs that he later transferred and sold on audiocassettes (foreground) between the 1970s to early 2000s.

Heritage performances featured on the musical records that Ka Jul and his fellow vendors sell are not exactly *sui generis*, narrowly unique, or parochially exclusive to Tausug performing traditions. These heritage musical compositions were themselves derived from older traditions of performances coming from across the Sufi domains of the Islamic ecumene that had been indigenised upon reaching the coasts and islands of Zamboanga and Sulu. Yet, the lives of these heritage music and dances did not end in their indigenised forms. They eventually moved from live performances to the domain of mediation, further opening up another dimension of cosmopolitan relations through a media reproduction practice that transcends and

constantly transforms them. In their mediated form, media producers in Sulu and Zamboanga recast *kissa* from earlier versions of cosmopolitan vernacularization of the Arabic notion of “*Qisas al-Anbiya*” into the Anglophone category of “Muslim Musical Heritage” marking the many layers of cultural blending behind the making of mediated Tausug performances. Tracing how these shifting media platforms reanimated the old, hybrid, dynamic but fragmented heritage performances into a popular, mass circulated VCDs of Tausug imaginary is the central concern of this chapter. In relation to this aim, the chapter examines the extent by which wedding performers and performing events shape the tradition of mediation of Tausug heritage performances. This examination locates the situated social and cultural resources animating the cosmopolitan imagination of the Tausug community. These rooted and widely observed cosmopolitan social and cultural resources underscore the argument I laid down in the Introduction and in Chapter 1 that the continuity and historic episodes of transformations of translocality are driving the cosmopolitan processes in the region.

Mediation and Continuity

It has been predicted with distressing concern that “for better or worse” the advent of cassette recorders, alongside radio, phonographs and the movie houses, threatened the survival of the “music and dance traditions of the past” in Muslim Mindanao (Gowing 1979: 134). Recent publications celebrating salvaged versions of old heritage narratives of Sulu continue to share such predictions and blame of “new media such as radio and cassette”, as well as of globally flowing pop and rock and roll music for Tausug youth’s “loss of interest in their traditional culture” (Rixhon 2010: 1-2). Left out in this prediction are the small media productions that in the past were also animating local social life and cultural performances in Zamboanga and Sulu. If we, however, look back to the box-load of left over audiocassette tapes that Ka Jul has been selling in the Zamboanga market during past few decades, I would say that these predictions missed their mark. On the contrary, the era of phonograph, audiocassettes, radio, ushered the rebirth of old Tausug performances as well as its enrichment. For every new form of media technologies that come to Zamboanga and Sulu as I will show here, old music and dance tradition that were feared to be lost are being continually brought forward to the present in dynamic ways by street based

Tausug media producers. As old performances were brought onto the present through mediation, they emerge as a cultural resource on which communities isolated by time and geographic distance collectively view, share, and consider them as meaningful narratives that makes Tausug think about the broad expanse of their social community. Yet underlying these narratives and performances are cultural practices that can be best described as transcultural and translocal as shown by the way the Tausug *kissa* narrative heritage were being blended with Arabic and Anglophonic terms. In their mediated forms, what we see is not a homogenized imaginary of a community but rather imaginaries shaped by multiple cultural influences.

To some extent, the Tausug mediation practice in Zamboanga and Sulu is comparable to the “cultural revitalization” generated by the growing popularity of audiocassette recording of Bedouin poetry recital, singing, and “electric pop music” that Lila Abu-Lughod investigated in Egypt in the 1980s (1989: 7, 9). Abu-Lughod notes that Bedouin poetry and music were widely believed to be dying amidst perception that an aggressive state campaign for an Egyptian national culture as well as rapid spread of industrial media technology such as cassettes, radios, televisions, and video recorders are assimilating and homogenizing the country’s diverse but marginal culture. Instead, the appearance of “best selling cassette of an original sort of electric Bedouin pop music, signalled a greater permeability of regional boundaries and a new kind of transculturalism. Modern technologies of public culture – cassette tape recorders, radios, televisions and VCRs – have made this possible” (Abu-Lughod, 7). Reflecting on the Bedouin audiocassette experience, Abu-Lughod raised a critical point against arguments that the introduction of television as well as other media technologies are causing “social relations to atrophy and limit cultural creativity” (Ibid.). The experience of the Bedouin community with audiocassette production and circulation shows that “it is not just that people themselves seem to embrace the technologies and actively use them for their own purposes, but that they select, incorporate and redeploy what comes their way” (Ibid., 8). Charles Hirschkind (2001), discussing public reflections of Islamic sermons on audiocassettes circulating in the streets of Cairo, also offers a similar observation. He notes that mediation is coming across as an account of modernity that is not exactly concerned with the “destruction of the old and its replacement by the new” but rather “shaped by the

maintenance of continuities with past practice, as well as, by revivals, reworkings, and rediscoveries” (Ibid., 642).

In Zamboanga and Sulu, Tausug media producers laid out a long running practice of mediation in a manner that continually renew, revive, rework, and revitalize their performance heritage beyond the use of audiocassettes. As I noted earlier, the cache of unsold collection of old phonographs and audiocassettes of Tausug performances that Ka Jul keeps under his VCD stall is indicative of that long running mediation practice. These were left over products of a vibrant and evolving cottage-based mass media production practice in the margins of Zamboanga and Sulu. How these productions evolved offer a picture of the continuity of cosmopolitan imagination in Tausug mediation practice. Based on my conversations with Ka Jul, other sellers in the Zamboanga market, wedding performers as well as few long time friends who grew up in Sulu, without claim of being exhaustive I piece together a picture of the evolution of this mediation practice starting from phonographic recording of Tausug heritage music fifty years ago.

Sulu Phonographs

Enterprising wedding performers in Sulu released the first of the phonograph records of Tausug musical performances in the 1960s. One of these performers was known as Mohammad Elias Hussein, a popular *gabbang* and *kissa* player whose music revolves around reflections on Tausug knowledge (*kiyabalo*) and the value of ancestral cultural legacies (*binhi sin kamaasan*). Hussein sold out most of his records inspiring a slew of wedding performers to also produce their own phonograph recordings of *gabbang* and *kissa* effectively establishing a small but vibrant phonograph recording enterprise in Zamboanga and Sulu. Attesting to that vibrancy, Ka Jul notes that his family collected seventeen *gabbang* and *kissa* records produced by twenty-one wedding performers that time. The titles on his old phonograph record collections touched a wide array of themes in the *kissa* and *gabbang* poetic traditions. They include hagiographic stories from the Hadith as in the case of the *Kissa Sin Wafat Nabi Muhammad (Kissa on the Birth Anniversary of the Prophet Muhammad)*, sacred Koran narratives in *Kissa Ha Nabi Noa (Kissa About the Prophet Noa)*, the local stories of heroism in *Kissa Kan Mayor Tiger Amo in Kapagbuno in Lugus Tapul*

(Kissa About Mayor Tiger Who Fought in [the town of] Lugas Tapul) as well as local experience of suffering and displacement in *Kissa Ka Baquit Ha Lupa Sug* (Kissa About the Evacuation of Sulu), amongst others.

Ka Jul remembers that many of these vinyl records were being sold in some shops around the commercial district of *Chinese Pier* in downtown Jolo. People flocked to buy them spurring a small industry of Tausug vinyl musical record production. Wedding singers and musical players performed and produced nearly all the Tausug vinyl records that could be found in Sulu at that time. Driving the performers' interests at producing phonographs is their view of it as an instrumental medium in generating public recognition of their performance so they will be hired in regular wedding events that animate community life across Zamboanga, Sulu, and beyond. Some performers raised funds from relatives whilst others invest their own money for the recording in the production studios of Manila. Nonetheless, Ka Jul said, most of these investments paid off since there were many weddings around Sulu and that people patronized them even as Hollywood and Manila produced pop musical recordings were also proliferating all around Sulu. Ka Jul also remembers that some of the phonographs made it to Zamboanga and Sulu radio stations. They were aired alongside iconic pop music from Hollywood and the multi-million peso recording industry in Manila. Radio stations categorised and celebrated them as the musical traditions of Sulu rather than as wedding performance catalogue. As phonographic records, Tausug heritage performances endured rather than died off amidst massive influx of global pop culture as well as the dominant cultural influence coming from Manila as earlier feared by Mindanao scholars. To a great extent, the phonograph had done to the Tausugs what Roland Gelatt (1956) said about the "wonders" that phonographs had done to the fate of live musical performances in Europe and the United States in the early part of the twentieth century: they played a "vital role in the forward march of musical culture" (Ibid., 32). As the recorded musical culture move forward in time and across Tausug enclaves in Sulu and Zamboanga, people saw them as a collective Tausug imaginary rather than mere wedding songs.

The small phonograph industry, however, did not last long. Secessionist Moro rebel build up, massive military deployment, and the cataclysmic shooting war that

they precipitated have been brewing across most parts of the Sulu Archipelago and the Zamboanga peninsula in the early seventies abruptly interrupted the production and circulation of the phonographs. Many of the phonograph performers and producers were themselves displaced by the war. Regular buyers of the phonographs like the families of my long time Tausug friends, left Sulu whilst those who remained had a devastated livelihood to rebuild. Whilst many residents were able to pick up their lives and gradually recover from the war in the second half of the 1970s, the small media production landscape of Sulu also changed radically. Instead of phonographs, the recording and selling of Tausug music on audiocassette records of Tausug performance heritage took up their place. Under this new mediation practice, new musical genre also emerged ushering in new forms of transcultural musical productions that enriched deeply rooted heritage performances.

The Age of Audiocassettes

Older wedding performers and VCD sellers I met in the market traced the emergence of audiocassette production between the early and mid seventies. Rather than produced from the recording studios of Manila as they had with the phonographs, audiocassette musical recordings were done in the homes of the performers or their producers. The recording tools were rather basic, with a microphone, a keyboard synthesizer, a home stereo speaker, and an audiocassette recorder. Depending on consumer demands, the producer would normally record about a hundred cassettes for every album of about twelve songs. Song titles on cassette case covers were handwritten. Some covers were adorned with photocopied studio pictures of the performers to give the production an aura of professionalism and commercialism. The sound quality of leftover audiocassettes that I bought from the market and listened to is uneven with either the voices extra-ordinarily loud or drown off by musical instruments. Ambient and hissing sound could be heard on every recording. Crude though they were, people patronised them consequently producing an informal cottage industry in the slums, streets, and markets of Zamboanga and Sulu with people impoverished by the secessionist wars as their primary agents.

As I noted above, the emergence of the enterprise was closely tied to massive civilian dislocation during the war. Many of those involved in Tausug audiocassette productions were refugees left without a job and in the squalid slums of Zamboanga and Sulu. With no job opportunities coming, refugees like Ka Jul were forced to innovate to survive. A brief account on Ka Jul's life and struggle as a refugee offers a picture of the formative roots of the Tausug audiocassette musical recording enterprise. Ka Jul was originally from Jolo but decided to settle and raise his family in the hometown of his wife some place north of Zamboanga where he worked as crew for a petrol station. The shooting war, however, reached Ka Jul's adoptive town forcing him and his family to flee to Zamboanga where thousands like him ended without a home, a job, and in squalor. There were not enough employers to hire the thousands of refugees coming in and government aid was not enough if it came at all. Ka Jul, along with few other refugees, began engaging with popular Hollywood music pirates and sold their pirated media goods in the side streets of the market. From the earnings that he generated from pirated audiocassette music they got from the broader infrastructure of piracy, a dynamic that will be expanded in Chapter 6, Ka Jul bought his own audiocassette recorder and reproduced his own pirate music from a set of already existing pirated cassettes. He and others would then put on photocopies of cover designs from the pirated versions and sell them off at a much cheaper rate than those offered by the pirates. In a sense, Ka Jul and others were selling Hollywood music they themselves pirated from bigger pirates. Eventually, Ka Jul expanded the range of his pirated musical goods by adding up audiocassette copies of *kissa* and *gabbang* originally recorded on the phonographs. He did this by recording the family phonographs he managed to salvage from their home in Sulu on audiocassettes. His new innovation proved productive. He was able to earn more from the *kissa* and *gabbang* cassettes than those of the Hollywood pirate music. Ka Jul's success inspired several other refugees to emulate him resulting into a thriving low-level mass mediation industry of Tausug musical recordings.

Other sellers in the market of Zamboanga and Sulu pirated the *gabbang* and *kissa* that Ka Jul recorded from the old phonographs spurring their re-circulation around Muslim communities in the region though in another form. These new media practices at the interstices of Zamboanga and Sulu brought forward in time the old musical heritage that was feared lost by some observers I pointed earlier. Not only

that the old musical heritage were preserved, the success of audiocassette reproduction of old phonograph records catalyzed renewed interests in recording new live *luguh*, and *kissa* performances on audiocassettes. It was during this period that the *Kissa sin Hadji Ban*, which I discussed in the Chapter 2, was recorded and sold on audiocassettes across the markets of Sulu and Zamboanga. Few more titles surfaced including the musical *kissa* about the mythical *Burak*, the winged horse (*Kurah Sambalani*) creature that took Prophet Muhammad to heaven as I illustrated at the beginning of this chapter. Then there are more. In addition to forging the establishment of a vibrant cottage enterprise of old Tausug heritage music, grassroots audiocassette recordings also sparked the emergence of widely patronised Tausug pop music culture that melds Western, Filipino, and Islamic musical traditions with local performance heritage.

Audiocassettes and the Rise of Tausug Heritage Pop Music

Tausug pop music rose when a new generation of wedding performers more attuned to radio, television, and cinema music began tapping audiocassettes to promote themselves in the wedding entertainment circuits of Zamboanga and Sulu. Rather than limit their ensembles to *kissa* and *gabang*, these new performers hybridized popular, disco, rock, and other musical genre with the older hybrid musical traditions in Sulu, further reliving the cosmopolitan spirit that defined these performances across the ages. One song from that has gone extremely popular on audiocassettes and around the wedding circuit to this day is the Tausug appropriation of the song “Diana” by the American pop cultural icon, Paul Anka. Whilst the Tausug rendition took the melody of Paul Anka’s Diana, the rhythmic style was starkly different. The rhythm was consistent with the bright, playful, and sprightly tunes that Tausug wedding musicians play as accompaniment for the Tausug heritage dances of *pangalay*. This music, which never fails to excite the wedding crowd, is known amongstst wedding singers as *sangbay*. The *Diana sangbay*, which was played with keyboard synthesizer as accompaniment, transliterated none of the English lines in Paul Anka’s Diana. Instead, *Diana* (which I italicized to distinguished from Paul Anka’s Diana) in the Tausug’s *sangbay* rendition, captured the idioms, humour, swaggering, and bantering that features a cheerful performance of the *pangalay* at weddings, as the following lines would show:

<i>Yari na hi Patriama</i>	Here comes Patriama
<i>Sangabayun ta isab Diana</i>	We will play Diana for her
<i>Hi inda ini maporma</i>	This stylish lady
<i>In mangalay isab ini siyana</i>	The next dancer
<i>Wooa, so please! Oh dayang!</i>	Wooa, so please! Oh girl!
<i>Idol sangbayan Diana!</i>	This is your idol singing Diana!
<i>Lililah lilah lali lalah!</i>	<i>Lililah lilah lali lalah!</i>
<i>Indah ay mu kaw dumugal</i>	Lady, please don't be offended
<i>Bang in naglagu Diana hi Madal.</i>	If Madal lavishes you with Diana praises
<i>Bang kaw indah magtingkang hibal</i>	Because whenever you sway lady
<i>Bangtug nakaw in original</i>	You are adorably the original!
<i>Wooa, so please! Oh Dayang!</i>	Wooa, so please!
<i>Idol sangbayan Diana!</i>	This is your Idol singing Diana!
<i>Lililah lilah lali lalah!</i>	<i>Lililah lilah lali lalah!</i>
<i>Misan laggu laggu old model</i>	Even if my music sounds like an old model
<i>Inda' pangalay kaw staring pangalay</i>	Lady, you still are the star of <i>pangalay</i>

Diana was crafted in the 1980s by Madal, a musician whom I met at the VCD alley of the Zamboanga market where he runs his own a stall and receives clients searching for wedding performers. Madal trained under elder Tausug wedding performers in classical *gabbang*, *biyula*, *sangbay*, and *kissa* music when he was a teenager growing up in Zamboanga. Later, Madal expanded his repertoire by adding electric synthesizer rhythms and fusing pop music influences on his *sangbay* performances in recognition of the changing musical preference of the Tausug wedding crowd. He acknowledges that public preference changed amidst the dominance of pop music from Manila, Hollywood, and elsewhere in Zamboanga and Sulu. “In the age of cassettes, radio, and the synthesizers, our knowledge of heritage music and musical instruments were no longer enough to be a wedding performer. The wedding crowd had been demanding for greater variety in the performances. They wanted an even more lively *pangalay* and humorous *sangbay* for the wedding,” Madal told me in one of our conversations. I asked Madal why he bothered fusing

pop on to local musical tradition and not just take a less complicated approach by organising ensembles of dominant pop music coming in from the West and Manila since people prefer those tunes anyway. He offered a rather practical answer: “The people still prefer their songs to be sung in Tausug. Over and above that, they will never dance anything other than *pangalay* but want newer rhythms and tunes of *sangbay* that should accompany the dance. The wedding crowd wants performers who are able to sing the *kissa*, play *gabbang* (native xylophone) and *biyula* (native violin), and upbeat music like *Diana*. I tried to be more versatile, I offered them old and new Tausug music.”

On the surface, Madal’s explanation presupposes a modernizing consciousness sweeping across Tausug communities but viewing these performance preferences in the context of the many episodes of cultural fusions in Zamboanga and Sulu, the continuity of the old practice of indigenizing global cultural flows becomes more apparent. Madal’s *Diana* performance exemplifies this process with the way he blended the rhythmic sound of heritage *sangbay* music and the disco beats of Paul Anka’s work. Beyond beats and rhythms, Madal also captured that idea of blending heritage and globally popular music with the way he structured the words of the *sangbay*. He spiced it up with iconic pop cultural references as the following lines go: “Lady, please don’t be offended/ If Madal lavishes you with Diana praises/ Every time you sway my lady/ Adorably without doubt you are the original.” In these words, Madal actually picked up the idiosyncratic value of Paul Anka’s *Diana* for Tausugs in Zamboanga and Sulu. He recognized that many Tausugs actually adored this American pop song, which for decades now is still being aired on radio and jukeboxes in the restaurants and markets of the region. Pirated copies of the *Diana* cassettes are also stacked up in some cupboards at the home of several of my informants attesting to the meaningful degree of appreciation that Tausugs had of the song. What Madal did was utilized this American tune to pay homage to the heritage value of *pangalay* as illustrated by his figurative heaping of “praises” to the person performing it. Subtly, Madal mocked notions of originality of his own work in a brilliant parody of the English word, “original”. He makes a humorously implicit but wishful reference of the dancer as originator of an adorable performance that would be copied by others. Furthermore, Madal’s *Diana* hyperbolically commented on the transformation of the Tausug musical preferences in the following lines: “Even if my

song sounds like an old model/ Lady, you still are the star of *pangalay*.” Both lines figuratively celebrated the resilience of *pangalay* as indicated by the fact that this remains a popular dance and now serving as a defining feature of Tausug pop culture amidst a dominant Western and Manila music. Madal chose to wrap up his *sangbay* with a series of amusing chorus lines that simultaneously serve as ode and ludicrous parody of a dominant media culture that rewards iconicity in the notions of “star” and “idol”. The *sangbay* music of Madal is a reminder that whilst popular music from Manila or Western media productions had an influencing impact on Tausug localities, they were not able to overwhelm existing musical traditions. On the contrary, they catalyze renewal in musical forms that resonates with many Tausugs in the slums and islands.

Madal’s *Diana* is one of frequently requested accompanying music (*sangbay*) for *pangalay* numbers in wedding celebrations. In the wake of its popularity, other wedding performers produced their own versions, changing words that Madal crafted to make it even more humorous. Younger performers cut new records that are more attune to the language of their generation. These new renditions, however, were not copies of the original but diversifications, a process that is key to constant revitalization of heritage performances as I will further discuss. During fieldwork, I participated in the efforts of younger wedding performers in recording their own rendition of Madal’s *Diana sangbay* on VCDs. The performers, brothers Jamaica, Robin, and Abdulman, all teenagers from the slums of Barangay Rio Hondo in Zamboanga, retained the bright, jumpy tunes of Madal’s *Diana*. The trio played not only with American music but also with Bollywood imaginaries that reached the slums and markets of Zamboanga and Sulu by way of pirated DVDs as recent as mid-2000s. The *Diana-Bollywood* rendition of the three brothers goes:

<i>Yari na isab liyangan</i>	Here once again I offer this song
<i>Ni indah kalasahan</i>	To my beloved lady
<i>Agitungan simayang sayang</i>	There in the middle she raises and raises her hands
<i>Laung mu bigya Industan</i>	You’ll think that she is an Indian (Bollywood dancer)
<i>So please stay with me Diana</i>	So please stay with me Diana
<i>Lilalillahlalilahlala</i>	Lilalillahlalilahlala

The continuing practice of remaking and hybridizing heritage performance like the *Diana sangbay* highlighted the characteristics of media production practice in Sulu and Zamboanga. They are not reproducing exact copies of old heritage performances but renditions that reflect and adapt with the shifting streams in the global flows of cultural productions. The fact that they are not faithful copies of the original or previous renditions made them dynamic and adaptable to changing times and influences even as they retain the identifiably indigenous colour and spirit of the performance, a pattern that is repeated over and over in the reproduction of *kissa*, *gabbang*, *luguh*, *sangbay* and *pangalay*. They illustrate the reinvigoration and enrichment of heritage rather than their demise in the age of radio and audiocassettes, and supposed domination of Western and Manila musical cultures. The position taken by performing agents and media producers of neither accepting or rejecting wholesale musical cultures not their own was key to the staying power of Tausug heritage performances. These agents opted to incorporate other cultural influences into their own performances, and in the process sustain the knowledge, myth, and the spirit of their heritage performances into the ever-shifting practice of mediation. Leading this tradition of hybridization, revivals, and emulation are subaltern agents who do not necessarily advance a politically defined cultural discourse but celebrates a cultural heritage by constantly reworking, retooling, and transcending them. This reflects a cosmopolitan way of life that is simultaneously grounded and open to other influences, effectively bridging the “division between us and them, between self and other” (Kahn 2008: 269) in the construction of inclusive imaginaries.

Very High Frequency Radios

Amidst the explosion of audiocassettes as the preferred home entertainment system in Tausug neighbourhoods, two-way radios that broadcast at very high frequency (VHF) airwaves also emerged as an unlikely platform for the mass circulation of Tausug musical performance in the eighties through the nineties. Once again, they highlight the productive role of subaltern agents adept and quick at seizing technologies of mediation in amplifying heritage performance in the construction of the Tausug imaginary in ways that are not necessarily concerned with the

advancement of an ideologically inclined political identity. VHF radios are tightly regulated by the government and largely reserved for official use of the Philippine military, the police, government officers, and business institutions with radio communication license. Loose implementation of the regulation, however, spawned widespread unauthorized usage of the radios. Many of these gadgets either end-up in the hands of the rebels or giddy teenagers. Under such environment, some wedding performers in Sulu and Zamboanga discovered VHF radios as an effective and cheaper way of broadcasting their songs, though illegally. I talked to two wedding performers regarding this innovative episode of Tausug mediation. Both performers whom I will name here as Ahmed and Salman, offered two different but related origins of VHF-music playing practice.

Ahmed linked the VHF music broadcast to smuggling in of consumer goods from Sabah in Malaysia in operations financed by legitimate traders, one of whom is his relative. He had worked for his relatives in the eighties through the nineties and would sometimes be entrusted to coordinate with smugglers the landing of contraband goods through a powerful VHF radio base that could reach tens of miles out into the sea from Zamboanga. Coordinating means staying up all night to wait for radio signals from smugglers who will be coming with the contraband by boat through the Sulu Sea. In one of these long waiting nights, Ahmed said he and some colleagues thought of entertaining themselves by organizing a music programme. With their guitar on hand, they played and live broadcast a series of Tausug songs familiar to people who patronise Tausug audiocassette records in the market. They were hoping that their broadcast would be heard in nearby rural villages. Without expecting it, they received an avalanche of radio messages from as far as Sulu requesting for their favourite Tausug audiocassette songs. As it turned out, a string of radio listeners rebroadcast the musical signals they were sending from Zamboanga in such a way that their music reach thousands of communities more than a hundred of miles away and deep into the Sulu archipelago. Ahmed said his boss and the smugglers were rather happy of their initiative and encourage them to carry on with the musical broadcasts because they realised that it had helped cover up traces of their communications and confused coastguard officers who may be scanning radio signals for smuggling. Nonetheless, the success of Ahmed's broadcasting initiatives

prompted other performers to follow their lead by using VHF airwaves to broadcast their own performances.

Salman, the other wedding performer, organized VHF broadcast not link to smuggling but on sincere intention of sharing Tausug music as well as popularizing their names so families would know and hire them in the next wedding celebration. Salman set up their broadcast from the confines of their living room in one of the slums of Zamboanga. The mechanics of their broadcast is vastly different from the one tied to smuggling. Salman explained that he and his colleagues would usually go and visit the VHF broadcast channels already teeming with users and invite them to switch to their music channel. They would also receive several song requests and carry on with their performance way beyond midnight. Many other follow Salman's model of broadcasting filling up the airwaves over Sulu and Zamboanga with Tausug music night after night.

The nightly performances on VHF radio illustrate how global mediation technologies were used by situated agents to sustain the practice of showcasing heritage performances across the Tausug enclaves of Sulu and Zamboanga. They offer a picture of how industrial two-way radios, as it was with audiocassettes and phonographs, were remade into local cultural artefacts and effectively indigenised as they were integrated into local cultural affairs. At the margins of mediascapes, the term Appadurai (1996) uses to described the globalisation of media flows, the indigenised practice of mediation extended the Tausug imaginary beyond bounded, narrow, and parochial spaces of wedding celebrations even as they continue to return to them as the wellspring of their imaginings. The two-way radio in this sense emerged not merely as an amusing industrial object but a productive cultural tool that Tausugs made better use of in the imagination of Tausug identity. Again, this practice is consistent with the older tradition of indigenizing global cultural flows, such as the vernacularisation of the Islamic exegesis of the prophetic life in the Arabic *Qisa* into the Tausug *kissa* of musical narratives. As they indigenised universal human acts, such as religious principles and industrial media technologies, they have in the process transcended what was local practice into a widely shared cosmopolitan imagination.



Figure 7. Tausug wedding company advertises their VHF radio channel on the cover of the VCD released in Zamboanga.

VHF radio music programmes had already stopped by the time I started my fieldwork in October 2009 but some performers went on using the equipment as medium for contacting them for wedding performances in addition to their mobile phones. I stumbled across a copy of a music video that suggests the continued use of VHF radio in the age of VCDs. The VCD featured a selection of *pangalay* and music videos produced by a wedding performing company from Sulu named, in English, the “Spider Group” which I showed in Figure 7. This highlights the enduring connection of wedding performances and technological shifts with the cosmopolitanism of Tausug imaginaries as expressed through their performance heritage.

VCD Performances: The Reinvigoration of Heritage

The first of the music VCDs circulating in Zamboanga and Sulu was a collection of Tausug folk rock music performed by Sidznie Band, a musical wedding company. Band members claimed they had sold out more than 20,000 copies and set forth a wave of Tausug digital music video productions in Zamboanga and Sulu.

Following the success of the Sidznie Band album, new sets of VCD appear in the market and sidewalks nearly every month establishing a small media industry for VCDs. Like the wedding performers of the phonograph a generation or two before them, the younger wedding artists also discovered the potential of the VCDs in raising their profile, renewing the competitive spirit that drove the production of the old *kissa* and *gabbang* during the flurry of phonograph recordings in the 1960s. That competitive spirit ushered the expansion of an even broader genre of Tausug performances that blended global performing influences of pop, rock and roll, mellow, slow rock, and disco into local cultural productions. These blending spurred the making of a musical genre referred on the VCDs as *Tausug Non-stop Songs*, *Tausug Unplugged*, *Tausug Comedy Hit Songs*, *Comedy Gabbang*, *Tausug Folksongs*, *Tausug Balladeer*, *Tausug Love Songs Collection*, *Tausug Medley Song*, *The Best of Tausug Love Songs*, and *Tausug MTV Karaoke*. Apart from new musical genres, the age of VCD also spur the production of versions of these heritage performances. At the market in Zamboanga, new editions of the *kissa* and *gabbang* performances began surfacing in the mid-2000s. Amongst them are the VCDs produced by Mohammad Elias Hussin, the wedding performer who recorded long-playing phonographs in the 1960s. In the era of the VCDs, Hussin reworked the categorization of *kissa* and *gabbang* from the *Muslim Ballads* of the 1960s phonographs into a *Binhi sin Kamaasan* (Seed of the Forebears), inadvertently magnifying their value as heritage and cultural music that speaks for all generations of Tausug in Sulu and Zamboanga and those who moved beyond these shores. Additionally, the image of cultural fusions were also evident on the cover of Hussin's new VCD that shows a photograph of him wearing a skullcap commonly worn by Indonesian and Malaysian men, his collaborators in dresses accentuating the Tausug heritage fabric, a picture of a *gabbang* and a label that says "Mindanao Culture". Hussin's VCD cover, which I laid out in Figure 8, is consistent with the themes of cultural melding underlying the mediation of musical productions from the era of the phonographs (Figure 9) to two-way radio. This was the desire to transcend the parochialism of community life even as they repeatedly return to these heritages in the imagination of the broader Tausug community.

Moreover, the VCD productions did not only usher new compositions of narrative heritage but precipitated a new round of reproductions of classical *kissa*, and



Figure 8. A cover of “*Binhi Sin Kamaasan: Tunis Jaga ha Pangantin*” (Seeds of the Forebears: Music for the Bride and Groom), *kissa* and *gabbang* performance on VCD by Mohammad Elias Hussin.



Figure 9. An old phonograph produced by Mohammad Elias Hussien in the 1960s. The label reads “The Sulu Gabbang Troupe, this *kissa* is performed by Brother Mohammad Hussein.”

gabbang performances recorded on Sulu musical phonographs half a century ago. In their digital reincarnation, the narratives of the old recordings were visualized and animated with imaginaries from other cultural worlds, adding a new layer of hybridity to older hybrid narrative tradition. A case in point is the Sufi-inspired *kissa* of *Usulan sin Nyawa Iban Jasad: Tausug Hadis Pakamatay* (The Fate of the Soul and Carnal Body: Death as Told in the Hadith), a narrative encapsulating Tausug notions of universal Muslim morality and afterlife. The *Usulan kissa* features *gabbang* music and a melodic but poignant narration of the terrifying cosmic fate that awaits the soul of a Muslim person who lived a life of decadence as well as a prayerful path of redemption that one can follow to avoid a terrible afterlife. The *Usulan kissa* was first



Figure 10. The cover of *Usulan sin Nyawa iban Jasad* VCD showing a photograph of the performer, Hadja Malangka.

recorded on a phonograph and sold in Sulu in the 1960s. Subsequently, vendors like Ka Jul copied the phonograph record of *Usulan* on audiocassettes and sold them out. Around the time of my fieldwork, a VCD version of this forty-five minute ballad (*see* Figure 10) appeared in the VCD alley of the Zamboanga market complete with video images ripped from two different religious Arabic short films and some pictures of mosques from around the world as visuals. The first film portrays an Arab man living a decadent life of drinking and gambling in his worldly incarnation until struck by death. The film follows his funeral but shows him being cosmically reincarnated as a soul and then cast away from the grave to the fiery cauldrons of hell (*see* Figure 11). The second film presents video instruction of the *madhab* tradition of Islamic prayer. The video deleted the original sound on both films and replaced them with the rhythm and melody of *Usulan sin Nyawa*. The first film was used to visually portray the *Usulan* narration of the infernal afterlife that awaits a man who lives in moral decadence and the second video for its message of deliverance through a prayerful life. Added on to the second video are pictures of magnificent mosques from around the world, leaving viewers a visual sense of resplendent beauty and goodness for those who live a pious Islamic life.

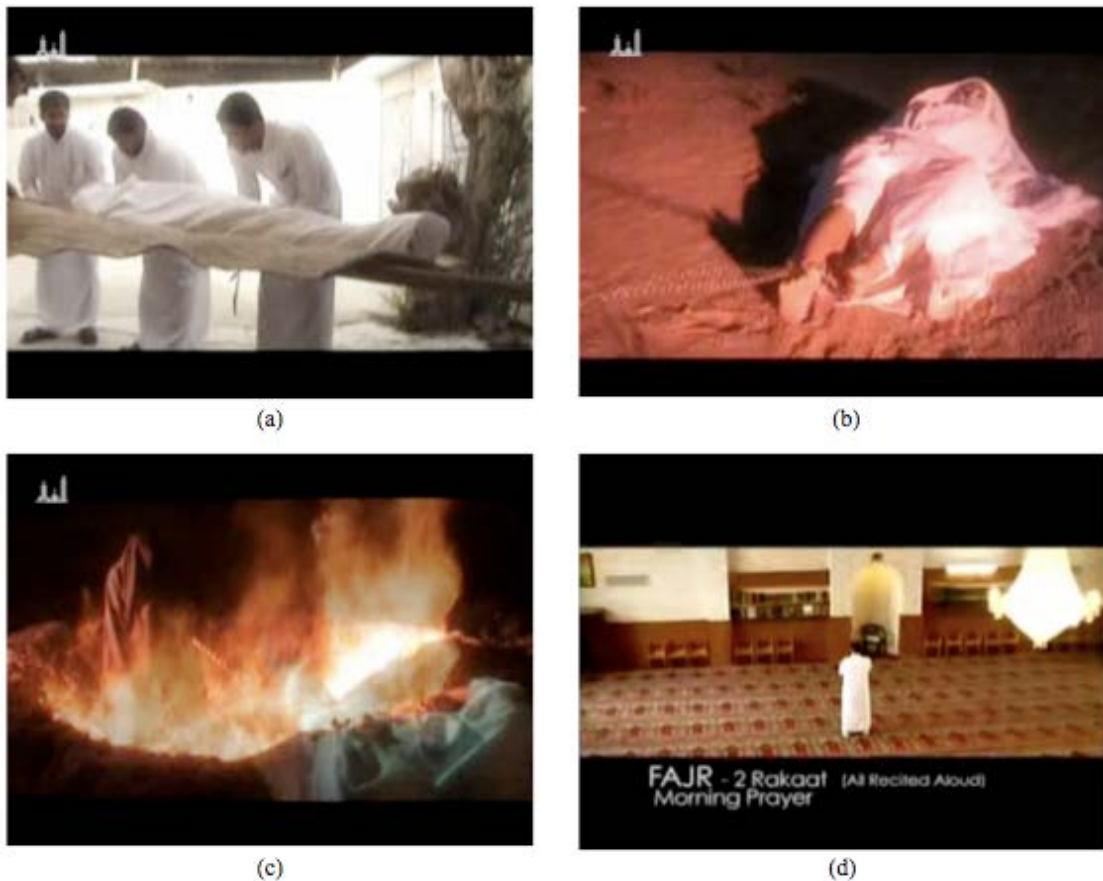


Figure 11. Kaeting, the vendor and producer in Zamboanga, utilized images from (a to c) an Arabic film on an Islamic cosmos and Islamic prayer following the (d) madhab orientation, to animate a Tausug *kissa* on death and redemption, the *Usulan sin Nyawa Iban Jasad* as performed by Hadja Malangka.

The person behind the production of the *Usulan* VCD was Eting, the seller I cited in the introduction and in Chapter 2. Eting said he actually downloaded the Arabic films that he had used on the VCDs from YouTube. He does not speak Arabic but made sense of the images by following them as they unfold on the film. In the end, he concluded that the visuals resonated very well with the *Usulan* message of hellish providence that awaits the soul of an un-pious man and the idea of redemption for those who follow a pious path. “The Arabic films I found in the Internet were the perfect visuals for *Usulan sin Nyawa*. People who will see these images on an *Usulan sin Nyawa* video will surely be moved and inspired to reflect how they must live their lives. I am making more copies in time for the Ramadan,” Eting told me. He produced about 500 copies. The *Usulan* VCD illustrates an example of how layers upon layers of cultural fusions in heritage performances are shaping the Tausug imagining of

Muslim cosmology. In this case, an Arab video of a Muslim soul wandering in an Islamic cosmos is being blended into the vernacular Tausug narrative tradition of *kissa* that in turn evolve from discrepant Islamic traditions of Mad'hab teachings and and the Sufi Qisa exegesis, as I have explained earlier in this chapter.

The *Usulan* VCD is only one of hundreds of video representations of Tausug performances visualized with images sourced from imaginaries adrift around the world. VCDs of Tausug pop songs, rock, and ballads featured videos from Malaysia, Indonesia, or India's Bollywood, America's Hollywood, and so on. When these reproduction practices are viewed in the context of the many episodes of integration of disparate cultural traditions on to the making of Tausug performance heritage, they reveal a productive pattern of an inclusively cosmopolitan imagination of community. Furthermore, these media practices also show that contrary to ominous fears of disappearing Tausug performance heritage in the advent of new media, at the capable hands of street based media makers like Eting and Ka Jul the technology was instrumental in spurring the revitalization of Tausug performance heritage. To a certain extent, the long running Tausug media production practices can be compared and contrasted with the gramophone recording of Sufi devotional *qawwali* music amidst the rising tide of nationalism in South Asia in the 1940s. With strong support and patronage from Sufi religious leaders, politicians associated with Sufism, and local and western corporate partnership, *qawwali* gramophones played instrumental roles in establishing the category of devotional "Muslim music" and in the recognition of *qawwali* as a feature of the Indian national culture even as Muslims constitute a minority in India (Qureshi 1999: 69-70). In the 1980s, audiocassette record producers and performers reinvigorated *qawwali* as well as catalyze the emergence of a commercially-popular regional, "pluralistic", "hybrid", "at once modern and affirmative of diversity of the public, community aesthetics and values" (Manuel 1993:155).

In similar vein, Tausug cultural producers also categorized phonograph recordings of Sufi-inspired *kissa*, *luguh*, and *gabbang* music, as markers of "Muslim" identity. On phonographs, these performances were represented as exemplification of "Muslim culture" for the Islamized minority of postcolonial Christian-majority Philippines. In contrast with the audiocassette production in Northern India, however,

recording corporations played no observable roles in Tausug production. The greater segment of the Tausug political and intellectual elite is not taking part in the promotion of mediated music from the streets and wet markets of Zamboanga and Sulu. Some religious leaders associated with the Mad'hab schools of legal Islam, the Islamic tradition with the most expansive community of followers in Muslim Mindanao, questions the morality of sustaining the heritage performances casting doubts on the soundness of their interpretation of Islamic texts. Rather than that of the upper segment of Tausug society, these mediation practices are mainly the handiwork of subaltern constituents within a minority constituency of the nation state - the subaltern of the subalterns, so to speak. These subaltern agents, comprised mainly of wedding performers, vendors, and impoverished small media producers, serve as the driving force behind the long-running Tausug mediation practice from below. They thrived amidst a social and political environment scarred by a long-standing secessionist war.

The perseverance of wedding performers, sellers, and small media makers in producing electronic records of heritage performances amidst difficult conditions of violence and inequality, and through shifting technologies across the decades indicates that there is more to these enduring mediation enterprises than simply a consequence of globalised media flows. They raise the question of what capacity do wedding performers have to be able to spur an enduring media practice in Zamboanga and Sulu? Why are performers needed in the ritual sociality of weddings? In examining these matters, I return to and tackle the second aim I laid down earlier in this chapter that is the investigation of the extent by which wedding performers and performances shape the practice of mediation of Tausug heritage performances. I will extend that aim by identifying the local cultural resources driving the production and mediation of the performances, and through it the cosmopolitan imagination of Tausug community.

The Ubiquity of Tausug Weddings

Weddings are by far the most ubiquitous social occasion that I observed in the Tausug communities of Zamboanga and neighbouring area of Sulu. In the market where I hang out, hardly a week passes without chatters of an impending wedding by

someone they know. There will always be talks about a coming wedding of a neighbour or of relatives in their respective hometowns. Talks of weddings also mean that wedding performers are constantly obtaining bookings for performances. Nearly every week in the market, I meet a performer who happens to pass by on the way to or coming from a night or three of wedding performances. Demands for wedding performers only decline during the holy month of Ramadan but pick up again on the day of the *Hilaya*, the Tausug term for the feast of the *Eid'l Fitr* marking the end of Ramadan.

The significance of weddings and wedding performances in the social life of communities across Zamboanga and Sulu are discernible though not elaborated in existing ethnography. Ethnographers who conducted fieldwork in different Muslim communities in the area during the last five decades hardly missed out brief accounts of wedding performers and performances they had engaged with no matter what phenomena they were studying (Nimmo 1972, Kiefer 1986, Bottignolo 1999, Johnson 1997). H. Arlo Nimmo, who conducted fieldwork on culture change amongst the *Sama* in the 1950s, notes that apart from abundant food to feast on, wedding performers offer dances and musical performances lasting from afternoon through the night. Nimmo points that it was common to see the kindred of grooms collectively raising money to cover the “considerable cost” of the feast and the wedding performers (Nimmo 1972: 30). Bruno Bottignolo (1999), whose aimed is to study religion and spirituality, wrote about witnessing a three-day wedding celebration amongst sea-dwelling *Badjaos* and wrote a vivid picture of a groom sailing towards the home of his bride with musicians playing their instruments at the stern of his boat (Ibid., 228). A friend, an anthropologist and Tausug native speaker who conducted fieldwork in his father’s old hometown in Sulu for an ethnographic study on local violence in early 2000s, also wrote about a wedding performance featuring a balladeer singing an ode to the martyred in the secessionist conflict (Husin, *unpublished*). Thomas Kiefer, an American anthropologist who lived in a Sulu coastal town for two years in the early 1960s, refers to wedding performers as “professional musicians” whose musical performances he described as “highly professionalized” (1986: 41, 1968: 108). He notes that people regard the hiring of wedding performers “as ‘business’ for which people should be paid, and the pecuniary motive is paramount in the role identities of most professional musicians” (Kiefer 1968: 108, emphasis in

original). Kiefer observes and discussed briefly that the hiring of wedding performers is culturally situated in the practice of producing bride wealth, which Tausugs refer as *ungsud* (1986: 41). Such practice is still the case today, which I contend plays a critical part in the long running practice of mediation of Tausug cultural performances and along with it the imagination of the Tausug community.

Wedding Performances as Bridewealth

From stories of wedding negotiations shared with me by wedding performers, I gathered that people have different interpretation of the relevance of *ungsud* in Tausug marriage. Some believes that the *ungsud* is meant to demonstrate the capacity of the groom and his kin to support the new couple in raising a family. Many also idealize *ungsud* as a gift that the bride could use in whatever way she chooses to exemplify the goodness of married life. Some argue that it is an Islamic edict whilst others dispute the claim. Nonetheless, Tausugs generally observe the practice of negotiating and exchanging an *ungsud* as part of a long and elaborate pre-wedding ritual convention of Tausug society. *Ungsud* are negotiated in a ritual process called *pagpangasawa* or the betrothal of couples to be engaged. It is normally handed over to the family of the bride in another ritual called *pagturul tayma* or the period of setting the wedding rite and celebration. An *ungsud* is normally given in cash but presented in symbolic way in the material form of an ark adorned with cut papers, ribbons, and Philippine currency notes stuck like flags on rice cakes as I illustrated in the photograph I snapped in one of the weddings I attended in Zamboanga (see Figure 12). In some weddings, especially those of more affluent families with relatives working abroad, the arks were stuck with United States dollars and Saudi Arabian Riyals. Families in the slums, however, dispense with the ark, which they find expensive. Instead, they use the full amount of the *ungsud* to finance the expenditures for the celebration. In the slums, an *ungsud* typically ranges between 10,000 to 50,000 pesos depending on the economic capacity of the groom's family in raising the money. Such amount of money is equivalent to three months to nearly a year's worth of earnings for an ordinary family in the slums. To raise the bridewealth, other kin usually step in to offer their contributions in a Tausug moral expression of mutual support called *pagbaugbug*.

In the market where I hang out, I usually find people pre-occupied with conversations of how negotiations on *ungsud* and priorities for spending the money were done and concluded. Many of these talks would turn to the agreed size of the *ungsud*, the length of celebrations, and the fortunate wedding performer to be hired. An informant, a video maker with relatively affluent parents, told me that in one of the betrothal negotiations involving his cousin the groom's family offered an *ungsud* worth about 200,000 pesos. A grandmother who took part in the negotiations demanded that a chunk of that *ungsud* be used to hire and pay for travel of a Sama-Tausug wedding performer who has gone to live in Sabah but made popular audiocassette records of bright, catchy, synthesizer-based *sangbay* music in the eighties. Depending on the popularity of the performer, standard rates for wedding performers in Zamboanga ranges from 5,000 to 20,000 pesos for each night of



Figure 12. An ark symbolising a Tausug bridewealth (*ungsud*).

performance. The fee covers payment for the sound system and musical instruments that the performers themselves rent and take to the weddings. The rate amounts to nearly half of the *ungsud* that poorer families in the slums are able to offer. Many of these families, however, would not let go of the performances even if they had to limit the amount of food to feast on, illustrating the level of priority that many Tausug put on wedding performances. To a significant extent, *ungsud* serves as an economic resource driving the enterprise of wedding entertainment that in turn sustained, revitalized, as well as enriched the production and reproduction of Tausug performance heritage with global imaginaries such as the *Diana sangbay* and *kissa* ballads I discussed above. My friends in the wedding performing circuit helped me count the number of wedding entertainers emerging from an enterprise underwritten by bride wealth money. In the end we counted 30 groups, many of whom produce their own music, dances, and videos that make wedding entertainment enterprise a highly competitive as well as a dynamic resource for sustaining Tausug cultural performances.

The link connecting *ungsud*, the small enterprise of heritage performances, and enduring cottage industry of musical mediation illustrates the deeper cultural roots of media production in Zamboanga and Sulu. These connections show that cultural conventions drive the practice of local media production whilst being enabled by global circulation of media technologies. In Tausug communities, people take global technological flows not for what they are when they come but as useful instruments in reproducing and reinforcing already existing cultural practices. Yet as they appropriate them, they are also transforming and enriching local cultural conventions in ways that make them more attuned to the world. One example of this emerging consciousness towards the world is the production of new lexicons ascribing Tausug wedding performers. Older wedding performers refer to themselves variably as *mangagabang* (gabbang players), *mangangalang* (singers), or *mangangalay* (dancer). In recent years, the ascription shifted towards Anglophonic terms: as *mag-oorgan*; *live band*, and *artists*. *Mag-oorgan* originates in the seventies as a reference to the changes of musical instruments that performers take to the weddings. In this period, performers began shifting their instruments from bamboo xylophones (*gabbang*), horse-string violins (*biyula*), and brass gongs (*kulintangan*) to electric organs. *Live band* as ascription emerged in the late nineties and two thousands

when some wedding performers portray themselves as a folk rock group with a drum set and electric guitars as instruments. The notion of wedding performers as *artists* is a category that media makers use in labelling the audiocassettes and VCDs that they sell in the market. Wedding performers and collaborating video producers in turn deploy one or a combination of these lexicons on their videos as codes for promising a spectacle in wedding performances should they be hired.

A spectacular wedding performing company is expected to offer a complete set of Tausug performances, the heritage dance and music as well as new genre of Tausug pop and rock songs. One of the videos offering such promise came out with the title *Kulintangan* in reference to rhythmic brass gong music accompanying the dance heritage of *pangalay*. Instead of brass gongs, the instrument played was an electric organ. Performing the *pangalay kulintangan* is a young man in a headscarf (*pis syabit*), a silken vest (*badju lapi*) and a loose trouser (*sawal kantiyu*) conveying the message that he can simultaneously perform *pangalay* in both indigenous and new way. He was filmed on a beach gracefully and dexterously swaying his arms, shoulders, torso, legs, fingers, and feet in a movement that resembles the rising and falling of the waves behind him. At the bottom of the video screen, illustrated in Figure 13, crawls a text that read: “Sidznie group offers live band music, dance (*pangalay*) and synthesizer musical performances for all occasions. We also offer video editing services. For enquiries, please contact cellular phone number: 091690000838” (emphasis supplied). I met the dancer on the video. His name is Ajing, one of the better-known *pangalay* dancers around the wedding entertainment circuit of Zamboanga and Sulu, and whom I will also cite again in Chapter 4.

Ajing and his colleagues produced the video to promote their wedding entertainment company, which they named the *Sidznie Band* after the man who founded their group. Ajing says the goal of the video is to project *Sidznie Band*, one of the earliest group that used the VCD to promote their music, as the ultimate Tausug performing group with a stable of musical talents who could offer a total Tausug entertainment experience, ranging from heritage performances to new genre of local music. Ajing’s colleague also produced VCDs of Tausug folk rock music and showing the same crawling texts on the bottom of their videos. As argued and illustrated above, the deep and expansive reach of global industrial media technology



Figure 13. Ajing, a wedding dancer in Zamboanga, performs the *pangalay* in these series of video grabs from *Kulintang* VCD.

are creating the conditions for a subaltern mediation practice but they did not just happen because they came and penetrated local communities. In Zamboanga and Sulu, these global technological and cultural flows were appropriated and reintegrated in local social life to sustain deep, widespread, and long running cultural practices. In this case, the Tausug practice of holding elaborate and spectacular wedding performances is instrumental in fuelling this enterprise in as much as global process are enabling them. This then raises the question, what kind of sociality does wedding celebrations produce? In this discussion, I will illustrate how a sociality formed by neighbourhood spectacles arising from the celebratory spaces of wedding performances provide a salient social and cultural resource in stimulating the production of Tausug imaginaries. In turn, the production of these imaginaries became integral to the formation of Tausug sociality.

One way of thinking about the sociality arising from exuberant Tausug wedding celebrations is by casting it around Victor Turner's appraisal of effervescent, evanescent but recurrent cultural performances as a salient feature of social process by which people think about as well as creatively participate in the making of their own society (Turner 1988: 22). Sociality emerging from cultural performances constitute a ground wherein situated agents, in particular performers and audience, actively produce an imaginative vision of society more than just offer a reflection of the broad cultural themes, values, or processes of social and cultural changes. As Turner writes, "cultural performances are not simple reflectors or expressions of culture or even of changing culture but may themselves be active agencies of change, representing the eye by which culture sees itself and the drawing board on which creative actors sketch out what they believe to be more apt or interesting 'designs for living'". (Ibid., 24, emphasis in the original). Turner builds the idea of cultural performances as social process from an ethnographic account and analysis that Milton Singer (1971, in Turner) wrote about the social lives of Indians in Madras. Singer, as Turner notes, articulated the term "cultural performances" to provide a unit of observation of an encompassing and overlapping features of cultural and artistic events in Madras. In this context, the notion of cultural performances captures altogether social affairs, which would normally be categorized in other cultural context as plays, concerts, and lectures; as well as prayers, readings and recitations of ritual texts, sacred dances, rites and ceremonies in weddings and festivals that would

otherwise be regarded as religious and ritual events. Turner is particularly interested in knowing how cultural performances are expressed in what Singer calls “cultural media”, an overlapping modes of communication that include not only spoken language but also songs, dances, acting, graphic and plastic arts, and even devotional films (Turner, 24).

Cultural media reveal how messages conveyed in rituals, drama, or any other genre of performances are expressed not in a single mode of communication but through interacting medium “like a hall of mirrors – magic mirrors, each interpreting as well as reflecting the images beamed of it, and flashed from one to the others” (Ibid.). Turner shows that cultural media such as ritual, drama, and performances are themselves “tiered structure” that make them flexible genres and “nuanced instruments capable of carrying and communicating many messages at once” (Ibid.). Turner, however, moves beyond Singer’s analysis by locating both performers and the audience at the centre of interacting cultural media underpinning cultural performances. The active engagement of both actors and audience in the interplay of cultural media reveals the social process behind the imagining of the broad contours of their way of life, or as Turner would say, “designs for living” (Ibid). By placing cultural actors and audience at the centre of the analysis of social process, I contend that it is possible to extend Turner’s approach in examining overlapping and interrelated modes of communication of the messages of cosmopolitan values and imaginaries in local cultural performances. On this end, we can think of Turner’s reanalysis of cultural performances and the intertwining cultural media underlying them as a relevant frame in identifying the cosmopolitanism of the sociality emerging from ubiquitous, effervescent but evanescent Tausug wedding celebrations.

Weddings As Stage for Cultural Performances

As I noted earlier, ethnographies on Muslim communities across Zamboanga and Sulu dating back to the fifties provide descriptions of wedding celebrations no matter what research questions were being pursued. I contend that the attention to the weddings, though mostly sparing, was generated by the fact of the ubiquity and exuberance of the performances in the celebrations. In Barangay Mariki, the sprawling slum of 6,000 families where I usually hang out with my informants, I

would always notice a wedding held in one of the houses nearly every fortnight. I myself have received more than twenty invitations not only to weddings around Zamboanga where I focused my fieldwork but also to remote islands and town centres of Sulu. Due to security and logistical reasons, I only managed to attend nine of these celebrations all within Zamboanga and mainly by tagging along with wedding performers and video makers. Nonetheless, the nine weddings that I attended offered me comparative insights on how a cosmopolitan sociality is being formed amidst the effervescence of these celebratory events. The celebratory spaces of the weddings show how the cosmopolitan consciousness are being conveyed through interweaving media of songs, dances, stages of the rites, preaching, and videos manifested under the notion of cultural performances. Furthermore, my fieldwork position as companion to the performers and video makers allowed me to see from their end how the intertwining cultural media underpinning the Tausug cultural performances entangled them with their audience.

Six of the nine weddings I attended with the performers were held in the slums. On at least two occasions, the wedding took place at the home of an affluent family and another in a hotel²². In many of these weddings, the performances start hours before the actual wedding rites, breaking only for fifteen minutes to observe the five daily Islamic prayers that many in the communities adhere. The performers told me that there were few weddings on which they were hired to perform for three straight days covering the day before, the day of the rites which Tausugs sum up under the term *kawin*, and the day after. Elderly performers were saying that in the older days the performances would last up to a week. In the weddings that I attended, performances normally start at mid morning lasting throughout the night until just before the daybreak *bang*, the Tausug term for the *adhan* (Arabic term for call to prayer) the next day. Performances at hotel weddings tend to be shorter because the families could only secure a few hours of use of the function rooms but the celebration usually continued either at the home of the bride's or the groom's family. Whilst the celebration and performances of most weddings go on nearly round the clock, the actual wedding rites (*kawin*) are rather short and officiated discrepantly in

²² There were several instances when I was offered the opportunity to join the wedding performers in the one of the string of islands across Sulu but regrettably I had to decline the offers amidst growing incidents of kidnappings in the region.

different weddings. Some weddings integrate both the *kawin* and the celebrations in large open banquet halls with the couple occupying the centre of public attention, projecting an aura of a theatrical performance. British anthropologist Mark Johnson (1997) who conducted fieldwork in Jolo in the nineties notes that his informants believed such practice represent a rather new adaptation of Tausug marriage rites, which is usually done separately at home and the celebration in a hall. Johnson, however, described the celebration he had attended as particularly lavish appearing more like a “theatre production” with the bride, wearing a cloth adorned with indigenous and globally trendy designs, being carried on a palanquin with a uniformed choir accompanying her. The ceremony itself, Johnson notes, “took place on a revolving dias-like platform, mechanically imitating the traditional turning-round of bride and groom which marks the end of wedding rituals” (Ibid., 76). Johnson interpreted this event as “another example of what some researchers have regarded as particularly ‘Southeast Asian’ process of localization ... a retranslation of global forms in terms of local cultural traditions and sensibilities” (Ibid., emphasis in original). The localisation of global cultural forms is also apparent in less lavish weddings done the old fashion way at home. Key to that localisation is how interacting cultural media underlying cultural performances, which Turner described and I discussed above, conveyed the ritual message of marriage. As I have noted in this chapter and other parts of the thesis, the process of indigenising and conveying global cultural flows into domestic spaces of Zamboanga and Sulu are rather extensive and materially observable in the form of heritage ballads, indigenous instrumental music, dances, and their mediated versions on phonographs, audiocassettes and videos. How these varying forms of cultural mediation interplay and generate situated forms of cosmopolitan consciousness can also be viewed in the sociality emerging from the celebratory occasion of weddings, be they grand or less lavish and done in a large banquet hall or within the confines of home. I saw these dynamics at play in a wedding celebration at the home of a relatively affluent family in Barangay Kansayangan, a short three-mile ride from the Zamboanga city centre. It was a wedding of a nephew of a video seller who invited me to the occasion.

The video seller took me to the wedding just after midday although I was told that the rite is not starting until late in the afternoon. Other guests also trickled in and like us were ushered by the hosts to several sets of large round tables laid out in a



Figure 14. The groom (centre) with his pandalas (groom's young companions) at a wedding tent adorned with tapestry from neighbouring Basilan, balloons, paper sunflowers, Persian rug, and the announcement of a nuptial.

yard fronting the house and next to a wedding tent adorned with hand-woven tapestry from the neighbouring island of Basilan, red and blue balloons clustered into the likeness of petals, paper sunflowers, Persian rugs for a floor, and the English word: “Nuptial” (see Figure 14). As soon as we were seated, the hosts served the guests the main courses of the celebration. As we dined, a group of wedding performers arrived and immediately rushed to set up their musical instrument – a keyboard synthesizer – and large and powerful sound system next to the tent. The performers, whom I also met at the market, were actually running late but soon after finishing the set up, they started singing Tausug romantic pop, folk rock, and *sangbay* songs for at least five-dozen guests in the banquet. Their music echoed loud enough for the entire neighbourhood to hear. Sometime around half past three in the afternoon the elders and the religious stopped the performances and took over the microphones to start the rites leading to the *kawin*, the actual rite and declaration of marriage. One elder, wearing a Malay-Indonesian *kufi* hat, led the groom in Tausug heritage dress of white *sawwal kantiyu* (loose trouser) and *badju lapi* (silken shirt), to a soft coloured couch that sits on Persian rugs under the balloon-adorned tent on the yard. For nearly an

hour, a succession of elderly and religious speakers came forward and sat with the groom on the couch with a microphone on hand. The elders and the religious were dispensing practical advice on starting a family as well as theological discourses on Muslim marriage, which they say were based on the sound teachings of Islamic scholars of Damascus in Syria and Al-Azhar in Cairo where many of them studied.

Notwithstanding two hour-long speechifying and discoursing about the universal message of Islamic marriage, not at any one point did the bride show up in consonance with the indigenous practice of hiding the bride before the groom declare his commitment to marriage. That commitment was to be articulated in a ritual act of *santiki* and then fetching her from her hiding place where an imam will officiate for them the final rites of the wedding. It was not until nearly half past five when the elders wrapped up their speeches and called for the imam to perform the *santiki*, a rite marked by the groom articulating his commitment whilst they both clutch each other's right hand and touch each other's thumbs. The imam led the groom to fetch the bride in a room where she was hidden whilst the wedding performers sung a series of keyboard-based romantic Tausug pop songs. This performance contrasts but appropriates and continues the older practice of a *biyula* (horse-string violin) player and *kissa* singer of walking behind the groom as he takes his hidden bride to the wedding rite.

I was allowed to follow the groom and the imam into the room and witnessed the short rite of *pagbat'al*, a symbolic act of taking the bride by staking his thumb on her forehead, and the subsequent lifting and turning around of the couple by the imam to mark the end of the sacred part of the wedding ritual (*kawin*). The rite, which was witnessed only by ten others including three children serving as her *pandala* (bridesmaids) and their mothers were all done in a quarter of an hour. Before sun set at six, the sacred wedding ritual ceremonies (*kawin*) were over setting off the stage for more musical and dance performances. The performances went on interrupted only by the *Maghrib* prayer at six and the *Issa* around suppertime. The loud sound system set up early in the afternoon attracted neighbours who came in after supper from their respective homes. By nine in the evening, the crowd swelled to around five hundred forming a large vibrant audience in the yard. The performers took turns playing Tausug mellow, rock, and comedic songs with messages revolving around an array of

themes of love, misadventures, and memories of old Sulu but as the crowd grew, the audience began demanding that they sing *sangbay* and play *pangalay* music on their synthesizers. The performers readily acceded to the request by rendering several sets of *sangbay* music including a version of *Diana sangbay* I discussed earlier. As the night wore on, several guests join the performers in the singing and the dancing of the *pangalay* in styles that combine funky dance steps from Hollywood with the graceful flexion and extension of arms and fingers in indigenous rendition of the *pangalay* as what Ajing did on the video I described above. The celebration continued until way past midnight with performances conflating old indigenous musical and dance styles with globally familiar pop performances.

The sequence of the rites as well as the nightlong celebration in Barangay Kansanyangan exemplify how overarching messages of the indigenisation of global cultural flows are being conveyed through deeply rooted and intertwining cultural media underpinning Tausug cultural performances. The messages were conveyed through wedding speeches that articulate the idea of universal Islamic morality within the context of distinctively indigenous rituals marking Tausug marriage. These messages can also be located in the adornment on the tent that fused indigenous tapestry with Persian rugs, coloured papers, and balloons. Furthermore, the messages melding local and global cultural forms are mediated on the Malay-Indonesian and indigenous clothes that garb the imam and the newly wed, the pop and *sangbay* music that the performers play, and the conflation of funky Hollywood steps on the veritable heritage of *pangalay* (dances). Like a “hall of mirrors”, as Turner puts it, these intertwining media reflect and bounce off the idea of cultural conflation in every sequence of the Tausug wedding rite making the event a transculturally rich experience. In many ways, Tausug weddings are more than a rite of passage (Van Gannep 1977), or a site where symbols and meanings of performances can be interpreted (Geertz 2000). Rather, it is also an event that celebrates the amalgamation of the universal traditions of Islam, old local practices, and global popular culture as they were all fused together to form a distinctively Tausug cultural performance. Whilst effervescently evanescent, the celebratory spaces of the wedding offered a rich ground on which people experience and interact with the transcultural messages exemplified in the cultural performances. How this effervescent and evanescent event ushers the formation of a cosmopolitan sociality is even more evident in the second

wedding that I attended. In these performances, we can see how the decades of small media productions in the streets and markets of Zamboanga and Sulu are intricately woven into the celebratory spaces of weddings.

Ajing, the *pangalay* dancer in the *Kulintangan* video I mentioned earlier, took me to a wedding at a small slum community squeezed into a pocket of open space in a housing subdivision reserved for the Philippine military some two and half miles off from the city centre. At the centre of the slum is a clearing with a small makeshift wooden stage adorned with colourful paper flowers and a red backdrop emblazoned with more paper flowers, heart shapes, and the word “Nuptial” above the name of the bride and groom. The banquet and the performances were well underway when we arrived at ten in the morning. In fact, Ajing and I already heard the music from the performances three street corners away from the entry point of the community. Members of Ajing’s wedding musical company were already up on stage performing whilst the wedding guests gathered around a few sets of plastic round tables partaking the banquet. Amidst the celebration, however, I have not seen the groom and bride. I was told that the actual wedding rites would not start until after the *Asr*, the afternoon prayer at three, but the host thought that as a matter of custom, the performances and the banquet must commence. Like the first wedding I described above, the performances were stopped by the elders around four in the afternoon to give way to the wedding rites. Unlike the first wedding, both the bride and groom were on stage as the religious offered their speeches on universal Islamic morality and the elders some practical advice on married life. In this wedding, the indigenous rites of *santiki*, *pagbat’al*, and the turning of bride and groom marking the end of the ritual were all done in full view of the guests and neighbours. Like the first wedding, the sacred performance of the marriage commitment lasted no more than fifteen minutes.

Soon after the couple was introduced to the guests and the community as newly weds, the performances resumed and went throughout the night, interrupted only by the call for the *Maghrib* prayers at six in the evening and *Issa* at about seven. Around eight in the evening, the wedding crowd composed mostly of neighbours and relatives of the bride and groom, swelled to nearly a thousand even as the hosts stopped serving food. The banquet tables brimming with food earlier that day were all folded away. Instead of the hosts serving food, ambulant candy and cigarette vendors

strayed around the celebration site to watch the performances and sell their goods. Whilst the banquet had long ended, performances were aplenty. People poured in not for the banquet but to watch and participate in cultural performances that were made familiar by VCD as well as the earlier audiocassette recordings. The audience sung along with the VCD repertoire that Ajing and his company prepared. Some went up on stage presenting their own renditions of popular VCD ballads that they had learned by heart. The performances went on with the performers and sometimes a member of the audience coming up to sing a Tausug pop song or two. Most songs that they have chosen to perform revolve around the universal themes of unrequited love, romance, the pain of breaking up, lover's farewell and return, the joy of reuniting, as well as local memories of Sulu and life in Zamboanga.

Ajing reprised the *pangalay* styles and steps on the popular *Kulintangan* VCD that I described above (*and illustrated in* Figure 13) whilst diversifying his performance to include an array of *sangbay* music. One of his well-received performances was a rendition of a version of *Diana*, the *sangbay* I described earlier. As the performances heated up, some in the audience took turns climbing up on stage to show off their own interpretation of the *Kulintangan* or the pop versions of the *sangbay* sung for them by the performers. Like the performances in the first wedding, some performers melded funky moves to the *pangalay*. Others turned the *pangalay* into a game of showmanship by performing with a glass of water on their heads as well as of flexing their legs and stretching and lowering their backs too low in moves that resemble the popular 1960s American limbo rock dancing though without the limbo bar. The audience grumbled in disapproval on some of the performances but many appreciated and showed their appreciation by coming up on stage slipping some banknotes between a performer's fingers, a long held practice known in Tausug as *pangpanji*. Brian, one of the performers, has told me that in their lucky days, they get American dollar bills and Middle Eastern currencies slipped between their fingers. He showed me with great pride the Kuwaiti dinar bills that were slipped between his fingers whilst performing a *pangalay* in a wedding in one of the islands of Sulu a year ago. Ajing and his fellow performers entertain the crowd all night with dances and music until the *Fajr bang* (call to prayer) was broadcast all throughout the neighbourhood just before the first ray of daylight.

Weddings as Public Events

Rather than a private family affair, Tausug weddings are public spectacles as exemplified by the influx of people who poured into the two celebrations to watch and take part in the dance and musical performances heard all across the neighbourhood. With the powerful loudspeakers that the performers set up, the sound of the revelry is nearly inescapable. It comes across as an open invitation for the entire community to take part and experience the celebration. The scenes in the other seven weddings that I attended are generally the same with loudspeakers echoing all over the neighbourhood and with crowd swelling especially on the night of the wedding. Some families may have chosen to keep the sacred parts of the rites out of public view but ensured that the performances in the celebrations are open and accessible to many. Apart from being open and inviting, the celebrations were also kept purposely lengthy offering great opportunity for the audience and actors of the celebration to form an effervescent and evanescent but meaningful sociality. The crowd participated not as passive audience but as significant actors, interacting through dancing, hooting, and clapping that makes the performances a quotidian event wherein they are able to collectively experience and bodily articulate a sociality that helped them imagine what it is to be Tausug. As Turner illustrates, “their full meaning emerges from the union of script with actors and audience at a given moment in a group’s ongoing social process (Turner 1988: 24). As a large and ubiquitous community event, the wedding celebrations serve as a public ground for showcasing Tausug cultural performances that think about the Tausug idioms of love, faith, personhood, relations, pain, goodness, patriotism, and martyrdom. The length of the celebration provides an intimate but publicly shared stage on which to imagine how it is to become Tausug. Whilst effervescent and evanescent, the ubiquity of wedding celebrations offered Tausugs a sustained means of experiencing the transcultural ideas conveyed through the intertwining cultural medium of speeches, adornments, artefacts, dances, songs, and other performances. That sense of continuity makes Tausug wedding celebrations a critical ground by which cosmopolitan sociality is formed as well as well as drive the production of Tausug imaginaries of cosmopolitanism.

Yet whilst weddings provide the platform for the performance of imagining a community, it is however a limited space. The imagined identity shared on that space only reached the network of kindred and neighbours of the newly weds and the performers. The ballads and dances that many Tausugs identify with could not be circulated to the broader Tausug social world. Herein lies the significance of reproducing the performances on a mediated space. Rather than leave them alone as a static cultural and structured space of performance and ritual, Tausug performers in collaboration with VCD producers and sellers reproduced them on the VCD and in previous decades, on phonographs and audiocassettes. In their mediated forms, it has been possible to think of the performances as a representation of Tausug identity consequently integrating them into the “tempo and rhythms that shape the dance of life” (Rosaldo 1989: 126). These mediated performances extended the domains of spectacular wedding performances to the realm of the quotidian and everyday subsequently reinvigorating them as relevant, useful, and fascinating shared cultural artefact. As a mediated artefact surrounding the most significant, identifiable, and celebrated aspect of the Tausug life cycle, people who separately live in their own narrow enclaves were able to collectively transcend their parochial understanding of the performances from an exclusively family and neighbourhood affair to a diacritical marker of the broader Tausug community.

Conclusion

There have been speculations that heritage performances of Tausug communities in Zamboanga and Sulu are bound to be decimated in the wake of culturally destructive inflow of mass mediated technology and western cultural forms that came with it. Lila Abu-Lughod, writing in the context of audiocassette proliferation in Bedouin society of Egypt, refers to these sentiments as criticisms that “liberal nostalgics” raise out of fear that indigenous production of popular culture will atrophy, as they “passively received what is sent from commercialized and often government controlled centres” (Abu-Lughod 1989:8). Yet the opposite happened in the Bedouin experience as it was in Tausug society. Instead a translocalisation of indigenous cultural performances have been happening in ways consistent with processes of cultural conflation that I discussed in Chapter 1 and 2. Tausug performers and videomakers appropriated western industrial media technology to

mass reproduce age-old but also transculturally conflated heritage performances such as the poetic but Sufi-inspired *kissa* ballads. In the process, Tausug performances underwent a kind of revitalisation even without government, elite, and other forms of institutional support in three complementary and distinctive ways. First, mediation kept as well as continually brought forward in time old heritage performances through media transfer from their materiality as phonographs to audiocassettes and to VCDs. In their subsequent reproduction across time and medium, the performances were constantly renewed and assured of a new lease on life even as new ones were being made and reproduced. Second, the constant shift of media technologies offered Tausug media producers opportunities to also carry out the long running practices of blending disparate cultural traditions to enrich their own as in the case of novel innovation of the musical tunes of *sangbay*. Third, the influx of mediation technology and global musical imaginaries ushered new forms of Tausug performances. They created the globally familiar genre of pop, folk rock, and rock and roll music but performed in ways that were distinctively Tausug in tone and imageries. To a great extent, Tausugs weaved reproduction technologies into local cultural practice and remade them into useful local cultural tools for reproducing and sustaining their valued heritage performances across the generations. These long-running grassroots media productions of trans-located cultural performances offer a case of situated form of cosmopolitanism predating global cultural flows currently precipitated by market-led globalisation, a pattern that will be further examined in the context of embodiment in the next chapter.

Yet these localising processes were not exclusively generated by an inward flow of global cultural forms. Rather, the widespread practice of mediation of performances is enmeshed within a small but enduring wedding entertainment enterprise that is in turn deeply interwoven into cultural conventions surrounding wedding celebrations. The celebrated Tausug practice of giving away bridewealth and family aspirations for holding spectacular public weddings performances, I contend, are driving the formation of a creative and enterprising class of wedding performers who in turn engendered a long-running practice of mediation. These cultural conventions locate the economic resources that underwrite the project of Tausug imagination of community without institutional or elite support. Bride wealth and spectacular wedding celebrations created the ideal socio-economic condition for the

formation of a community of performers, producers, vendors, and consumers of Tausug imaginaries. Apart from serving as economic resources in sustaining electronically mediated imaginations, the celebratory spaces of the weddings opens a point of conjuncture for the messages of translocality deeply embedded in cultural performances such as music, dances, and videos with Islamic messages of universal morality and humanity conveyed through ritual events such as the weddings. With these varying media conveying discrepant messages of translocality coming together into play in a publicly open space of wedding celebration, it is possible to imagine how cosmopolitan consciousness is shaping the formation of Tausug sociality.

Chapter 4

Pangalay and Sangbayan:

Dance Music Videos and the Embodiment of Cosmopolitanism

The dance video is titled “*Tokyo Town*” but the images on it feature those of the soaring minaret and gleaming dome of the Taluksangay mosque in the rustic outskirts of Zamboanga City. Foregrounding the sprawling mosque is an animated image of a young woman in Tausug heritage clothes of dark *sawwal* (loose trouser), a *batawi* (embroidered silken blouse), a *tiyahian* (wrap around brocade), and a full set of *janggay* (sharp and shiny metallic claws). A soft but pulsating rhythm from a keyboard synthesizer begins playing in the background cuing Fatima, the young woman on the video, to assume a flexed body position and stretched palms at the level of her pelvis. After a short whilst, the music grows louder pressing Fatima to perform more ebullient movements by flexing her arms and elbows forward and sideward. As the rhythms beat faster, Fatima begins flicking her hands, sliding and gliding her feet side ways, shifting her weight from one outturned knee to the other, and turning her bent trunk gently from side to side. These moves exemplify the intricate vocabulary movement of the *pangalay*, a dance heritage that continues to enliven Tausug festivities. Amidst such a dexterous sight, the baritone voices of unseen male singers belt out these playful lyrical lines:

One, Two, Three, Four!

Tokyo Town, Tokyo, Tokyo Town,

Lilla lillah lahlillah lala

Sangbayun ta na magbira

Mangasik isa isa

Babae malangka na makamula mula

Indah mapulma

Biya anak artista

In simangbay sangbay

Vocalist Suara

One, Two, Three, Four!

Tokyo Town, Tokyo, Tokyo Town

Lilla lillah lahlillah lala

Let's now sing

For this one and only dancer

Woman of blinding beauty

Stunningly classy lady

A film star's daughter

The singer is yours truly

The vocalist of Suara [wedding band]

One, Two, Three, Four!
Tokyo Town, Tokyo, Tokyo Town

Lilla lillah lahlillah lala
Indah sarang mapanday
hagitungan nangalay
Bang lima mu ilimbay
Biya sin bugsay bugsay
Misan malugay masi i-sangbay
Hi indah kaw saranga malubung kilay

One, Two, Three, Four!
Tokyo Town, Tokyo, Tokyo Town
Lilla lillah lahlillah lala

Sangbayan ta na continue
Bang mangasik hi dayang ku
Agari magdisco disco
Kidjutan in abaga mu sampay buli mu Kidjut
kidjut, kaw harap madtu

One, Two, Three, Four!
Tokyo Town, Tokyo, Tokyo Town

Lilla lillah lahlillah lala
 Maiden of fair skill
 Dancing around the middle
 When your hands go flicking
 You look as if you're rowing [a boat]
 Even if it takes forever I'll go on singing
 For this fair maiden of lush eyebrows

One, Two, Three, Four!
Tokyo Town, Tokyo, Tokyo Town
 Lilla lillah lahlillah lala

Let's continue singing
 Whilst my lady dances
 Let's play disco music
 Shake your shoulders and your bottom
 Shake, shake, you move there

For every utterance of “*Tokyo Town*” in the song’s chorus line, Fatima alters the fundamental *pangalay* movement of flicking of hands, plodding of feet, flexing of knees, and slight bending of the trunk at the hips. She does this by briefly clinching her fist and sticking both her thumbs up whilst alternately raising her arms to the heavens as if evoking the high rises of Tokyo (*see* Figure 15). Her arm and hand movements are further emphasized by the long, sharp metallic set of *janggay* around her fingers. The sight of such sprightly motions and the bodily metaphor of a Tokyo landscape conjure an extra-ordinarily affective scene where one could actually see, think about, hear, and feel a trans-local imaginary as they are viscerally interpreted and performed. Both the *pangalay* and its music, which the wedding performers in Zamboanga and Sulu call the *sangbay*, are recognizably local but simultaneously suffused with imageries of dance and musical styles adrift around the world.



Figure 15. A video grab of a VCD showcasing a *pangalay* and *sangbay* performance titled “Tokyo Town” in across the Taluksangay mosque in the outskirts of Zamboanga.

The *sangbay* (music) on this *pangalay* (dance) video integrates a fragment of the rhythm and imagery of “Tokyo Town”, originally a disco song released in Germany by a global recording company²³ in 1986. In the late 80s to 90s, the original “Tokyo Town” pop song was extensively aired on Philippine radios whilst its MTV versions made it to television programs. From the mainstream radios and television, the song flowed its way through the piped-in music of shopping centres, passenger jeepneys, and restaurants. Eventually, street sellers included them in their collections of pirated audiocassettes. The music drifted further, deep into the interstices of the Philippine society – the slums and far-away rustic communities of Zamboanga and Sulu. In the slums of Zamboanga and the remote islands of Sulu, Tausug wedding performers and VCD producers, picked up this global rhythm but rather than echo the original music, Tausug performers did something different with it. Local performers borrowed just a fragment of its rhythm and the words “Tokyo Town”, and then

²³ “Tokyo Town” dominated the Philippine music radio from the mid 1980s to early 1990s. It was originally performed and released by international pop artist named Sarah through EMI Records.

conflated them into their age-old musical and dance repertoire. The result is a fascinating demonstration of sight and sound that captures the indigenous and global characteristics of Tausug performing and mediation practice. They illustrate how the live performance and subsequent mediation of *pangalay* served as exemplary sites where we could further examine the ways grassroots communities align with global cultural flows and thus engage with the cosmopolitan ideals of openness, flexibility, and adaptability (Beck 2002: 18, Molz 2006: 19, Notar 2008: 622).

Across the years, a broad range of anthropological enquiries take up dance and music as productive lenses in investigating wide-ranging questions related to society and civilization; nationalism and ethnic identity; politics; symbols, signs and meanings; beliefs and knowledge; culture and history; exploration of theoretical positions, and so on (Lange 1975, Hanna 1983, Spencer 1995, Stokes 1994, Blacking 1995, Davis 1994, Carvalho 1994, Buckland 1999, Williams 1991). Dance and music are set as the ethnographic contexts for the examination of competing “performances” of power between coercive state and calculating subaltern actors (Askew 2002). More often, dance and music are cited for their critical roles in eloquently expressing society’s perception of space, environment, and places through the body (Royce 1977). Through her ethnographic investigation of street dances of the annual *Sinulog* religious festival in the central Philippines city of Cebu, Sally Ann Ness (1991) examines the tension and the interplay of local, national, and corporate influences in the social construction of cultural authenticity (*Ibid.*, 207). More broadly, dances and music served as the lens in understanding the embodiment of an imagined national community (Hughes-Freeland 2008) as well as ways on which cultural performances from one part of the world are kinesthetically experience by localities integrated into the conditions of globalisation (Alexeyeff 2009; Archetti 2003). Potentially, these dynamic discussions on dances and music could illuminate the material embodiment of cosmopolitanism through the lenses of Tausug performative heritage of the *pangalay* and its musical repertoire. As Marcel Mauss noted in his celebrated notion of *Techniques of the Body*, the body is simultaneously the people’s “most natural instrument” (tool), “technical object”, and “technical means” (agent), in learning the habits of everyday life as well as in thinking about and shaping the world (2006:83). Amongst these techniques, he regarded dancing as the more culturally diverse and one that demands “complex sociological analysis” (*Ibid.*, 89-90). In this context, the

Mauss implies the significance of dance as a phenomenon for knowing how people construct their world. The *pangalay* and its musical features, I contend, foreground a cosmopolitan practice that fleshes out in bodily ways the abstract notions of cosmopolitanism as a means of being a world citizen (e.g. Hall 2008, Gutierrez 2008, Heater 2002, Nussbaum 1996), or some form of a transcendent “subaltern awareness” of globalisation from below (Mignolo 2002: 183). The lived heritage of performing arts in Zamboanga and Sulu exemplify acts of cosmopolitanism that are embodied and kinesthetically performed as part of intricate dimensions of everyday life implicated by global processes.

Embodying Cosmopolitanism

Sociologist Jennifer Germann Molz (2006) offers an idea of cosmopolitan embodiment in ways that critically appraises Kantian-inspired “accounts of cosmopolitanism as an abstract, detached and disembodied” project of “world democracy and global citizenship” (Ibid., 18). She weaves this critique into her analysis of inter-cultural interactions practiced by cross-border backpacking travelers in the course of their journeys. Such practice, Molz argues, illustrates the cosmopolitan ideals of cultural openness, flexibility, and adaptability “literally embodied”. It expresses a cosmopolitan practice “that is not just an abstract, philosophical engagement with a world of difference, but rather a bodily and materially iterated orientation to the world as a whole” (Ibid., 17). Unlike abstractly intellectualized or institutionalized modes of global cultural exchanges, they are “critical and actually existing forms of cosmopolitanism” (Ibid., 5; *also see* Robbins 1998). Coincidentally, this perspective partly reflects the characteristics of everyday cosmopolitan life in the slums and islands of Zamboanga and Sulu though not necessarily as a community of travelling agents but as actors who open up to cross border cultural flows. In other words, the cosmopolitan experience of Tausugs in Zamboanga and Sulu offers few more insights on what it actually entails for cosmopolitanism to be embodied.

Cosmopolitan practice in Sulu and Zamboanga involve more than cross-border travelling agents (e.g. for music and dances Glick-Schiller and Meinhoff 2011, Nava 2007). More significantly, they include local agents who made use of the

cosmopolitan ideals of inclusivity in producing their very own sociality, in the form of dance and music at wedding and religious festivities. Cosmopolitanism, as I will be demonstrating in this chapter, is embodied in the sense that the disposition of openness, adaptability, and flexibility toward the world were not only represented in symbolic terms but also animated in bodily ways. These dispositions, in my view, frame the production of the Tausug imaginaries on the VCDs.

Bodily Interactive Performances

Musical accompaniment for *pangalayan* (term referring to the repertoire or variations of *pangalay*) performances essentially comes in two categories. My friends in the wedding performance and VCD production circuit in Zamboanga refer to these as the *sangbayan* (term in reference to the repertoire of *sangbay*) and the *kulintangan*. The *sangbayan* are performances that feature lyrical words whilst the *kulintangan* celebrate the *pangalay* by accompanying the dance with bright and pulsating rhythm without the benefit of words. In other words, performers dance the *pangalay* by choosing either a lyrical (*sangbay*) or rhythmic (*kulintangan*) music as accompaniment. Hence, these *pangalayan* performances are referred to on the VCDs as “*Pangalayan Sangbayan*” and “*Pangalayan Kulintangan*”²⁴. Wedding performers deem it important to distinguish both forms of musical accompaniments because they determine the style, pace, and movement of their performance. Ajing, a virtuoso pangalay wedding and VCD performer, has told me that in principle the dance does not use the usual terpsichorean technique of notation because its movements are not determined by repetitive counting but rather by the way a performer sonically senses the music. Ajing added that in live performances the way a musician accompanies the dance is also dependent on the way he or she visually senses the movement of the dancer thereby making the performance bodily interactive. Dancers resonated with the music whilst musicians are stimulated with the sight of the dancing as they reciprocate each other’s body movements through music.

²⁴ Wedding performers and VCD vendors normally use the words *pangalayan* and *sangbayan* in referring to the repertoire of *pangalay* styles and *sangbay* music. Video producers featured the words, *pangalayan* and *sangbayan* on the covers of VCDs carrying these performances. On this paper, I deployed the terms *pangalay*, *sangbay*, *pangalayan*, and *sangbayan* interchangeably as they do in Zamboanga and Sulu. In regards the *kulintangan*, local agents utilize the term in referring to both the music and the instrument.

Sangbayan: Lyrical Music for Pangalay

Pangalay and *sangbayan*, the humorous, lyrics-based performances that I have seen at weddings in Zamboanga feature a *mangangalay* (dancer) and a *mananangbay* (singer) interpreting each other's performances in somatic terms. In consonance with the festive spirit of a wedding or a religious celebration like the *Hilaya* or the feast marking the end of the Ramadan (*Eid'l Fitr*), the *mananangbay* jestingly use superlatives of beauty and virtuosity in describing both the bodily features and movements of the dancer just as the performers of the "Tokyo Town" *sangbay* did in these lines: *Let's sing a song for this one and only dancer/A woman of blinding beauty/ A classy lady/ Who looks just like a movie star's daughter/ ... Maiden of fair skill/ Dancing around the middle/ Whenever you flick your hands and fingers/ You look as if your rowing/ Even if it takes forever I will go on singing/ This fair maiden of lush eyebrows.* Often, the *mananangbay* teases the performer to dance the way he or she imagines the *mangangalay*'s performance: *Let's continue singing/ As my lady dances/ Let us play some disco music/ Shake your shoulders and your bottom/ Shake, shake, you move there.* In performing the *sangbay*, the words must be composed on the spot in a manner that capture and dictate the movement of the dancer. "You do not memorize a *sangbay*, you make it up as you sing it in the performance of the *pangalay*," Imin, a young *mananangbay* and budding manager of a wedding company in Zamboanga, told me. Imin said a *mananangbay* must be able to describe the movement of the dancer and lyrically communicate with the dancer the moves that he or the spectators would want the dancer to show.

Kulintang: Rhythmic Music for Pangalay

The *pangalayan kulintang* are performances based on a deeply sensorial relation between a dancer and a musician who interact with each other not through words but through the rhythmic, percussive and pulsating sound of the *kulintang* music. The dances could not be choreographed and the music could not be written down as performers are only able to perform their respective crafts by sensing each other's performances. In the past, a *kulintang* was played using an array of seven to eleven bossed brass gongs of graduated sizes which people in Sulu collectively called the *kulintang*. Each gong, usually lain in a row on a low level stand, produces

different tones of sharpness with the smallest gong resonating the sharpest sound when beaten. These sound variations aided both the dancer and the *kulintang* player in sensing each other's style, speed, and rhythm.

In recent decades, however, Tausug, Sama, Yakan, and other native wedding performers in Sulu and Zamboanga replaced the small brass gongs (*kulintang*) and large suspended gongs with keyboard synthesizers. The romantic sound of brass gongs rarely, if at all, animates the performing events in grassroots communities. In recent years, the gongs were mainly confined to school cultural shows or performances that Philippine cultural conservation groups promote. Nevertheless, native performers in Sulu and Zamboanga sustained the name *kulintang* in their synthesizer-based *pangalay* repertoire mainly because the fundamental principle of the musician's and the dancer's sensorial interaction remain central to their performance. Consistent with performances accompanied by brass gongs, the *mangangalay* (*pangalay* performer) and the *mag-oorgan* (synthesizer player) sustain such sentient engagement of each other's style, speed, and rhythm but this time they rely on electronically generated percussions and the pulsating sound of the keyboards to musically animate their interactions.

Spectators viewing virtuoso *pangalayan kulintang* or *pangalayan sangbayan* performances are often drawn to the graceful rising and falling of the dancer's shoulder blades and the flexion and extension of limbs (*see* Figure 16). At the outset, these movements come across as mimetic expressions of the ebbs and flows of deep ocean waves that characterise the Sulu and Zamboanga ecological environment but something even more relevant to cosmopolitan terms of living is happening in these performances. In the *Tokyo Town sangbay*, the raising and lowering of arms by the dancer, Fatima, kinesthetically articulates in bodily ways the landscape of a metropolitan city. Other *pangalayan sangbayan* and *kulintang* articulate birds in flight, boats in motion, aircraft zooming past, or the latest dance craze in Hollywood or Bollywood as I will describe and discuss later in this chapter. In many ways, the *pangalayan* and its music exemplify the way people think and express their disposition of the world in bodily ways yet they also indicate something more. Given the trans-locally open and flexible characteristics of *pangalayan*, *sangbayan* and *kulintang*, we are actually seeing here examples of lived performing



Figure 16. Ajing, one of Zamboanga’s virtuoso performers emphasizes the *pangalay* vocabulary movement of rising and falling shoulders, flicking of hands, slightly bent trunk and the flexion and extension of limbs.

heritages that productively utilize the body as the means on which Tausug communities are able to interact, socialize as well as collectively imagine the world.

A Paradigm Embodiment

There are two synonymous words relating to the body in the Tausug vocabulary, *baran* and *jasad*. Tausugs use *baran* in complex ways. In everyday communicative usage, *baran* is variably expressed to denote physicality, deep emotional feelings, and notions of existence such as self, person, persona, personality, the personal, being and becoming (cf. Johnson 1997: 125). As Johnson explains, though in the context of his discussion of Tausug conception of beauty, *baran* “is

recognized as being important in many respects, not the least of which is that it is seen to be the locatable container of the immaterial spiritual aspect of a person – including the emotions and sense of well being, memory and longing, as well as potency and intellect” (Ibid). Johnson suggests that the significance of *baran* lies not because it is being expressed “metonymically to signal the totality of the person, but precisely because the immaterial aspect and quality of a person is only apprehended by its effects or physical manifestation” (Ibid). For that matter, *baran* is often use in conversations as well as in musical compositions to suggest a disposition towards the world in physical, emotional, psychological, and aspirational senses. In Chapter 2, I cited an example of its usage in a poignant ballad of Tausug inmates brutally killed in an assault in a Manila prison, “*Ikaw in gagandilan/ Minsan baran mapanggisan* (You remain warrior/ Even if your body shall perish). *Jasad*, a vernacularized Arabic word, is usually invoked in religious and moral discussions of the carnal body as the starting point in locating the soul in the Muslim cosmic world of *surga* (paradise) and *narka* (hell). One example of this usage, which I cited in Chapter 3, is encapsulated in the title of a ballad about the cosmic fate awaiting the soul of man living in vices and decadence, “*Usulan sin Nyawa iban Jasad: Tausug Hadis Pakamatay* (The fate of the soul and body: Death as told in the Hadith)”.

Through the notions of *baran* and *jasad*, Tausugs perceive the abstract ideas of cosmic, emotional, and physical existence largely in bodily ways. *Baran* and *jasad* are subjectively constituted as the means on which one situates, relates, and acts with other bodies – be they material, cognitive, or cosmic - in the world. My aim in bringing up the notions of *baran* and *jasad* is not to present a typology of local philosophies of both words but rather to constitute them as a take off point in discussing the relevance of the concept of embodiment in understanding the bodily ways in which cosmopolitanism is experienced in Tausug communities. The conflation of consciousness and the body in the Tausug notions of *baran* and *jasad* resonate well with a phenomenological argument that transcends the Cartesian duality of mind and body, and infuses the notion of agency in the process of such transcendence. In postulating a paradigm of embodiment, Thomas Csordas (1990, 1994, 2011) actually utilizes this agency-infused phenomenological critique as a starting point in rethinking the idea of cultural consciousness from something that is thought about to something that is constructed and manifested by human agents in

bodily ways. Fundamental to such an idea of embodiment is the consideration of the human body as a ground on which we should examine culture and self as well as the recognition of that body as “at once the wellspring of existence and the site of experience” (1994: 6, 2011: 138).

Describing embodiment as a “methodological field” on which we may be able to comprehend the dialectical relations of bodies with other bodies and bodies to the world, Csordas postulates his paradigm by complementing three analytical concepts that deal more comprehensively with the notion of agency, those of Merleau-Ponty’s idea of existence and intentionality, Bourdieu’s habitus and practice, and Foucault’s power relations and discourse (Csordas 2011: 139). Csordas invokes Merleau-Ponty’s argument that the fact of our bodily existence actually presupposes agency as it assumes a sense of intentionality or some kind of a “possible task” towards the world (Csordas, 140; Merleau-Ponty 2005:100). Echoing Merleau-Ponty, Csordas asserts that “bodies-in-the-world” are neither “passive nor inert” on the premise that for as long as they are there, there will always be a “momentum of existence towards other bodies, towards the future, towards the world” (Csordas, 165). Csordas expanded the analytical features of his embodiment paradigm by factoring in the broader cultural context wherein the dialectical relations between the body and the world are actually learned, produced and reproduced by way of practice. Drawing from Bourdieu’s conceptualization of habitus and practice (1977), Csordas located the agency of “bodies-in-the-world” as they are being enmeshed in and mediated by the habitus in the course of practice. Of prime importance to Csordas is Bourdieu’s view of the habitus that enriched the Maussian understanding of this concept from a social ground for acquiring the bodily techniques of being in the world to a more enduring yet tacitly inculcated social ground for the “generation and structuring of practices and representation” (Bourdieu 1977: 79, Csordas 1990: 11)²⁵. The structure that mediates the habitus is at once mentally constructed and bodily acted through everyday social practice reflecting the fundamental idea of embodiment as a process that fuses the abstract and concrete worlds altogether in bodily terms (*also see*

²⁵ Csordas (1990) emphasizes Bourdieu’s point that the “part of practices which remains obscure in the eyes of their own producers is the aspect by which they are objectively adjusted to other practices and to the structures of which the principle of their production is itself a product” (Bourdieu 1977:79). Csordas suggests that such view of the habitus actually expresses “dual function” by generating practices in relation to the objective structures and serving as the unifying principle behind the “total repertoire of social practices” (Csordas, 12).

Strathern 2004: 195, Ots 1994: 117).

Furthermore, Csordas aligns both concepts to the idea of textuality, the realm of semiotics that inextricably relates both the idea of reading lived experience as meaningful texts and the discursive relations governing such textual production (1994: 12). Csordas later explains the agentive role of discourse in textual production by bringing in the Foucauldian view of power relations mediating this discursive practice. Explicitly, Csordas points to the agency emanating from discourse in Foucault's idea of discursive formations – “the groups of statements systematically dispersed under condition that permit the activation of incompatible themes or that conversely establish the same theme in different groups of statement” (2011: 142). These complementing analytical frames of embodiment are reflected in the way the performance heritage of *pangalayan* and its musical accompaniment embodied the lived experience of openness, interactivity, flexibility, and adaptability towards the world, as well as in conversing with seemingly incompatible cultural themes and power relations at play in Zamboanga and Sulu. Using this agency-centered view of existence, the habitus, and the discursive formation in analyzing the process of embodiment, we can better appreciate that the performance heritage we see in Zamboanga and Sulu are not just symbolic representations of the Tausug identity. We can also find in these performances evidences of integration of trans-local imaginaries into the production of Tausug sociality and identity.

Tausug Enclaves: A Habitus of Cultural Borrowing

The *pangalay*, *sangbayan*, and *kulintang* are performance art works that emerged from a *habitus* defined by hybridity, borrowing, cross-border kindred linkages, and global cultural flows. As discussed in Chapter 1, these connections have a long history, dating further back when Sulu, Zamboanga, and other parts of Mindanao, formed part of an old expansive trading realm that was in turn integrated into an even broader ancient maritime emporium that spanned the Western Pacific to the Bay of Bengal, including the southern regions of China. Translocal trading relations in the area continued through the era of Islamic conversions in the thirteenth century until it slipped into a long period of decline in the advent of European colonial intrusion from the seventeenth to early twentieth centuries. The rise of

postcolonial boundaries delineating the Philippine, Malaysian, and Indonesian national territories restricted all forms of undocumented travel and direct trading in the region as each state enacted their own set of border crossing and smuggling laws. Local agents, however, routinely violated these restrictions. They pushed ahead with cross border travels, smuggled in goods, and moved their performances across state boundaries amidst radically altered geopolitical landscapes and power relations. In a sense, the shift in political formations of both regions may have undermined but not completely broken long running and widespread practices of cultural exchange and reproduction - the *habitus* of the region.

Trans-local Beginnings of Pangalay

Performing traditions of communities spanning the Malaysian peninsula and Muslim enclaves of Southern Philippines “have always been marked by borrowing and hybridization” before the region was divided and reconstituted into postcolonial nation states (Kahn 2008: 270, *also see* Kahn 2006). Some documentation on Philippine dances reflects these observations cultural hybridization, tracing the beginning of *pangalay* to a pre-Islamic maritime world that directly linked Sulu to other parts of Southeast Asia. In separate works, three eminent Filipino scholars on dance - Leonor Orosa Goquinco (1978), Reynaldo Alejandro (1978), and Amilbansa (1983) – hypothesized that the *pangalay* and its musical accompaniments must have flourished alongside the old trading relations across the ancient Hindu-dominated trading ports dotting the Indo-Malayan archipelago all the way up to Indian coasts. During the period of Islamisation, the *pangalay* and its music were infused with styles and movements emanating from an even broader expanse of the Muslim world. “In their dance, the Moslem tribes exhibit traits that link them not only to the Indo Malayan worlds but also to other cultures of the East,” Alejandro wrote on his expansive survey of the Philippine dances (Ibid.,167). These Eastern traits, Alejandro claimed, are embodied in the *pangalay*’s “emphasis on the upper torso, for instance, and the use of the hands to express nuances of feelings, bent knees and up-turned toes” (Ibid.). Sulu-born Goquinco, who also produced a survey of Philippine dances, referred to *pangalay* as living legacy of archaic but trans-locally connected Islamised enclaves of Mindanao. This legacy, Goquinco argued, “flowered into a culture touched by Hindu, Javanese, Chinese, and Arab Persian civilization” (Ibid., 39).

Amilbangsa, who published in 1983 a detailed account on the intricate techniques and variations of the dance, noted the similarity particularly of the facial countenance of Javanese and pangalay dancers in their performance. Performers of both dances, she pointed, assumed facial expressions that are “refined, dignified, formal sans stiffness” as well as nearly impassive with downcast eyes (*Ibid.*, 62).

Furthermore, *pangalay*'s association with other Southeast Asian dances can also be linked to the predisposition of its performers to constantly integrate new styles to existing ones thus making the dance dynamic, variable, and suffused with trans-local influences. Amilbangsa commented on the matter of variability of the dance by attributing these characteristics to the salience that virtuoso performers regard mastery of basic *pangalay* posture and movements of flexed knees, rigid but slightly bent upper body, outstretched palms, shuffling footwork, fluttering of hands and fingers; and creative improvisation from these fundamental steps. The combination of mastery and openness to improvisation, which is widely regarded in Sulu as the markers of good performance generated the production of numerous *pangalay* movement patterns of “relative complexity” that created a broad range of terpsichorean expressions (*Ibid.*, 62). Amilbangsa codified 23 *pangalay* variations which she divided into seven categories representing occasions such as courtship and ritual, mimesis of the natural landscape, competitive exhibitions of terpsichorean skills, and songs and games. Pangalay wedding performers and videomakers I engaged with in Zamboanga had not classified the dances the way Amilbangsa did, which to be fair she herself acknowledged in her book as her own account and did so to present an initial codified presentation of the dance that future scholars could refer to (*Ibid.* xi, 13). Individual *pangalay* performer I met in Zamboanga offers their own style, depending on the way they sense musical accompaniment in the forms of *sangbayan* and *kulintangan*. Distinctively, I have not seen performances that are exactly alike giving me an impression that there must be thousands or even more variations out there. Many of the variations I had seen are combination of styles and movements taken locally or melded from globally popular pop dances and songs that flowed into Zamboanga, a point that I will elaborate after discussing the culturally conflated beginnings of *sangbayan* and *kulintangan* below.

Trans-local Borrowings in Early *Sangbayan* Performances

Accounts of the evolution of *sangbayan*, the popular musical repertoire of *pangalay*, also indicate that its conflated character is linked to older practices of cultural hybridization and borrowings in Sulu and Zamboanga. I present this insight by piecing together written, oral, and passed on accounts of *pangalay* performers and scholars who had lived in Sulu shortly after the *sangbayan* reportedly gained widespread popularity. Amilbangsa, who studied *pangalay* when she lived and later taught in a southern Sulu college from 1969 to late 1970s²⁶, tracked the emergence of *sangbayan* just before the Japanese invasion of Sulu in the 1940s. She referred to it as “*pagsangbay or dalling-dalling*”, a comical ballad that formed part of “song and games” variations of *pangalay* (Amilbangsa, 42). Amilbangsa wrote that a popular version of *dalling-dalling* featured man and woman performers dressed up with Chinese white powder and soot for make up on their faces, golden paste board crowns on their heads, and capes on their backs, whilst dancing to comedic musical accounts of sex, courtship, gossips, work, adventures, and other public pre-occupations (Ibid.). Amilbangsa wrote that during her time in Sulu the *dalling-dalling* had been widely well liked and spurred tales of the dance being popular as well in neighbouring Borneo (Ibid.). Amilbangsa credited the early beginnings of *dalling-dalling* to an entertainment troupe organized by a man named Albani citing accounts shared to her by Sulu-based academic colleagues who had known him early on (Ibid.). Amilbangsa wrote that Albani and his troupe, which was reportedly famous in Sulu in the 1940s to the 1960s, likely produced the dance by improvising on the performance shown by a group of Singaporean dancers who performed in Sulu’s capital town of Jolo when it was yet being administered by American troops (Ibid.). Her academic colleagues, Amilbangsa said, believed that Albani’s troupe may have vernacularized the term “*dalling-dalling*”, which was then not part of the Tausug vocabulary, from the English word *darling* (Ibid.). This account of vernacularisation, along with widely shared tales of copying the acts of visiting Singaporean dancers, and buzzwords about *dalling-dalling*’s popularity in nearby Borneo, testifies to the enduring and

²⁶ At the time Amilbangsa taught at a state-run Sulu College of Technology and Oceanography in a town called Bongao which was then part of the undivided province of Sulu. In 1973, Sulu was split up into two provinces with the new one named Tawi-tawi and Bongao as capital town.

widespread cross border consciousness that characterized the evolution and reproduction of *pangalay* and *sangbayan* performances.

In the flea market where I regularly hang out during fieldwork in Zamboanga, I met one of the *pangalay* performers who associated with Albani and offered me few more narratives of the processes of trans-local conflation in the production of *sangbayan*. Aged seventy and nimble limbs gone with his youth, Mameng has been a well-known virtuoso *pangalay* performer in his prime according to my friends in the Tausug wedding and festival entertainment circuit. Mameng told me that he was part of an entertainment circle, which Albani formed and made famous in Sulu. Their group performed primarily at weddings in Sulu as well as in other areas of Muslim Mindanao and across the borders in the Celebes region of Indonesia and Sabah of Malaysia. Mameng regarded Albani a mentor and inspiration to several *pangalay* performers like him. Albani's troupe, however, was not an exclusive group but rather loosely organized reflecting the formation of recent wedding companies I discussed in Chapter 2. Performers who associated with Albani were free to pursue their own wedding or festival performances but being identified with him, people eagerly hired them. Mameng was in his teens when he joined Albani's company in the 1950s and remembered the lore surrounding him and his performances in Sabah and the Celebes. Mameng himself had not joined Albani in his travels across the border having set his attention to wedding entertainment invitations within Mindanao. After performing elsewhere, however, Mameng said returning wedding performers including Albani would make it a point to gather round the town plaza and show off new *pangalay* moves or *sangbayan* compositions that they pick up from their cross border journeys. Whilst showing off, they would also study the new steps and musical compositions their fellow performers learned from their travels. Eventually, the performers would integrate these new dance strokes and musical pieces on to their repertoire and show them off in their next wedding event. On occasions when non-local dance companies visit Sulu, they would go and see them and later try integrating terpsichorean moves that they find interesting. It was in this setting that *dalling-dalling* was created, he said. For Mameng, however, *dalling-dalling* was meant as playful shorthand for the variation of performances that they produced and grouped as a class of vocal musical accompaniment *pangalay* that they would later call the *sangbayan*.



Figure 17. A set of laid-in-a-row *kulintangan* gongs (foreground) and suspended gongs - *agung* on the right, a *buwah* in the middle, and a *pulakan* at left, on exhibit at the Sulu Museum in Jolo town.

Mameng quit performing after he and his family evacuated Sulu for Zamboanga following the war in the 1970s (Chapter 1), and worked instead as street seller. Mameng keeps tracks of new pangalay variations shown on VCDs but recalled that the *sangbayan* and *pangalay* he performed in the past were radically different from today. As accompaniment, Mameng said performers of his generation used a set of *bulah bulah* (bamboo clappers) and *kulintangan* (small gong instruments). In spectacular wedding events, the small gongs and bamboo clappers were usually complemented with larger brass gongs of varying sizes and depths known as *agung* (deep gong), *buwah* (narrow rimmed gong), and the *pulakan* (wide rimmed gong) (see Figure 17). In a full *pangalayan* ensemble of the past, performers add a set of *biyula* (horse-stringed violin), *gabbang* (bamboo xylophone), *tambul* (drum fitted with brass cylinder), *gandang* (percussion carved from hollowed block of wood), and the *suling* (bamboo flute). Mameng prefers the old fashion way of performing *pangalay* and *sangbay*, and finds oddness with the way new generation of performers favoured keyboard synthesizers as accompaniment. Left unsaid by Mameng, the evolution of this preference from gongs to synthesizers was also conditioned by cross border



Figure 18. Imin (on microphone) and Ghadzer (on synthesizers), *sangbayan* and *kulintangan* performers influenced by shifts in musical movement from the neighbouring Tausug and Sama communities in Sabah, Malaysia.

wedding performances that he once celebrated with his old colleagues in Sulu and which I will illustrate next.

From Gongs to Synthesizers

Jose Maceda (1972, 1998), a Filipino musicologist who had done extensive research on Philippine native music, claimed that musical instruments in Sulu, particularly the *kulintangan* and the larger ensemble of gongs used in *pangalay* performances, were related to an array of gongs animating the performing arts of the Dusun of Sabah in Malaysia as well as the Minangkabau and Iban of Sumatra and West Sarawak, and several other societies in Java, Bali and Lombok in Indonesia (Maceda 1998: 33). Origin-wise therefore, the *kulintangan* and other gong musical instruments emerged against the backdrop of long-running cosmopolitan relations in the region. Paired with the accounts of cross-border travels and performances, the similarity of musical instruments in Sulu with other polities in the Indonesian

archipelago and the Malayan peninsula exemplify the varying levels of cultural borrowing and fusions of the performing heritage of Sulu and Zamboanga. Significantly, that deep history of trans-local borrowing, fusions, and exchange did not actually end in the past, but lived through in recent decades. They played crucial roles in the transformation of the *pangalayan* from its life as heritage performances enlivened by acoustic instruments, such as brass gongs, bamboos, horse strings, and wooden percussions, to electrifying heritage performances powered by keyboard synthesizers, loud speakers, and microphones (*see* Figure 18).

Wedding performers who regularly hang out at the VCD alley of the Zamboanga market had told me that the first of these synthesizer-based *sangbayan* and *kulintangan* performances did not actually originate in the Tausug homeland of Sulu. They emerged from the Sama and Badjau speaking communities in the coastal enclaves of neighboring Sabah in the 1970s. Kadil, a Sama and a wedding performer whom I also met at the Zamboanga market, claimed that one of the first performers of keyboard-based *sangbayan* and *kulintangan* is also a Sama man named Jenes. Kadil said Jenes was his bosom buddy and partner in a wedding performing group that they had formed in Sulu. Like him, Jenes has several relatives in Sabah who constantly crosses borders amidst travel restrictions from state institutions on both sides. The two men performed between borders and recorded audiocassette tapes of *kulintangan* and *sangbayan*, which they sell in Sama as well as Tausug communities across Sulu and Sabah. Copies of their old music are still being aired and sold by enterprising VCD producers who digitized and redistributed them in the market and streets of Zamboanga.

Kadil said Jenes and his group began using synthesizers in their performances after realizing that they could easily manipulate them to mimic the rimming sound of the *kulintangan* and other percussion instruments. With that discovery, they began arranging a repertoire of *sangbayan* and *kulintangan* music on synthesizers. When Jenes introduced and played his synthesizer-arranged *kulintangan* and *sangbayan* music at weddings and religious festivals in Sabah, they were instant hits especially amongst the Sama and Tausug communities there. Soon, requests for Jenes and his troupe to play *kulintangan* and gong music on synthesizers in both Sabah and Sulu began pouring. Other troupes on both sides of the borders noticed Jenes's and his

group's success. They also began securing their own synthesizers and using them as part of their ensemble. By the 1980s, the synthesizers effectively replaced the brass gongs as the featured musical instrument in *pangalay* performances at weddings and other forms of festivities. Today, fewer performers are knowledgeable enough to play the *kulintang* and the older acoustic musical instruments. From amongst my friends in the wedding and festival performing circuit, I have not met a performer adept at playing the *kulintang*, *agung*, *buwah*, and *pulakan*. Madal, the wedding performer I talked about in Chapter 3, lamented the lack of interest in playing the *kulintang* but he said he could not exactly blame his colleagues because for one, a musical instrument like a full set of *kulintang* is rather expensive for impoverished wedding performers like him. He claimed that at the lower end of the price range, a full set of *kulintang* costs about 50,000 pesos²⁷. On the other hand, a brand new low end or a used higher-end synthesizer could be purchased at half or even a fourth of that price.

Interactive Region

At the outset, one can say that the flexibility and openness of the Tausug *habitus* precipitated the decline of brass gongs and other local heritage instruments. A closer examination of such decline, however, shows that they did not exactly mean the end of the Tausug musical and dance heritage. On balance, the demise of the brass gongs and the rise of the synthesizers in wedding and *Eid'l Fitr* performances actually exemplify the continuing episode of cultural borrowing, melding, adaptation, and fusion in Sulu and Zamboanga. They indicate a renewal of the old *pangalay* precisely because of the openness, flexibility, and adaptability of the Tausug society. Such renewal is evinced by a surge of synthesizer-arranged *sangbay* and *kulintang* music videos in recent years that I earlier said could number to more than a thousand variations. For instance, a Malaysian pop disco music titled *Senggol Senggolan Cubit Cubitan* (Nudging, Pinching) has been transformed by local performers into a *sangbay* called *Chubit-Chubitan*, a word that could not exactly be found in Tausug vocabulary but often played in the slums and the market and sung at the weddings and festivals. Furthermore, several music videos produced by the Bollywood entertainment industry were transposed into bright, lively, and humorous *sangbayan*,

²⁷ At current exchange rate, 50,000 Philippine pesos cost about 700 British pounds.

as in the case of the Hindi song, “*Jimmy-Jimmy Aaja Aaja*” to “*Sangbay Jimmy-Jimmy;*” and “*Chiki Chiki Bum*” to “*Sangbay Chiki Boom*”. Additionally, several *sangbayan* and *pangalayan* tracks also carry Anglophone titles such as “Oh My Darling, I love You”, “Oh, Idol”, “Titanic”, “500 Miles”, “123 I Love You”, and so on.

The global array of cultural influences shaping the evolution of *pangalayan*, *sangbayan* and the *kulintang* seemed to embody the “profoundly interactive” (Appadurai 1996: 48) nature of the Malayan peninsula on which the coasts of Sulu and Zamboanga are situated (Kahn 2008). Through the flow of people, goods, and recently the music and video technologies, these communities continue to “interpenetrate each other” (Beck 2002: 18) thus engendering new local performances that are very much “part of the constitution of the global” (Weis 2002: 94). Conversely, by virtue of the fact that Tausug communities are culturally integrated to the global, the realm of cultural borrowing and exchanges no longer revolve exclusively around the trading contours of the old maritime world but extends to an even broader *habitus* - the domain of global media flows.

Trans-Local Performances on Videos

Ajing, the wedding performer I discussed in Chapter 3, has been acknowledged by his colleagues as the best amongst all *pangalay* dancers in Zamboanga. I saw Ajing dance virtuously at several wedding occasions, witnessed him win a *pangalay* competition, watched his performance in festivals and viewed many of his *pangalay* videos, including the *Pangalay Kulintang* which I presented in the previous chapter. Whilst on fieldwork I followed him to his performances, met his family, friends, and colleagues in Zamboanga and Sulu’s wedding entertainment circuit. When Ajing dances, spectators are often enthralled by the way he smoothly flexes his limbs and gently sways his neck and head in a loopy pattern. His head and neck stroke somehow reminded me of the jerky neck movement in Balinese dances that I have seen on some videos except that Ajing’s motions are far slower, fascinatingly smoother, and admirably gentler. Based on what I read and observed on films featuring the Balinese dances, I had assumed that Ajing’s loopy head and neck movement must be the living heritage of an ancient dance stroke that is directly

related to the dances of Bali. When I shared this assumption to Ajing, he actually gave me a puzzling look before declaring: “Oh, that neck movement, that is an *Industan* (Indian) dance move. I learned it from the VCDs of *Industan* movies (the pirated Bollywood films) that the vendors have been selling here in the market. *Kuya*²⁸, had you been here in 2004 and 2005, you would have seen this market flooded with all those *Industan* VCDs. People were buying them like crazy. I found those neck movement as something that fits with *pangalay* so I incorporated them into my performance,” Ajing said.

Brian, Ajing’s friend and understudy whom I also followed around during my fieldwork, told me that he was able to master the dance and think of new styles to embellish his moves, by watching *pangalay* performances uploaded on YouTube. “If you log on to YouTube *kuya*, you will find the different *pangalay* styles there. There were *pangalay* videos posted from Malaysia, Indonesia, and several other places. I learned a lot from YouTube.” True enough, when I keyed in ‘*pangalay*’ on YouTube in March 2010, it showed around 300 video entries. When I checked back again whilst writing this study in the summer of 2011, statistical information on YouTube counted 379 different video entries of *pangalay*. I will be expanding my discussion on the Zamboanga and Sulu music video circulation on YouTube and varying media platform in Chapter 5 but in relation to the discussion at hand, I find it important to underscore the significance of global media flows in shaping the styles and movements of *pangalayan* performances, and through them the embodiment of cosmopolitanism. Ajing’s and Brian’s efforts in studying global dance videos to enrich their own *pangalayan* performances illustrate the enduring values of cultural openness, flexibility, and adaptability amongst performing artists and their audience in Sulu and Zamboanga. Those values could be clearly seen through their music and kinesthetic bodies, the medium on which they embody the principles of cosmopolitanism. Moreover, these performances also reveal the enabling role of global media flows in revitalizing the local embodiment of cosmopolitan values in the Tausug social world.

²⁸ *Kuya* is commonly used across the Philippines as a term of endearment and respect to elder brothers. Ajing and many of my younger informants usually call me *kuya* in consonance with the friendship and brotherly relations that we both cultivated in the course of my fieldwork.

Extending the Embodiment Process

In understanding the process of embodiment in a mediatised environment, I find it productively useful to align the paradigm offered by Csordas with David MacDougall's comment on "embodiment in and around film" (MacDougall 2006: 6). As a critique to commentaries perpetuating the Cartesian view that film technologies stimulate the senses in one and only one way, MacDougall notes that the ability of the viewers, or as he would say the spectators, to connect with the bodily image on film shows that our vision is "directly connected to our own bodily process" (Ibid., 18). For MacDougall, film allows people "to go beyond culturally prescribed limits and glimpse the possibility of being more than we are. They stretch the boundaries of our consciousness and create affinities with bodies other than our own" (Ibid., 17).

Though MacDougall did not intend to analyze the corporeality of film and images toward an understanding of the workings of cosmopolitanism, his point about the way film stretches the boundaries of our consciousness and creates our sense of affinities with other bodies can also be extended to explain the processes at work in the embodiment of the cosmopolitan ideals of embracing cultural difference. Films or videos are themselves repositories of culture as well as the medium for possible encounters between cultures. Once circulated trans-locally and trans-culturally, films and other forms of media images create the right condition for cross-cultural encounters. In other words, the film and media viewing experience open up the possibility of local agents adapting the cultural consciousness of the others as well as heighten their sense of affinity to bodies not their own. Such point is useful in understanding the performances and music videos produced by the third wedding performer I met in Zamboanga, a young dancer and VCD artist who sports the screen name "Allan Jackson". Allan adopted such alias because he usually integrates the moonwalk and strut dance moves of his "idol", the global pop-star Michael Jackson, in his *pangalay* performances. Allan executed these strokes by briefly conflating the Michael Jackson moves into the *pangalay*'s emphases of dexterous flicking of hands, the rising and falling of blade shoulders, controlled movements on the hips, trunk, and feet, and the flexion and extension of limbs. Like Ajing and Brian, Allan learned moonwalk and strut by studying Michael Jackson's videos on the Internet, television, and pirated VCD copies of the late pop-icon's music videos.



Figure 19 (a).



Figure 19 (b).

Figures 19 (a & b). A video grab of a music video featuring Allan Jackson performing a *Pangalay Kulintang* with moves inspired by Michael Jackson's moonwalk and struts. The same video has been spliced with clips of dancing penguins (b) from a Hollywood-produced animation film, "Happy Feet" (2006).

In an even more engrossing demonstration of cultural borrowing, a young VCD producer named Omar, videotaped Allan's moonwalk and strut-conflated *pangalay kulintang* on the grounds of the Sulu Provincial Capitol. They then spliced their video with clips of dancing figures of penguins on a snowy Arctic landscape from a pirated copy of the 2006 Hollywood animation film, "Happy Feet" (see Figures 19 [a & b]). The images of anthropomorphized penguins waddling their

hips, stomping their feet, and flapping their wings were juxtaposed with video takes of Allan performing the *pangalay* movement vocabulary of bending the trunk in the hips, plodding of feet, flexion and extension of limbs, and flicking of hands. The original film score of the “Happy Feet” clips of the dancing penguins were removed and replaced with the pulsating rhythm of a keyboard-arranged *kulintang*. Such a re-editing trick left behind a fascinating visual and musical impression that the penguins were indeed dancing *pangalay* with Allan in a music video they titled, the “*Kulintang*”. VCD vendors often play the spliced-up “*Kulintang*”-“Happy Feet” music video in the market. Each time they do so, they never failed to attract onlookers who seemed to interact with the animated figures of Allan and the dancing penguins by performing a bit of the *pangalay* moves of flexion of limbs and flicking of hands.

The melding of Allan Jackson’s *pangalay* and the “Happy Feet” clips resonates partly with some ethnographic accounts that trans-local viewers of American television soap opera do not passively view these programs and accept the Western ideology that come with them (Ginsburg, et. al. 2002; Liebes and Katz 1990; Ang 1985). Rather, trans-local viewers also re-interpret these imaginaries from the West in accordance to their specific cultural circumstances. In the case of the *Pangalay Kulintang-Happy Feet* production, local agents went further than re-interpretation. What they did was remake the American imaginary by melding, fusing, and conflating some of its elements into their own. In doing so, VCD agents were able to produce videos that allow Tausug spectators to experience what MacDougall has said about the corporeality of the film experience – they expand the boundaries of our consciousness and create affinities to bodies other than our own. Even more interesting in the case of Allan Jackson’s *Pangalay Kulintang-Happy Feet* video, that consciousness and bodily affinity extended all the way to animation characters imagined by its Hollywood creators. This practice exemplified an embodiment process that adapted Western imagination not necessarily under Western terms. By integrating other imaginations of bodies into their own in the form of music videos and showcasing them as part of the practice of everyday life, local Tausug performers and VCD makers like Ajing, Brian, and Allan were able to reinvigorate a kinesthetic heritage that embodied their identity precisely in cosmopolitan terms.

Sensing the Force of the Rhythms

Another aspect of the embodiment process that I will be examining is the visual and sonic dimension of *pangalayan* (dance repertoire) and their musical repertoire. Sound, through pulsating and percussive musical arrangement, defines a *pangalay* performance based on the fact that dancers do not rely on notations in creating and shifting their moves. Rather, they sense the music and feel the rhythm penetrate their bodies. Ajing has explained this to me one Saturday afternoon in between a *pangalay* rehearsal involving him and fellow virtuoso dancer, Nurminah. As accompaniment, Ajing and Nurminah played a VCD of fast, rhythmic, and pulsating synthesizer-based *kulintangan* music but the pace of their movements was exactly the opposite of what they are hearing. Their moves whilst smooth and flowing were extremely slow and intensely strenuous. I could see the tensions on their muscles building up as the outline of their veins marked off their arms, backhands, and neck. They seemed to be summoning all their strength as they slide and glide their feet sluggishly on the floor, whilst maintaining the *pangalay's* defining poise of outturned knees, slightly bent trunk, and flexed limbs. By keeping their pace slow but vigorous, they created an illusion that they were pushing their own bodies mightily hard just to turn and move an inch or two toward either their left. Yet every time they hit left, they sprung swiftly back to the right and restarted the snail-pace movement towards their left all over again. Whilst their flexed trunk and legs moved at glacial speed, they kept flicking their hands and wobbling the muscles in their shoulder blades dexterously. As the beats of the music grew louder and faster, the pace of their movements appeared slower and extraneous as if exerting all their strength in turning back the speeding tempo of the rhythm.

Ajing has told me that when he dances the *Pangalay Kulintangan* he makes it a point to feel the force, the *kusug*, of the rhythm pressing against his body. Once he feels the rhythm against his skin and muscles, he then senses the music rushing into his fingers and through his hands like a *sug*, a strong deep ocean current. That *sug* compels both his hands and fingers to vigorously stretch and flick them all at once, marking the beginning of the dexterous strokes of his *pangalay* performance. On his muscles, he feels the musical current making its way through every fiber of his body. “When you feel that force, that strong current of the *kulintangan* rhythm pulsating

through your body, you have to push them back as forcefully as you can. The virtuosity of a *pangalay* dancer lies in his strength and the way he converts that strength into a force. The faster the rhythm, the stronger you push. Since you are pushing back an on rushing rhythm, it is but natural that as you do so you also slow down because its force is dragging you down. This is why as the *kulintangan* beats faster, your movement should also go a lot slower,” Ajing said. Ajing conceives of the percussive and pulsating rhythm of the *kulintangan* as a material and kinetic “force” that stimulates his body into action. As the rhythm’s tempo accelerates, the slower the dancer’s movement should be. Ajing’s conception of rhythmic music as a force piercing through his muscles reflects the over-all Tausug philosophy of the body, the *baran*, as a self-conscious entity rather than a mere passive chunk of flesh. Being a self-conscious entity, performers like Ajing, Nurminah or Fatima whom I introduced at the beginning of this chapter, find it with ease to utilize their body as a medium and an instrument in kinesthetically expressing the way they dispose themselves to the world.

In live public performance, I saw several other dimensions of this sonic event. The sensorial experience does not flow towards one direction alone - that is from the musical source to the dancer. Rather, the experience is far more interactive and involves far more agents - the dancer, the musician, the spectators, and the instruments of music. As I have noted here and in the previous chapter, I tagged along with Ajing and his band’s wedding performances in the course of my fieldwork. In the performances that I witnessed, Ajing and several other *pangalay* performers and musicians prefer that the *kulintangan* be played live on synthesizers without permanent notes and musical measures. I saw this idea of interactivity in action with Ajing and his band’s synthesizer player, Ghadjer, performing a *pangalay kulintangan* interactively. As Ajing interacts with the music, Ghadjer also relates with him in sensorial ways whilst they are both entangled in a performance. Ghadjer adjusts the tempo and the rhythmic emphasis of his music by visually sensing and anticipating Ajing’s movement. Whenever Ajing speeds up his movement, Ghadjer slows down the tempo and lightens the rhythm. Sensing that Ajing is slowing down his movement, Ghadjer speeds up the tempo and toughens the rhythm. Seeing both Ajing and Ghadjer harmonize their *pangalay* and *kulintangan* performances is like seeing a musical and terpsichorean dialogue between the musician and the dancer. The dancer

relied not on the notation of the dance and the musician depending not on the notes of the music but on their heightened sonic and visual senses. Ajing reacts and follows the tempo of the musician whilst Ghadjer anticipates the dancer's movement. Ajing has told me that this practice is precisely patterned from the era when the *kulintangan* brass gongs were yet the musical instruments of choice in Sulu and Zamboanga. The dancer sensed the acceleration or deceleration of the tempo of the gongs player whilst the gongs player reacted to the pace of the dancer.

Indeed, Ligaya Amilbangsa, the senior pangalay scholar I cited earlier, wrote that a virtuoso *pangalay* and brass gong *kulintangan* performance rely “on sustain(ing) and constant interaction”, adding that “the skill of the former (musician) heightens the enthusiasm of the latter (dancer), and vice-versa. The implicit sharing of sentiments unconsciously serves as each other's inspiration and stimulus” (Ibid., 51, emphasis added). Furthermore, Amilbangsa noted that these interactive relations were not simply limited to the performers but widely shared by the spectators. “Whistling, shouting, and traditional exclamations known as *ulak* are the local seal of approval, the male spectators' rather noisy and outgoing fashion of expressing pleasure over the dance. This, or its glaring absence, gives the cue soon enough to both the dancers and the musicians to prolong or shorten the performance. As the spectators get more delighted, the *ulak* becomes more uproarious” (Ibid., 51-53). In other words, as I have noted earlier, key to a virtuoso performance is the deep play of the senses involving the dancer, the musician, and the crowd. In my own fieldwork, I observed that Ajing's and his musician's virtuoso performances never fail to elicit screaming, bantering, ribbing, hooting, laughter, and clapping from wedding celebration guests and festival spectators. Once the crowd's rousing approval fills the festive air, Ajing's performance turn from simply dexterous to ecstatic. As the crowd reacts listlessly and noisily to the virtuosity of his moves, Ghadjer's *kulintangan* music gets even more rhythmic. This heightened level of mutual responses appear to push Ajing nearly to the realm of trance but rather than a spiritual being directing his moves, it is his senses of the rhythmic sound of the synthesizer and the rapturous noise of the adoring crowd that stimulate his stroke. His body resonates with the rhythm and his senses seem to

take him closer into a “state of intoxication”²⁹. Such intense bodily reactions seemed to be generated by the sensuous relations that Ajing, Ghadjer, and the crowd of spectators had collectively experience in the context of an uproarious social event.

Bodily Production of Sociality

The ecstatic sight and sound in *pangalayan kulintangan* and *pangalayan sangbayan* performances reminded me of a point that Adam Chau (2008) makes about the importance of “heightened sensory ambiance” in examining the production of sociality (Ibid., 485). By bringing the social back into the analysis of embodiment, Chau presents his argument as at once a critique and expansion of the narrowly individualist idea of the “mindful body” in a Csordasian paradigm of embodiment (Chau 2008, Strathern 2004). For Chau, the idea of the mindful body does not necessarily mark the end of the embodiment process but rather the “pre-condition” in experiencing an “action-full lifeworld” in sensorial ways (Ibid., 492). Chau applies this view in the context of the sensorial experience of pilgrims participating in the spectacularly noisy, loud, and massively attended Shaanbei temple festivities in north-central China. Chau notes that the mutual responses of the pilgrims to each other’s noise and body heat as well as the sights that they encountered in their visit to the temple illustrates the resonant character of our bodies as they relate with several other bodies and the importance of the sensorial experience in the production of sociality. On broadly similar terms, the highly sonic, visual, and bodily resonant characteristic of *pangalay*, *kulintangan* and *sangbayan* performances in large social events like weddings and *Hilaya* festivities, are themselves an exercise of socio-somatic awareness that bring local agents together into a community. As I have noted previously, a *pangalay* dancer, endeavors to feel the rhythm that the musician produces through his or her sense of hearing. The musician, by his or her sense of sight, depends on the moves and pace of the dancer, in measuring his beats. Both performers – the musician and the dancer - entwine themselves in a bodily resonant dialogue of rhythms and movements. Entangled with the two performers are the gathered bodies of wedding or *Hilaya* spectators who lustily and noisily react to the dazzling sight of the dancer’s dexterous strokes and the stimulating sound of the

²⁹ The phrase, “state of intoxication”, was originally used by Radcliffe-Brown (1948) in describing the climactic phase of an Andamese dance that he had witnessed (Ibid., 252).

musician's rhythmic beats. As both performers and spectators knowingly encumbered themselves in such a boisterous interplay of rhythm, movement, screaming, and bantering, they intricately conjoined themselves as an exuberant, harmonious, and mutually resonating social body.

Objects and Bodies

There is also a material dimension in *pangalay* and its musical performances. Chau has not exactly factored the significance of sound-producing things in the sensorial production of sociality but I would argue that bringing in the material source of this sonic experience is equally crucial in understanding the embodied feature of cosmopolitanism in Zamboanga and Sulu. Towards that end, I see it necessary to expand Chau's sensorial social agents beyond human actors by bringing in the sound instruments into the understanding of the sensorial. Chau himself has claimed that the analytical foundation of the idea of "intense sociality" in ritual occasions could be tracked back to Durkheim's examination of the frenzied celebratory rites of aboriginal totemic clans in central Australia. In building up his argument, Chau recounts Durkheim's analysis of totemic ritual as a key cyclical event that brings clan members together into one social body following a long gap of being separated as small family units throughout most of the year. Durkheim, according to Chau, notes that these clans' very act of re-grouping to perform their totem's ritual were themselves an "exceptionally powerful stimulant" (Ibid., 498). So powerful and stimulative were these acts of socio somatic concentration that clan members in the course of the ritual were often collectively transported to a "extra-ordinary degree of exaltation" (Ibid.). Chau, however, leaves out in the analysis Durkheim's meticulous examination of the preeminent sound-making totemic ritual objects that actually inspired Australian aboriginal religious sentiments and embodied their sociality (Durkheim 1995: 119-124). One eminently sacred totemic object regarded with unsurpassed importance in terms of "religious dignity" is a bullroarer that the aborigines called the *churinga* (Ibid., 118). The *churinga*, which was also adorned with symbols and figures that embodied clan identity, produced a deafening noise when vigorously whirled in the air (Ibid.). Its vociferous sound and the images carved on it have immense ritual significance as these are employed in every ceremony of major importance and regarded as inherently powerful by virtue of their healing and fate-altering properties

(Ibid., 119).

By acknowledging the roles of both human agents and objects that aid human actors in organizing themselves, Durkheim actually offered a comprehensive and inclusive picture of sociality that could be adapted in understanding the intensely interactive production of sociality in a *pangalayan*, *kulintangan*, and *sangbayan* wedding or festival performance. Although musical instruments for *pangalayan*, performances were not regarded as totemic nor powerful sacred objects with healing and fortune-shaping properties, they played just as significant, if not agentic roles in setting the ambience for a sensorial production of cosmopolitan sociality in the Tausug lifeworld.

Shifting Instruments, Continuing Cross-border Exchange

As I noted earlier in this chapter, the musical instruments used in old *pangalayan* performances were generally made up of brass gongs that were also found in some island or coastal communities of neighboring Indonesia and Malaysia. The fact that these musical instruments were trans-locally constituted revealed the cosmopolitan features of the sound-making objects animating the sensorial production of Tausug sociality right from the past. From the 1970s, local interest on gongs have waned but not in isolation from the broader shifts in musical trend sweeping the cross-border communities of Tausugs, Sama, Badjau and some other groups in Zamboanga, Sulu, Sabah, Kalimantan, and the Celebes. Wedding and festival performers who travelled across these borders drove the transition from gongs to synthesizers. They started the shifts in the Sama, Tausug, and Badjau enclaves along the coasts of Sabah and gradually replaced the old acoustic heritage instruments in the Sulu archipelago and the Zamboanga peninsula. Nevertheless, such changes did not mean the end of the Tausug performing arts heritage. On the contrary, it ushered not only a reinvigoration of the Tausug heritage performances but were significantly instrumental in bringing forth their sense of community in sensorial ways.

Synthesizers aided performers in making their performances at weddings and *Hilaya* festivities even more spectacular and interactive than they already were in the era of brass gongs and acoustic musical instruments. The synthesizers offered the

dancers, musicians, and spectators a new way of experiencing the sensorial relation that animate the production of sociality in Tausug communities. Imin, the *mananangbay* (sangbayan performer) I introduced earlier, actually encapsulated this experience in one of our conversations. Imin told me that he and other wedding performers prefer the synthesizers because of its versatility. Whilst the synthesizers are able to mimic the rimming sound of brass gongs, they can also do something more with it. They could produce excitingly new and even more ecstatic tunes that heighten the sensorial experiences of performers and their spectators. On synthesizers, they acquired greater artistic maneuvering room to compose and play new songs that conflate locally familiar rhythms with those of globally familiar Western, Bollywood, or Southeast Asian music. The more performers conflate locally and globally familiar music, the more ecstatic were the responses of spectators. Consequently, the heightened sensory experience and higher levels of mutual responsiveness amongst performers and spectators generate even more spectacular wedding events and festivals. With more people actively and enthusiastically participating in spectacular weddings and festivals, they produce the mood for even richer sensorial relations that constituted their sociality in bodily ways.

***“Pangalay Super Jet”*: Sangbayan Spectacular**

Motivated by the desire to deliver the most excitable, cheerful, humorous, and enthralling performance, wedding and VCD performers actually produced a trove of *pangalayan* moves and musical pieces that never fail to rouse the ecstatic connection amongst spectators, performers, and musical instruments. Furthermore, several of these performances creatively stretched the local imagination to include things that animate the world, such as industrial objects, ships, aircrafts, iconic scenes from television soap opera, film characters, and so on.

When I was on fieldwork, I joined Ajing and his colleagues in recording a fast beat, funky, and jovial synthesizer-based *sangbay*, which they titled as “*Super Jet*”. Nurmadji, a colleague of Ajing who performs both the synthesizer player and the *sangbay*, recounted that as its title suggested the composition of *Super Jet* was inspired by the industrial world’s aircraft technology. In consonance with the *sangbay*’s industrial imagery, Ajing invented *pangalay* moves that incorporate the

visual images of jet planes in flight into the *pangalay*'s basic movement vocabulary of bent limbs and flicking hands. He does this by flexing and crisscrossing his arms upward to the heavens as his bodily way of showcasing two super sonic aircrafts racing their way up to the skies. This innovative *pangalay* stroke, which Ajing named the "*Pangalay Super Jet*", almost always elicit cheerful reaction from spectators in wedding events thus enhancing the ambience for a deeply sensorial experience of sociality across Tausug communities in Zamboanga and Sulu. Amidst widespread interest on the *Sangbay* and *Pangalay Super Jet*, Ajing collaborated with VCD producers in shooting an amusing music video that showed him dancing the *Super Jet* and Nurmadji singing on board a small fishing boat (see Figure 20).



Figure 20. Ajing dancing the "*Pangalay Super Jet*" in a music video set on board a small fishing boat in Zamboanga.

Ajing also recorded and filmed a *sangbay* and *pangalay* strokes that portray the industrial ships regularly plying the seas of Zamboanga and Sulu. Ajing said these moves, which had been invented by *pangalay* performers before him, have been known as the *Pangalay Sakayan*. In this movement Ajing visualized the waves on his body by raising and rolling his back shoulders and the prow of the boat by raising his arms above his head. Even popular television fantasy series beamed nationwide from Manila were incorporated in the *sangbayan* (*sangbay* repertoire) and given a *pangalay* dance interpretation. Amongst the favorite of young wedding performers is the *Sangbay Mulawin*, which captured the title of a Philippine television series on the fantastic saga of a mythical society of half-bird and half-humanoid beings. Whenever these fancy *pangalay* moves and rhythmically novel *sangbayan* music are performed in weddings and festivals, the crowd turns ecstatic, making weddings and festivals a truly spectacular and rousing event. Amidst the noise and thunderous exchange of these spectacles, the crowd and the performers were absorbed and unified in a highly sensorial state of sociality.

A Sensorial Experience of Sociality at Masjid Drive

One evening in July, my friends in the VCD and wedding performing circuit invited me to their performance at a wedding celebration in Masjid Drive, a sprawling neighborhood within the confines of Zamboanga City's downtown *barangay* (community) of Santa Barbara. A friend, who was one of the performers picked me up from an appointed place and took me to the venue, a narrow passage in one of the alleys leading to a swampy slum community at the farthest end of Masjid Drive. Three blocks from the performance venue, we already heard the loud pulsating sound of the *kulintang* on keyboards being amplified over powerful loudspeakers. The bright rhythmic tunes of the *kulintang* must have resonated well across the neighborhood as we saw several residents coming out of their homes and heading towards the direction of the music. We arrived half way through the program so by then, a phalanx of spectators had already gathered and filled up all corners of the narrow passage that was transformed at once into staging and viewing arena. We squeezed into the crowd to get to our friends in the performance area – a tight makeshift stage mounted next to the doorstep of a shanty that was home to the family of the bride. Fronting the stage were school-aged children whilst a crowd of teenagers



Figure 21. *Pangalay* and *sangbay* performers show off their skills at a wedding in Masjid Drive in Zamboanga.

and adults stood lustily behind them.

During a brief lull in the performances, the crowd – both the adults and the children – were hooting, teasing, and jubilantly demanding at the very top of their voices that the next performance must be another showcase of: “... *pangalay! pangalay! pangalay!*” The other half of the crowd touted: “*sangbay! sangbay!*” At that point the synthesizer began blasting a pulsating *pangalayan* rhythm triggering more hooting and clapping. From the shanty’s door emerged a young gay man, fully dressed in a purple colored *sawal* (loose trouser), a cream *batawi* (silken blouse), a velvet *tapis* (wrap around), and a red *pis syabit* (head dress), with his arms cleaving around a large roll of Persian rug (*see* Figure 21). Flamboyantly swaying his hips, the young man made his way to the front of the stage, shooed the children away, pushed the crowd back, and rolled out the rug on the little space that he managed to clear up. His daring and comic way of clearing the crowd prompted more hooting, laughing, teasing, shrieking and clapping. Amidst the banTERS, the man stood on the rug that he had just spread out and assumed the basic *pangalay* posture of flexed arms, outturned

knees, and slightly bent trunk. When the synthesizer player began beating *sangbay* tunes, the man went on showing off the basic *pangalay* movement of flicking hands, flexing and extending limbs, and raising and lowering his shoulder blade muscles. His movement elicited a prompt rhythmic response from the keyboard player who, in turn, accelerated the tempo of his synthesizer. Moments into the dancing and rhythmic beating, a *mananangbay* (*sangbayan* performer) climbed up on stage belting a popular *sangbay* titled, *Istah Kulafu* or “The Grouper Fish”, a hilarious and salacious *sangbay* that adapted the folksy tunes of an American Midwest song, “Oh My Darling Clementine”.

As the musicians and dancer entangled themselves in visual and sonic interplay of the senses, the hooting, clapping, and bantering from the boisterous crowd surrounding them grew even louder. The deafening noise appeared to have beguiled the dancer to show even more fancy moves and the musician an intoxicatingly pulsating music. His was a slow moving acrobatic summersault and some form of bodily contortions as he tried to make a public spectacle of his skill. Spectacularly, he transformed his body into a human arch, which he did by flipping on his back, planting both legs and arms on the ground, elevating and flexing his trunk, and turning his front side towards the heavens. Whilst sustaining such a contorted posture, the dancer tried flexing and extending his trunk and limbs in consonance with the *pangalay*'s flowing flexor and extensor movements. This fascinating sight drew more teasing, shrieking, yelling, laughter, and clapping as well as even faster and pulsating rhythms from the synthesizer. More singing, *pangalayan* (dance repertoire), *kulintangan* (instrumental repertoire), and *sangbayan* (*sangbay* repertoire) numbers were performed throughout the night generating a community gathering mediated by spectacular bodily movements, percussive rhythm from the electronic synthesizer, and mutually responsive bodies of spectators and performers. Indeed, such a spectacle highlights the significance of a sensorial experience in producing the kinship and neighborly bonds at the very core of Tausug sociality.

I left the celebration an hour before midnight. To make my way home a couple of kilometers from the wedding venue, I had to take a ride from a *jeepney* stop three blocks away. As I was approaching the stop, I heard the familiar loud pulsating rhythm of the *kulintangan* on synthesizer playing from a nearby alley. Audibly rising

above the rhythms are thunderous yelling and hooting in yet another wedding just around the corner. The stimulating sound and sights of live *pangalayan*, *kulintangan*, and *sangbayan* performances and by extension the VCDs reverberates day in and day out in the markets, streets, slums, and rustic communities across Zamboanga and Sulu.

Conclusion

The visually and sonically rousing *pangalayan*, *kulintangan*, and *sangbayan* performances offered us a lens in viewing how the cosmopolitan notion of inclusivity are actually imagined in bodily affective ways by the Tausug constituents of Zamboanga and Sulu. We could distinctly see these cosmopolitan values personified by virtuoso *pangalay* performers Ajing, Allan, Brian, Mameng, and Fatima, as well as the *sangbay* and synthesizer players like Madal, Kadil, Imin, and Ghadjer with the way they kinesthetically and musically express their disposition toward the world with their bodies as mediating instruments. In many ways, their performances illustrate the means in which cosmopolitanism is actually articulated beyond the intellectual discourses of global citizenship and belonging. Rather than cerebrally reflected, these notions of cosmopolitanism were materialised in the form of heritage music and dances. Through their bodies, they were able to weave global cultural flows into performances that animate the practice of everyday life in their locality. Performed in sonorously spirited wedding spectacles and the *Hilaya* religious festivities, these trans-locally infused performances were woven into the very fabric of Tausug sociality thus rendering every musically and dance-infused kindred and community gathering in Sulu and Zamboanga an actually existing as well as bodily grounded cosmopolitan affair. By being attuned and resonant to global cultural flows, these *pangalayan*, *kulintangan*, and *sangbayan* performers made every performance a rejuvenating and spectacular experience. Precisely by being cosmopolitan, these heritage performances turned out to be exceedingly effective in stimulating the sensorial relations that animate the production of Tausug sociality. These are the features of an embodied cosmopolitan sociality that subsequently underpin the production of Tausug imaginary on the VCDs.

Furthermore, the pervasiveness of cultural conflation in these performances indicate that deep in the provincial corners of the nation-states marginal Tausug communities have continually opened up to global processes in historic terms. By historicizing the cross-border habitus of *pangalayan*, *kulintangan* and *sangbayan*, we get to know that these performances are but the latest phase of a long-running trans-local exchange that historically engendered the kindred, social, and performative relations connecting the Tausug communities of Zamboanga and Sulu to the wider world of peninsular Malaysia and insular Indonesia. They reveal how these agentive local communities continually enmeshed themselves in non-western centric but multi-polar civilizing and globalizing project, acts that are at the very heart of the cosmopolitan philosophy of openness, adaptability, and flexibility.

Amidst the rise of colonial and later post-colonial state boundaries of Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines that I pointed in Chapter 1, the age-old practice of melding, integration, indigenisation, and remaking of trans-local performances actually endured. Where the nations erected geopolitical walls, the people in this area courageously pierced through them with their kinesthetic bodies and music, practically circumventing each government's stately goals of territorial consolidation. Hence, when wedding performers shifted from centuries old *kulintangan* brass gongs and acoustic musical instruments to synthesizers, they do not necessarily and exclusively mean a hegemonic consequence of Western cultural flows but rather also a product of cosmopolitan exchanges of border crossing by artistic agents. The conflated characteristics of their dances and their music on live as well as mediated performances illustrate how the local practice of borrowing actually converse with shifting cultural flows that go with the changing power relations in the area. Thus, these performers and their spectators did not only articulate how hybrid cultural identities are formed but showed us their capacity to embrace cultural difference and embody hybridity in the process of sustaining their own heritage.

Notably, recent processes of cosmopolitan embodiment in Zamboanga and Sulu were no longer confined to body-to-body or flesh-to-flesh human relations. Creative agents in Sulu and Zamboanga actually reconstituted such embodiment process into the field of mediation in at least two inter-related ways: by exploiting globally circulating imaginaries and remaking them into locally familiar performing

heritage. The vast collection of dance and music videos adrift globally were regarded by Tausug wedding performers and VCD producers as a rich pool of creative resources that they could mobilize, integrate, and remake into their own performing heritage. In the process of remaking these globally drifting sonic and visual media productions, local Tausug performers and video producers inadvertently re-interpreted them through the lenses of their own cultural practice. These creative acts of remaking and re-interpretation were no less than exemplified by the melding and conflation of trans-local imaginaries like Germany's "*Tokyo Town*", Hollywood's "*Happy Feet*" and the *Bollywood* dance videos, into *pangalayan*, *sangbayan*, and *kulintangan* VCDs. Consequently, the mediation of these performances extended the process of cosmopolitan embodiment in Sulu and Zamboanga beyond the ritual contexts of weddings and festivals; and toward an even more expansive project of social construction - the production, circulation, and consumption of the Tausug imaginary, which will be discussed in the following chapter.

Chapter 5

Improvisation and the Cosmopolitan Imagination: Street Video Makers as Rooted Cosmopolitans

<i>Subay kita niyu tumaayun</i>	We must live in harmony
<i>Sabab sibu-sibu da pa katan bangsa</i>	All nations are alike
<i>Magtulong tabang kita niyu katan</i>	Let us help one another
<i>Malayuh massuk papaghambuukun</i>	Bridge the distant and the near
<i>Muslim pa Christian</i>	Muslims or Christians
<i>Wayra nagbiddai</i>	Are not that different
<i>Palayuun natun bunsu iban jingki</i>	Cast hatred and spite away.

The soaring passages above constitute the chorus line of *Muslim pa Christian* (Muslims or Christians), a Tausug language pop rock music VCD that was circulating around the poorer and troubled quarters of linguistically diverse Muslim communities of Zamboanga and Sulu during my fieldwork in 2009 and 2010. With its emphasis on the fundamentality of human likeness amid discrepant religious and national affiliations, we can think of this song as an eloquent imagining of the oneness of humanity whilst simultaneously upholding the plurality of social belonging (Hollinger 2008: 231). The song's call for mutual aid amongst nations brings to mind the cosmopolitan dictum of human responsibility towards the other (Stade 2007, *also see* Levinas 1999). Its exhortation to *cast hatred and spite away* suggests a desire for "cosmopolitan' peace amid a community of humankind" (Rapport 2010: 21). The song celebrates an idea of universal human morality whilst valuing the diversity of the world's collectivities.

I had the opportunity of engaging with the *Muslim pa Christian* creators, a collaborative team of Tausug and Sama Muslims, as they were making the video for the song during my fieldwork. They asked me to get involve in the production by serving as their sound and recording engineer, an unexpected invitation that offered me an excellent location from which to observe the productive and creative processes as well as the agents shaping the transcendent features of the community being imagined on Tausug-Sama music videos. I will illustrate here how the distinction of cultural and linguistic difference between Tausug and Sama

communities are bridged at the level of everyday collaborative relations in grassroots music video productions. More significantly, at least for this chapter, my productive and creative interaction with Tausug and Sama musicians and video makers allowed me to further investigate the idea of “rooted cosmopolitanism” that recently frame cross-disciplinary analyses of the mutual relationship of identity making and situated forms of cosmopolitanism. The term rooted cosmopolitanism has been attributed to political essayist Mitchell Cohen, who in a critical commentary of the opposing notions of international proletarianism and differentiation in the American analytical spectrum, argues for a concept of social relations that dialectically “accepts a multiplicity of roots and branches and that rests on the legitimacy of plural loyalties, of standing in many circles, but with common ground” (1992: 483, *also see* Tarrow 2005). Subsequently, American philosopher Bruce Ackerman used rooted cosmopolitanism in describing persons who have a deep sense of loyalty to the founding principles of a nation, such as its Constitution, whilst sustaining their commitment as “citizen(s) of the world” (1994: 516, 535, *emphasis supplied*). Ulrich Beck employs the term in describing an ethical paradigm for citizens “to be engaged in the local and the global at the same time” (2003: 27). In anthropology, Richard Werbner takes the term from the abstract discussions of global and local citizenship to make sense of heroic patriots who passionately assert their own ethnic identity and political rights whilst sustaining their engagement with other collectivities. Contextualizing his thesis in modern Botswana, Richard Werbner appropriates the notion of rooted cosmopolitanism in analyzing the characteristics of leading public intellectuals, crusaders for social justice, and valiant nationalist revolutionaries who are “proud and assertive of their ethnic or other origins and home identities whilst recognising the cultural good of being engaged with a variety of others” (R. Werbner: 2008:175).

Whilst these assessments effectively enrich our idea of a rooted sense of cosmopolitanism, it also raises the question should rooted cosmopolitan agents be confined to the acts of public intellectuals? Should their acts be defined by public and political activism? Can an ordinary person committed to peace and justice at home be regarded as rooted cosmopolitans? I will approach this enquiry by situating the concept of rooted cosmopolitanism at the level of the everyday and

the quotidian. On such level, particularly in Zamboanga and Sulu, we will likely see a broad range of actors who do not necessarily lead or actively participate in patriotic movements but just the same shape and share an imagined community that simultaneously celebrate home identity and relations with the other. Furthermore, we can also see at this level, marginalised agents taking active roles in the making of the cosmopolitan imagination with tools, modes, and relations of creative production, which can be regarded as improvisational. The fluid, indeterminate flow of everyday and quotidian life can provide us a lens in viewing a process of identity construction that does not stray from the cosmopolitan vision of ethical engagement of self and other even as its agents respond to unequal power relations and issues of social justice in their midst. Inevitably, the techniques of improvisation that I will be examining here also include my own as I found myself entangled into the vagaries of working indeterminately with local agents at the helm of VCD productions as I myself performed what some anthropologists referred to as the cosmopolitan engagement of fieldwork (Colson 2008, P. Werbner 2008a, Rapport 2007). Whilst I have reflexively discussed this involvement in my fieldwork method (Chapter 1), I will be detailing this engagement here to highlight the relational dimension of improvisation that music video makers had cultivated with me in the same way that they would engage their collaborators in the improvisational process of VCD productions. Relevantly, our engagement also points to my own attempt of doing improvisation in fieldwork within the line of what Liisa Malkki has said about ethnography: “[it] is, and always has been, an improvisational practice” (Malkki: 2007: 179).

An Invitation to Engage

My participation in the making of *Muslim pa Christian* began when Manz, a Tausug wedding performer and songwriter, approached me to help him cut records for songs written by his Sama and Tausug speaking friends. By chance, Manz and I kept bumping into each other with me lugging my laptop for a series of video elicitation interviews in a slum community where he grew up and at a downtown flea market where he usually hangs out. At one point after one of my market interviews, Manz sat with me and shared his predicament about a music video producer who committed to take his project but reneged. Since then, he and

his collaborators thought it better to record the music themselves and search later for a video producer who can shoulder the costs of filming and reproduction of their music videos on compact discs. In my previous conversations with some VCD makers (Chapter 3), I learned that earlier generation of music producers in Sulu and Zamboanga actually record and circulate their music on audiocassettes. Normally, the producers shoulder the costs of recording and reproduction of the cassettes but since the advent of VCD and DVD machines in mid-2000s local recording tools shifted to desktop computers. In turn, producers cover costs for recording, filming, editing, and CD reproduction of the music videos. Manz calculated that if they themselves record their music digitally, they would easily win support from a producer as it already cuts the cost of recording. He said they have done this before using a borrowed computer but that equipment broke down and a friend who usually operates it for them has already left town. Manz told me that they have talked about various ways of saving the project and consensually decided to ask me to record their music on my laptop instead. The request was totally unexpected and my initial reaction was one of hesitation because I really have no knowledge of recording musical tracks on a computer. In response, Manz told me that he himself knows little about computers, he is certain that his friend had self-taught himself and suggested that I could easily teach myself since I already know the basics of computers. I took his advice. I studied my computer's *Garageband* recording software and checked out online tutorials on the rudimentary methods of mixing vocals and musical instruments into audio tracks. A week later, I told Manz that I am all ready so off we went to cut records at the home of his Sama friends in the slums of Barangay Arena Blanco in a mutual embrace of improvisational collaboration in the mediation of their cosmopolitan imagination.

Cosmopolitan Possibilities in the Time of Violence

Arena Blanco is a sprawling but impoverish multilingual seaside *barangay* (community) of 11,000 people about six miles to the eastern coast of downtown Zamboanga. Sama-speaking Muslims, who dominate the area linguistically, regarded Arena Blanco as ancestral home although an influx of Tausug and Yakan Muslims as well as of Chavacano Christians that they accommodated altered its geographic

landscape in different periods of its history. The area's Muslim roots suggest that the place has long been integrated into the broader expanse of the Islamic ecumene. Its Spanish name indicates a colonial history that essentially incorporated the place into the global geopolitical order, starting with the Spanish empire from the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries and later by the Americans through nearly half of the twentieth century. When Arena Blanco was formalized into a *barrio*, the fundamental level of political division of the American colonial government in 1939 and later of post-colonial Philippines, its people again accommodated the entry of non-Muslims that subsequently transformed the community into a shared home for multi-faith and multi-lingual ethnic communities. In some sense, Arena Blanco is "becoming more cosmopolitan" through time in so far as both the term and the actual acts of its people "involves coming to terms with the evaluation of differences within the nation, particularly between themselves and their principle contrapuntal other" (Fardon 2008: 238-9). During the last four decades residents yet again offered Arena Blanco as refuge for people displaced from towns afflicted by complex sets of recurrent conflicts in various areas around the Sulu Archipelago and some parts of the Zamboanga peninsula. Some stayed in Arena Blanco after fleeing fighting between government forces and discrepant factions of Muslim rebel groups. Others settled in the community after moving away from their hometowns to avoid getting caught in disturbing cycle of vengeance killings amongst families entrenched in long running generational conflict locally known as *rido*³⁰.

Tragically, however, the continuing violence in the surrounding areas caught up with Arena Blanco in recent years. When we recorded *Muslim pa Christian*, some of the Chavacano-speaking Christians and Sama-Tausug Muslim families in and around Arena Blanco were themselves embroiled in a *rido* that has already claimed nearly a dozen lives. Fearing an awakening of Christian and Muslim animosities, city officials and Muslim and Christian religious and civic leaders intervened to resolve the conflict. Dialogues were conducted but at the time I ended my fieldwork, the killings continued. The difficult social and political situations in Arena Blanco, and

³⁰ Rido is a widely use local term characterising incidents of recurring armed violence between kin groups in some parts of Mindanao. In recent years, rido generated violence had grown more complex as it drags military and rebel resources into the conflict resulting in massive displacement of people not involved in the fighting. Rido killings, in some cases, targeted persons who are not necessarily members but associated to a particular kin group or community (see Torres 2007; Canuday 2007).

for that matter most of Sulu and Zamboanga would have presented a challenging environment for cosmopolitanism. Amid such difficulties, however, rich music video imaginaries of an engaging, open, and peace conscious society also emerge from the region. This suggests a possibility of cosmopolitan imagination even in communities caught in everyday violence and dire social circumstances. The characteristic of this cosmopolitanism becomes clearer to me in the course of the collaborative work that Manz, his fellow VCD creators, and I did in recording, filming, and editing music videos through rather indeterminate and improvisational ways.

Recording in the Slum

At the hour of ten one February morning, Manz led me through a labyrinth of shanties until we reached the steps of an old but airy wooden house that is home to one of his Sama friends in Arena Blanco. Manz then introduced me to the members of the *Blacks Stone Group*, a wedding band that he helped organise and mentored, and whose songs we came to record. The group had 10 songs, all of which were written by Mang, the band's lyricist; arranged by Asiri, the musical director; and performed by Dayang, the vocalist. Soon after the introduction, Mang and Asiri ushered us to the family living room where they both said we would cut the record. They asked Manz and myself to settle down as they brought in a keyboard synthesizer, a large speaker, a sound amplifier device, and a microphone. Attentively, Manz began setting up the equipment by connecting microphone, speaker, and synthesizer cables to the amplifier. He then handed me a cable from the amplifier that I then connected to a pinhole on my laptop using an audio jack. I then opened my computer and its recording software, remembering all the steps I learned from online tutorial. With a laptop, amplifier, microphone, and keyboard synthesizer we made ourselves a makeshift recording studio.

Before we could start, however, an electric power disruption sweeping across Zamboanga during my fieldwork struck preventing us from doing anything. The power outages had been happening daily lasting indeterminately between one to four hours but people adjusted and went on with their lives working around the daily disruptions. To wait out the outage, Mang and his colleagues spent the time practicing their music on an acoustic guitar. At one point, we got to talk about

their music, which they write in Tausug and Sama for the pragmatic reason that both languages are being shared in Arena Blanco and the broader expanse of Sulu and Zamboanga. Eventually the conversations drifted to their greater concern, what was then a recent rash of killings that have been stirring anxiety in their community. They offered their analysis of its roots and implications, frustration over the police's failure of solving it, and deep concern over personal safety. They felt extremely vulnerable because they are often out in the streets earning a living as rickshaw drivers or menial workers for some shops when they are not performing at weddings. Their fears, I later learned, were founded on a very personal brush with the violence before them. Few days before we came, the father of a fellow band member was shot dead on the main street of Arena Blanco. Instead of seeking vengeance or venting their anger on the government, the police, or neighboring Christian families, Mang thought that it would be better for them to channel their frustration to writing ballads like *Muslim pa Christian*. "This conflict involves some people who happened to be Muslims and Christians. It is not a Muslim and a Christian fight. Fighting in the name of religion does not make any sense, we are one and the same are we not?" Mang asks in a manner that somehow echoed the message of the song he wrote.

Two hours into the electrical disruption, our conversation went on without anyone cursing the power company or coming to the edge of their patience. When the *bang* (vernacular term for the *Adhan* or the Islamic call for prayer) was made at noon, the more religious in the group excused themselves to pray. On the third hour through the power outage, we were called for lunch with Mang assuring that power would soon be restored. After lunch, Asiri led us back to the living room brimming with an optimistic prediction, "Power should be coming back now because it's been about three hours. It's usually a two to three hour blackout here." When power finally resumed on the fourth hour, the group immediately buckled down to work. Asiri jumped into his keyboards, Mang called Dayang, whilst Manz re-tuned the amplifier, sound boxes, and the microphone. As soon as we were done re-setting our rather crude music booth, we started recording. Dayang's powerful voice betrayed her petite body frame and Asiri's mastery in imitating and melding the sound effects of percussions, organ, drums, and strings on the synthesizer gave their music an overall feel of a rock band fully fitted with

musical instruments. The recording went on from two in the afternoon to about six in the evening but despite limited time and equipment we managed to lay down the tracks of *Muslim pa Christian* and nine other songs in a music recording process marked by contingencies and remarkable commitment to simply carry on despite the limitation of their resources as well as the deficiencies of both political and electrical power structures before them.

Negotiations in the Market

The tracks that we recorded in Arena Blanco in January were not immediately made into music videos. The project languished for three more months as Manz and his friends searched around for producers willing to take their music. Finally in May, Manz and his friends struck a workable deal with Eting, a VCD seller in Zamboanga's downtown flea market. Striking a production deal was not exactly smooth, which I have witnessed by following through the negotiations. Initially, Eting was hesitant in taking the project for pragmatic and petty reasons. First, he lost money in a recent venture and would want to make sure that his next project will not be as financially straining. Second, he detested some members of the *Black Stone Group* for breaking an audiocassette earlier lent them supposedly to record music that he himself would film. Manz, however, persisted by asking Eting to just listen to the music. Eting considered Manz's proposal but demanded that he listens to the music during the busiest time of the market. "It is better this way. We could listen to the music whilst observing how the passersby and sellers nearby react to it. That way we will know if this can indeed attracts buyers," Eting told Manz. After airing a few songs, about three people approached Eting's stall wanting to buy copies. Instantly, Eting committed to videotape, edit, and reproduce the *Black Stone Group* VCD on a condition that he does not pay them and that he bears no cost during actual filming. The group, however, are free to sell copies of the videos at any price they want provided that they return him his estimated editing and reproduction costs of eight pesos (five pence) for each VCD. Manz, Mang and other members of the *Black Stone Group* agreed on the condition that Eting highlights the name and contact details of their band. With nods and laughter, they sealed the deal and set the date of filming: the next day.

Filming with a Pocket-sized Home Video Camera

After the group left, I hung out with Eting at his stall to enquire how he would pull off a music video shooting in a day's notice. He walked me through a plan, which he normally executes in his video projects. He would shut his stall for the afternoon but he and the artists would gather there before heading to nearby plazas and streets to film. The filming would be somewhere within walking distance from the nearest cybercafé because Eting's lone film equipment, a pocket-sized digital video camera, has a limited two-gigabyte memory card that can only store about half an hour of low-resolution moving pictures. In the event that his camera runs out of digital space, he would briefly suspend filming, walk into the Internet shop to download his videos on a recordable DVD, and then resume shooting on location. Since I have a laptop, I thought that I could just offer him my disc space and equipment to save on time. I also asked that I come along and photograph them whilst filming for my study. I assured him that I would share all the pictures I took of them. He accepted my offers, setting the stage for my involvement in another area of collaborative effort in Tausug and Sama video making, filming and editing.

The following day, we all gathered at Eting's stall. Eting's original plan was to film Dayang at a park a few blocks away to save on transportation fare but upon learning that one of the members of the *Black Stone Group* managed to borrow a pick-up vehicle, he quickly changed plan. He decided to film on three locations, a sandbar off Cawa-Cawa boulevard, the Zamboanga seaport, and a popular waterfront promenade called Paseo del Mar. Before heading to his chosen locations, he told us that these spots are familiar to many as Zamboanga landmarks and that by showing them on the video they will be conveying a message of Muslim allegiance to the city even though they are regarded as minority to the place. Eting wrapped up the day by filming the lights and streets of Zamboanga from the back of the car when they were returning to the market to drop him off. With a pocket-sized home video camera on hand, Eting managed to shoot about three hours of moving pictures in a single afternoon through a filming method that I would characterize as rather quick and hasty.

Post Production at a Cybercafé

Eting sat on his footages for about a week. He decided to open his stall with the hope of earning a bit more before shutting it again once he begins post production work. When he finally was ready for editing, he approached Tam, a friend who works in a downtown cybercafé and knows basic editing techniques. He also negotiated with the café owners to allow Tam to edit his videos there. The owners agreed provided that Eting pays extra and Tam does the editing in addition to the task of administering the shop's computer network and accepting payment from clients relative to what he was hired for. The cybercafé whilst well ventilated and air-conditioned was rather cramped and brimming with students playing computer games. Eting and Tam, however, edited on a server computer in a secured corner where Tam usually sits whilst administering the shop's computer network. During editing, Eting had no script or a storyboard that usually guides more formal approaches to filmmaking. Instead, Eting made do with the constraints of the three-hour raw video footage of Dayang and Mang that he filmed. To tame the cost of post-production, he aimed to finish within the shortest possible time using the limited materials in his possession. To achieve that goal, Eting simply divided his footages into ten sequences and used them without cuts or shifting scenes on the ten songs that the *Black Stone Group* handed him. For *Muslim Pa Christian*, Eting used a grainy shot of the band members, himself, and myself walking towards the camera (Figure 22) and the city lights that he filmed whilst driven back to the market (Figure 23). With such simple approach to editing Eting and Tam managed to complete editing in a day.

After editing, Eting worked on a VCD cover design with a second friend working in yet another Internet café. Whilst designing the cover, Eting remembered the photographs I took of them whilst filming. He asked for some copies from me and picked two, the one showing Dayang and Mang together (Figure 24) and the other that features him and other members of the band (Figure 25). He then integrated both photographs on the covers of the VCD (Figures 26 and 27) that he released in the flea market. When the VCD hit the stalls, copies were immediately sold out. Buyers who came to Eting's stall would tell him how



Figure 22. A grab of the opening shots of *Muslim pa Christian* music video edited by Eting shows grainy and partly hidden pictures of himself (third from right), *Black Stone Group* members, and myself (extreme right taking pictures of them) whilst walking towards the camera.



Figure 23. A video grab of continuing sequence of city lights near Zamboanga's Paseo del Mar that Eting shot on top of a car and rendered without cuts on the *Muslim pa Christian* music video after running out of footages.



Figures 24 and 25. Photographs of Dayang and Mang (left image) and of the *Black Stone Group* members (right image), which I snapped during filming of the *Black Stone Group* music video.



Figures 26 and 27. The photographs, which I took of the performers during fieldwork ended as a cover of the VCD produced by Eting, music video producer and seller in the streets of Zamboanga.

they were captivated by Dayang's voice and the poignant messages her songs convey. Eting had to reproduce an additional 500 copies of VCDs on top of the initial 500 copies he produced. Soon he would no longer cope with the demands, prompting his fellow VCD sellers to pirate and reproduce his videos as demands multiplied and the music of the *Black Stone Group* echoed throughout the market, streets, and slums of Sulu and Zamboanga, practically day and night.

Improvisation and VCD Making

To some extent, the production process in Sulu and Zamboanga reflects

and contrasts with Henry Stobart's (2011) description of the Bolivian carnival music VCD production in the Andes. Like that of the Bolivian carnival music VCDs, the one in Zamboanga and Sulu also resembles a "cottage industry" in the sense that the productive activities involve family members, include domestic spaces as makeshift studios, make optimal use of worn out facilities, and could be characteristically defined by "ingenuity, practicality, and pragmatism" (Stobart, 217). Unlike those of the Andes in Stobart's documentation, however, the production process in Sulu and Zamboanga could be regarded as far more indeterminate. The production of the *Black Stone Group* VCD can be described as an endless loop of contingencies and improvisations that draw in several actors and resources as they go along. The makers of these imaginaries are without a studio, secured funding, consistent and committed patrons, or organized system of production and distribution. The recording is usually done in someone's bedroom, kitchen, dining area, living room, or whatever available domestic spaces they could find. The indeterminate ways that Eting, Manz, and the *Black Stone Group* piece together their music VCD is typical of the production process of music videos in Zamboanga and Sulu. Instead, producers and performers work around their constraints by taking advantage of whatever resources available and make do with what they have in an indeterminate method of production that can be better characterized as improvisation. Nevertheless, this ability to improvise out of the indeterminacy of the local production process suggests the centrality of improvisation in the making of Tausug imaginaries on which VCD production is one example of.

Improvisation, according to another musicologist Barret Frank is an "excellent site to study" the process of self-making and world making (2010: 154). Improvisation acknowledges the productive nature of people as "active, striving and creating agents" ready to reconstitute themselves, imitate others, try out new roles, and craft works of fiction (Ibid.). Unfortunately, whilst the term improvisation has repeatedly slipped into anthropological discussions of discrepant forms of cosmopolitanism the idea has been vaguely conceptualized (see Appadurai 2002: 63, Van der Veer 2004: 171, Werbner 2008b: 3, Graeber 2008). Nevertheless, David Graeber's account of "spaces of intercultural improvisation" as loci for people of diverse cultural and political traditions

figuring out ways of going along whilst living side by side offers a relevant starting point in thinking about the value of improvisation in the imagination of a cosmopolitan social world in peripheral areas like Sulu and Zamboanga. Graeber offered a past and a contemporary example of these zones, first is the frontier regions of eighteenth century Americas, and, second, the indigenous communities at the centre of the Zapatista rebellion in southern Mexico towards the end of the previous century. Graeber regards the point when natives and settlers started integrating each other's cultural practices, like child rearing and social formation, into their own whilst figuring out ways of living side by side in frontier Americas as examples where we could find cosmopolitan improvisation at work (Ibid. 289). Such improvisational cosmopolitan spirit, according to Graeber, could also be seen in the Zapatista democratic self-determination campaign. (Ibid., 295). Rather than resorting exclusively to indigenous governing methods, Graeber notes that the Zapatista constituents established their self governing structures by melding together local notions of indigenous social organization, the ideas of Maya intelligentsia inspired by the writings of Immanuel Kant, liberation theological views influenced by Judeo Christian teachings, and Maoist thoughts (Ibid., 297). Graeber's political examples of cosmopolitan improvisation, I must concede, do not fully reflect the dynamics of everyday terms of improvisation that I documented. In fact, the creative activities in the markets of Zamboanga and Sulu are far more ordinary and nothing close to the Zapatista's revolutionary goals of re-founding democratic structures through self-organization of autonomous communities as viewed by Graeber.

Whilst a militant self-determination struggle has long been simmering in the Muslim areas of Mindanao, music video makers from the slums regard the rebels as only one of the many actors shaping the way they imagine their community and its relation to the broader world. Tausug and Sama music video makers do not necessarily view their community outside the reach of the state but rather locates them within the Philippine state. In *Muslim pa Christian* music video, for instance, they offer an openly humanistic and inclusive imagination of society ensconced within the realities of the Philippine south. Nevertheless, Graeber's account of inclusive zones of cultural improvisation offers a useful argument on which to tease out forms of cosmopolitan practices involving

ordinary agents who dealt with life's indeterminacies by absorbing trans-cultural practices and variant social consciousness to enrich their own. In doing so, I move beyond Graeber's attention to revolutionary and intellectual agents by contextualising the question of cosmopolitan improvisation around the lives of ordinary people who also produced humanistic as well as socially, religiously, and politically inclusive visions of their local community as they carry on living in accordance to the rhythm of everyday life. To examine this, I will return to an earlier discussion on rooted cosmopolitanism I laid out at the beginning of this chapter. Beyond the capacity of local ordinary agents to appropriate global cultural forms, the critical question emerging here is whether or not their cultural accomplishments did serve the ends of justice that Richard Werbner emphasizes as a defining characteristic of rooted cosmopolitans. Does the ordinariness of VCD makers make them a force in addressing the ailing condition of their community? Should not cosmopolitans be transformative? Is cosmopolitan transformation possible in the quotidian practice of everyday life? Returning to the lives as well as motivation of Eting the VCD seller; Maing, the cybercafé-wedding video shop owner, and Manz the fruit vendor-musician in making music videos can provide us some insightful answers to these questions.

Eting: From Revolution to Video Production

Eting, one of the most productive video makers in Zamboanga, used to serve as an envoy for an armed secessionist movement called the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF). The movement's rhetoric of Islamic and ethnic discrimination effectively attracted recruits and material support from a broad swath of Muslim communities in Southern Philippines during the wars in the 1970s. Eting was drawn to the side of the rebellion after Philippine soldiers arrested him and his father in 1974 on suspicion of being MNLF supporters. Eting, who was nine year old then, and his father, who was manhandled whilst in custody, were eventually released but their horrific experience drove them to the cause of secession. Eventually, Eting's father joined an MNLF command in the neighboring island province of Basilan whilst he, his siblings, and mother eked out a living in Zamboanga. Whilst growing up under the shadows of war, Eting somehow managed to attend school and even earned a college education from a

Zamboanga university. In between school terms, however, he would climb up the hills to train as a guerrilla as well as serve as a secret MNLF envoy.

When the MNLF and the government signed a peace accord in September 1996, Eting enlisted into a programme that integrated MNLF combatants into the Philippine military. Eventually, Eting served the Army's community relations team and later its intelligence unit. Eting, however, got disillusioned from what he regarded as ostentatious disregard of critical intelligence information he had been sending his superiors. One of the most blatant, Eting said, was a brutal rescue assault ordered by ranking military officers when he and his team was at the very point of securing a negotiated release of kidnapped evangelical Christian missionary couple Martin and Gracia Burnham in 2002. The assault, which made the pages of newspapers around the world, killed many of the kidnapers and Martin. The last straw for Eting was when soldiers attacked a remote but populated village on suspicion that the villagers were harboring terrorists and kidnapers. Eting claimed that none of the terrorists and kidnapers perished in that assault but a respectable imam was killed whilst several families were displaced in a relentless episode of aerial bombardment made even after he and his unit sent out reports detailing an earlier movement of the armed men out of the area. After the incident, Eting went on leave from the Army and decided instead to sell wares in the city's *barter trade* market, a local term for a flea market selling duty-free goods coming from across the borders of Sabah in Malaysia. Coincidentally at that time, the local mayor targeted the closure of the *barter market*, which is located just a block away from the main flea market and commercial shops of the city, as its growth started to affect the enterprises of long established traders. Eting challenged the policy, first by making representations before city officers, and later by standing in an election for mayor even though he never had resources, an organisation, political campaign experience, and chance of winning. Eting lost both the elections and his place in the *barter market*, devastating his finances as well as entrepreneurial future. With his political and livelihood prospects hanging precariously, Eting turned to selling VCDs and music video production.

Hanging out with Eting at his stall one day, I asked him why he settled on

a career selling and producing VCDs given his storied experience as a rebel, soldier, and mayoral candidate. He gave a mix of pragmatic and quixotic answer: “I like this work. Producing VCDs gives me this deep feeling of happiness even if I only earn a little. I also like the fact that by selling here in the market, I am able to engage with as many people rather than stay at home without a job and doing nothing. The best thing about producing and selling VCDs is that I feel that I am still communicating to the people what we have been trying to say to the government and the world when I was with the MNLF. I see this as one way of achieving recognition for our people.” I went on probing his argument by pointing that whilst he indeed has agreed to produce meaningful videos like *Muslim pa Christian*, most of what he sells are music videos that dominantly revolve around hymns on romantic love. He paused, smiled, and gave this reply: “Is it not that the opposite of love is hate and bitterness? Whenever I make videos featuring Tausug or Sama love songs, I actually believe that I am contributing to the cause of peace. We could make videos that agitate Muslims to hate Christians and the government. No, I don’t think that is right. I am happy that people like love songs more than anything else because that means it is not hate and bitterness that rule their heart.” Eting added that a great number of Tausug and Sama songs are really romantic poetries written largely for wedding celebrations. When I reviewed nearly a hundred music VCDs that I had purchased in Zamboanga, an overwhelming number of them revolves indeed around romantic love themes. The “love” that Eting has thought about whilst reflecting on his work and life as a VCD producer comes from a deep intuitive desire of imagining a society that does not live in animosity with the other, even with the dominant forces in their midst. He projects a narrative of self-identity that is based on a romantic sense of the value of love as well as the sharing of faiths and lives with communities not their own, having seen the horrors of war and experienced the pang of injustice first hand.

Maing: Concerts for Peace and Against Violence

Maing’s family is affluent but they also went through a rough and tumbled life of dispossession and displacement as a result of the secessionist war. Maing was a toddler when his kin evacuated to Zamboanga from their war-ravaged

hometown in the nearby island of Basilan in the seventies. When they started their new lives in Zamboanga, Maing's parents and elder brothers eked out a living as peons in the *barter market*. After decades of learning the ropes of *barter trading*, Maing's family eventually managed to pull themselves out of hardship and established their own wealth as *barter traders*. Maing, however, did not imbibe his parents' and siblings' passion in *barter trading*. Instead, he taught computer technology subjects in a local university. Later, he opened the Musa Internet Café at a cramped downtown Zamboanga office space that became an improvised studio for post-production work of music video producers as well as his own videos of Ramadan lectures.

At one point during my fieldwork, however, Maing shut down his shop after failing to pay up their internet bills but reopened it again after managing to raise some funds. Amid those limitations, however, Maing pursued other ventures that sought to address the deteriorating social relations in Sulu and Zambaonga in his own little way. When I was in Zamboanga, Maing actually spearheaded separate productions of two meaningfully inclusive public performances, a "Concert and Pangalay for Peace" during the *Amun Jadid* (Islamic New year) celebration in December and a "Concert Against Electoral Violence" in March the following year. The first concert, which he actually organised with Eting and Manz, gathered Muslim wedding performers as well as a few school-based troupers from Christian schools who were seen by about five thousand people for free in the popular and easily accessible Paseo del Mar seaside park in downtown Zamboanga. The second concert, which was aimed at spurring public actions over recurring violence in Zamboanga and Sulu elections, brought together music band members who embodied the multi-linguistic communities of the region in their songs and spiels. That concert, however, attracted fewer people due to Maing's poor choice of a venue off downtown Zamboanga, failure to properly advertise the event, and decision to impose some fees to pay the artists and recover his expenditures. Though he at times fumbled in event organising, Maing's efforts reveal his vision of a politically inclusive and tolerant Tausug and Sama societies. These concerts also illustrate both his continuing concern and deep desire of seeing an end to conflict and displacement that had once dispossessed his family.

Manz: Video Maker, Fruit Vendor, Wedding Performer

Like Eting, Manz also grew up in conditions of uncertainty and anxiety. Manz was born in Sulu at the height of the secessionist war in 1974. His parents evacuated their troubled hometown to the Sulu provincial capital of Jolo few days after he was born. Within weeks of their arrival in Jolo, armed clashes engulfed the capital. One searing afternoon at the height of the fighting, his parents wrapped him in a blanket and around their arms as they made a mad dash to the last boat out of town. They eventually settled in the slums of Mariki in downtown Zamboanga where he grew up. Unlike Maing's family, Manz's parents had difficulty adjusting with life in Zamboanga and remained too poor to send Manz to school beyond first grade. Instead, they ask Manz to help augment the family income by selling fruits and other wares in the market rather than attend school. His parents made up to Manz by teaching him the basics of writing and counting, skills that took him through the difficult life of growing up as street fruit vendor. His lack of formal education, however, did not deter him from writing songs and playing music for weddings. He taught himself guitar and keyboard synthesizer as he went on pursuing his childhood dream of actually becoming a professional wedding performer. As wedding performer, Manz realised that he was good at writing both music and lyrics for pop ballads and rock genres. He began composing songs when he was a teenager and has since written more than a hundred Tausug ballads, pop, and rock music that were later recorded by other wedding performers on audio cassettes and VCDs. Manz also took up part time work as a cameraman for wedding video shops. Though wedding performances and video coverage opportunities abound, there were times when his earning would not be enough to support the needs of his family. Again, to augment that income, he peddled fruit in the streets of Zamboanga.

In his twenties, Manz briefly left his life as a wedding performer when he took an offer from an affluent uncle to sell fruit in the streets of Manila. His uncle's venture failed a couple of years later driving Manz back to Zamboanga. In his return, Manz immediately resumed his involvement in wedding performances and rekindled his passion for songwriting. He claimed that he has become even more productive and inspired in composing songs with a stream of wedding

performers who come to him in search of new songs and music recording collaborators as I discussed in Chapter 2. Additionally, Manz mentored younger wedding performers and songwriters such as the members of the *Black Stone Group*. When music video productions began picking up in Sulu and Zambaonga, Manz was at the forefront of it. He organized wedding groups and sought out support for their music video projects from sources as varied as VCD sellers, cybercafé operators, and even politicians.

On a few occasions, Manz found himself being hired by varying rebel groups to film the military formations they organize in the jungles of the Sulu archipelago. On such occasions, some rebels attempted to recruit him but he politely declined all offers. Manz believed that the searing experience suffered by his family during and after the war might have convinced the rebels that he could be trusted. Whilst he deeply respected the cause of the rebels, he told me once, he does not think that fighting can address the troubles their society face. He saw his calling in songwriting, wedding performing, and producing the kind of music videos that he had already made. Amid his family's bitter experience of being displaced by war and his own repeated exposure to rebel formations, none of his songs and videos took up the cause of secession. Rather, a number of his works reflect the meaningful relations of fellow persons across faith, cultures, nations, and places. Like the VCDs that Eting sells and produces, most of Manz's musical compositions express the value and pains of romantic love.

Indeterminate Lives, Fluid Affiliations

If we examine the life stories as well as the productive activities of Manz, Maing, and Eting, as I presented above, we would see that they actually share nothing much in common with the transformative and heroic figures in recent discussions of "rooted cosmopolitanism" (Appiah 1998, R. Werbner 2008, Fardon 2008). For instance, whilst Eting had joined a revolution and later the military, he merely served as their marginal foot soldier that he had since then abandoned. Similarly, Manz had been exposed to the secessionist politics and has in fact been accepting assignments to videotape local guerilla formations but refused to be absorbed by them. Maing may have a relatively affluent family but he himself

struggled to sustain his enterprise. Manz and Eting are people of the slums whilst Maing is a small-time entrepreneur but they all manage to make a living by turning music video production into a micro-cottage industry. If at all, these actors are imperfect and sometimes overwhelmed by the anxiety of losing out on their ventures. Just the same, however, these actors craft imaginaries that value both their identity as Tausug or Sama Muslims and those beyond their own. The imaginaries they produce are not of an isolated and exclusive collectivity of Tausug or Sama Muslim but a community that connects with other collectivities. In their imaginaries, they are firm in thinking about the foundations of their identity, which are Islam and their language (Tausug or Sama) but did not end there. They tempered that firmness with imaginaries of engagement with other faiths. They remain committed to making music with words and video images that imagine a Tausug community that is not only concerned with self-identity but one that seeks to be globally engaged and respectful of other faiths, and cognizant of other forms of social belonging at all times.

By relying on the resources within their reach and the global technology that flowed into their communities, these video producers effectively expanded their vision of social belonging beyond their social world. In that vision, their identity is grounded in our common humanity and no less rooted from their faith, place, and nation. A meaningful aspect in the lives of Eting, Maing, Manz, as well as the other video makers in Zamboanga and Sulu, is the openness of their social and political affiliations. Their lives have gone through several phases, spanning from the horrific experiences as children of war to their efforts of reinventing themselves as peons, vendors, guerrilla, soldier, cybercafé owner, and music video makers. Maing expands the Tausug cultural horizon with his peace and electoral violence awareness concerts. Each of them takes part in varying social, political, religious, and cultural networks in their community but never settle or harden their positions. They do not settle on a single and defined representation of themselves as well as of the world but open up to it. In their imaginaries, they portray themselves as Muslims, world citizens, Tausug, Sama, or Filipino. Their adherence to their identity as Tausugs or Sama is firm but not overwhelmed by the politics of identity. Their faith in Islam is unwavering but they also engage creatively with Christians as they did in infusing an ecumenical segment in their

celebration of the *Amun Jadid*, the Islamic New Year. They transformed pop music into a locally shared cultural artifact infused with themes celebrating universal human ethics and morality like love, faith, and purity. Whilst they live in a local world torn by violence and prejudices, they remain steadfast in crafting imaginaries that present the Tausug and Sama communities as far more respectful to human variability and yearning for a more inclusive but distinctive society. Their political positions are not set in ideological rigidity but one that is open towards establishing meaningful social relations with other faiths and collectivities. Through the VCDs, cultural producers like Manz, Eting, and Maing articulated their dispositions towards the world in response to the indeterminacy of the social conditions they encountered as ordinary constituents of Zamboanga and Sulu. In producing the videos, the three did not do the work alone but collaborated with fellow cultural producers as they innovate and improvise music to produce popular videos mediating the imagination of cultural and social life, as I will further discuss below.

Collaborations, Innovations, and Musical Improvisations

Ordinary people's response to indeterminate but quotidian situations has been viewed as imperative to the production of cultural and social life, particularly in the analysis of improvisation and creativity (Rosaldo 1993, Bruner 1993, Ingold and Hallam 2007). Such indeterminacy allows for the creative emergence of new cultural designs and ultimately powers cultural production (*also see* Ingold 2007: 45). Though these views were not specifically oriented towards understanding cosmopolitanism, they could offer us a productive analytical frame in discerning the value of improvisation in the cosmopolitan imagination of community. These viewpoints, I contend, could help us think about the making of cosmopolitan imagination that unfolds in the practice of everyday life in marginally located communities and marginal actors like Manz, Eting, and their collaborators. After all, "zones of indeterminacy", according to Renato Rosaldo, "promote a human capacity for improvisation in response to the unexpected and this very capacity can be celebrated as a cultural value" (Ibid., 256). Yet there are more to consider in understanding the value of cosmopolitanism in cultural productions such as the music videos in Zamboanga and Sulu. Building on Rosaldo's view, Edward

Bruner takes the idea of improvisation into the realm of the everyday and regarded it as acts of creativity that does not diminish “ordinary social life” (Bruner, 323). He critically re-examines the overwhelming attention to exceptional agents in the analysis of creativity and brings forth in respectful terms the “little guy” who participates in the social construction of culture as they go along and as they respond to the contingencies of their lives (Ibid., 322). As Bruner puts it, “even little people in the routine and the everyday construct their lives as they live their lives” and therefore possesses the capacity to shape culture and society (Ibid., 326). Furthermore, Ingold and Hallam expanded Bruner’s point by arguing for a concept of cultural production that does not always rest from the creative ability of the extraordinary but by a creative process that is realised as people carry on and go along with their lives. Their argument effectively established improvisational creativity as “intrinsic to very processes of social and cultural life” (Ingold and Hallam, 19). Given that, the analytical task that has to be done is characterize the improvisational process and agents driving them in discrepant settings of cultural productions. Such analytical approach to cultural production is pertinent to our investigation of the distinguishing features of improvisational creativity of Tausug and Sama music VCD making and the cosmopolitan ways in which they implicated the process of identity construction in Sulu and Zamboanga.

Music video CD production in Zamboanga and Sulu generally involves three sets of key agents comprising of compact disc sellers in flea markets, staff of small cybercafés, and performers at weddings. They are not people with extraordinary abilities, financial means, or political clout. By utilizing the flea market, cybercafés, and homes as their music and video production base, however, they were able to address the constraints of their resources although in informal and indeterminate modes. In producing their musical and filmic imaginaries, I see at least three possible features of improvisation that enable them to infuse cosmopolitan features in the social world and identities imagined in their music videos. These features, which I will be presenting below, suggest the value of social collaboration, innovation, and a local practice of musical improvisation conditioned by a web of interrelated cultural and political circumstances implicating the Tausug and Sama communities.

VCD Sellers: Collaborative Improvisation and Video Making

In terms of volume, VCD sellers are perhaps the most productive amongst the varying set of actors involved in music video making. For instance, Eting the VCD seller and producer at the back alleys of Zamboanga flea market made 70 music and dance videos of Sama, Tausug, as well as Yakan language songs over the course of my year-long fieldwork in Zamboanga. Boyet, also a seller-producer a block away from Eting's stall, managed to release 40 music videos in varying languages. Taken together, both Eting and Boyet produced 14-track music VCDs at least once a month and a fortnight. Yet, Eting and Boyet do not own enough assets, financial, and technical resources. Typically around Sulu and Zamboanga, a producer owns only two or three of the following facilities normally used in video productions: sets of microphones, loud speakers, sound amplifiers, audio cassettes, keyboard synthesizers, electric guitars, a drum set, desktop or laptop computer, audio-video editing software, video camera, computer printers, and internet access. Their limitations prompt them to seek support from other agents in Sulu and Zamboanga's VCD production industry. Eting and Boyet drew commitments from collaborating actors to invest material resources, musical talents, time, and effort into production.

Eting's collaborators usually end up producing the sound equipment and keyboard synthesizers for recording. Eting pays the rent but pays low since wedding singers normally secure them from wedding performing groups at heavily discounted rates. Wedding singers would then take the equipment to Eting's home in the slums of Barangay Santa Catalina about a mile from downtown Zamboanga where they would be doing the recording (*see* Figure 28). Alternatively, Eting would ask wedding performers to do the recording themselves in their homes and hand in an audiocassette or a CD as he had done with the *Black Stone Group*. During filming, Eting uses his low-resolution pocket size digital camera but before acquiring that he has been renting an old hand-held *Hi-8* video camera from wedding events video coverage shops. The new but cheap digital video camera that Eting acquired, however, broke down after three months of use forcing him to return to video coverage shops. After completing audio recording and video taking, Eting brings his materials to a cybercafé where he edits them as



Figure 28. Wedding performers recording their music at the home of Eting in the slums of Santa Catalina.

simply as he can as I have earlier described. Since Eting usually had very limited videos, nothing is left on the cutting floor. If ever he had unused extra footages, he archived and used them for future musical production. Whenever he runs out of images, Eting scours the World Wide Web, normally logging on to YouTube where he downloads clips that he then splices to his videos. After editing, Eting also asks staff from the cybercafé to help him layout the covers of the videos. Again his instruction were simple, he either grabs a scene from the video or ask the performers to hand him their best picture for cover. Eting then prints the covers on a letter paper using a reused computer inkjet printer. In reproducing the videos, Eting purchases a pack of 500 blank VCDs from a home equipment shop in downtown Zamboanga. He then takes the discs back to a cybercafé for reproduction using the shop's desktop computers. For each VCD, Eting spends at least eight pesos (5 pence) in production costs. To recoup his money and earn, he devised two methods of selling. First is by selling them at his stall at 10 to 25 pesos each (7 to 22 pence each), a price range that is rather determined by the ability of buyers to bargain. Second is by releasing the VCDs to wedding performers on a consignment basis.

Boyet, for his part has relatives to rely on when it comes to securing equipment. His parents actually rent out sound equipment and musical instruments to weddings. During my fieldwork, Boyet's parents bought him a cheap used desktop computer for video editing. He parks the computer at home in Barangay Mariki, a sprawling watery slum at the city's waterfront, where he normally edits records music and edits videos. Boyet, however, does not own any camera and is often strapped with cash. To get around that limitation, Boyet asks collaborating wedding artists to pay up for the rent of video cameras. In editing the video, however, Boyet often runs out of video footages since wedding singers also have limited budget for elaborate filming schedules. To address that problem, Boyet splices scenes from a huge collection of pirated Hollywood, Bollywood, Malaysian, and Filipino films and videos circulating around the market and slums of Zamboanga.

One striking stream of images that Boyet picked up from a pirated Hollywood VCD is that of the 1979 internationally released film called "Jesus" by directors Peter Sykes of Australia and John Heyman of Britain. Shot mainly in Israel, the Jesus film was played by Shakespearean British actor Brian Deacon and scripted in English but the Christian religious group, Campus Crusade for Christ in partnership with the Summer Institute of Linguistic, dubbed the film into about a thousand languages including Tausug and Sama. VCD copies of the Jesus film in Tausug and Sama have been circulating around Zamboanga and Sulu under the title, *Isa Al-Masi*. The film presented a Biblical version of the life and teachings of Jesus but Muslim vendors have been selling and Muslim consumers have been buying pirated versions of the film on the basis that it features the teachings of Jesus whom they understand to be as one of the more significant moral and prophetic figures in the Koran. Knowing this prevailing viewpoint, Boyet spliced up a selection of five-minute clips from the film's representation of Jesus being born, growing up, being baptized by John the Baptist, and doing sermons on a mount as background video for a popular Tausug ballad about sin and redemption that Manz composed and titled, *Balik Kaw Pa Inasil Mu* (Return To Your Beginning, see Figure 29), which I will discuss further on in this chapter. In reproducing videos, Boyet asked the wedding performers to also invest in the project by purchasing 500 to a 1,000 sets of discs for reproduction of the videos.



Figure 29. A scene from an international production of The Jesus Film spliced into a sing-a-long video of the Tausug religious pop song, *Balik kaw Pa Inasil Mu (Return to Your Beginning)*. The words on the video grab reads in English, “Words of the Prophet is the path.

When he gets the disc, he often spends several days using the lone CD burner of the desktop computer he has at home, leaving his stall at the flea market for his wife to run. In circulating the videos, Boyet and the wedding performers who invests for the production split up the VCDs and sell them separately. Whenever he has extra cash with him, Boyet invests his own money in the purchase of the VCDs keeping the earnings to himself.

As illustrated above, the characteristic of Eting’s and Boyet’s improvisational approach to VCD production revolve around collaboration. They engage in acts of making do not all alone but by cultivating productive, creative, and a give and take relationship with the varying agents of the Tausug small music industry. VCD producers like Eting and Boyet, however, were driven to such an approach since none of them possess all the resources needed to produce music video CDs. As I have noted earlier, music video producers in Zamboanga and Sulu produce their craft by making do with the limited resources in their midst and carrying on with their lives. Most often, however, as they improvise their way

into video making, their efforts intersect because not one of them is equipped enough to produce a music video. To successfully record a 14-track music video album producers have to link up with each other at some point in the production process. In a sense, this also shows us that amidst the contingencies of their methods there are levels of intimacy and connectivity in the relations between VCD seller-producers, cybercafé owners, and wedding performers.

To some degree, these production methods reflect Karin Barber's idea of "collaborative improvisation" in characterizing creativity that does not necessarily feature extraordinary acts of gifted individuals who revolutionize conventions of society but a practice of making things that people accomplish not alone by themselves but between them through "give and take" (Barber 2007: 33). Tausug music VCD making, as practiced by seller-producers like Eting, is a hugely collaborative process that involves and mobilizes the resources and talents of many actors. It is not driven by a dominant enterprising leader nor of a visionary who shapes the characteristics of the Tausug imaginaries, contrasting it for instance with a Henry Stobart (2011) documentation of the Bolivian carnival VCD productions whose key agents involve leading indigenous peoples rights advocates aiming towards stamping indigenous consciousness into the cultural construction of an Andean society. The VCD productions in Sulu and Zambaonga emerge from the contingencies of everyday life as lived by varying actors amid the vagaries of the political and economic condition of its slums and flea markets. Through collaborative improvisation, Eting, Boyet, and wedding performers, established a highly fluid and flowing though doable production method that they keep retracing without replicating. That indeterminacy prompts them to adapt a more flexible and inclusive stance in constructing the themes and imaginaries on the Tausug and Sama music videos. Moreover, that flexibility and inclusivity are marked by their ability to remake globally drifting technology and imaginaries, through collaborative and improvisational ways, into a meaningful Tausug cultural production. That faculty to alter technology and imaginaries indicates an innovative dimension of improvisation that will further be illustrated below in the context of cybercafé and wedding video shops operators' involvement in Tausug and Sama video making.

Innovation at Cybercafés and Video Shops

Just a block away from the VCD alley of the Zamboanga flea market sits an internet shop called “Musa Internet Café”. The shop is actually less of a café since it does not sell food or drinks for internet users but rather a small space that caters to a variety of small business ventures. It rents out six outdated desktop computers and intermittently slow internet access for walk-in clients. The café also offers video coverage services for weddings, birthdays, funerals, graduations, school ceremonies, and as its signage says, “any occasions”. To a great extent, the internet shop reflects those of the description of Daniel Miller and Don Slater of the cybercafés in Trinidad, that is as an adjunct to many other small enterprises run by its owners (2001: 72). At times, the Musa Internet shop bustles with video makers and sellers like Eting who come to edit and reproduce their videos or print covers for their VCD. One or two computers in the shop is equipped with either open source or bootlegged versions of audio recording software like *Sound Forge* and digital video editing applications like *Ulead* or *Pinacle*. Other VCD makers frequent the cafe to rent the couple of *Hi-8* home video camera that its staff normally uses for wedding and “any occasions” video coverage.

Whilst opening the shop to VCD makers, its owner, Maing, occasionally produces Tausug music videos utilizing his wedding video equipment for filming and the shop as editing studio. Like Eting and Boyet, however, Maing does not own any musical or sound equipment, indicating the incompleteness of his tools and the limits of his capacity. To get around that limitation, like Eting and Boyet, Maing improvises by collaborating with wedding performers or the wedding companies owning musical and sound equipment. The wedding performers or company members then take the rented equipment to his home in Barangay Kansanyangan, about two miles away from the city centre where they record their music. After recording the songs Maing, like Eting, directs and shoots videos of the performers unaided by any assistants to save on costs. To ensure a well-lighted production, Maing only shoots at daytime because he does not own any lighting equipment. During filming, Maing would usually ask his artists to lip synch their songs by playing the records they save on their mobile phones. Maing usually shoots in the streets, parks, and some corner of a restaurant whenever owners

allow him to. Whenever he finds his videos short, Maing also poaches clips of images from the World Wide Web to fill visual gaps of his music videos. During Ramadan, Maing suspends wedding video coverage and music video shoots as he diverts his attention to the filming of theological lectures given by the leading Islamic scholars in Zamboanga. Maing would then edit and produce CDs and DVDs of the lectures that he distributes outside the lecture halls the following week. Unsold videos of the seminars are then distributed on VCD stalls in the market and the streets. So far, Maing had released three music VCD albums with about 40 videos and four DVD albums of two-hour Ramadan lectures when I was in Zamboanga.

Small Internet and wedding video coverage-based enterprises such as those run by Maing undergird the technical support structure for the production of Tausug music VCD. In an entrepreneurial way, staff in these shops innovatively offers industrial hardware, high tech software, and globally generated images into readily available, accessible and affordable tools for a production process that as I have pointed out earlier resembles a micro cottage industry.

Their innovation established the cybercafé as a portal that enables slum-dwelling and flea market-based small music video producers to access, harness, and innovatively alter global technology and imaginaries in shaping their imagination of their social world. These innovative acts reflect critical discussion of innovation that rejects conventional ideas of the term as “unprecedented practices or forms of knowledge” that only gifted “geniuses” could instigate (Demian and Wastell 2007: 119). Expanding the notion of innovation, Demian and Wastell refer to it as the ability of innovative agents to “play with contexts” by re-contextualizing expected practices in “unanticipated milieu” (Ibid.). Innovation, as Demian and Wastell elaborates, points to “the appropriation would be of the context rather than practice itself, an ‘as if’ scenario where dissimilar social contexts are treated as homologues to one another” (Ibid.). Tausug video makers like Maing altered the way global industrial technology was made to be used as we can see for instance in the way he appropriated mobile phones as a lip synching device during filming; utilized home video camera as primary instrument in videotaping musical performances, deployed his cybercafé as video editing

room; and re-utilize trans-located images from Internet as visual background for Tausug music.

Furthermore, the innovative entrepreneurialism of Maing and video makers like him also corresponds with the illustration of Ingold and Hallam (2007) of the dialectical relations of creativity with improvisation and innovation: the “former characterizes creativity by way of its processes, the latter by way of its products” (Ibid., 2). In a sense, Ingold and Hallam regarded innovation as productive acts generated by creative processes marked by improvisation. Such reading of improvisation casts human agency at the center of our analysis of cultural creativity as it “celebrates the freedom of the human imagination to transcend the determination of both nature and society” (Ibid., 3). This assessment of improvisation allows us to appreciate the implication of Maing and other Tausug videomakers’ indeterminate methods of altering global industrial technology like mobile phones, cybercafés, and Hollywood videos from their pre-existing and culturally determined usage. Here, small time and street-based entrepreneurs like Maing and the video producers of Zamboanga and Sulu exercise creative cultural improvisation by re-contextualizing the uses of global industrial technology into everyday tools of production and reproduction of local imaginaries that fits the specific cultural needs as well as addresses the practical and financial limitations of their community. Through their innovative and improvising acts, they are able to localise global technologies and imageries, and in the process expand the imagination of the Tausug collectivity. Moreover, the ability to re-contextualize creative products from its preceding form or cultural usage are also extended in the manner that the music in these videos were composed as I will be discussing in the next section.

Musical Improvisation in Sulu and Zamboanga

The improvisational characteristics of the *kalangan*, the Tausug and Sama term for discrepant vocal musical genres of Sulu and Zamboanga have been fairly established in the field of musicology. Ricardo Trimillos, a University of Hawaii musicologist who has been conducting investigations on the class of *kalangan* called *lugu maulud* (songs for the birth of Prophet Muhammad) and the *baat* (love

ballads) musical heritage since 1960s, notes that the process on which this music is composed actually “encourages improvisation” in the sense that these songs are being made extemporaneously as they are performed (Trimillos 1987: 27). When music radio and audiocassettes swept into the domestic spaces of Sulu and Zamboanga in the 1960s, local performers began integrating pop tunes into *lugu* and *baat*, a musical composition technique that Trimillos characterizes as a type of music improvisation called “embedding”. As Trimillos writes: “More common in this day of the cassette recorder and the transistor radio is the interpolation of exotic material, including quotations from Lowland Filipino folk song or Malaysian pop song. A striking example of embedding was the second phrase of ‘Auld Lang Syne’ quoted in a lullaby (*langang bataqbataq*) heard in 1963” (Ibid., 33).

Manz, the wedding performer and fruit vendor who invited me to record music in Arena Blanco, values *lugu* and *baat* as a Tausug musical heritage but does not take part in their composition or performance. Manz belongs to a generation of Sulu and Zamboanga wedding performers who write musical notes, chords, and words rather than extemporaneously compose them in the process of performance. Like the *lugu* and *baat* performers, however, Manz and his contemporaries also imbed into their own composition musical tunes they appropriated from pop songs that made their way to Zamboanga and Sulu via radio, television, audiocassettes, and recently the VCDs. Manz started writing *kalangan* pop pieces when he was a teenager and as he approached his 40s he actually wrote more than a hundred songs. How Manz managed to compose a hundred songs was largely driven by his mastery of musical improvisation. When Manz writes a *kalangan*, he builds up from locally and globally familiar pop and folk rock music of pop culture icons like Bob Dylan, John Denver, or Cat Stevens as well as other Malaysian, Indonesian, and Filipino pop music artists. Manz would normally alter a bar line of an established pop song until he finds his own melody, a technique that can be best illustrated in the way he wrote the song I noted earlier as *Balik Kaw Pa Inasil Mu (Return to Your Beginning)*. *Inasil*, as the song is endearingly referred to by many of its singers, comes about as a popular piece for young Tausugs signing up for community singing contests because it features wide ranging notes that allow performers to fully explore their vocal

range. In writing the tunes of *Inasil*, Manz told me that he actually started by playing with the melodic structure of “*Bawal na Gamot*” (*Forbidden Drug*), a Tagalog pop ballad about a drug addict seeking moral redemption, that saturated radio broadcasts and musical jukeboxes across the Philippines in the 1990s. Manz improvised from the melody of *Bawal na Gamot* by re-arranging its octaves and notes. He then combined few other notes from Malaysian pop songs that made its way to Zamboanga through audiocassettes, making the song inclusively trans-local. Manz’s meaningful words in *Inasil*, which I underscored below, projects an even deeper sense of inclusiveness in a Tausug Muslim view of moral purity as a transcendent human value that cuts across religion, gender, age, and home in the world:

Impag lawag to sin kansayangan	The search for tranquility
Hinang in katan agad katan	Is everyone’s desire,
Gimba mag higad, lawud mag datag	May we be from the mountains, coasts, plains
Sibu inmaksud nag a-agad	Our goal is one
Ma-as pa bata usug pa babai	Elderly, children, men, women
Muslim pa Kristian way nag biddai	Muslims or Christians there is no difference
Kimakahagad sin awun tuhan	We all believe in one god
Maita’ awun pa lawa ha indan	Why do some people forget that
Bukan daka ikaw ini	Could you be
Lamud ha lawa ha indan	One of those who forget
Labi bang in karisyasali	Most especially those who come from
Muslim in diyaingan	Muslim origins
Balik kaw pa hinasil mu	Come back to your beginning
Biya lupa tubig hangin kayu	Like the land, water, air, and fire
Balik kaw pa nagna-an	Come back to the beginning
Pamandu sin rasul hinanga dan	Words of the Prophet is the path

With its familiar pop tunes and inclusive worldview, *Inasil* resonated rather well with the Tausug community attesting to the value of Manz’s musical improvisation and humanistic message. When it first came out in Zamboanga’s

flea market on audiocassettes in the 1990s, vendors in the flea market told me that they repeatedly played it because it attracts several buyers. Other wedding performers came up with their own versions of the song and included it in their own musical albums in audiocassettes released later. During my own fieldwork in 2010, younger Tausug musicians have again revived *Inasil*. One of these, which I have discussed above, is a video released by Boyet splicing *Inasil's* music with *The Jesus Film* by British and Australian filmmakers. In an improvisatory way, Manz's songs are continuously sustained as they are altered and reproduced in new recordings.

The method of music composition practiced by Manz and the generation of pop music Tausug musicians before and following him are no less improvisational than those with *lugu* and *baat* performers but the characteristic of improvisation in this case resembles those sketched by Peter Manuel and Ingrid Monson in their separate musicological investigations of the history of modal jazz and latin dance pop music in the United States (*see* Manuel 1998, Monson 1998). Both genres are rooted from a distinctive musical heritage, the Hispanic Carribean community for latin dance music and African American musicians for modal jazz. Amid the rising tide of cultural and political upheavals sweeping their respective societies in the 1950s and 1960s, musicians immersed in each genres began exploring and integrating elements of Spanish, Cuban, Egyptian, Hindu, Buddhist, and Sufi musical traditions into their music. For that matter, Monson suggest that to understand the history of jazz musical composition it has to be viewed within the “web of interlocking contexts that include aesthetic modernism, spiritual transcendence, transnationalism, the civil rights movement and African independence” (Monson, 149). Similarly, Tausug and Sama pop music had emerged in the wake of sweeping cultural and political stirrings in Southern Philippines in the sixties and the seventies. At that time, television, music radio, and audiocassettes started circulating in the region but the songs they aired and sold were exclusively confined to American, European and Tagalog pop music brought in by a global corporate music industry that established its Philippine base in Manila. Tausug pop music was practically non-existent in Sulu and Zamboanga radio and television. Coincidentally, two related events in the Middle East and in Mindanao during these decades also began shaping the discourse of Muslim

identity in the Philippines. As I have discussed in the introductory chapter of this thesis, the tide of pan-Islamic consciousness in the Middle East had spurred a grassroots Islamic renewal movement across Muslim communities in Mindanao whilst a violent secessionist movement started by young Muslim intellectuals catalyzed enduring advocacies for Muslim self determination (*also see* McKenna 1998). Amid growing passion amongst Philippine Muslims to define themselves a collective identity and the invisibility of Muslim musical performances on the airwaves, wedding performers like Manz and a generation of performers before and after him stepped into the void with pop music as their medium and improvisation as their method.

One of those who pioneered pop rock musical composition in Sulu and Zamboanga is Ka Halid, a rickshaw driver and wedding performer who had been actively collaborating with Manz and other video sellers in making Tausug music VCD. Ka Halid was a former member of *Binhi* (The Seed), a folk rock band acknowledged by local performers as the wedding group that established folk and pop rock music as a significant and respectable genre in the rich array of Tausug and Sama *kalangan*. *Binhi* was established in the midst of a fast spreading Islamic renewal movement and secessionist struggle sweeping significant areas of Mindanao in the seventies. They started by expressing American and Tagalog folk rock and pop music in the vernacular but later began writing their own pieces. The music that they normally write altered the notes of familiar global pop music by integrating it into their own in improvisational modes of musical composition resembling those practiced by Manz. Ka Halid, who in a creative embrace of pop cultural practice adopted *Seven Colors* as a screen alias, pointed rather succinctly to the reason for vernacularization and alteration of pop as a technique of composing their own music in one of our conversations:

“I have always loved folk rock and pop ballads on radio and television. My uncle, relatives, friends, and neighbours love them too but somehow none of these songs come with Tausug words so we contented ourselves listening to English and Tagalog pop music. When I was a teenager, I often hear this talk that as Muslims we should be proud of our religion and as Tausugs we should value our land, heritage, dances, and music. Perhaps the (secessionist) wars

helped us realised that. The displacement of thousands of people, including my family, made many of us reflect on the value of our heritage. The fighting destroyed our mosques, homes, farms, and cherished heirlooms. A number of my relatives perished. With those terrible loses, we felt that our way of life is under assault. It seemed that we did not exist because nothing in the world around us really reflected our way of life. When we turned on the radios and televisions, none of the songs there were sung in Tausug, Sama or Yakan and nothing of these songs resonated with Muslim values. My friends in *Binhi* (wedding band) thought that we have to articulate who we are through our music. Since we love singing and listening to pop ballads and folk rock music on radio, we began rewriting the words in English and Tagalog pop songs into our language. We sung and played their music but replace their words with our own and with stories that reflect our experience. That way we are able to express much more freely about life in Sulu and Zamboanga, our family, our problems, our love affairs, and of course our faith.”

As Halid recounted above and as I pointed out earlier in this section, the beginning of Tausug pop musical practice can be located within the conjuncture of sweeping Islamic renewal movement, the secessionist struggle, and the suffusion of global pop musical culture in Zamboanga and Sulu radio and television in the sixties and seventies. That juncture in Tausug and Sama social experience elicited patriotic and religious consciousness that are viscerally expressed through collective preference of listening and singing folk rock and pop music in the vernacular and in the context of their faith, lives, heritage, and struggle. Subsequently, pop versions of Tausug and Sama *kalangan* became essential features in audiocassettes and wedding celebrations across the region. Methodologically, Manz, Ka Halid, and the generation of musicians following their footsteps look towards musical improvisation as a way of realizing that collective yearning. They integrate global pop musical forms into local musical composition and performances. By establishing pop music as a genre, Manz, Ka Halid, and their compatriots inadvertently enrich local musical practice as well as establish a new medium of sharing and expressing their collectivity. When reproduced into videos, the cosmopolitanism in the community they imagined in their music are meaningfully visualized. This point could be illustrated in *Saddiya Magsangah* (Ready to Serve), a music video that Ka Halid did in collaboration

with Manz and other musicians in a pop rock band they had formed and called *Solid Whengz*.

Saddiya Magsangsah is part of the 14-track music video album that Manz, Ka Halid, and their colleagues composed for Hadja Widad “Wheng” Tingkahan, a municipal councilor from Sulu who commissioned the project as her way of projecting herself for re-election in May. The group was not able to release the video until after the elections due to production delays but Hadja Wheng, as the councilor is popularly known, went on financing the project on which she also performed as lead singer for most songs. I had the chance of observing the production of both the music and videos of the album after Manz recruited me to serve as their sound recording engineer. During production, both song writing and recording were done around the dining area of Hadja Wheng’s home in the affluent section of *Barangay Santa Catalina* in Zamboanga. The musicians would gather with finished set of lyrics and a tentative melody. Whilst the lyrics are written individually, the melodies are left out for the musicians to work on together. In piecing the melody, the group usually improvises from global pop musical tunes they heard coming from the radios, televisions, and previous Tausug pop musical compositions recorded on audiocassettes. In some cases, the melody that comes out in the process are uniquely new as in the case of the Blackstone Group’s *Muslim Pa Christian* I noted earlier. In other instances, they come as a fusion of locally unfamiliar and trans-locally familiar commercial pop tunes like Manz’s *Inasil*. In yet another case, they merely appropriated established popular radio music in the vernacular by changing the words, contexts, and message of an original song. This was the case for *Saddiya Magsangsah* that Ka Halid wrote and arranged for Hadja Wheng. Ka Halid used the entire melody of the hugely popular Tagalog pop song known as *Hawak Kamay (Hand in Hand)*. Whilst the words of *Saddiya Magsangsah* subtly presents Hadja Wheng as a committed public servant, the song also posed soaring exhortation for disparate agents across Sulu and Zamboanga to cultivate peace and unity as the following lines would show:

<i>Paghambuuk ka hulah ha bangsa iban Subay</i>	Bring together every nation and faith
<i>dih lawaum ha kampong in paglasa agama</i>	Let every corner become homes of love
<i>In bin sin kama'asan</i>	Legacy of our forbears
<i>Mag tulong tabang</i>	Help one another
<i>Sama-sama pa kasangyangan</i>	Work together towards peace
<i>Aku ini saddiya magsangсах</i>	Here I am ready to serve
<i>Ha ra'ayat iban hulah</i>	The people and the land
<i>Mag ulin lima kita niyo</i>	Hold hands everyone
<i>katan maghambuuk</i>	All must unite
<i>Magpasambu sin kawman</i>	Towards a prosperous community
<i>kaput kamut</i>	Hold hands
<i>Pa lima ko katan di' ta kamu butawan</i>	My hands will never let go

The cosmopolitan message of the song comes across when viewed against four decades of internecine conflicts afflicting communities of Sulu and Zamboanga. As I have repeatedly stressed here and in Chapter 1, Sulu and Zamboanga are both centers of a long-running secessionist war in Mindanao. Zamboanga hosts the largest military installation in Southern Philippines whilst Sulu has been home to discrepant armed secessionist forces, some of which use the political discourse of religious and ethnic discrimination as rhetoric for recruitment. Complicating secessionist-related violence are bloody feuds involving well-armed families and the stationing of an American military contingent in both areas since 2002, first as part of a United States global campaign on terrorism and recently to counter a Chinese military resurgence in the Pacific. Amid a backdrop of continuing local violence and powerful global military forces at play in Zamboanga and Sulu, Ka Halid's exhortation that every feuding family, nation, and faith turned every corner of Sulu and Zamboanga into "homes of love" sharply resonates with the cosmopolitan dictum of peace, multiplicity, and inclusiveness. Furthermore, the song's admonition is set in clearer terms in the visual backdrop they used for the *Saddiya Magsangсах* music video. The video juxtaposes the images of Hadja Wheng singing and a guitarist strumming with pictures of ordinary people going about their lives, Filipino soldiers gearing for battle, American soldiers in the streets, and children carrying a "We are for peace" banner in Sulu and Zamboanga all ripped off by the video editor from the Internet (*see* Figures 30 [a-d]). Meaningfully, the video reinforces



(a)



(b)



(c)



(d)

Figures 30 [a-d]. Video grab of Saddiya Magsangah juxtaposes images of singer and town councilor Hadja Wheng with photographs of (a) everyday life in Sulu, (b) soldiers gearing for battle, (c) American military contingent on the streets, and (d) children bearing banners declaring, “We are for peace.”

the cosmopolitan message of the song, “*paghambuuk*” or oneness of communities and faiths, in the wake of upheavals ripping through the social and political fabric of their society. By improvising from pop musical tunes, Manz and his colleagues established and sustained Tausug pop musical video production as an instrumental medium for imagining a Tausug or Sama collectivity that does not look inward but one that is conscious of the value of self-identity and global belonging. They seized and remade global cultural forms like pop music into a medium that expresses and creates awareness of their community’s place and relations to the broader community of humanity that seeks peace and practices tolerance.

To some degree, the significance of pop musical improvisation in the cosmopolitanism of Tausug and Sama imaginaries parallels with ethnographic accounts pointing to pop performances as a meaningful medium of cosmopolitan expressions in collective identity formation at cultural settings as diverse as

Tanzania and Liverpool (see Edmondson 2007, Cohen 1994). Laura Edmondson notes that the Tanzanian appropriation of Congolese pop dance music into a nationally shared performance in the form of *souko* dance music illustrates in stark terms how the “vigour of popular culture is transforming boundaries of ‘foreign’ and ‘local’” (Ibid., 136). *Souko* dance music, in this sense, remade trans-local pop cultural influence into their own subsequently offering Tanzanians a medium “to construct a cosmopolitan version of national identity” (Ibid., 137).

Similarly, if *souko* pop dance music served as a medium for the infusion of cosmopolitan ideals in musical expressions of Tanzanian national identity, we can also say that pop versions of the Tausug and Sama *kalangan*, which essentially melds Filipino, Malaysian, Hollywood, or Bollywood pop musical practices, mediated their imagination of the Tausug collective identity. This point also mirrors Sara Cohen’s ethnography of “Liverpool Sound” as a shared medium in which the Liverpool musical and media community construct themselves a distinctive identity through local appropriation of global pop musical practice. For Cohen, such condition illustrates the way “music exercises territorialising power, framing public and private spaces or domains” (Ibid., 133). Transnational pop musical productions once received locally, Cohen argues, are “often mediated and appropriated within a local context” subsequently enabling local cultural production and identity expressions (Ibid.). The ability of Tausug and Sama wedding performers and musicians to appropriate globalised musical genre into local *kalangan* composition shows Cohen’s argument taking shape in Sulu and Zamboanga. Yet there are also other processes at work in the Tausug and Sama pop music making experience. Beyond their ability to localise global musical practice, Tausug and Sama pop musicians infuse the cosmopolitan ethos of peace, multiplicity, and tolerance in the imaginaries that they produce. Such productions are remarkable especially when viewed against a backdrop of powerful global political, military, and media forces at play in their midst. At a time of malevolence, the musicians effort of remaking global pop musical composition into a local medium of cosmopolitan expression illustrate an instance where “essentially unequal relationship with the world outside their community is thereby controlled and symbolically dealt with in their own terms” (Stokes 1994: 17).

Improvisational Productions in Zamboanga and Sulu

To sum up the discussions above, an array of productive actors who produce creative works whilst carrying on with their lives as flea market sellers, rickshaw drivers, small cybercafés operators, and wedding performers propel the production of popular Tausug and Sama music videos in Zamboanga and Sulu. Their resources are limited and production tools wanting but by making do with cheap home entertainment equipment, outdated computers and software, and video shops at some street corner, they manage to produce thousands of music videos that forms part of the everyday cultural life in Sulu and Zamboanga. Their motivation for producing music videos vary from the mundane concerns of earning money for their day-to-day needs to profound goals of vernacularising the global language of pop musical culture. By carrying on and making do, these actors effectively engaged in a highly indeterminate process of cultural production that could best be regarded as improvisation.

Notably, there are varying practices of improvisation at work in the production practices of Tausug and Sama music video producers. In this chapter, I examined at least three improvisational production practices initiated by video sellers, cybercafé owners and wedding performers. Improvisation has galvanized an intricate and intimate collaborative engagement of otherwise disparate and unlikely producers of pop music video CDs like flea market sellers, small Internet café operators, providers of home video coverage services, and wedding performers. Improvisation spurred innovations that alter original intentions for the utility of industrial, computer, and home entertainment technology to one that is attuned to the condition, and cultural preference of the Tausug and Sama communities. Finally, improvisation has been instrumental to the enrichment of Tausug vocal musical heritage with the addition of pop music that effectively situates local musical practice not in isolation but in relation to the world. From these improvisational production practices, we can draw insights on the significance of improvisation in understanding the characteristic of cosmopolitanism at the level of the everyday and the quotidian. At the core of these improvisational productions are musicians, sellers, and small-time cybercafé

operators who are also ordinary social actors in the streets, flea markets, and slums of Sulu and Zamboanga. Amongst them are VCD sellers and producers such as Eting and Boyet; a small-time internet operator such as Maing; and fruit vendors, peons, rickshaw drivers, and musicians such as Manz, Mang, Asiri, Dayang, and Ka Halid. In their music and videos, they imagine a Tausug and Sama community that is not self-contained or territorialized but a collectivity that celebrates inclusiveness, ethical human responsibility, and respect for religious diversity. Whilst firmly rooted on Islam and sense of home in Sulu and Zamboanga, the insightfully humanistic words, the pop rock beats of their musical compositions, and the meaningful trans-local images on their videos makes them simultaneously grounded and cosmopolitan.

Conclusion

Improvisation is central to the production process of music videos emerging from the flea markets, streets, and slums of Zamboanga and Sulu. Through improvisation, the ordinary group of creative agents, were able to establish collaborative arrangements, alter the contextual usage of globally generated technological and audio-visual resources that drifted into their region, as well as appropriated and vernacularized trans-locally familiar performing art forms like pop music into an artistic medium projecting their collective identity and views of the world.

These indeterminate approaches to music video making partly reflect Ingold and Hallam's characterization of the importance of improvisation in cultural productions: it "makes the most of the multiple possibilities they afford for keeping life going" (Ibid., 15). For Ingold and Hallam, improvisation suggests a creative practice that illustrates a world that is fragmentary rather than fixed. It is a world determined by previous state of cultural construction, always in the making "rather than ready-made" (Ibid., 3). These characterizations of world making through cultural productions parallels with the cosmopolitan manifesto posted earlier by Carol Brickenridge and colleagues. For Brickenridge and company cosmopolitanism is "a project whose conceptual content and pragmatic character are not only as yet unspecified but also must always escape positive and definite

specification, precisely because specifying cosmopolitanism positively and definitely is an uncosmopolitan thing to do” (Brickenridge et. al. 2002: 1). Cosmopolitanism, as a practice and analytical framework is continuously being made and remade. It is a term that “signals a condition of self confrontation, incompleteness...(and) entails a view of society as an ongoing process of self-constitution” (Delanty, 2009: 71, 73, emphasis supplied).

Whilst the foregoing analytical frames eloquently factor the significance of incompleteness, flexibility, openness, and multiple possibilities of world making, they were somehow articulated towards starkly different ends and contexts. On the one hand, critical assessments of vernacular forms of cosmopolitanism have not fully considered the productive capacity of improvisations in reproducing cosmopolitan dispositions in local social worlds. Whilst cognizant of endless possible conditions and materials that could steer cultural productions into “multiple trajectories”, Ingold and Hallam on the other hand did not explicitly consider the possible implications of global cultural flows into the various settings of improvisational creativity that they examine. Ingold and Hallam choose to align the generative, relational, productive, dynamic, and reconstructive capacity of improvisation within Pierre Bourdieu’s concept of *habitus* - that tacit realm of enduring, reproducible, and widespread set of dispositions situated between structure and agency. On such alignment, Ingold and Hallam underscored Bourdieu’s emphasis on the non-deterministic and mechanistic reproductive capacity of the *habitus* without taking into account his seemingly bounded conceptualization of it within the confines of structure and agency (*see* Ingold and Hallam, 15; Bourdieu 1977: 95). Whilst Bourdieu has indeed laid down the analytical bearings that allow us to understand the possibility of modifying the *habitus* in his concept of “regulated improvisation”, other commentators see the need to re-evaluate such a view by factoring in the reality of globalizing local social worlds and the trans-local reach of “mediated master narratives” (Ibid., 78; Appadurai 1996: 55). As Appadurai emphasized, whilst Bourdieu’s concept of *habitus* is analytically sustainable, it has to be considered that “improvisation no longer occurs within a relatively bounded set of postures... improvisation was snatched out of the glacial undertow of *habitus*, *habitus* now has to be painstakingly reinforced in the face of life-world that are frequently in flux”

(Appadurai, 56; emphasis supplied).

The productive experience of music video makers in Sulu and Zambaonga, yearns for an analytical frame that dialectically relates improvisational creativity to cosmopolitan world making. Within that frame, this experience can further enrich the analytical value of rooted sense of cosmopolitanism at the level of the everyday and the quotidian. On such domain, particularly in Zamboanga and Sulu, we could see a broad range of actors who do not necessarily occupy the extraordinary disposition of a leading nationalist or global citizenship crusader but just the same shape and share an imagined community that simultaneously celebrate home identity and their relations with the other. They are what Edward Bruner respectfully celebrated as the “little people” who once again exemplify his idea of cultural creativity that does not necessarily “take a giant to move the world” (1993: 322). In the same vein, it does not take heroic figures to build a cosmopolitan community in local social worlds. The fluid, indeterminate flow of everyday and quotidian life could provide us a lens into viewing a form of identity making that does not stray from the cosmopolitan vision of ethical engagement of self and other even as its agents respond to unequal power relations and questions on peace and justice in their midst.

Chapter 6

Pirates and Cosmopolitans: The Reach of the Tausug Cosmopolitan Imagination

Hardly a day passes without the *Biraddali*, a celebrated Tausug pop love song, being heard played around the video compact disc bazaars of downtown Zamboanga. The ballad, scored with soft romantic tunes on synthesizer and electric guitar, is immensely popular amongst Tausugs, to the point that it frequently ends up in the repertoire of wedding performers owing to incessant requests from revellers. The song gets showcased during *Hariraya* (the feast of Eid'l Fitr) festivities, crooned by politicians in campaign rallies, and used as mobile phone ringtones. *Biraddali*, however, did not actually originate from Sulu or Zamboanga but was composed and released by Tausug-speaking wedding performers in the neighbouring Malaysian state of Sabah in the mid-2000s. Travellers who frequently move across borders brought some CD copies of the song and enterprising disc sellers reproduced them without permission from their Sabah creators as soon as the discs came in. Consumers who got hold of the *Biraddali* CD ripped and posted the song on the Internet that later formed part of over 2,000 clips of Tausug music and dances that have been amassing on YouTube as of December 2012. A video clip of *Biraddali* first surfaced on YouTube in 2007 and since then spawned 200 other renditions that include rap, hip-hop, dance remix, and acoustic music exemplifying its popularity (see Figure 31).

One version of the *Biraddali* clip was streamed nearly 200,000 times whilst another generated 150,000 views, and still another spawned 110,000 playbacks. Statistical information on YouTube shows that the video is being watched widely not only in the Philippines but also in Malaysia, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia, indicating the broad reach of the song. The various clips generated at the very least a thousand commentaries by viewers identifying themselves as diasporic Tausugs based in Cairo, Jeddah, Riyadh, London, Southampton, and Kuala Lumpur. In their commentaries, viewers generally reflected through the song their ancestral ties to Sulu and Zamboanga, a sense of community, and a deeply held desire for “*Bangsa Tausug*” – the Tausug nation – to move onward. The clips also attracted non-Tausug viewers

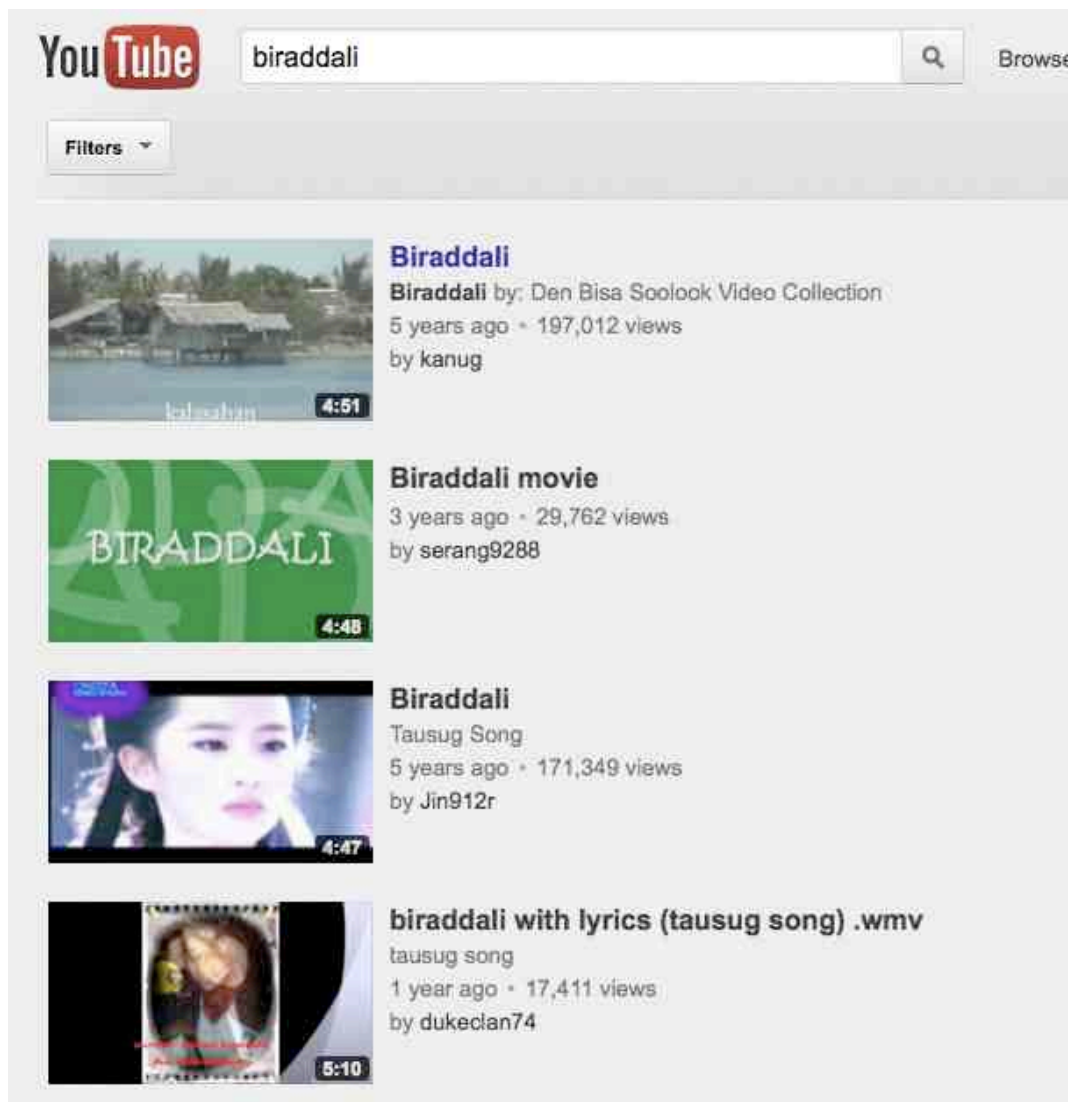


Figure 31. A thumbnail of four of about a thousand Biraddali videos posted on YouTube.

who expressed their appreciation and calls for English translation so the “entire world (can) sing it”, as one commenter puts it.

The term *Biraddali* was drawn from an old Tausug mythical story about enchanting nymphs but the music videos re-presents its imagery as a metaphor for an alluring lady who captivated a man’s heart. A mix of Tausug and English rendition of the song has indeed appeared on YouTube in 2008 but Tausug singers who translated it practically changed the notion of *Biraddali* from a nymph of the old Sulu legends

into “*the angel of my life*³¹“, expanding its imagery in ways imaginable to non-Tausugs. The movement of the *Biraddali* clips from a track on street-peddled compact discs to footage on the free digital space of YouTube characterise its evolution from commodity to video clips expressing a sense of local belonging and desire to situate the Tausug community in the broader world.

Ostensibly, the videos appear to offer possible insights of the material expression of Tausug aspiration for collective attachment and conviction to cosmopolitan imagination. A closer look into the way people valued these digital imaginaries, however, suggests that the dynamics of cosmopolitanism are a more complicated affair especially in a given cultural and political context. Not all viewers leave affirmative comments on YouTube. On the contrary, some commentaries expose the underlying differences amongst Tausugs on the cultural significance of performances that the videos featured. A few viewers actually regard the videos as offensive mischaracterisation of Muslim values that inappropriately misrepresented Tausug social life, as in the case of the *Tokyo Town pangalay* (dance) video that I cited as an expression of embodied cosmopolitanism in Chapter 4. Shortly after the video was sold off the streets, flea markets, and slums of Zamboanga, a clip appeared on YouTube, generating some form of approval and contempt as shown by the following points I culled from the comments board³²:

Rhozemitch:	ok malingkat peace work.....	(Ok, great peace work.....)
MOROsniiper:	ASTAGFIRULLAH masjid pa hinang background....! IGNORANTE PALPAL HA AGAMA	(GOD HAVE MERCY. They even used the mosque as background....! UTTERLY IGNORANT OF RELIGION)
Aezlemae:	your the great dancer i love it	You are the great dancer. I love it.
MyKUREI:	wow taluksangay zamboanga city philippines	Wow. Taluksangay, Zamboanga City, Philippines

³¹ In May 2008, Tausug-English rendition of *Biraddali* performed appeared on YouTube featuring Sabah-based Tausug wedding performers. The last time I accessed the YouTube clip was on 30 October 2012 at this link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z5--okp3IeE>

³² The *Tokyo Town pangalay* clip appeared on YouTube in November 2010. I accessed the clip on 30 October 2012 at this link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nz6F4v3MIXs>.

Commentaries on *Tokyo Town* outline the overlapping orientations of Tausug viewers towards the world as well as viewpoints that are identifiably cosmopolitan but not necessarily in agreement. Reading through the postings, we can see the language of cosmopolitanism being used in conflicting terms. *MyKUREI* situates the local and national locations of the video whilst *Aezzlemae* articulates appreciation of the dance, both statements of local pride oriented towards the global audience of the World Wide Web. Others see political and religious dimensions of the performance. For instance, *Rhozemitch* views the dance as an embodied message of advocacy which comes across as meaningful reminder of desire for peace in the region, if contrasted against the tensions between secessionist and the state forces in the Southern Philippines (Chapter 1). On the other hand, *MOROsniiper* employs Arabic terms and particular understanding of Islam in airing perceived religious offense of dancing in front of a mosque.

Two dynamics can be accounted from the circulation and consumption of *Biraddali* and *Tokyo Town* videos that underscore the over-all political and cultural significance of the VCDs to Tausugs. First, they illustrate the commoditized status of the videos once reproduced en masse and set into motion by a cross-border network of informal trading. Second, they also show the transformation of the videos from objects of economic value into a shared cultural imaginary in their context of use. The online conversations I noted above offer an example of use of the videos. In these conversations, people either valorise or critically view the videos as a medium of Tausug imaginaries. As the YouTube posts indicate, the conversations often take an expansive account of the Tausug society as a collectivity committed to forging relations with communities other than their own. These perspectives suggest that people regard the videos as more than just commodity but material expressions of Tausug imagined community as well as conviction to cosmopolitan imagination. In a sense, these seemingly contradicting worldviews hallmark the concept of rooted cosmopolitanism. Further examination of these worldviews, however, also suggests competing and clashing disposition towards the world amongst Tausugs. As shown by the commentaries on YouTube I cited above, people deploy cosmopolitan terms but with variable and sometimes conflicting intentions, exposing the tensions of rooted forms of cosmopolitanism that I will further elaborate from here on.

The Materiality of Cosmopolitan Convictions

The concept of rooted cosmopolitanism, as I laid out in the introduction and discussed in other parts of this thesis, seeks to reconcile two seemingly paradoxical notions of belonging. One is the sense of attachment articulated around the ideals of patriotism, national community, or religion; the other is the cosmopolitan commitment to inclusivity, openness, and universality. It underscores the human desire to establish attachment as the moral resource underpinning cosmopolitan values. As Kwame Appiah (2006, 1996) stressed, the love of nation and the celebration of ethnicity is not anathema to cosmopolitanism but rather these comprise the wellspring that many patriots draw on living out their commitment to universal values. Cosmopolitan patriots see others as a reflection of themselves and use that sense of attachment as a basis for cultivating relations with other collectivities. Such an expansive concept, however, spurred critical concerns from commentators wary of reducing the complexity and variability of notions of belonging into a single analytical frame. As critiques of cosmopolitan theory notes, there are irreducible sources of human values that could not possibly be encapsulated in a singular concept (Nagel 2005). Kymlicka and Walker (2012), firm advocates of cosmopolitan theory, concede that rooted cosmopolitanism indeed faced the danger of being viewed as a “monolithic doctrine” (Ibid., 23). To address such a perception, the pair countered by presenting a notion of rooted cosmopolitanism as an “image of how the irreducible plurality of culturally distinct and politically bounded communities can nonetheless respect and advance universal cosmopolitan values” (Ibid.) Recognizing concerns over the traps of essentialism in the articulation of cosmopolitanism, Kymlicka and Walker, proposed to look into practice as a way of drawing a sense of how the rooted cosmopolitan dynamics of “particularist attachment interact with universalist commitments in specific times and places” (Ibid.,12). Kymlicka and Walker contextualized their ideas in the way ethnically, culturally, and linguistically diverse communities within Canada express attachment to themselves and the broader global community as immigrants connecting to their countries of origins or as aboriginals building solidarity with other indigenous communities through international movements whilst sustaining their allegiance to the Canadian nation.

Applying rooted cosmopolitanism as an analytical approach for understanding the politically intricate question of citizenship and global political affairs, however, also exposed its limits. Kymlicka and Walker opened a can of problems with the idea by extending it, amongst other examples, to Canadian state entanglement in geopolitical conflicts and failure to commit in global environmental agreements as it stands in lockstep with geopolitical allies. Yet beyond its application to the intricate world of state affairs and geopolitics, I contend that the idea of rooted cosmopolitanism as a frame for understanding practices espousing particularist attachment to community and universalist commitment to humanity in small and situated communities such as the Tausug society remains useful and relevant. Amongst these practices, I argue, is the articulation of cosmopolitan values in material and visual forms. In the Muslim enclaves of Sulu and Zamboanga, the materiality of cosmopolitan conviction is reflected on widely produced and circulated compact disc videos of Tausug music and dances. By examining the materiality of rooted cosmopolitanism on popular music video disc, we may further examine varying dimensions by which Tausugs imagine their society.

As discussed earlier, Tausug video creators and distributors circulate their work as commodity around Sulu and Zamboanga and across the borders with Sabah. Yet once consumers get hold of the videos, these are often transformed materially into Internet clips and re-viewed as representations (or misrepresentations) of the Tausug society. The context of use of the videos offers a ground in understanding the complex and sometimes conflicting dynamics of cosmopolitanism at play in the making of the Tausug identity. To some extent, these dynamics also implicate the broader issues surrounding state formation in the Philippines. On this premise, I find the commodisation and material transformation of Tausug videos on the internet resonating rather closely with anthropological conceptualisation of the *social life of things* that Arjun Appadurai (1986). Central to Appadurai's argument of the social life of things is his re-analysis of the nature of commodity from an object defined by absolute economic value to a "phase" in the course of its material existence. Commodity, from this perspective, is regarded as a temporal state that becomes of an object following production. In the process of exchange and consumption, people at times invest deep meanings in commodities in ways that reflect the cultural categories of the society on which they circulate. Building up from the argument of Igor

Kopytoff (1986), Appadurai suggests that commodities can move in and out of the market as people invest culturally specific meanings in them. These analyses effectively demystified the supply and demand side of the economic life of objects (Ibid.) and expand them as relevant grounds for understanding local experiences of cosmopolitanism in the era of transnational cultural flows (Appadurai 1996: 178).

Tracking the way people assign meaning to things as they move around and out of the market circuit offers a fitting analytical frame in understanding how Tausug music videos are distributed and subsequently materialised as a medium of identity making. In my view, Tausug videos illustrate one example of how “human actors encode things-in-motion that illuminate their human and social context” and make use of them to mark their identity (Appadurai 1986: 5; Binsbergen 2005: 15, 24). As Binsbergen suggests, “things, especially when they are in motion, call forth powerful human imageries, precisely because they are so difficult to contain and control, in the world of the circulation of communities, as much as in humans’ existential struggles in general” (Ibid., 29). Precisely because the commodification of Tausug VCDs move beyond borders and change materiality, this phenomenon also presents a rich ground for understanding how the dynamics of cosmopolitan imagination in Sulu and Zamboanga come into play in commodity exchanges and material transformations. This case can be seen in the circulation and assignment of identifiable features of Tausug life on the music videos. In the case of the Tausug VCDs, it suggest the possible reach as well as indicates the limits of sharing imagined community mediated through VCDs. None of the small-time video producers in Sulu and Zamboanga possess enough resources to produce without pirate technology and no one would be able to reproduce copies of Tausug videodiscs at a massive scale. Media piracy plays a critical role in the commodification and subsequent transformation of the videodiscs into a medium for imagining, sharing, and experiencing the common features of Tausug cultural life.

The materialisation of Tausug imaginaries on digital media entangles them into the global system of capital and regulatory regimes often set forth by powerful global forces such as governments and corporations. In effect, the commodification of Tausug videos is tempered by global and local politics of intellectual property, inadvertently generating questions over the kind of cosmopolitanism being

experienced in a marginal environment such as the Muslim regions of the Southern Philippines. By following this dynamic, I would expand preceding discussion on improvisational method of VCD production to the dynamics and domestic perspectives of pirate media as they implicate the distribution and consumption of Tausug VCDs and the reach of the community they seek to imagine. I focus my attention on the intricate practice of un-authorized recopying of videodiscs and its implications on the construction of Tausug imaginaries. On this premise, I will examine the reach of the imaginaries they promote. The idea of reach also presupposes the limits of a grounded, actually existing, vernacular cosmopolitanism. It suggests capacities and liabilities of being an agent of cosmopolitan imagination in an impoverished and politically contested environment like Sulu and Zamboanga.

Materiality of Pirate Media

Academic assessments of media piracy are critical mainly towards the media lobby industry for purveying “moral panic” and “doomsday declarations” of alleged havoc that it is causing on the transnational flow of trade and information (Coleman 2010:495, Sundaram 1999). Others illustrate that the generative and hegemonic features of the global intellectual property regime are simultaneously enabling and constraining the emergence of subaltern forms of media industry especially in the developing world (Sreberny 2006: 614, Strangelove 2005, Coombe 1998). Pirated filmmaking computer software for instance provided the material condition for the emergence of a militant Burmese cinema along the borders of Thailand and Myanmar (Jirattikorn 2011) as well as produced the capital, tools, and distribution networks that enabled the emergence and consumption of domestic feature-length films in the difficult economic environment of Nigeria (Larkin 2004: 290). Building on Larkin’s argument and ethnography, Simon Floyd (2008) notes that international video piracy also made possible the emergence of popular indigenous Quichua music videos in the Ecuadorian side of the Andes. The videos were copied, transported, and sold by the same people in the same spaces used by pirate media, and occupies the same market stalls alongside bootleg Hollywood videos. Floyd illustrates that the Quichua videos served as a medium for sharing distinctive features of Andean cultural identity (Ibid., 40). Larkin goes further by examining the material conditions that bred the operations of media piracy in Nigeria. Larkin situates the pervasiveness of Nigerian

media piracy to the broader problem of frequent breakdown of public utility infrastructure and the corruption in the administration of state power. The ubiquity of these problems “imposes a particular experience of technology and its cultural effects”, which in the case of Nigeria ushered in a “culture of repair” in the form of widespread presence of mending shops and broad preference for used items (Larkin, 304). Larkin notes that whilst these indicate access and integration of the Nigerian society to global urban networks through technology, they also magnify the gap of that linkage as well as exposed political tensions with constituents pointing to frequent infrastructure breakdown as basis for criticism of the state.

Video productions in Sulu and Zamboanga bear some resemblance as well as partly differ with the ethnographic narratives from the streets of Nigeria and the hinterlands of Bolivia that I discussed in the introductory chapter. Like in Bolivia, the videos of Sulu and Zamboanga are produced and circulated on the same spaces where pirate media are sold. As it is in Nigeria, sellers circulating the videos form part of an informal trade that kept the wheels of the economy in Sulu and Zamboanga turning amidst limited employment opportunities and periodic episodes of armed conflicts in the region. Access to pirate media production and reproduction technologies enabled local cultural producers to make and circulate music videos that they would not have been able to afford with their limited resources. To some extent, music video piracy in Zamboanga and Sulu can be linked to the broader malaise afflicting the marginal areas of Southern Philippines. They throw into sharp relief bigger societal issues such as the inefficiency of state services and corrosion of public infrastructure as evinced by frequent breakdown of power and water supplies, and reports of large scale stealing of government resources by politicians.

Zamboanga and most parts of the Southern Philippines had been experiencing long episodes of power outage at the time of my fieldwork in 2009 and 2010. As I noted in the last chapter, the blackouts can last between one to four hours. In really bad times, those one to four hour blackouts happens twice or even thrice in a day. Water from the taps flow late at night but stop early in the morning. In the slums of Mariki where I usually hang out, the tap dries up for a day or two. Dwellers often tell me that they had seen worse some years back when nothing flows from the pipe for a full week. Both power outages and water interruptions are fairly regular events,

worsening in terms of length during years when long dry spells wreak havoc to hydroelectric plants and pumping stations of Mindanao. The frequent breakdown of public utilities often generates consternation and criticisms of state incompetence but at the same time also prompted affected communities to find new ways of dealing with the problem. Shops around the city runs their own diesel-fed electric generators every time the power grid shuts supply. Households prepare a variety of containers, from empty oil barrels to soda bottles, to store as much water they can.

As in Nigeria, small repair shops for household equipment, vehicles, and nearly any other form of commodities pop up few blocks from each other. Amidst the broader trend of public infrastructure breakdown are creative and productive responses from agents harshly affected by them. The phenomenon of media piracy in Zamboanga peninsula and the Sulu archipelago, I argue, is an extension of these creative responses to conditions of public infrastructure breakdown, government corruption, lack of indigenous political representation in national media affairs, similar to what Larkin described about media piracy on the streets of Kato in Nigeria or Floyd in the mountains of Ecuador. Nonetheless, the experience of media piracy in Sulu and Zambaonga also offers few more insights on the social, political, and cultural conditions shaping Tausug relationships with the national community and the world in a manner that is not exactly reflected in the ethnographies from Bolivia and Nigeria. In particular, they tell us more about the trans-local dynamics of informal networks and piracy that were not exactly reflected in the ethnographies from Bolivia and Nigeria. In this regard, it is useful to extend our analysis of informal distribution and consumption of VCDs as a lens towards understanding both the complementing and contrasting imagination of the Tausug social world, and the way the dynamics of Philippine state formation and global processes enabled and limited the circulation and consumption of these imaginaries.

Tausug videos form part of the larger collections of consumer goods circulating in and out of Sulu and Zamboanga through licensed and informal means. The videos are not just sold alongside pirated CDs and DVDs but also amongst an assortment of legally certified and smuggled items such as textiles, clothing, chocolates, biscuits, soap, noodles, canned goods, toys, and body hygiene products manufactured within the Philippines or shipped in from Malaysia. In some markets,

the VCDs surface near the stalls that sell used army uniforms, articles, and utensils reportedly discarded by the military camp in Zamboanga. Late in the afternoon, the streets in the flea markets are effectively shut as vendors of used imported clothing from European, Japanese, and American capitals - locally ascribed as *ukay-ukay* - occupy them. More permanent shops in the market sell refurbished and unbranded television sets at a fourth of the price of new branded equipment. Elsewhere in Zamboanga, “Korean Surplus TV”, a euphemism for used television sets imported from across the developed world, is selling briskly. Notably, the videos are distributed not in isolation but as part of everyday legal and illegal trade moving throughout the Muslim enclaves of the region and beyond. The videos themselves are circulated in a market simultaneously integrated into the greater Philippine economy as well as informal trading networks that extends from the side streets of Zamboanga to the merchandising houses of Sabah in Malaysia. As such, the production and distribution of the videos do not flow on a one-way or two-way street or from an urban center to a rural periphery. Rather, the circulation of the videos is entangled into the broader history and continuing episodes of cross-border trading relations and travel that can be described as a complex business all around.

Smugglers and Pirates

The movement of people and commodities between northern Borneo and Sulu is a long running affair that continually evolves amidst dramatic reconfigurations of political power and state formation in the region (see Chapter 1). Musical imaginaries that helped define the connections of the Tausug and Sama communities on both sides of the Philippine-Malaysian borders emerge from shifting trans-local trade and travel connections that I will briefly tackle from hereon. A significant form of cross-border travel and trade that peaked in the 1950s was the bartering of Sulu-cultivated copra with textiles, clothing, cigarettes, household appliances, and other consumer commodities from Hong Kong and Singapore re-exported by the merchandising houses in what was then a British colonial enclave of North Borneo (Eklof 2005). Once commodities flowed into the Philippine market, they were then circulated and sold by cash on bazaars, colloquially referred to as the “barter market”, in populated trading centres of Zamboanga and Sulu. From populous cities, the bartered goods mixed up with other Philippine traded items and distributed further on to minor

trading centers like the towns of Isabela in Basilan island south of Zamboanga, and Bongao in Tawi-tawi further south of Sulu where consumers from inner (*tau gimba*) and more remote coastal (*tau higad*) villages trade their goods.

In 1955, the Philippine government criminalised cross border trade through Sulu and Zamboanga in response to strong domestic industry and shopkeepers lobby. Subsequently, Sulu barter traders and ship operators were classified as smugglers and sea pirates that the state would have to deal coercively with through interdictions and arrests. Notwithstanding these restrictions, cross-border ventures went on as the merchandising houses of British North Borneo sustained trading relations with Sulu copra exporters and commodity importers ignoring Philippine importation laws. The 1962 British ceding of North Borneo and subsequent establishment of postcolonial Malaysian federal state of Sabah did trigger changes on old colonial trading arrangements that catalyse their further evolution. Defiant Sulu traders in the Philippine side of the border upgraded their logistical capacity by deploying high-speed motorboats that can easily outpace outmoded fast crafts maintained by Filipino coast guards (Eklof 2005: 3, 5). As cross border trading proved resilient, the Philippine government shifted policy by re-opening the so-called barter trade in 1973 but imposed a restrictive list of conditions including a requisite for all barter traders and ship owners to come forward and register with the government. The law also set a ceiling on the cost of tariff-free imported goods coming from the ports in Sabah³³. Instead of effectively ending cross border trade, however, the restrictions bred the ground for petty government corruption as regional Philippine custom officials began taking bribes and imposing unofficial taxes on violators of the 1973 importation laws (Ibid.). The flow of copra from Sulu to Sabah, however, waned around the 70s not only because of restrictions on Philippine importation but as a result of a dramatic growth of palm oil productions along with the expansion of oil palm plantations in Malaysia³⁴. With the copra trade in crisis, Sulu shipping to Sabah was stopped but not the importation of Malaysian re-exported commodities. Even as trade arrangement

³³ About two decades later, in 1990, the Philippine government adjusted the policy on travel and trade restrictions by increasing the number of allowable trips for each trader under the law called Executive Order Number 427.

³⁴ Industry reports on the state of Malaysian palm oil productions and exports note that oil palm plantations expanded from half a million hectares in 1974, at the time when copra trading from Sulu declined precipitously, to about seven and a half million hectares in 2006 (Hassanpour and Ismail 2010: 23-24).

evolved to cash-based transactions, people across Sulu and Zamboanga continue using the term “barter” in popular and official usage, especially when referring to commodities from Sabah. The shift to cash-based transactions precipitated the rise of even bigger *barter* bazaars that sell consumer products coming from as far as Bangkok and other great South Asian cities.

Towards the end of the 90s, trading relations mutated anew as political and economic shifts sweeping the region set the conditions for the decline of barter bazaars. Central authorities in Kuala Lumpur began viewing the open ports of Sabah as illegal migration routes for impoverished natives of Sulu and the neighbouring Kalimantan province of Indonesia. The assessments led to a Malaysian campaign of seizures and deportation of undocumented Tausugs as well as neighbouring Sama-speakers back to the Philippines³⁵. On the political front, local government authorities of Zamboanga and other trading centres in Mindanao criminalised barter bazaars in response to new rounds of lobbying of local shop owners who viewed them as competition. Economic wise, the flow of cheaper consumer commodities from China and used electronic products from elsewhere through the Philippine capital of Manila further undermined the viability of the costs of bribery and shipping from Sabah. These changing political and economic climates precipitated the shuttering of barter bazaars in bigger trading centres such as Zamboanga. Nevertheless, the collapse of barter trade transformed furthermore the means of cross border exchanges as it subsequently opened other legal and legally ambiguous avenues for circulation of music videos around Tausug and Sama communities. One legal route is a weekly ferry service linking the ports of Zamboanga, Jolo in Sulu, and Sandakan in Sabah. Another route is through the small island port of Sitangkay, the southernmost Philippine municipality in the archipelagic province of Tawi-tawi. Sitangkay’s port launches small boats to some points in Sabah close to fifty nautical miles away, moving both documented and undocumented commodities and people in the process. Travellers and traders using both routes often take with them few copies of Tausug music videos. As soon as they reach Sulu and Zamboanga, local sellers reproduce and circulate the discs without permission and integrated them with globally circulating

³⁵ In the late 1990s to the 2000s, Malaysian, Indonesian, and Philippine authorities strengthened border security coordination and restricted travels following a spate of high profile violence in the region. One of the most dramatic security related incidents near the borders was the daring kidnapping of European tourists in an upscale Malaysian resort by a band of armed men onboard small boats from Sulu in 2001.

pirated media that flowed in from Hollywood, Bollywood, other entertainment capitals, and elsewhere. From the busy ports, the videos were then shipped to smaller trading centres such as the provincial islands of Basilan and Tawi-tawi, broadly in the same mode as the “barter commodities” were distributed in the past.

Tournaments of Value in Media Piracy

As I discussed earlier in this and the preceding chapters, the Tausug enclaves of Sulu and Zamboanga are intimately connected to Tausug-speaking communities on the Malaysian coast of Sabah. Tausugs on both sides of the border produce, circulate, and consume music videos featuring their shared heritage using images, technology, and distribution networks offered by pirate media. Invariably, such settings situate the materiality of Tausug videos within complex layers of political controls constituted amongst others by state authorities that regulate cross border movements of people and goods, as well as media conglomerates that restrict public access to global media flow through the rules of copyright. How cultural agents such as the music video makers of Zamboanga breach through these sets of control are salient in identifying the processes by which the broader Tausug community shifts the value of the videos from illicit consumer commodities into Tausug imaginaries.

Inevitably, the valuation of the videodiscs as a Tausug imaginary is implicated by the politics that underpins their production, circulation and consumption. In analysing these dynamics, I turn to Appadurai’s argument of the importance of understanding “relations, assumptions, and contests of power” in shaping social re-evaluation of commodity to objects of cultural significance (1986: 57). Appadurai categorised these dynamics as “tournaments of value”, a conceptual tool that he formulates to take into account the politics at play in the determination of value of a commodity within a cultural setting on which it circulates. As he defines it, tournaments of value are “complex periodic events that are removed in some culturally well-defined way from the routines of economic life” (Ibid., 21). These tournaments, Appadurai contends, “occur in special times and places, their forms and outcomes are always consequential for the more mundane realities of power and value in ordinary life” (Ibid.). This modality of valuing of goods goes beyond economic calculation of commodity, notably in the form of supply and demand. Rather, the

notion of tournaments of value takes into consideration the alteration of the path of commodity from larger systems of exchange and the subsequent shift of its usage in a phenomenon that Appadurai refers to as “diversions”. To illustrate this paradigm, he offers as example the varying ethnographic illustrations and analyses of the concept of Trobriand *kitoum*, the collection of valuables that can be placed within or withdrawn from the Melanesian *kula* system of commodity exchanges (Munn 1977, Damon 1983, Weiner 1983, Bohanan 1955). Appadurai underscores the characterization of *kitoum* as disparate but smaller and intimate transactions implicated by “debt, death, and affinity” that is intricately occurring alongside a “grander interisland system of exchange” (Appadurai, 20, Weiner 164-165). For Appadurai, such analysis of *kitoum* demonstrates how the politics of reputation amongst the Melanesian men of substance spur the re-determination of value in the course of the diversion of an object from the larger path of commodity flows in the *kula* ring. Appadurai expands the potential application of tournaments of value as an analytical category for much more complicated settings of commodity exchange. He notes its application in analyzing the “ludic, ritual, and reciprocal aspects” of valuing artworks under auction, the removal of royal items from commodity markets as a means of establishing their material and cultural value through exclusivity, and so forth.

Subsequent ethnographic investigations move on to apply the notion of tournaments of values in analysing what Appadurai regards as the “agonistic, romantic, individualistic, and gamelike ethos that stands in contrast of everyday economic behaviour in diverse phenomenon of commodity flows” (Ibid., 50). Amongst these are ethnographies detailing the manipulation of identity and authenticity of tribal art in the construction of its price in auction houses (Geismar 2001); the variable notions of capital (economic, symbolic, intellectual) in the publishing industry (Moeran 2010); the recent rise of money as medium of exchange amongst the people of the Maka forests in southern Cameron (Gescheire 2005), and the establishment of fictive norms of kinship in the organization of a resilient Indonesian furniture industry for global exports (Alexander and Alexander 2005). I take the notion of the tournaments of value into account in making sense of the value shifts of copyrighted commodities as these were diverted from the legal paths of

global media flows and entangled into the politics and mundane world of media piracy operations in the Southern Philippines.

Pirate Media and the Politics of Value

Copyright regimes presuppose control of the reproduction and movement of commodities, a dynamic that reflects Appadurai's argument that "it is in the interest of those in power to completely freeze the flow of commodities... by creating a closed universe of commodities and rigid set of regulations about how they are to move" (Appadurai, 57). Yet, as Appadurai notes, "the very nature of contests between those in power (or those who aspire to greater power) tends to invite a loosening of these rules and an expansion of the pool of commodities. This aspect of elite politics is generally the Trojan horse of value shifts. So far as commodities are concerned, the source of politics is the tension between these values" (Ibid.). Within this "precarious balance between circulating and freezing" we find a critical "nodal point for relating things and agency" and observe the transformation of traded objects from commodity to use value (Binsbergen, 23). In line with this perspective, media piracy can also be regarded as a nodal point where contending agents come into play to either tighten or break the rules governing media circulation in a manner that implicates trans-local spaces and shifts the value of commodities to objects of deep political significance.

Going back to the Nigerian pirate media experience, Larkin illustrates that media piracy essentially forms part of the "organizational structure" of globalisation as a trade reproduction and distribution system spinning off from global corporate media flows (Larkin, 289). Its operations are highly dependent on tightly regulated commodities that are circulated through trading infrastructures built and sustained by global media corporations but protected by domestic state authorities. Safeguarding that infrastructure is the International Intellectual Property Alliance (IIPA), an influential and powerful coalition of global media companies that monitors copyright violations across trans-national economies. The group's political influence lies on its outsized influence on the United States Trade Representative, an agency with a power to exert trading embargo against its client states. The media alliance can lobby for an economically devastating US trade sanctions against states it deems to have failed in securing the copyright of its members. In this regard, IIPA has consistently listed the

Philippines in its annually published report of patent violators since the late 1990s. The IIPA reports, which essentially comprise of consequential documents called the “Special 301”³⁶, consider the piracy of computer software, books and journals, films, and music in the Philippines as extremely pervasive to the point of permeating the legitimate fields not only of entertainment but also of business, governance, and the academe. Moreover, IIPA noted that the Muslim enclaves of Mindanao has serve as a transshipment point of trans-national flow of illicit media and of the rebels as agents of these operations³⁷. Amidst a threat of a US trade embargo, the Philippine government legislated a series of punitive measures criminalizing copyright offenses in the country. On the strength of these laws, the Philippine police carried out raids and arrests with American trade agents in attendance demonstrating the tangle of global and domestic power relations that underpin the regimentation of copyright.

Piracy and Politics

Raids and arrests in the name of copyright enforcement has generated impassioned reactions from Philippine-based academics in ways that brings attention to pirate media not just as an illicit commodity but as objects enmeshed in the exigencies of geo-politics and state formation. This point can be illustrated in reflexive expositions written by two academics at the University of the Philippines (UP), the premiere state university in the country. Drawing from a personal teaching experience at the UP Film Institute, Tilman Baumgärtel (2006) notes the following account in a paper that discusses “the culture of piracy in the Philippines”:

“When I started to teach at the Film Institute at the University of the Philippines in July 2005, I found a film collection of approximately 500 films on VHS tapes, around 100 VCDs and a handful of DVDs. The videos were a sound collection of the international and local film canon, although the

³⁶ Special 301 documents refers to the legal provisions under Section 301 of the United States 1974 Trade Act mandating the Office of the US Trade Representative to draft an annual report identifying possible trade issues facing American corporations and products in relation to intellectual property, copyright, patents, and trademark issues in other countries.

³⁷ In its “2001 Special 301 Report Philippines”, IIPA notes on page 177 that: “Muslim extremist groups appear to be involved in the distribution of pirated entertainment videos imported from nearby Malaysia.” The IIPA, in succeeding reports up to 2012 however, drops reference or suggestion of involvement of “Muslim extremist groups” or any other rebel groups in media piracy in the Philippines.

quality of many of the tapes was admittedly poor and there was a lack of Asian films... Yet, only one year later, the situation has drastically changed. On the shelves of the film collection there is a quickly increasing number of brand-new DVDs, and many professors have started to use top-notch DVD versions of rare and off-beat movies from their own collection in class. Not only allow the brisk, new transfers on many of these DVDs for a more rewarding viewing experience for the students, but it is also noticeable that some professors started to use more uncommon, contemporary, independent and cult films, and also more films from Asia. Needless to say, most of these films stem from the markets for pirated DVDs, which have sprung up all over Manila.” (Baumgärtel 2006: 374).

Baumgärtel’s reflexive commentary illustrates how a trans-locally regulated commodity is being re-valued once it reaches the hands of consumers. In this account, Baumgärtel underscores the way the intellectuals of the country’s leading but underfunded university made use of pirate media as a tool for reproducing filmmaking knowledge in ways that commits to the cosmopolitan value of learning from trans-located imaginaries. Furthermore, Baumgärtel investigates the possible source of the array of international films that ended up on the shelves of the UP film school. He went on illustrating the translocality of the informal economy that underpins the operation of media piracy with his reconstruction of the linkages of distributors of pirate media. Baumgärtel explores two modes of media piracy in the country, one he referred to as the “Chinese Connection”, a sophisticated transnational network of criminal gangs that ships discs through Filipino Chinese courier flying from either Hong Kong or Singapore. The other mode, which he regarded as the “Muslim Connection”, constitutes a rather crude and circuitous piracy operation involving the smuggling of a single disc copy of a pirated media on a boat trip from the city of Kota Kinabalu in Sabah. Border-crossing fishermen allegedly pack the film into either a belly of a tuna or barrels stuffed with shrimps. Upon reaching the “beaches of Mindanao”, the disc would immediately be reproduced with one copy sent to Manila, again by a ferryboat, for large-scale reproduction whilst a “master disk” remained in Mindanao for local copying and distribution (Baumgärtel, 388). Baumgärtel points out that these modes of pirate operations contrast sharply with Western practices of illegal internet downloading. It depicts the particularity of the

“culture of piracy” in the Philippines that whilst linked to global pirate media infrastructure also “moves along long established trajectories of the illegal economy” of the country with Muslim traders, along with the Chinese pirate network, serving as its principal agents (Ibid., 393).

Pirate Media: Trans-localism or “Third World Cosmopolitanism”?

Roland Tolentino, a humanities professor also at UP, offers a different assessment by noting that whilst the media piracy opened local spaces to cosmopolitan way of living and consumption, the phenomenon also indicates a Filipino middle class “posturing of modernity and a version of Third World cosmopolitanism” (Tolentino 2006: 13). Tolentino diverges from Baumgärtel’s argument about the centrality of Muslim traders in the operation of media piracy by pointing instead to the material relevance of pirated intellectual properties in the critical examination of ethnic relations and of the backward nature of cosmopolitan experience in the Philippines. Rather than singling out the Muslim or Chinese trading community in illustrating the constitution of media pirate infrastructure and network, Tolentino argues that it is imperative that the examination must also spotlight who actually drives the phenomenon. For Tolentino, what sustains the demands for pirate media are the lowly-paid Filipino middle class yearning to take part in the global consumption of new media technologies, entertainment, and knowledge they they could not afford. Yet, when it comes to state action against media piracy, Tolentino contends that Muslim traders and sellers bear the brunt of government raids and arrests but not a single legal action has been taken against leading pirate media consumers that include scholars, students, professionals, and filmmakers.

Tolentino gives two poignant explanations on the disparity of state coercive response to violators of copyright. First, he writes that state agents are actually cuddling the middle class consumers on the premise that they occupy a politically influential place in the country and powerful enough to isolate and undermine the legitimacy of the ruling class. Tolentino concludes that such an approach is a cynical state attempt to pacify the middle class whose desire to partake in legal consumption of global flow of knowledge, entertainment, and technology is stunted by extremely low wages amidst government failure to grow the economy and capital production in

the country. Tolentino's second point accuses the Philippine ruling class of perpetuating a cynical agenda of assuaging the US government and global media corporations with a facade of fortitude to illegal media trade at the expense of the Muslim trading community. The state's supposed forceful response to media piracy is often pursued in an astute and opportunistic show of "performance of coercion" (Ibid., 11). Each raid and arrests that state agents carry out in the Muslim enclaves of Manila is often undertaken with television news crews in tow and before the presence of American trade agents. Yet once the prying eyes of American trade representatives stray away and the focus of television news cameras turn elsewhere, arrests and raids cease. Tolentino goes on to indict the broader Filipino middle class for taking part in the state's "sustained profiling" of Philippine Muslims as "illicit bodies" that has to be disciplined and integrated into the national body politic (Ibid., 9). He takes offense at what he calls "sinister-like" middle class parody of street based Muslim peddlers' idiosyncratic enunciation of DVD to "*dibidi*" by street-based Muslim traders as a pejoratively coded attribution of media piracy to the broader Muslim community in the country (Ibid., 8). Tolentino airs out a passionate condemnation of the broader Filipino middle class in a terse statement that goes:

"So who in the Philippines is not a pirate? Who has not bought pirated music or DVD film from the neighborhood Muslim vendor; has not downloaded films, television shows, and music from Internet sites; has not played pirated games in computers powered by pirated software; and has not listened to pirated music played in bars, karaoke establishments, and restaurants, amongst others? We could all get arrested for doing what we do with our media texts. But we won't. At least not yet." (Ibid., 2).

Building on his argument of state atrocity and middle class hypocrisy toward Muslims, Tolentino argues that media piracy must be understood as a "creative and critical response of Filipino Muslims" to "the homogenizing cultural politics of the Philippine nation-state and neoliberal globalisation" (Ibid., 5). He says that Muslim involvement in media piracy is a subaltern strategy in resisting coercive state policy that "negates their identities and social subpractices" (Ibid.).

Pirate Media: From Commodity to Objects of Political Significance

Whilst contrasting, Baumgärtel and Tolentino's reflexive illustrations of media piracy in the Philippines demonstrate in stark terms a process on which a set of rules that rigidly controlled commodity flows precipitated a radical shift of their value. Baumgärtel and Tolentino, writing both as scholars situated in a community where media piracy is deemed pervasive, exemplify the transmutation of pirate media from illicit commodity to a politically meaningful object embroiled in complicated ethnic relations and cosmopolitan experience in the Philippines. Baumgärtel points to the way local academics valued globally sourced pirated films as tools for offering a cosmopolitan view in the reproduction of filmmaking knowledge amidst the inadequacy of education resources in the country. In so doing, Baumgärtel exposes the trans-locality of the connections of informal economy in the Philippines in which its Muslim constituents played a significant role. For his part, Tolentino makes use of media piracy as an instrument in demonstrating a pathological account of cosmopolitanism in a nation with a globally oriented middle class but lacking sufficiently global income to participate in global consumerism other than through illicit means. Both also draw attention to the impact of pirate media on ethnic relations and cosmopolitan experience in a social landscape saddled by economic inequity and unequal relations of power. They highlight the significance of media piracy in knowing how social agents assign use value on a commodity in ways that I would say provide us some insights on the relationship between things and human agency.

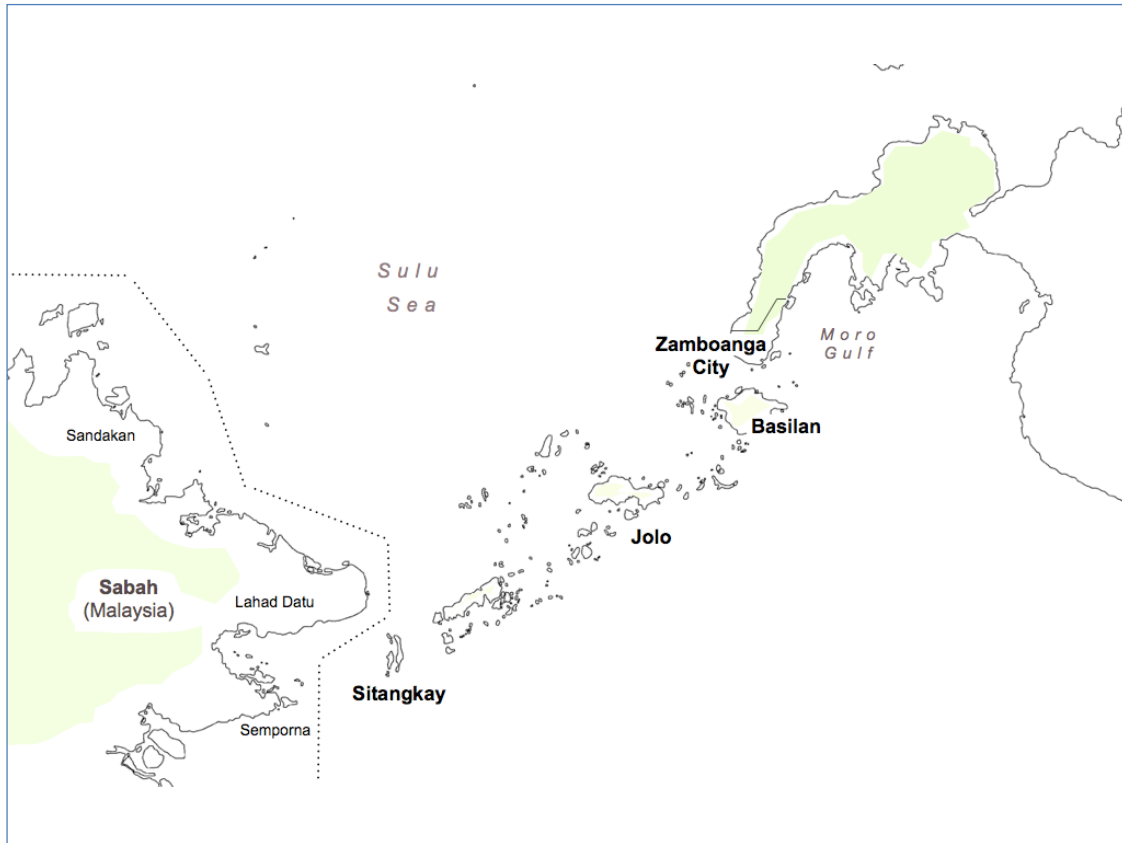
The emphases of Tolentino and Baumgärtel, however, are limited to demonstrating the entanglement of pirate media with larger issues of power implicating state formation, ethnic relations, and cosmopolitan encounters. What they fail to offer is a picture of how these processes are actually playing out within a Muslim community in the Philippines. As I noted early in this and previous chapters, the Muslim enclaves of Sulu and Zamboanga are not only distributors but also consumers of mediated entertainment, images, technology, and knowledge. Rather than stand outside the realm of consumption, they partake of them not only as objects of entertainment but also as materials for filmmaking and tools for sharing the common features of Tausug cultural life. Through pirated software and ripped off

images from globally circulating films that I discussed in previous chapters (Chapters 2, 4 and 5), Tausug video makers were able to produce and distribute their very own imaginaries for mass consumption. These processes implicate but at the same time move beyond geo-political affairs, state domination, or subaltern resistance.

Tausug Music Video Flows

The circulation and consumption of illicit media technology, entertainment, and knowledge in Tausug communities provides another dimension of the tournaments of value of pirate media in ways that does not simply demonstrate episodes of state domination and resistance. Tausug music videos are commodity that flowed through old but constantly transforming trading routes linking Zamboanga, Sulu, and Sabah. The media piracy infrastructure on which Tausug videos circulate was not just precipitated by modern day globalisation but embedded in the same commodity zone that keeps mutating through the centuries. The shifting nature of the mode of trading in this zone brings forth other complications, indicating that the circulation of Tausug videos as commodity do not necessarily come in a smooth and forthright manner. They reflect Appadurai's understanding of commoditisation as a variable and complex process affected by the social context, categories, and period on which it is situated and at times unpredictable as it interacts "with myriad other indigenous social forms of commoditisation" (Appadurai, 16). Such commentary resonates with the characteristic of the trans-local market circuits on which the Tausug videos flow as I learned from Delson, a videodisc producer who also runs a stall selling salted fish coming from various parts of Sulu and farther down south of the archipelago.

During my fieldwork, Delson began tapping his contacts in the salted fish trade to find him distributors of his music videos on the island of Sitangkai, the southernmost Philippine town situated near the watery border with Malaysia (*see* Map 3). Delson did so because he knows that exporting a huge volume of music videos to Sabah would require him to pay duties that he could not afford. He thought that he can get around exportation costs by having his Sitangkay partners sell some copies of the videos to travelers and traders who regularly come and return to some points in Sabah, which is merely about fifty nautical miles away. Towards the end of my



Map 3. Philippine-Malaysian border map.

fieldwork, Delson began sending music videos through salted fish traders returning from Zamboanga to Sitangkai. The fish traders then pass on Delson's music video to video sellers in Sitangkai. In exchange, his Sitangkai partners also send him, again through the traders, the latest Tausug, Sama, as well as other Malaysian, Indonesian, and Bollywood music videos that travelers and traders from Sabah bring to Sitangkay. Delson's video trading operation shows that the music videos did not just flow into one direction or the same mode of cross-border exchange but rather were cultivated through long established but constantly changing mode of trade. In a sense, Delson and his partners form part of the generation of local agents who sustain cross border movements that continue to link Zamboanga and Sulu to Sabah and trading centers further beyond amidst sharp changes in geo-political trends in the region. The way Delson conducts trade illustrates that deep in the marginal areas of Sulu and Zamboanga is a continuous trans-locally connected economic and cultural enclave in which the music videos are circulated as commodity.

Modes of Distribution

Varying producers circulate the music videos of Sulu and Sabah through different modes and networks of informal selling. One of these modes involves producers consigning their videos to street peddlers whilst others sell the videos themselves in the flea market. Sellers usually set the price at thirty-five pesos (fifty pence)³⁸ but lower them at rock the bottom price of fifteen pesos (about twenty five pence) for buyers who are good at haggling. As I noted earlier, the videos are not just sold in the major trading centers of Zamboanga and Jolo but also flow into smaller markets located on island towns and villages³⁹. Some producers send their videos to Isabela, a smaller trading center in the neighbouring island province of Basilan. Others send VCDs to as far as Bongao, the capital of the provincial islands of Tawi-tawi that cover the border town of Sitangkay. Wedding performers and producers from Isabela and Bongao also produce videos, distribute them in the local flea markets, and send a few more of their own work to Zamboanga and Jolo, the capital town of Sulu. Towards the end of my fieldwork, dance music videos produced from the peripheral group of islands of the Sulu archipelago appeared in Zamboanga.

As I briefly presented at the beginning of this chapter, another mode of video circulation is unauthorized reproduction. The piracy of local videos thrive largely because none of the street video producers are wealthy enough to mass-produce copies of their work in numbers that could possibly meet a market of nearly a million Tausug speakers. Without extensive capital investments and sponsorships, a Tausug producer in Zamboanga distributes an average of about a thousand copies of their videodiscs. That number, however, multiplies exponentially as soon as the disc reaches a stall in the flea market. Other sellers immediately reproduce them, often without permission from their creators as in the case of the *Biraddali* videos that I discussed in the beginning of this chapter. By pirating each other's craft, they are able to multiply the copies of music videos no one producer could possibly afford and surmount the financial limitations of mass-producing disc copies of music videos.

³⁸ Thirty-five pesos (fifty pence) is roughly a seventh of the minimum daily income for wage earners in Sulu and Zamboanga.

³⁹ Broad swath of islands and towns within the Sulu Archipelago and Zamboanga peninsula are without internet connections sustaining the old practice of sending both pirated and locally produced digital products by boat; the preferred means of circulation to the islands.

These unauthorized reproductions inadvertently boost the numbers of the discs in circulation making it possible for greater number of Tausugs in the slums, island villages, and the broader Muslim communities in Sulu and Zamboanga to share the same imaginaries.

The Intimacy of Tausug Piracy

Amidst the prevalence of media piracy, however, it does not mean that everyone simply consented altruistically. On some occasions, episodes of piracy actually generated the consternation of Tausug video makers on the pirates for undercutting their earnings as I have learned after months of hanging out with the sellers at their stalls in the flea market as well as in helping out producers and wedding performers in digitally recording their music. Eting, the video seller and producer I have referred to in previous chapters (Chapters 3 and 5), pointed out: “Instead of buying from us producers, sellers go directly to the pirates because they sell the videos cheaper by at least a peso compared to the price that we can offer. We could not sell them any lower because we spent some money for its filming, editing, and some other expenses. The pirates spent and laboured nothing except for copying them.” One time I saw Eting fuming upon learning that a music video he released shortly after half past twelve noon was already reproduced and distributed by pirates at two in the afternoon. Yet a month later, after personally uncovering one of the sellers who pirated his work, he did nothing but laugh at the whole episode. The incident happened rather serendipitously when Eting insisted on coming with me to the house of a fellow videodisc seller and producer named Monas who asked for my help in recording sound tracks for the wedding singers he is working with. Though Monas did not invite him, Eting said that he is sure that he would not be turned away, telling me: “He is my cousin’s husband.”

Monas is one of the few video sellers and producers who do not live in a slum. He earns better than others by selling Philippine refurbished television sets and lower-end made-in-China videodisc players also in the flea market. His house at Barangay Kansayangan, a 15-minute walk from the slums where Eting lives, is rather spacious and had one of the rooms converted into a video editing and reproduction shop. The room was fitted with shelves and desks that stacked up Tausug music video discs of

his past productions and those that he had reproduced. Through the covers, I recognized that some of the discs were actually taken from Eting's original recording. I lifted one of the disc, the *Black Stone* music video I discussed in Chapter 5, to have a closer look at the reproduction. Monas saw what I did and immediately interjected by bragging that he actually improved the cover of the video. He said he added a picture of a stone on it reasoning that such revision makes better sense given the name of the group. All throughout the conversation, Eting merely smiled and kept shifting the conversation to other things instead. After leaving Monas's home, I asked Eting how he felt with his work being pirated by his cousin's husband. Eting grinned, telling me that he actually found Monas's act a complement. "It means that my work is good. Why would he pirate it if he did not find it well?" Whilst Eting resented the piracy of his work, he would not want the pirates gone completely. "All we want is for them not to reproduce our work within an hour or a week of their release. They should just give us enough time to recover our investments," he often tells me.

"The Pirates of Zamboanga"

Another episode yet again involves Eting but this time it is he who is being regarded as the pirate by fellow Tausug producers. One of his critic is Omar, a fellow Tausug music video producer who spliced footages of *pangalay* he filmed in Sulu with ripped off clips of Warner Brother's *Happy Feet* animated feature that I discussed in Chapter 4. I met Omar whilst recording a musical track for a wedding band called Solid Whengz near Kansayangan. The leader of the band, Hadja Wheng, had originally asked Omar to record and film their music but he begged off due to scheduling conflicts. Other members of the band whom I befriended in the course of my fieldwork, told Hadja Wheng to ask me to record the music instead and leave the filming to Omar later. In one of our conversations, Omar learned that Eting and I had become friends in the course of my fieldwork. He called Hadja Wheng's attention as he warned me of keeping my recordings away from Eting. He said Eting pirated many of his previous works, including the *Happy Feet-Pangalay* video. "Just don't trust the guy. He is known around as the pirate of Zamboanga," Omar charged harshly within earshot of other members of the band. That same day, Eting dropped by at Hadja Wheng's house to see me. He greeted Omar and exchanged mobile phone numbers but no one articulated any misgivings of piracy. Eting's reaction in seeing his work

pirated by Monas and Omar illustrates the typical way producers handle conflicting intellectual property interests. They often avoid confronting each other directly but grumble in private chats. The two encounters, however, illustrate the dilemma that Tausug video producers often find themselves in when dealing with media pirates, many of whom are their relatives, friends, acquaintances as well as themselves. On the surface, this mode of piracy illustrates the intimacy of the informal distribution network on which the videos flow, given that many of the sellers are actually linked by kinship and friendship. Beyond affinity, however, the grumbling also indicates an underlying tension behind the veneer of cordiality that video producers show each other. Driving that tension is a deep sense of frustration especially when the intimacy of kinship and friendship get entangled with the broader relations of power in their midst.

I followed that tangle of tensions, affinity, and power relations in the passionate but failed attempt of Maing, another video producer I introduced in Chapter 5, to actually stop the sellers from pirating his work. This affair illustrates the affinity that binds pirates together also extends to local state agents. Maing has several relatives who rose through the ranks of the police force in Zamboanga and approached them to support his crusade. Instead of accommodating Maing, he was rebuffed and lectured by police officers that the people he wants prosecuted are also part of their extended family. When he insisted, his relatives in the police questioned the legality of his own production, particularly the license of digital video editing software he is using and permits to sell his work. Maing admits that he has no legal papers to show. For that he was told that if he insists on the arrest of other pirates the police would arrest him as well because his act also constitutes piracy. Maing was adamant in preventing the piracy of his work so he decided to apply for license.

In one of our conversations, he told me that should he succeed in getting a license, he would have the moral and legal authority to press the police to stop the unauthorized selling of his videos. On this crusade, however, Maing got caught and lost in the complex maze of copyright bureaucracy. He enquired with the Zamboanga city hall the steps of acquiring video production and distribution license but city trade officers told him that the law does not authorize them to do that. Instead, local officials informed him that his video production and distribution operations are

actually illegal and urged him to obtain license from the Optical Media Board, a national state agency directly overseen by the Philippine presidential office. To secure his license, Maing must travel to the OMB office in Manila, the national capital, a prospect that Maing deemed impractical for him. He would have to spend his entire earnings for a year in his travel to Manila and temporarily shutter his business. In the end Maing abandoned his idea of licensing his work, telling me in one of our conversations: “We only earn enough to keep our business running. We do not think that we can afford the expenses needed for travel alone.” In later conversations he sounded remorseful and critical of himself, telling me, “We and the police know who the pirates are. They are just there in the market, they have computers ready to reproduce whatever we released but they are also my relatives. Can you really ask the police to arrest your own relatives?”

Maing’s travails in copyrighting his videos reveal a complicated relationship between state agents and pirates rather than an affair tightly locked and reducible into domination and resistance. Maing’s situation does show how a copyright regime bends state power towards securing global corporate media interests without actually protecting the intellectual property of small, cash-strapped creative producers like the video makers of Zamboanga and Sulu. They throw into sharp relief the uneven field of copyright, exposing it as a costly legal undertaking affordable to agents with adequate financial resources but way beyond the reach of low earning media producers. Yet the partiality of copyright towards corporate interests does not completely define the contours of power relations in Sulu and Zamboanga. Local law enforcers do not simply translate the agenda of global media lobby industry into a brute force that disciplines suspected media pirates. Other circumstances also temper the coercive tendency of state institutions and agents in the Southern Philippines. Maing’s efforts and eventual failure to convince his relatives in the police to arrest video sellers whom he suspects of pirating his work bares the tangled connection of pirates and state agents at the margins. His attempt to mobilize state resources against fellow pirates offers a picture not of self-conscious agents tactically using media piracy to resist the homogenizing agenda of the Filipino state suggested by Tolentino. As Maing pointed out, police officers and street-based Tausug video sellers and pirates are conjoined by affinity. Precisely because of that intimacy, local state agents had to balance the competing interests of pirate media sellers instead of simply

crushing them. They tap into their kindred connections in ways that results not only in the conservation of local infrastructure of piracy but the emergence as well as circulation of Tausug music videos. This phenomenon offer a picture not of a state in full control of its coercive powers or of the Tausug Muslim media pirates as agents of resistance. It is an intricate relationship, which in this case abetted and sustained the necessary condition for the materiality of the Tausug imaginary.

Media Piracy as a Phase in the Social Life of Tausug Videos

Whilst piracy serves as the means on which the videos are reproduced and distributed at a massive scale across a broader Tausug community, by no means their mode of circulation is limited by it. Piracy constitutes a phase in the social life of the music videos. Both pirated and non-pirated videos are often passed on to wedding performers who in turn take and peddle them to the slums and island villages in the course of their performance. Imin, the Tausug wedding performer I cited in Chapter 4, is amongst those who frequently take the video discs to their performances in the remote *higad* (islands coast) and *gimba* (interior) communities where locals own televisions and playback videodisc players that runs on car batteries. Imin takes the video by consignment for eight to twelve pesos but sells them five times higher or more, depending on the remoteness of the village. Even if he multiplies the price of the videos several times over, Imin usually sells out all his videos with buyers embracing his sales pitch: “People from far away villages need not spend transportation costs to buy the videos in the trading centers. In fact, they are grateful that we bring and sell them music videos because they rarely venture to the town centers. For them the VCD we bring are precious because they feature songs and dances in our language.”

The involvement of wedding performers like Imin in the selling of the videos show that the VCDs did not just circulate along long established trading paths but also through intimate local community affairs such as village weddings. They spread and embedded across the littorals of Zamboanga and the Sulu archipelago not only by way of traders but also through cultural agents such as the wedding performers. The paths on which the music video flowed marked its transformation from a commodity to a valuable medium on which people collectively share the experience of consuming

Tausug cultural imaginaries. The gratitude expressed by village-based consumers, *the tau higad* (people from the coasts) and *tau gimba* (people from the interior) to wedding performers who bring them videos of Tausug performances illustrates that the people regard the VCD as a culturally valuable artefact.

Local Consumption

Thus far in this chapter, I illustrated the mode of Tausug video circulation to highlight the trans-locality of informal economic networks and the complexity of the power relations of the communities on which they flow. These processes situate the broader role of politics in re-shaping the use value of the videos as they move across legal and illegal trans-local and local market domains. Ultimately, these processes also bring up the question how consumers use the videos and how this usage influences their disposition towards the world? I realised part of the answer one afternoon whilst hanging out at Eting's sidewalk stall, waiting for him to finish accommodating a customer who came looking for a *pangalay* (dance) video. The client, a mother, asked Eting for the most recent *pangalay* music video which she and her daughter intend to study in time for a wedding in the family. She told Eting that she is particularly interested in videos that showcases new *pangalay* moves that her daughter could copy and use in time for her performance in a wedding celebration. In a number of Tausug weddings that I attended in Zamboanga, I did notice that many of the novel but culturally conflated *pangalay* styles featured on the VCDs were actually adapted by guests and relatives keen at showing off their moves. In one of these weddings, I saw a relative of the newly weds performing a loopy head movement that Ajing, the *pangalay* wedding and video performer I introduced in Chapter 4, copied from pirated Bollywood music videos and popularized. At another wedding, I saw performers integrating Michael Jackson's moonwalk and struts as shown in the Allan Jackson and *Happy Feet* video that I also described in Chapter 4.

Apart from the *pangalay*, the music released on the compact discs and VCDs features the song performances at wedding celebrations. Others would download and transfer these songs on their mobile phones and use them as their ring tones. I met a few others who keep the Tausug VCDs on their mp3 players and computers. One of them is Amilpasa Bandaying, an MNLF (Moro National Liberation Front) leader in the

1970s but has since then worked as assistant to the mayor of Zamboanga. I was introduced to Bandaying by Eting, and later had a chance to hang out with him in his office at city hall. When I got there, I noticed that Bandaying was playing Tausug pop songs whilst working on his laptop computer. In the course of our conversation, he showed me about a hundred songs from the VCDs and internet that he downloaded on his hard drive. He played one of his favourites, the pop rock ballad *Biraddali*, and reclined back into his chair, shut his eyes in blissful tranquility, before telling me, “Oh, nothing is sweeter than listening to music sung in your language. Each time I do that, I feel this deep sense of joy. This feeling is just fascinating.”

The deep sense of joy that Bandaying felt and the adaptation of *pangalay* moves on VCDs by wedding revelers practically lay down the process of transmutation of Tausug music and dance videos from commodity to culturally valuable objects. Bandaying’s exuberance offers a glimpse of how things relate to human agency in a manner that illustrates the “*ways in which people give meaning to them*” (Binsbergen, 19, emphasis in original). In demonstrating the transformation of the value of objects, Wim van Binsbergen follows mat making in central Zambia by noting its transformation from an object of use value for the community to commodity. In the case of the music and dance videos of Sulu and Zamboanga, the reverse happens. Tausug videos start life as commodity but in the process of circulation and consumption, people make use of them as a medium for projecting and experiencing the shared features of their culture. Other consumers and producers are deeply moved by the songs and shared them more widely through the World Wide Web, casting farther afield the reach of Tausug imaginaries as they transform materiality from their early lives as VCDs sold off the slums and streets of Zamboanga and Sulu. The most popular of the Internet sites for the VCD is YouTube, where around three thousand video clips of VCDs circulating the region has been uploaded since 2007, paving the way for trans-local consumption of Tausug videos.

Trans-local Consumption

Ajing’s *Kulintangan* dance video, the wedding entertainment company promotional VCD I noted in Chapter 3, was watched on YouTube about seventy thousand times since its 2007 posting. Statistical information on YouTube shows that

apart from territories in the Philippines, the video was also watched in some parts of Saudi Arabia and Malaysia. English, Tausug, and Tagalog commentaries posted below the clips piled up during the last four years giving us some sense of meaning that viewers attached on to the videos. I translated some of the Tausug postings and partly rephrased a selection of English commentaries for clarity below:

<p>muraji60 Posted 1 year ago</p>	<p>nag enjoy ako ha dance mo biyah san di ha brighton pier united kingdom upload pa_ kamo. magsukul,,,</p>	<p>I enjoyed your dance though I'm here at the Brighton pier of the United Kingdom. Upload some more. Thank you.</p>
<p>dmanusn77306 Posted __ years ago</p>	<p>Good work...aghay...hesiupa in gumanti...magdaa sin addat sin bangsa ta mang bukun_ he otuh ini.....</p>	<p>Good work. Who else should promote (and) raise the culture of our nation but this man....</p>
<p>tawitawian Posted 4 years ago</p>	<p>hello guys,,,thats our culture dance and im proud_ still existing until now.hope our new generation should not ignore instead teach them the way how the culture applied in new society....and this is how we dance,,,keep it up bro..! im here in qatar..salaam duwaa kaniyo katan.</p>	<p>Hello guys. That's our (cultural dance and I'm proud that it is still existing). I hope our generation will not ignore (it but help teach others instead about its cultural value in our changing society). This is how we dance. Keep it up brother! I'm here in Qatar. God bless to all of you.</p>
<p>danstioyo Posted 4 years ago</p>	<p>thanks for the positive comments. i upload these videos 2 ol my moslem and non moslem brothers and sisters. njoy!_</p>	<p>Thanks for the positive comments. I uploaded these videos for all my Muslim and non Muslim brothers and sisters. Enjoy!</p>
<p>msmindpower71 Posted 3 years ago</p>	<p>Excellent. Is this a Badjao dance? very nice. If it is Bedoin people should be very proud of their heritage. Post some more_ and give us a briefing of your cultural background and what language do you speak? or closest to -dialect? Thanks for sharing.</p>	<p>Excellent. Is this a Badjao dance? Very nice. If it is, (Badjao) people should be very proud of their heritage. Post some more and give us a briefing of your cultural background (and language you speak or closest dialect.) Thanks for sharing.</p>

As shown by the YouTube postings above, the videos that started life as commodified VCDs around the bazaars and streets of Zamboanga and Sulu are reaching the Tausug labour diaspora in the Middle East and beyond through the internet. On their new materiality, the videos offered the means on which Tausugs in the homeland and those who had gone overseas partake the same set of imaginaries as indicated by the thoughts underlying the postings. As the career of the VCDs evolves into a YouTube clip, their use value also shifts from provincially shared imaginaries to a medium on which trans-locally situated Tausugs articulate subjectivities of home, heritage, identity, and dispositions. For instance, *tawitawian*, a poster from Qatar, sees on Ajing's *pangalay* clip a resilient cultural heritage shared by communities across the littorals of Sulu and Zamboanga. Others, such as *dmanusn77306* draws out from Ajing's dance video a mode on which the Tausug cultural heritage is reproduced whilst *Danstioyo*, the poster of the clip, speaks of a cosmopolitan motivation by stating that their heritage is meant to be shared with "Muslims and non-Muslims" around the world. Indeed, Ajing's *pangalay* video is attracting viewers from outside the Tausug speaking community as suggested by *msmindpower71*, the commenter who expresses interests of knowing more about the cultural identity of the people that Ajing represents. These commentaries reveal that as the videos traverse through an inherently cosmopolitan infrastructure such as the Internet, consumers revalue them as meaningful representation of a situated cultural community predisposed towards the world.

The transformation of the use value of the VCDs from a commodity to a medium for imagining and imaging the Tausug identity did not manifest exclusively on virtual spaces but extends to other established cosmopolitan grounds. Some of the clips made it to the lecture halls of the University of Hawaii, in a way influencing the academic construction of Tausug identity, home, and people⁴⁰. One of the clips that figured in Hawaiian Philippine Studies class was the video clip of Ajing performing *Pangalay Buligah* or the "Dance of the Good Luck Charm". The clip, which has so

⁴⁰ I learned this piece of information from a Hawaii University teaching staff who visited the Ateneo de Zamboanga, the Jesuit-run university where I established base, during my fieldwork.

far attracted about 25,000 YouTube views from the Philippines, Malaysia, and Saudi Arabia, shows Ajing dancing the basic *pangalay* movement of flexion of knees and extension of hands with a red curtain drape behind the background and Persian rug for a floor (see Figure 32). The visiting Hawaii University instructor culled this particular video from YouTube as part of her collection of visual resources for the Philippine Studies class that she teaches. Similarly, another set of *pangalay* music that I heard in the streets of Zamboanga but has since then moved to YouTube attracted the attention of my former professor in the Philippines but has since gone to teach Philippine Studies in Hawaii. I learned about my professor's discovery of Tausug YouTube clips after he sent around a blast of emails asking for a background of a sound clip of *Dayang Dayang*, a popular *pangalay* music performed by Sabah-based *Tausug* wedding performer who sports the name of *Hainun*. In the email, my former professor thought of its value as a cultural resource that contrasts with the dominant narrative of the Sulu Archipelago as a violent and troubled region⁴¹.



Figure 32. Ajing Pangalay Buligah performance surfaces on YouTube after appearing on VCDs on the streets of Zamboanga.

⁴¹ Cited with permission from Federico Magdalena, a Philippine Studies lecturer at the University of Hawaii in Manoa, who sent the email loop enquiry on the *Dayang Dayang* sangbay.

The cases I illustrated above shows that the evolution of Tausug videos from VCDs to YouTube clips offers some answers to the question raised by Kyra Landzelius (2006) in her introduction to *“Native on the Net”*, an anthology of ethnographic works on indigenous and diasporic people on the internet. Landzelius asks: how do virtual networks “provide new anchors that bring about a virtual rooting (dispersed across space/time), whilst also ‘routing’ new cosmopolitanism forms?” (Ibid., 2). The case at hand may not exactly reflect deftly organized indigenous rights campaign websites that Landzelius and company documented and examined. Nevertheless, the process of identity making in Sulu and Zamboanga are being shaped by trans-locally situated social agents conscious of establishing connections to cultural roots by utilizing a cosmopolitan space like the internet. The materialisation of Tausug music and dance videos on YouTube opened the space for agents from within and beyond the shores of Sulu and Zamboanga to participate in the social construction of Tausug identity. The process of imagining and valuing of the rootedness of the Tausug as a Muslim community indigenous to the border regions of the Malaysian state of Sabah and the Southern Philippine provinces of Sulu and Zamboanga is playing out in more inclusive rather than insular terms, constructed not in isolation but also shaped by cosmopolitan agents. A broader implication of this dynamic suggests that the notions of cosmopolitanism and indigeness are not necessarily opposing but can in fact be dialectical and reciprocal. In some ways, these dynamics exemplify a critical idea of rooted cosmopolitanism as “interplay between local attachments and commitment to cosmopolitan values” (Kymlicka and Walker 2012: 1).

In Sulu and Zamboanga, the making of an indigenous society is not necessarily a local process but involves a wide-array of trans-locally located agents espousing connections to home, religion, and identity as a way of expressing and making sense of their place and position in the broader world. That interplay is apparent in the social life of the Zamboanga and Sulu videos, which in the process of their production, circulation, and consumption, are revalued from a side street commodity to a medium for sharing Tausug imaginaries within and beyond Tausug Muslim communities in the Southern Philippines.

Overlapping Cosmopolitanism

Whilst agents committed to rooted identity and cosmopolitan relations played critical roles in the imagination of the Tausug community, their interests and perspectives are not necessarily homologous. The politics animating these imaginaries are variable and tend to overlap, underscoring the variability of rooted cosmopolitanism and the limits of cosmopolitan construction of Tausug identity materialising on the videos. At the beginning of this chapter, I pointed to the conflicting perspectives of trans-locally situated viewers of the *Tokyo Town pangalay* clip I presented in Chapter 4. I realised the divergence of these cosmopolitan commitments when I tried eliciting commentaries on the videos from Ligaya Amilbangsa, the eminent *pangalay* scholar whom I also cited in Chapter 4. Amilbangsa, as I previously noted, originally comes from Manila but had married a native Tausug and lived in Sulu for three decades since the 1950s. She and her late husband, however, moved to Manila in the 1970s following the violence that struck the region. Away from Sulu, Amilbangsa, committed her career to writing, performing, teaching, publishing, and filming Sulu material art and performances. She established a performing company called the *Alun Alun Dance Circle* that commits to national and international advocacies for the recognition of the *pangalay* as an intangible heritage not only for Tausugs or the Philippines but humanity. She and her dance company established a partnership with the United Nations Education, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation (Unesco) and convened local and international training, workshops, seminars, and conferences on *pangalay*. The biggest of which is a 2007 “International Conference on the Conservation and Popularisation of Pangalay and Related Asian Dances” that brought in participants from Kuala Lumpur in Malaysia, Padjang Pandan of West Sumatra in Indonesia, and Okinawa in Japan. After her husband passed away, Amilbangsa turned part of her home in the suburb of Manila into a *pangalay* dance studio where she and her staff hold Sunday lessons on basic *pangalay* steps for children. She also propagated the *pangalay* on the internet by establishing *PangalayDance.com* website which communicated *Alun Alun’s* mission to “preserve” *pangalay*, the “living link to traditional dance cultures in the Asian region”. One thing that I noticed about Amilbangsa’s campaign and dance company, they did not feature any of the wedding performers and VCD artists in

Zamboanga and Sulu nor their moves. *Alun Alun* is based in Manila and staffed mainly by professional dancers who have little or no connections at all with the wedding and VCD performers in the slums and streets of Zamboanga and Sulu.

During fieldwork, I visited Amilbangsa at her home and dance studio in Manila to show her some of the *pangalay* videos I bought from the side streets of Zamboanga. Less than half way through the first clip, that of Ajing with his conflated *pangalay*, pop, and *Bollywood* dance moves, she immediately snapped and commented that the execution was utterly disrespectful of Muslim piety. “Look, he is swaying his hips too much. My teachers in Sulu taught me never ever to sway your hips in performing *pangalay* because that would be viewed as sexually suggestive by the audience.” I told Amilbangsa that the dancer is actually a Muslim and that the same dance movement is being performed at weddings in Tausug communities. She insisted, however, the video encapsulates what she sees as the proclivity amongst younger Tausug *pangalay* performers to deviate from the basic teachings of the elders, which is to seriously consider the piousness of the people in their community. Amilbangsa argued that whilst it is right to conflate *pangalay* with styles from other dance traditions and trends, the dancers should be very careful against appearing sensuous. Instead, Amilbangsa showed me some *pangalay* moves without the wild swinging of the hips and the sensuality. She then pointed me to a two-part film on *pangalay* that she and the *Alun Alun* dance company produced with support from the Philippine Intangible Cultural Heritage Committee and the Asia/Pacific Cultural Centre for the Unesco in 2007. The first part of the film, titled the “*Pangalay: Dance of the People*”, claims that the *pangalay* is on the verge of extinction “due to war, western acculturation, Islamic fundamentalism, and globalisation”. The film went on to argue that *pangalay*’s “best” hope of surviving is to “train competent instructors who will impart the tradition to young people”, notwithstanding the vibrancy of the performance of the dance in the slums and streets of Zamboanga and Sulu. The second part, the *Stillness in Motion*, is basically a film of the company’s 2007 performance showcasing a choreography subtly suffused with ballet, Balinese, and slow jazz movements (see Figure 33).

I obtained a DVD copy of *Stillness in Motion*, which was introduced in varying universities, and watched it together with Ajing and his teacher, Jonathan, in



Figure 33. Balletic, Jazz, and Balinese dance styles fused in a choreography mounted by Ligaya Amilbansa for her *pangalay* preservation video production titled “*Pangalay: Dance of the People/Stillness in Motion* (2007).”

their neighbourhood at the watery slum of *Barangay Mariki* in downtown Zamboanga. We decided to view and talk about the film on a wooden plank right at the very edge of the neighbourhood with a clear and expansive sight of the vastness of Basilan strait and the Sulu Sea on the horizon. A group of teenage boys who were already there fooling around with playful *pangalay* moves immediately surrounded Ajing, Jonathan and I as we sat to view the video. About ten minutes on into the documentary, the boys were already restless, arguing loudly if the dances that I am showing them were indeed *pangalay*. Jonathan hushed them and demanded that they all sit and watch. “Quiet! Be still all of you. This video must be a rendition of the *pangalay* of our *kamaasan* (forebears). Show some respect,” Jonathan said sternly. The boys kept their mouths shut, hunkered down, and bent over with eyes focused on my computer screen but after ten more minutes of viewing, they stopped watching, stood, moved away, and did their own *pangalay* moves that include struts, break dance and Michael Jackson moonwalk, as they poked fun and played tricks on each

other. I can see, however, that Jonathan and Ajing remained glued to my computer screen, concentrating hard on the video. I thought that they were studying every movement in Amilbangsa's pangalay choreography but shortly past twenty minutes of viewing, Jonathan turned to me and politely said: "*Kuya* (elder brother), I hope you won't be offended with what I am about to say. The thing is if you show this dance around here, no one will watch them. They will all fall asleep with boredom!"

On the surface, the dismissive reaction that Amilbangsa casts on the Zamboanga and Sulu videos and the equally un-appreciative attitude of Ajing, Jonathan and the Mariki teenagers on the *Alun Alun* dance video appear to be matters of disagreement on form. Beyond these surface reactions, however, is an underlying chasm on the terms of construction of the Tausug imaginaries even from amongst deeply rooted agents oriented towards the world. They suggest that whilst varying Tausug cultural agents are committed to the integration of cross-cultural influences and trans-local propagation of their dance heritage, they do not axiomatically embrace and take part in each other's imagination. For instance, Amilbangsa finds the inclusion of Bollywood and other pop dance styles as unacceptable by viewing them as an affront to Islamic morality. On that score, Amilbangsa is not keen on valuing the Bollywood-conflated *pangalay* videos sold off the sidewalks and bazaars of Zamboanga and Sulu as a lived cultural resource that she can weave into her narrative of intangible heritage of the Southern Philippines. Notwithstanding the ubiquity of the *pangalay* and music videos on the streets of Sulu and Zamboanga, nowhere were they captured in Amilbangsa's video production and website. In fact, the *Stillness in Motion* film that Amilbangsa produced asserts that the *pangalay* is a "vanishing" dance tradition that can still be saved and preserved by the able hands of the choreographers and global cultural undertaking through groups like Unesco. Shunned out from these efforts were the Zamboanga and Sulu wedding performers and video makers who actually played essential roles in the reproduction of the Tausug heritage down in the communities. Amilbangsa was unable to draft Zamboanga and Sulu's slum dwelling wedding and video performers into her cosmopolitan project of extending the life of *pangalay* on a global stage.

Meanwhile, Ajing, Jonathan, and company could not bring themselves to appreciate the balletic moves in Amilbangsa's choreography of *pangalay*. Ballet is

practically remote and inaccessible in the Muslim communities of Sulu and Zamboanga where people delight with Bollywood and pop cultural performances that flowed on the backs of pirate media. Wedding performers like Ajing and Jonathan are not seeing the use value of ballet-conflated *pangalay* video documentary that Amilbangsa produced even as she articulates its overarching purpose of bringing *pangalay* into the forefront of identity making. These dynamics suggest that the trans-localization of identity construction does not always mean that situated agents would simply and uncritically adapt the terms of each other's cosmopolitan imagination. Existing chasms in the politics, social standing, class, and economic positions of local agents can simmer even as they profess an overarching commitment to the cosmopolitan value of openness to engage with cultural practices outside their own.

The contrasting viewpoints expressed by Amilbangsa and the Zamboanga performers also relates to the reflexive but competing characterization by the film and humanities professors at the cash-strapped University of the Philippines on the value of pirate media. Underlying the film professor's anecdote of film teaching staff sourcing trans-Asian films from illicit circuits are ethical questions that test their commitment to the cosmopolitan values. In their desire to expose their students to the universality of the filmic experience, they risk taking the path of ethical ambivalence rather than be tied up by state budgetary and legal constraints. The humanities professor, on the other hand, argues that whilst the consumption of knowledge, entertainment, and technology that pirate media bring in to the country is indeed a form of cosmopolitan engagement they, could not negate the difficult circumstances of economic stagnation and unequal power relations on which piracy arise. In the streets and slums of Zamboanga and Sulu, the materiality of cosmopolitan convictions is not a straightforward affair but a rather messy and complicated process imbued with competing individual interests and moral positions. As I noted early on in this chapter, a commentator on YouTube reacted strongly against the filming of a *pangalay* performance in front of the mosque in Zamboanga on the grounds that it is offensive to Islam. In some other cases, the disagreements are rather mundane involving for instance the mutual piracy of one another's creative imagination. In other cases, they also involve agents attempting to mobilize state resources to discipline whoever they think are not playing in fair fashion the unwritten rules of media piracy. The overlapping processes of cosmopolitan imagination in Sulu and

Zamboanga offer insight that rooted cosmopolitans are not always free from political and social fragmentation at the local level. The Tausug experience reminds us that rooted cosmopolitanism, is indeed not a monolithic doctrine devoid of complications. In some ways, rooted cosmopolitanism in Sulu and Zamboanga lay bare the social and economic fissures in a society even as they illuminate the possibility of people remaining committed to the idea of attachment to home, identity, and trans-locality. Nonetheless, whilst the terms of reference of cosmopolitan imagination amongst Tausugs differ, their conviction to advance the value of inclusiveness is evident on the videos they make and in the way they express willingness to co-exist with agents with whom they may disagree.

Conclusion

This final ethnographic chapter examined the social life of Tausug videos as a frame for analysing the reach of the Tausug cosmopolitan imagination. The broad compass of that imagination is perceivable in its materiality as a mass-produced videodisc traded around and beyond Tausug enclaves in Zamboanga and Sulu. As a popular commodity, the videos are widely accessible to Tausug communities situated not only in the trading centers but further into the remote villages of the archipelago and across the Malaysian borders in Sabah, evincing the depth and breadth of its reach. In the course of circulation and consumption of the videos, a cross section of Tausug consumers regard them at once material expressions of Tausug performance heritage and meaningful responses to global cultural flows. These expressions were passionately demonstrated, for instance, by that city hall office clerk confessing a deep sense of joy each time he plays pop music in their language on his computer or that mother who goes shopping for Bollywood and Hollywood-conflated pangalay performances. These responses were also embodied by that crooning politician who picks up the *Biraddali*, the ballad that Malaysia-based Tausugs composed, as the standard song that he kept singing in campaign rallies I briefly described in the beginning of the chapter. These modes of consumption illustrate how Tausug consumers assigned culturally specific meanings on the discs as a way of experiencing global cultural flows in terms that are relevant to their experience. Inadvertently, these consumption patterns transformed the discs from commodity to objects of use value, a distinctive phase in the social life of things that mark their

metamorphosis from things to be exchanged to things reflective of the shared convictions of the society from which they emerge (cf. Kopytoff, 83).

Furthermore, the imaginaries featured on the disc did not just remain on the streets, slums, offices, or the campaign trails of Zamboanga and Sulu. Some consumers posted the videos on the World Wide Web, tapping its inherently cosmopolitan network for the twin goals of establishing the bond amongst trans-locally situated Tausugs whilst contemporaneously sharing their imaginaries with communities outside their own. On their new materiality as YouTube clips, the videos served as an instrument for cosmopolitan encounters between Tausugs and other trans-located viewers who see the images simultaneously as a particular form of cultural expression of Muslims in the Southern Philippines and a material basis for forging trans-cultural understanding. Such phenomenon characterizes the interactions of human desire for particularistic belonging and commitment to universal engagement - rooted cosmopolitanism exemplified in material practice. The experience in Zamboanga and Sulu, however, opens another view into the contingencies, and by implications the limits of rooted cosmopolitanism that I will further explain.

Whilst the shifting materiality of the videos is instrumental in expanding the reach of the Tausug cosmopolitan imagination, they also expose the underlying layers of complications of rooted forms of cosmopolitanism. As I illustrated in this chapter, global media flows and their illegitimate other, the infrastructure of media piracy played significant roles in the materiality of Tausug videos. Such dynamics brought politics right into the heart of the determination of value of pirate media by contesting agents who either limit or make possible the material expression of cosmopolitanism. Media corporations tap into the coercive authority of the state to control access to the global flow of media entertainment, technology, and knowledge, with a manifested goal of protecting intellectual property and its commercial value. Consequently, the elite restriction of media products undercut the opportunities of marginal communities to legally participate in the material experience of cosmopolitan consumerism and confines the circulation of the legitimate versions of globally circulating media products within a narrow circle of the Philippine elite. The paradox of elite-imposed restrictions on commodity circulation, as Appadurai indicated, is that they

“sometimes provide the context and targets of strategies of diversions” (Appadurai, 25). The phenomenon of media piracy showcases a diversion of media commodities from the tightly controlled zone of legal economy, which in the case of the Philippines opened up the possibility for a cross-section of consumers to participate in global consumerism. Farther down south of the country, particularly in the illicit circuit of economic exchange in the streets and slums of Zamboanga and Sulu, consumers took advantage of trans-local flow of pirate media as a strategic resource for producing and sharing imaginaries of their identity. By implication, the technology, images, and knowledge that media corporations and the state valued as intellectual properties are re-valued into meaningful material for cultural expression and cosmopolitan engagement.

Yet again, whilst piracy allows a swath of people in the margins to participate with the broader world in using media commodity productively they also betray underlying problems of the society on which pirate media arises. Moreover, whilst media piracy indeed hallmarks a rooted cosmopolitan practice and could not simply be reduced into a pathological outgrowth of global consumerism, its operations nonetheless occur in societies grappling with economic and social inequality, public infrastructure breakdown, and corruption of government institutions. Underpinning the phenomenon of media piracy in Zamboanga and Sulu is a deep-seated crisis in economics and politics. The lack of financial means as well as rupture in intellectual property protection are central to the people’s decision of accessing and participating in the global consumption of media, knowledge, and entertainment through pirate media. Without adequate financial means and with a consumer market of largely impoverished community, Tausug video makers rely on pirate media to produce and share cosmopolitan imaginaries. These dynamics remind us of the significance of power relations in shaping the kind of cosmopolitanism a locality would and could experience. Moreover, Tausugs separated by class, social standing, and moral positions do not necessarily and uncritically adapt each other’s cosmopolitan imagination. Instead, they bare that the material experience of rooted cosmopolitanism overlaps and makes the social and economic divide discernable, ethical issues evident, and moral differences glaring. The Tausug experience underscores that in the practice of rooted cosmopolitanism, pre-existing conditions of

inequality, political corruption, and economic stagnation are simply not cast aside on the basis of commitment to the ideals of universality.

Adversities notwithstanding, it still is remarkable to think that in the making of Tausug imaginaries, the commitment of Tausug video makers and consumers to universal engagement were unwavering. On this end, I would say that the materiality of the cosmopolitan imagination in Zamboanga and Sulu attest to the depth of the Tausug commitment to universal values. Even as the terms of their cosmopolitan imagination clash, they continue to work out ways of expressing a sense of belonging whilst reaching out to collectivities beyond their own.

Conclusion

Identity as a Cosmopolitan Trajectory

At the video compact disc alley of the Zambaonga market in the early weeks of my fieldwork, I came across a bright white and yellow poster announcing a “Concert and *Pangalay* for Peace” of “All Bangsamoro Artists” crudely taped on a wall. On it were the pictures and names of performers whom I recognized from the VCD covers. I continued reading in search of date and venue but found instead this tentative information: “Watch for this concert. Venue and date will be announced later, Insha-Allah (God willing).”

Fortunately, the bill was posted right next to a stall brimming with VCDs featuring songs and dances from a variety of Sulu and Zamboanga languages as well as pirated copies of Malaysian, Indonesian, Bollywood and Hollywood music videos. I approached the man selling them and enquired if he knew something about the concert. With warm smiles, he identified himself as Sonny Boy Sakilin whilst pointing to his name on the poster. “My cousin and I are actually producing this concert,” Sonny Boy, the man many endearingly called as “Eting the VCD producer” and whom I would extensively engaged with in my fieldwork (*see* Introduction, Chapter 3, 5 and 6), told me. I asked Eting why the date and venue of the show were left out to God’s will. Eting chuckled as he recounted the story behind the inception of the concert, “We have been dreaming to produce this concert for a year now but we have not raised enough resources to rent out a venue, sound systems, lights, equipment, and all the works. The artists have already given us their commitment to perform without fees but we still are short of cash. We were hoping that if we print a poster announcing the event and actually put it out, Allah might just provide us our needed resources. Right now, we are thinking of collecting at least a peso from anyone interested in supporting this concert.”

The strategy of collecting a peso for the concert failed from lack of contributors but the spectacle that Eting and his partners dreamt did push through and was in fact watched by nearly 10,000 people on the open grounds of Paseo del Mar, a

waterfront park overlooking the tempestuous seas of the Sulu archipelago beyond. It was held in time for the celebration of the Amun Jadid, the Tausug vernacular term for Islamic New Year, of Hijra 1431 (2010). The concert, however, evolved from an exclusive performance of “All Bangsamoro Artists” to an interfaith event of “Local Zambasulta (Zamboanga-Sulu-Tawit-Tawi) Artists” funded by a United Nations multi-donor agency for the Mindanao peace process. It also attracted an Italian priest running an inter-religious dialogue movement based in Zamboanga to serve as organizing partner of the event. On the night of the concert, Christian Chabacano and indigenous Subanu performers also joined turning the show into a spectacular cosmopolitan gathering. In between performances, representatives of non-government organisations, envoys for some political parties, and peace advocates delivered short speeches explicating the desire for peace in Mindanao. Not to be outdone, the Chabacano mayor of Zamboanga also graced the event speaking about peace before singing a duet with a Tausug performer of a Tagalog love song. Soon after the speech and the singing, however, the mayor took advantage of the gathering to campaign and introduce his slate for the upcoming city election. When the mayor spoke, the organisers held their peace and stepped aside but as soon as he finished, they thanked him, and cutting to the chase, immediately introduced the next Tausug dancer who rendered a *pangalay* rendition combining Michael Jackson’s struts and moonwalk. With the array of Tausug VCD performers offering a number or two, almost as if the animated figures on the music video discs circulating in the market, sprung to life before a sea of spectators. They carried on with Yakan, Sama, and Chabacano performances and speeches until the show’s curtain call at midnight.

What changed the terms of the concert and compelled Eting and other video makers to subvert, at least on the surface of it, the notion of the Bangsamoro and relegate Tausug performers to one amongst many is a measure that reveals their pluralist, non-essentialist construct of identity. It shows that their sense of belonging, loyalty, and allegiances to one true identity need not necessarily precondition a neat and orderly imagination of Tausug Muslim collectivity. I offer this contention because they had on their hands a rare opportunity of triumphantly portraying Tausug and Bangsamoro identity before a broad platform but refused to simply do just that. Understanding what pulled them back can be better appreciated by considering the events behind the concert. I had joined the organisers in negotiating with multiple

agents in addressing the demands for holding the event in terms of funding and technical needs such as venue, sound system, audience, and performers. Through my contacts, I initially helped arranged a meeting with a field officer of a United Nations administered *Act for Peace* development project for Muslim communities affected by the secessionist wars but Eting and company themselves followed up the process and secured a deal for funding of their concert. The officer of the UN programme turned out to be a Tausug who himself is an avid collector of locally produced VCDs. Soon after, they began seeking permits for the concert through their own contacts at city hall. Amongst the first person they had approached is a Tausug executive aide of the mayor. The aide made a name for himself in the 1970s as leader and peace negotiator of a local arm of the secessionist movement but had since then agreed to stop fighting and advocate for Muslim interests whilst working in government. The aide lauded the efforts of the group and assured that he would take their request for venue to the mayor. Before letting go of the group, however, he demanded that they stop referencing the concert as an “All Bangsamoro” affair and commented against the words, “Tausug Republic”, on the poster. Eting and his group tried to explain that they were using the notion of the Bangsamoro to communicate the patriotic spirit of the event, whilst Tausug Republic is actually a “hip-hop” Tausug wedding music band.

The aide reminded Eting and company of an incident only a year earlier when the mayor spearheaded an emotionally charged campaign against a proposed peace agreement with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, one of the secessionist group in Mindanao. The agreement would establish an autonomous Bangsamoro administrative government encompassing Muslim dominated territories including parts of downtown Zamboanga. For the aide, bringing up the notion of Bangsamoro or a “Tausug Republic” is politically tenuous at that moment with the bitter and highly charged memories of the protest that had just passed behind and was still fresh on people’s minds. Eting and his colleagues were in the position to end negotiations with city hall and hold the event elsewhere since they already secured the UN programme’s funding commitment. Instead, they acceded to the demands of dropping references to Bangsamoro and Tausug Republic. Eting told me rather ambiguously that the moment requires them to balance their assertion of identity by thinking of the greater good of their community as Tausug and as Muslims sharing Zamboanga and

Sulu with other political constituents. He insists that dropping the Bangsamoro or Tausug references, at least in the poster, does not mean that they are undermining their adherence to these collectivities. What he meant by what he said I could only follow by what he and his company did next.

They proceeded on revising the poster, by dropping references to Bangsamoro and the Tausug Republic. Instead of deploying categories of ethnicity, they produced new posters identifying the participating performers as “Local ZamBaSulta Artists” in reference to the provinces comprising the region - Zamboanga, Basilan, Sulu and Tawi-tawi from which the performers Muslims, Christians, Tausug, Sama, Yakan, Subanu, and Chabacano would come. As they did these changes, they went on expanding the participation of the concert by inviting more VCD artists, peace advocacy groups and inter-religious institutions in Zamboanga and Sulu. On the night of the concert, Eting took the microphones as master of ceremonies, introduced himself as a Tausug and Bangsamoro whilst repeatedly hailing the event as a testimony to the possibility for the Christians, Muslims, Subanu, Chabacano, Sama, Yakan, and Tausug constituents of Zamboanga and Sulu to collectively celebrate an Islamic New Year with prayers for peace in Mindanao. Indeed, the program started with ecumenical prayers with a highly respected religious sheik from a local mosque delivering a prayer in Arabic, the Italian Catholic priest in English, and a local Subanu leader in their language. Each prayer was ambiguous to most having been said in a language that they do not share but felt in ways that through them they were connected as evinced by their respectful silence as they were delivered. On many occasions during the concert, Eting beamed with pride in emphasizing the deep emotional pleasure he feels whilst listening to their own songs in their own language and watching their own Tausug heritage whilst praising the performances of other cultural constituents of Zamboanga and Sulu. Speakers and performers delivered the concert in a variety of languages, including that of Tausug, Sama, Yakan, Chabacano, Tagalog, and English, making it a culturally and politically inclusive show. The evolution of the concert from an exclusivist Bangsamoro and Tausug affair to an interfaith spectacle anchored on an Islamic event exemplifies the processes on which cosmopolitan values are woven into the Tausug imagination of community.

I stated in the introductory chapter that this thesis aims to examine the processes on which rooted forms of cosmopolitanism implicate the social construction of Tausug community. Events behind the *Concert and Pangalay for Peace* highlighted the many episodes in which Tausug music video makers, sellers, and consumers crafted a rooted cosmopolitan imagination of their community in the sense that they were not solely envisioned in accordance to the politics of belonging or tied up to the intractable demands of identity politics (Rapport 2012, Turton 2002, Clifford 2000). The Tausug and the Bangsamoro community that they imagine are not reducible to singular or two neatly defined categories of identity in such a way that negotiations regarding when to and when not to deploy them would no longer be possible in any other circumstances. Their refusal to be bound by the politics of identity does not mean abandoning the terms of the Tausug belonging to the Bangsamoro. On the contrary, they would regularly articulate the notion of being Tausug as well as their affiliation to a Bangsamoro collectivity in the videos that they produce but not all and at all times. In the case of organizing the concert, Eting and company however prefer to exercise their strategic identities through the productive terms of ambiguity. Ambiguity provided them a platform for staging and mediating performances that delineate themselves from other collectivities in Zamboanga and Sulu in ways that do not alienate but offer an articulation of difference as basis for making connections.

The ambiguity with the way Eting and his colleagues mobilise and at times demobilise their strategic identities can be appreciated by following the dialogue carried out by Vered Amit and Nigel Rapport (2012) in locating cosmopolitan aspirations from tensions arising between the public construction and academic analysis of community. Amit proposes ambiguity as an “analytical resource” for thinking about the “overlaps” in the imagination of community (Amit 2012: 3-2). She builds this argument by pointing to the proliferation of the notion of community in public discourse that in turn leads to the production of multiple conceptualisations of it. For Amit, the diversity of conceptualisations indicate that “community...is just such a ‘titular’ concept, and in investigating it we can productively draw on concepts that are general enough that they can encompass a wide range of situations and are therefore concomitantly- and productively - ambiguous. At the same time, since these terms are all being used as attributes of common ground of community, we should not

be surprised by overlaps between them; indeed, it is these interrelations that allow us to work and rework a variety of combination and distinctions as we examine different cases” (Ibid., 5). Amit suggests “a more effective model of community must therefore focus on the uncertainties arising in the intersection between the idea and actualization of sociation” (Ibid., 6). Amit locates this intersection under conditions of disjuncture, in a sense that the term is understood as the “ways in which people effect or respond to breaks or interruptions in their social involvements” under quotidian circumstances (Ibid., 33). In this context, community and disjuncture can be viewed as “paired concepts” that deal with “complementary processes of social mobilisation and demobilisation” (Ibid., 29). These encounters with the disjunction of the everyday in many ways temper the tension between the idea of collectivity and its actualization, revealing that identity categories are not necessarily sustainable and cannot be regarded as finalities, and therefore inherently uncertain. “Community in all its proliferating invocations is not a cover for more crucial aspects of sociality. Rather it speaks to the relentless uncertainties entailed in many different forms of plural subjecthood,” Amit argues (Ibid., 13). Precisely because of the disjunction in the quotidian flow of everyday life, people strive to balance their sense of obligation, loyalty, role, and allegiance to collective relationships, institutions, and places, acts that constitute cosmopolitan aspirations. As Amit states, “in and of itself disjuncture can be a useful paradigm for thinking about the desires, possibilities, and practices through which people seek to modulate or rework their social relationships” (Ibid., 43). Amit argues, in such case, “cosmopolitan aspirations may be more achievable through mundane, everyday efforts both to mobilize and seek release from social relations and obligations” (Ibid., 66)

Nigel Rapport, like Amit, attests to the value of ambiguity in understanding the concept of community as he reinterprets and echoes earlier arguments not to take “specific classification seriously” and “freeze people in their categories” (Gellner 1993: 3-4 in Rapport, 79). Rapport makes a case for “overcoming category thinking” in social analyses as he argues that community along with categories of “culture... nation, religion, class, gender, and ethnicity are particular contexts in which people live their humanity – but they do not amount to the human essence. Concepts like those above, and also institution, structure, history, habitus of course afford senses of order and control, and even mastery and authorship, in relation to a world in flux but

they nevertheless represent the illusions of language” (Rapport, 81). In the context of the everyday, Rapport contends that these “conceptual orders do not represent inherent orderliness in the world: they are forms of wishful thinking erected against the exigencies of life” stressing that they are mere “instrumentalities rather than finalities” in accounting for what makes a community in a manner that leaves analysts constructing “enduring notions in the face of finitude, and we posit stability in the face of flux” (Ibid.). Rapport, however, ventured to push his critique against community by altogether dismissing its relevance as human taxonomy beyond the purpose of academic analysis. He points out that it is with reason that anthropological analyses thinks of categories of collectivities as imagined community being rhetorical devices that they are and no more than that. As Rapport states, “*I explore its usage but I do not investigate community as a type of human association. ... I do not find ‘community’ adding to either my analytical or my moral armoury,*” (Ibid., 211, emphasis in the original). On this point, Amit, disagrees warning that categories of collectivity in locating cosmopolitan values could not simply be dismissed as “mere delusion” and “forms of wishful thinking” because “individual consciousness is not passive through the world” (Amit 2012: 203). Amit argues that it is in fact through the creative efforts of individuals in the public sphere that categories of culture and the social are produced (Ibid.). Setting aside categories when the public are actually embracing it is problematic as it “also risks underestimating the effort and uncertainties involved in making, interpreting, and mobilizing social categories as well as understanding the panoply of social activity that is not being driven by the most generalized of these classifications of ‘race, tribe, ethnies, nation, religious congregation” (Ibid.).

As I noted earlier, the experience of Tausug music video makers in Zamboanga and Sulu reflects and contrasts with the discussion that Amit and Rapport initiated about the analytical value of community and its flip side - disjunction and ambiguities. Eting and company take a fluid position in expressing their identity and imagining community as their way of dealing with the banality of disjuncture in their midst. In everyday life, they share the spaces of Zamboanga and Sulu with several other linguistic, cultural, and faith collectivities but at the same time pulled by forces promoting strategic expressions of identities. Amidst these competing demands, they learn how to balance their obligation, loyalty, role, and allegiance to the Bangsamoro

and Tausug strategic identities with their responsibility to connect with other communities in the region. In several circumstances, as what they did at the concert, they would also deploy their identity being a Muslim and Filipino especially when dealing with religious and state agents. In this sense, the way they conduct themselves and imagine their community cannot be frozen into one or two identity categories - that of the Tausug or the Bangsamoro. They work out their identity in accordance with the circumstances of everyday life.

On the surface, the plasticity of the way Eting and company deploy strategic identities appear to reflect Rapport's argument of the futility of reading through categories in locating and understanding the workings of cosmopolitanism. After all, Eting and company could have chosen to assert and project their identities in engagements with United Nations representatives in their place. They also could have deployed the VCDs as a medium for propagating patriotic imageries of Bangsamoro and narrow imagination of Tausug consciousness. They could have abandoned their obligation to these abstract collectivities but stopped short of it. What they did was self-consciously deploy the language of ambiguity aware that it is one possible strategy to participate in the making of their own community as well as provide them a platform for engagement with the Other in their midst. At least for Eting and company, such approach proved right in their experience at the concert. By highlighting their difference as Tausug, Yakan, Subanu, Chabacano, and Sama through dances and music at the concert as well as the videos they produce, they were able to portray the value of diversity as well as the joy of collectively coming to terms with disjunction. Opening up their identities to negotiation, however, does not mean an abandonment of their obligations, allegiance, and loyalty to the strategic identity discourse of the Tausug and the Bangsamoro. Rather, they merely tweaked and readjusted the terms and timing of mobilisation of identity once they realised that dogmatically insisting on their deployment could have potentially undermined the possibility of them making broader connections. In the process of achieving those connections, however, they immediately redeployed their strategic identity as basis for inter-cultural and inter-community exchanges. Through such strategy, Eting and his fellow producers were able to hold on firmly to their own bounded and defined imagination of community in ways that did not make them less cosmopolitan. The attitude shown by Eting and company cannot be reduced into a product of

circumstances of living as minorities but one that can be characterized as a deeply rooted and long running practice.

This thesis makes a case that the cosmopolitanism of Zamboanga and Sulu is a continuing phenomenon and not a mere consequence of disjunction brought about by the currents of globalisation. I contend that cosmopolitanism is a transformative feature of the region traceable to varying stages of its history. The social constitution of Zamboanga and Sulu that had been forged through historical contingencies predating the coming of Islam as a translocally connected realm within a sprawling maritime emporium that extends from the Arabian Peninsula to the Western Pacific. Islam, colonialism, and postcolonial construction expanded the diversity of that constitution in ways that simultaneously brought together and differentiated the communities under its sway. These historical events, however, have been interpreted in contrasting ways as episodes of an enduring anti-colonial Muslim resistance that eventually gave birth to a Moro nation that share the Philippines with the Filipino nation. The other side of the academic divide argues against viewing these episodic struggles solely as acts of resistance on the strength of archival evidence of agreements on trading and slave raiding with one group of colonial agents against another to meet the demands of wider mercantilist economy and the geo-politics of colonialism. Whilst contrasting, both perspectives imply a cosmopolitan reading of Zamboanga and Sulu history that in turn set the stage for competing expressions of cosmopolitan community in the public sphere.

The imaginaries featured on music videos emerging and proliferating across the streets of Zamboanga and Sulu provides a view of the Tausug community as provincial state constituents attuned to the world as Chapter 2 illustrates. These imaginaries show how local creative agents tapped into the broad structure of global electronic capitalism to produce and circulate imageries that imagine the broad contours of the Tausug community. Amidst sharply divisive politics of Muslim identity formation in the Philippines, however, the production and circulation of these imaginaries exposed the contested terrain of music video discs production in Tausug communities. A significant issue driving such contestation is the tendency of some video makers to manipulate cosmopolitan images and tools of electronic mediation to promote violent and brutal response to perceived state-sponsored assaults on Muslim

religious freedom and nationalism as well as imagine a connection between local political struggles to global jihadist campaigns. Inevitably, these acts undermine the cosmopolitan ideals of peace, justice, and universal human morality and reveals a disturbing side of situated cosmopolitanism. Whilst translocal flow of media opens up a productive cultural field for cosmopolitan frames of thinking about belonging, they can also be used by agents to either buttress violent home-grown ethno-religious struggles or comment on inequality in their midst. They show the disjuncture of local response to global cultural flows and lay bare the tensions arising from discrepant cosmopolitan practices particularly when the agents deploying them do so for violent political ends.

The cultural politics of representation, however, is just one area of cosmopolitan expressions portrayed on Tausug music videos. As discussed in Chapter 3, whilst music video production is a new experience, the rationale of its existence and the cultural processes that underpin it are not. Music videos are recent episodes of a long running musical recording enterprise that date back to phonographic productions of heritage musical pieces. These productions exemplify the many layers of cultural conflation defining Tausug cultural performances. These can be observed in the process of mediation itself and the cosmopolitan content of heritage musical materials being mediated. The old musical pieces that people celebrate as distinctive of Tausug culture are themselves an amalgam of performance and literary traditions that includes vernacular versions of Arabic exegesis of the Koran and other shared Southeast Asian musical practices. In recent decades, the practice of musical conflation broadened to include not just the repertoire inspired by Islamic narrative traditions. Tausug video producers began to integrate cultural imaginaries circulated by the global flow of popular performances from Hollywood to Bollywood. Whilst enabled by globalising cultural forms and media, the enduring practice of electronically mediating performances is intricately woven into the Tausug ritual and social conventions surrounding marriage, bride wealth, and the holding of spectacular cultural performances in wedding celebrations. This illustrates the enduring and rooted characteristics of the cosmopolitanism of Tausug imaginaries as they are being shared and experienced socially and in bodily ways.

The embodied practice of cosmopolitanism, as illustrated in Chapter 4, can be located within the *habitus* of trans-local relations that engendered generations of kindred, trading, and artistic connections of communities on both sides of the Philippine and Malaysian borders. Although the post-colonial geopolitical reality of Southeast Asia reconfigured the social and economic ties of the region, the old practice of melding, remaking, and vernacularisation of trans-local performances actually endured. One enduring practice of cultural conflation captured on many VCDs comes in the form of dances and music in the Tausug performance heritage of *pangalay*, *sangbay* and *kulintangan*. VCDs featuring *pangalay*, *sangbay*, and *kulintangan* integrated with Bollywood and Hollywood imaginaries are circulated into the community. As a testament to their popularity, many Tausug copy and perform these culturally conflated performances in the private confines of their home and in the social arena of weddings and religious festivities. With the reverence that Tausugs regard *pangalay*, *sangbayan*, and *kulintangan* performances in their culturally conflated forms, I contend that translocality is intricately woven into the fabric of Tausug sociality therefore rendering local community gatherings a bodily-animated cosmopolitan affair.

The production and mode of integration of cosmopolitan worldview projected on Tausug music videos can be further examined around difficult circumstances surrounding the creative practice of their creators whilst living under conditions of violence and economic hardship. Chapter 5 lays down a critical perspective of cultural improvisation as an analytical ground for understanding rooted cosmopolitanism in a locality torn by strife and economic woes. VCD productions are akin to a small cottage industry laboured by agents who live ordinary lives as flea market sellers, rickshaw drivers, wedding performers, or small internet shop owners in a creative engagement that can be described as improvisational. Notwithstanding the limitations of their resources and troubles in their midst, Tausug video makers write music and film videos with themes that resonate with the cosmopolitan dictums of casting away hatred and spite, human responsibility towards the other, or upholding the oneness of humanity amid diversities of faith and sense of social belonging. I argue that the indeterminate character of VCD production reveals the productive capacity of cultural improvisation in reproducing cosmopolitan dispositions in a local social world. The fluid, indeterminate flow of everyday and

quotidian life provide a lens in viewing a process of identity construction that does not stray from the cosmopolitan vision of ethical engagement of self and other as well as reveal plebeians responding to unequal power relations and issues of social justice. On such a level, we can see a broad range of actors who do not necessarily lead patriotic movements and pursue a heroic place in history. The case in Zamboanga and Sulu offers a contrast from views that examine rooted cosmopolitanism through the life stories of globally thinking local martyrs, heroes, revolutionaries, or activists. Ordinary people who creatively imagine a society under the terms of justice, peace, and universal human ethical responsibilities whilst carrying on with their lives as marginal creators of improvised forms of small media like the VCDs are doing precisely what is expected of rooted cosmopolitans.

The indeterminacy of the VCD production process discussed above, however, also exposed the underlying layers of complications of rooted forms of cosmopolitanism. Chapter 6 shows that global media flows and their illegitimate other, the infrastructure of media piracy, has played significant roles in the materiality of Tausug videos. By pirating each other's work and tapping into the global network of pirate infrastructure, local VCD makers were able to boost circulation and share a cosmopolitan vision of a Tausug social world. These dynamics reveal the productive role of piracy in opening up the experience of global consumerism to marginal communities who would be otherwise left out of any chance of partaking in both production and consumption of cosmopolitan imaginaries. I contend that the productive value of piracy showcases an exemplar of rooted form of cosmopolitan practice in the sense that they open up opportunities for marginally situated agents to take part in the productive process of global cultural production and consumption. Nonetheless, whilst piracy opened up the ground experiencing other cultural imaginaries, they also exposed the social malaise of the condition of the communities on which it arises. They throw into sharp relief bigger societal issues such as economic inequality, normalisation of public infrastructure breakdown, entrenched political corruption, large scale theft of public resources, and so on. Amidst these problems, it still is salient to point out the unwavering commitment of Tausug video makers and consumers to universal engagement as evinced by the cosmopolitanism of the imaginaries they produce. The materiality of Tausug cosmopolitan imagination in the form of music video compact discs attests to the depth of the Tausug engagement

with universal values as they continue to work out ways of expressing a sense of belonging whilst reaching out to communities beyond their own.

This thesis underscores the cosmopolitan dimensions of the cultural production of the Tausug social world by its subaltern constituents. Older and recent episodes of global processes have profound implications on the modes of Tausug imagination of society. To begin with, the state's and rebel's contending visions of integrating Tausug society into their respective imagined communities are very much inspired by ideas of political belonging springing from the Middle Eastern brand of modern nationalism. They suggest ideas of national collectivity attuned to the world in a manner that is reflective of rooted cosmopolitanism. These ideas percolated the masses but as shown on the popular music videos circulating around the flea markets, the streets, and Tausug homes in the slums of Sulu and Zamboanga, they were received and re-imagined in critical ways. VCD makers produce and circulate imaginaries of the Tausug social world that offer further insights into the dynamics of rooted cosmopolitanism.

In Tausug communities, rooted cosmopolitanism does not mean a singular experience but a phenomenon that can be regarded as distinctively multifaceted. Rooted cosmopolitans can bring in a range of cultural ideas of belonging from other parts of the world in a manner that compete and complement. Once the cosmopolitan experience takes local forms through imaginative ways, which in this particular case are communicated through the videos, they can become complex and contested even as they are also unifying. As the cosmopolitan imagination touches ground they bring in competing and complementing ideas of social belonging that ushers in dynamic ways of thinking about the relationship of self and other that implicates the formation of the Tausug collective identity. Agents critical of the state are able to deploy images of violent jihadist struggles from other parts of the world as a way of imaging their resistance to local realities of inequality. Productively, the cosmopolitan imagination can also become a creative resource in cultivating an intimately grounded sociality especially when it is collectively embodied as in the case of spectacular dancing and musical performances in weddings events. Furthermore, cosmopolitan imagination offers local constituents a medium on which to deal with the difficulty of living under conditions of secessionist war as well as expressing their vision of peace and justice.

When these dynamics are analysed in relation to older experiences of cosmopolitanism in Sulu and Zamboanga, we can appreciate that the current cosmopolitan experience constitutes both a continuity and departure from past forms of trans-local connections. Whilst episodes of openness, flexibility, and cultural integration continued amid significant junctures of the region's cosmopolitan history, they also usher in a transformation of ideas of self and other, sociality, as well as identity. Local terms of cosmopolitan imagination render the notion of being Tausug and a Bangsamoro a trajectory rather than an inflexible, ossified, and unchanging fact of being.

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Glossary

Bangsamoro – self-ascription denoting Muslim nationalist identity in the Southern Philippines; *bangsa* is rooted from a Malay word connoting a ‘nation’ whilst *Moro* is an ascription that generally refers to the Muslim communities of Mindanao

baat – old forms of ballads with themes revolving expressions of love, sadness, and longing; usually performed at weddings

badju lapi – silken shirt worn together with a *sawwal kantiyu* (loose trousers)

baran – human bodies and things; in some usage, it also refers to self

jasad – indigenised Arabic term for body; Tausug usage associates the term for the fate of carnal body in the event of death and the separation of the soul

nyawa – term for soul that the Tausug shared with Malay communities; can also be contrasted with *jin*, a term the Tausug also shared with other communities in Sulu and Malay enclaves

ka – term of endearment for elder members of the community

kalangan – overarching term encompassing all sung musical performances (e.g. *baat*, *lugu*, and *sangbay*)

kissa – narratives of prophetic life, martyrdom, history, and historical fictions mediated through oral, musical, and written forms; the term vernacularises Arabic hagiographic stories encapsulated in the *Qisa Al-Anbiya*

kulintangan – word interchangeably used in reference to a set of differently sized gongs laid in a row as well as a genre for *pangalay* performances accompanied by bright and rhythmic instrumental music

kurah sambalani – mythical winged horse that Prophet Muhammad rode when he ascended to the heavens; also referred as *burrak* (bouraq).

luguh – ballads in high octave notes and falsetto voices performed generally by women

Moro – ascription for Muslim communities in Mindanao; originally seen by Mindanao Muslims as pejorative Spanish colonial term until nationalist movements in the 1970s appropriated it as a self-ascribed national identity for Muslims in the Philippines

MNLF – Moro National Liberation Front

MILF – Moro Islamic Liberation Front

pangalay – a heritage dance characterised by flexion of legs, extension of arms, and flickering of fingers shared widely by Muslim communities across the Sulu archipelago, the Zamboanga peninsula, and coastal regions of Sabah in Malaysia

pangalayan – a repertoire of *pangalay* movements

pangalayan kulintangan – a repertoire of *pangalay* performances accompanied by bright and fast beat instrumental tunes

pangalayan sangbayan- a repertoire of *pangalay* performances rendered with comedic songs (*sangbay*) as accompaniment.

sangbay - fast beat comedic song accompaniment to the *pangalay*

sangbayan – a repertoire of *sangbay* music

sawwal kantiyu – loose silken trouser usually worn with badju lapi (silken shirt); people use the trouser at weddings, special occasions, or in performing the *pangalay*