

article

The genesis of touristic imagery

Politics and poetics in the creation of a remote Indonesian island destination¹

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abstract Although the construction and amplification of touristically-celebrated peoples' Otherness on global mediascapes has been well documented, the genesis of touristic imagery in out of the way locales, where tourism is embryonic at best, has yet to be examined. This article explores the emergent construction of touristic imagery on the small, sporadically visited Eastern Indonesian island of Alor during the 1990s. In examining the ways in which competing images of Alorese people are sculpted by both insiders and outsiders, this article illustrates the politics and power dynamics embedded in the genesis of touristic imagery. Ultimately, I argue that even in remote locales where tourism is barely incipient, ideas and fantasies about tourism can color local politics, flavor discussions of identity and channel local actions.

keywords *Alor anthropologists and tourism Indonesia politics of tourism touristic imagery*

Numerous studies have chronicled the ways in which tourism projects have created exoticized, appealing, or sexualized images of ethnic Others (cf. Aitchison, 2001; Albers and James, 1983; Cohen, 1993, 1995, 1999; Dann, 1996; Deutschlander, 2003; Enloe, 1989; Selwyn, 1993, 1996). Such representations and images form the cornerstone of the cultural tourism industry. Disseminated via travel brochures, web pages, postcards, televised travel programs, and guide books, these print and photographic images construct 'mythic' Others for touristic consumption (Selwyn, 1996). Projected on global mediascapes, these touristic images are prone to glamorizing reified Others, nourishing viewers' 'desire[s] for acquisition and movement' (Appadurai, 1990: 299, also see Clifford, 1997 and Jenkins, 2003). Likewise, travelers' verbal descriptions also circulate, further inspiring prospective tourists' itineraries and channeling subsequent tourists' gazes (McGregor, 2000). In essence, the verbal narratives and visual images become prior texts for prospective tourists, motivating interest in



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particular destinations and shaping conceptions of distant peoples long before they are directly encountered.

Not only do these verbal, textual, and photographic representations shape outsiders' images and expectations, but they also have ramifications for the ways inhabitants of celebrated touristic destinations conceptualize themselves. For instance, in the case of the much-visited San'dan Toraja on the island of Sulawesi (Indonesia), guidebooks, travel brochures, and travel agents' descriptions have collapsed the imagery of the Toraja people into several sensational categories. The 'elaborate funerals,' 'distinctive architecture,' and 'haunting graves' of the Toraja are all fore-grounded, while their Christian faith, hierarchical social organization, and orientations towards the land tend to be obscured. These outsider representations of Torajas' Otherness have been digested, negotiated, and rearticulated by today's touristically-enculturated Toraja (Adams, 1991, 1997; Volkman, 1990; Yamashita, 2003). Likewise, as Vickers (1989) and Picard (1992, 1995, 1997) have ably illustrated for Bali, shifting tourist-oriented images and representations have been incorporated into Balinese conceptions of themselves, both in the past and in the present.² As I have argued elsewhere, we should think of travel writings as 'brokerings in ethnicity' and recognize the ramifications of brochures and travel advertisements on the self-conceptions of visited peoples. In short, the images circulated in guidebooks and brochures are more than simple ethnic markers: they offer a mental grid through which tourists filter their experiences while abroad and can serve as the basis for tourists'³ reconceptualization of their own identities, rituals and local landscapes (Adams, 1984, 1993).⁴

Although the construction and amplification of touristically-celebrated peoples' Otherness on global mediascapes has been well documented, the genesis of touristic imagery in out of the way places (where tourism remains more of a fantasy than a reality) has yet to be examined. What can be said of these nascent processes in little-known places whose images rarely surface on global mediascapes? Typically, anthropological analyses of tourism focus on established touristic destinations, rather than on locales where tourism is an embryonic phenomenon. Examining such fringe destinations can yield insights into the larger processes entailed in touristic development and globalization. This article explores the emergent construction of touristic imagery on a small Eastern Indonesian island known as Alor (see Figure 1). This island was only sporadically visited during the 1990s, in an era of Indonesian tourism optimism prior to the tourism slump prompted by the tragic 2002 Bali bombing and the 2003–04 Asian SARs outbreaks. The images highlighted in this article are primarily verbal or textual, as opposed to photographic images.⁵ In examining the ways in which competing images of Alorese people are crafted by *both* insiders and outsiders, this article illustrates the politics and power dynamics embedded in the genesis of touristic imagery.

As Morgan and Pritchard (1998) underscored, it is only in the past few years that scholars have begun to appreciate the centrality of power (and discourses



FIGURE 1. *Caption to follow*

concerning domination and subordination) to tourism research (also see Hollinshead, 1999; Picard and Wood, 1997). Cheong and Miller (2000) advocate a Foucaultian analysis of power dynamics in tourism, stressing a conception of power as something that flows in multiple directions and is intricately entwined with other knowledge. As Foucault underscored, the 'exercise of power perpetually creates knowledge and, conversely, knowledge constantly induces effects of power' (Foucault, 1980: 52).⁶ Analyses of touristic representations of Otherness, then, necessitate an appreciation of the power relations underpinning them. Likewise, as this article aims to demonstrate, issues of power and politics are also central to the process whereby touristic images are first forged. Even in remote locales where tourism is barely existent, ideas and fantasies about tourism can color local politics, flavor discussions of identity, and channel local actions.

Alor, a small mountainous island in the Indonesian province of Nusa Tenggara Timur, is the setting for my exploration of these issues. The findings in this article are based on a series of research visits to Alor (in 1989, 1993, 1996, and 1998) and interviews with Indonesian travel agents in Jakarta, Den Pasar (Bali) and Kupang (East Timor). I also draw upon tourist brochures, guide books, travel web pages, and personal blogs.⁷ My stays on Alor in the 1990s coincided with a period in which international tourism was increasingly touted as an economic panacea in Eastern Indonesia and domestic tourism was being hailed as a tool for Indonesian nation-building.⁸ While tourism to the island was rare (if not invisible) on my first visit to the island in the 1980s, by the mid-1990s the residents of Alor were actively producing a variety of competing images of themselves and their island, with the hope of attracting foreign visitors, capital,

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and touristic celebrity. Although tourist visits to the island had grown to 220 in 1994 (Kantor Statistik, 1994), even as late as 1998 tourism was still in its infancy on Alor. The process and politics of image-making in this embryonic phase of tourism consciousness on Alor have bearing for other off-the-beaten-track locales in other parts of the world.

A remote, little-known setting: Alor Island

Early historical records concerning the island of Alor are scarce. The label 'Alor' first appears in the writings of Antonio Lombardo Pigafetta, a young officer who sailed with Magellan and then with his successor Captain J. S. de Elcano. Elcano explored the Timor archipelago and, in 1522, Pigafetta produced a map of this region, which includes an island labeled 'Alor.' Pigafetta's log contains detailed descriptions of the landscape, as well as his disdainful impressions of the coastal people of Alor, whom he proclaims to be animal-like 'savages' and consumers of 'human meat' (cited in Vatter, 1932; LeRoux, 1929). Beyond this early sensationalized depiction of Alor, the precise origins of the label 'Alor' are unclear. Whatever its derivation, today the term 'Alor' has come to have multiple referents. Not only is it the name of a Regency/administrative district (*kabupaten*) in the province of Nusa Tenggara Timur, but it is also the name of one of the several islands that constitute this Regency, and finally it is the ethnic label for one of the many groups residing on the northwest coast of Alor Island.⁹

Within Nusa Tenggara Timur Province, the tiny island of Alor is famed for its linguistic and cultural diversity. The linguist Stokof (1975) found 13 languages on the island. Although some local sources (cf. Anon, 1990: 273), including the Regent, proudly declare that there are at least 50 dialects or languages and almost as many cultural groups on Alor, which has a modest population of roughly 146,000. It is challenging to make precise delineations of the ethnic groups on Alor, given the dearth of anthropological work on the island.¹⁰ Anthropologists Cora Du Bois and her Dutch collaborator M. M. Nicolspeyer, who both worked in Atimelang village in the late 1930s, were the last cultural anthropologists to conduct extended research on the island (Nicolspeyer, 1940).¹¹ While DuBois' ground-breaking psychologically-oriented ethnography of Atimelangers, entitled *The People of Alor* (1944) lent the island anthropological fame, it did not inspire droves of anthropologists to conduct research on the island. Thus, there is relatively little available ethnographic information about the other groups on the island. What is generally hypothesized, however, is that Alor's rugged terrain resulted in groups becoming somewhat isolated from one another, settling along mountain-top ridges and valleys. Tremendous mutual distrust and even inter-village warfare were reportedly common until the Dutch began to exercise their influence on the island in 1909.¹²

Despite its anthropological celebrity, and its notoriety within Eastern Indonesia as 'the language island,' Alor remains a relatively invisible backwater

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in Indonesia. Unlike many of Indonesia's more major islands and cultures, Alor is not represented in Indonesia's national cultural theme park, Taman Mini, which was founded as a recreational means for Indonesians to become acquainted with each other's cultures.¹³ Said to be one of the poorest islands in one of the poorest regions of Indonesia, only a couple of disastrous earthquakes (in 1993 and 2004) have fleetingly brought Alor into the consciousness of the nation. This is not to assert, however, that the government's nation-building programs have by-passed this region. The ubiquitous national motto 'unity in diversity,' elementary school citizenship curriculum, as well as weekly television shows and newspaper articles spotlighting the panoply of Indonesian cultures all convey to Alor that part of 'being Indonesian' entails being ethnically and culturally distinct from other Indonesian groups. It is perhaps worth noting that the Indonesian groups receiving the most showcasing in school books and nationally-televised cultural pageants tend to be those that are also noted for their touristic appeal: the Balinese, the Batak, the Toraja, and the Central Javanese, amongst others. On some subliminal level, then, Alor seem to receive the message that tourism confers ethnic legitimacy. In short, on Alor, as in other regions of Indonesia, these nation-building programs have created a fertile environment for self-conscious examination and promotion of cultural roots.

Since the late 1980s, the discourse of tourism has become increasingly ubiquitous in Indonesia. In preparation for Visit Indonesia Year (1991) and Visit ASEAN Year (1992), the Indonesian government launched a national Tourism Consciousness Campaign (*Kampanye Nasional Sadar Wisata*). As part of this campaign, the Minister of Tourism, Post and Telecommunications proclaimed the 'Seven Charms' (*Sapta Pesona*) to which all Indonesian groups should aspire. These tourist-pleasing charms include security, orderliness, friendliness, beauty, comfort, cleanliness and memories. According to the Cabinet Minister, the objectives of the Seven Charms Campaign were 'to form a strong and sturdy identity and to maintain national discipline' (Departemen Pariwisata, Pos dan Telekomunikasi, 1990: 36). The Tourism Consciousness Campaign was widely discussed in the Indonesian media, and the 'Seven Charms' were posted on plaques in villages throughout much of the 1990s. The campaign helped prompt even off-the-beaten-track villages in Indonesia's outer islands to consider their own touristic charms and attracting powers, as I discovered both on my 1993 visit to Alor and when I returned on more recent research trips.

Despite the ubiquity of the Tourism Consciousness Campaign, it is important to underscore that the island of Alor has never figured prominently in Indonesian tourism promotion. Indonesian travel agents and travel writers I interviewed in Jakarta had never heard of the island.¹⁴ Moreover, the Department of Tourism's hefty 1996/1997 *Indonesia Travel Planner* does not include Alor, although numerous locales on Sumba, East and West Timor, Flores, Lembata, and Komodo are all heralded as enticing Eastern Indonesian destinations. While tourist maps distributed in this packet label the island of Alor, it is

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not deemed worthy of the touristically charged icons of windsurfers, palm trees and snorkelers. Finally, Alor is absent from the government's 'Tourism Master Development Plan for Nusa Tenggara Timor' issued in the 1990s.

Early touristic images of Alor: Black magic, bronze drums and head-hunters

Just as Alor was overlooked by Indonesian tourism planners, the island also tended to be absent from mainstream English-language Southeast Asia and Indonesia tour books in the 1980s. Although a few Indonesia-focused adventure tour books from this earlier period make brief note of Alor as a magic-laden locale that is home to recently-reformed warriors and a mysterious array of languages, most of these hefty volumes devoted no more than a paragraph to the island. The following paragraph on Alor in Dalton's (1984) *Indonesia Handbook* is typical of this early period:

Island of Alor: North of Timor, Kalabahi is the main town with a population of 129,000. Warriors of Alor once used war arrows with chicken bone barbs which splintered when they hit, the original *dum dum* bullet. Seventy languages are spoken on this small island, most of them unintelligible to anyone living more than 20km away; several Papuan languages linger. Luckily most of its people have learned *Bahasa Indonesia* in the mission schools. A heavy Catholic trip here, but the people aren't fooled. The *naga* snake cult persists on Alor with sacrifices of meat and rice made to this protective deity. In the villages, woodcarved *nagas* on posts, often surrounded by piles of stones, are endowed with magical powers. (Dalton, 1984: 236)

Such relatively early outsider images were oriented towards backpacker tourists and spotlighted the wild and eerie traditions camouflaged just under the veneer of Christianity. Nothing is said of scenery or local amenities, rather the emphasis is on the island's black-magic and rugged people. Accompanying this fierce representation of Alor are references to the 'mysterious' bronze *moko* drums found in the region. Dalton devotes a paragraph to this topic at the end of his segment on the islands of Solor, Adonara and Alor:

moko drums: Small megalithic bronze kettle drums (*moko*) decorated with Hindu motifs are found nowhere else in Indonesia in such extraordinary numbers as on Alor.... On Alor, *moko* drums have been used until quite recent times as a ceremonial object. They are still used as an unofficial form of population control. Every time a male wants to get married, he must give a *moko* to his inlaws. But since there's only a limited number of drums left and no new ones made or imported, there aren't enough to go around and often the unlucky couple must leave the island. The drums also play a part as a symbol of wealth and as currency to buy land (and once human heads). (Dalton, 1984: 236)

Here, then, the anthropologically-colored description of *moko* drums is artfully fused with the tantalizing image of wild men willing to spend their scarce wealth on human heads. The contrast between this representation and anthro-

pological descriptions are noteworthy. In the only English language book-length ethnography of one region of the island, the anthropologist Cora DuBois also notes that, until about 1920, heads were bought and sold and had an equivalent value in gongs and *mokos* (1944: 181). However, this passing remark is made in the context of an extensive anthropological discussion addressing the interconnections between *mokos*, politics and economy. Headhunting was a rare topic in DuBois' writings concerning Alor, which focused heavily on childrearing institutions, the life cycle, and modal personality. These contrasts are stark, but the key point to be underscored is that touristic imagery of Alor in the 1980s was relatively rare and, when it appeared, it tended to be brief and sensational, stressing mystery, magic, *mokos*, warriors, and a Babylon of languages. This prompts the question of how this proto-touristic imagery contrasts or meshes with the self-imagery promoted and embraced by various Alorese during the late 1980s and early 1990s.

Alor in the 1990s: Investing in anthropological and archaeological celebrity

On Alor, the early 1990s was a period of vigorous cultural strategizing and image crafting. Hoping to attract flocks of deep-pocketed tourists to the island, various Alorese engaged in sculpting images and composing indigenous sites and performances as lures for potential tourists. In a series of articles, Maribeth Erb (1998, 2001) has chronicled how the Manggaraians on the nearby Eastern Indonesian island of Flores have drawn on an array of cultural strategies to promote their culture nationally and beyond, presenting rituals such as a harvest whip game for paying tourist visitors. As Erb has astutely observed, this cultural strategizing has prompted new Manggaraian debates about identity and authenticity. While Alor in the tourist-obsessed 1990s had not yet achieved the touristic fame enjoyed by various groups on Flores, Alorese leaders are just as entrepreneurial in their touristic strategizing. Moreover, as with the Manggarai, aspirations for tourism were setting the stage for local conflicts concerning the nature of 'Alorese' identity.

When I arrived in Alor's main port town of Kalabahi in the summer of 1989, I was directed to a bayside *losmen* (small inn) oriented towards local traders, visiting government officials and occasional intrepid travelers. The inn was operated by Haji Ladang,¹⁵ an enterprising retired school teacher. A thoughtful, reflective man devoted to religious and cultural matters, Haji Ladang had a lively interest in anthropological research. He was active in local government plans for development on Alor and took great pride in his daughter who was studying for a tourism degree on the nearby island of Timor. Haji Ladang had produced a hand-drawn map of Kalabahi and Alor for his guests and, by 1993, he had supplemented this map with a short mimeographed guidebook for touring on the island. Given Haji Ladang's intellectual and religious orientations, it is perhaps not surprising that his discussions of Alor's potential offerings to tourists

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centered on the island's anthropological and linguistic richness. While Haji Ladang noted the rugged quality of the island, his representation of Alor was that of a land of mysterious archaeological richness in the form of ancient bronze *moko* drums. The phrase 'WELCOME TO ALOR THE MOKOS ISLAND' is boldly emblazoned on his map and his mimeographed booklet features only two sketches, one of a *moko* and one of a traditional Alorese storehouse. Haji Ladang's booklet describes the importance of these 'mysterious' drums to Alorese, and outlines the amenities found in Kalabahi, describes local delicacies, and lists sites where traditional houses, dancing and songs can be viewed. Significantly, the themes headhunting and Alorese warriors are absent from Haji Ladang's imagery. This contrasts with the visual identity motifs found in Kalabahi, which emphasize both *mokos* and spear-clutching warriors. The town square, for instance, features a towering statue of a fierce-looking Alorese warrior in traditional dress, proudly standing atop an enormous *moko* drum. Inscribed in Indonesian, the statue is clearly designed for Alorese audiences.

The absence of warriors from Haji Ladang's imagery also contrasts with the popular imagery of the neighboring island of Sumba, where descriptions of violence, especially headhunting, are central to tourism promotion. Hoskins (2002) chronicled the ironies and inversions implicit in touristic encounters on Sumba, where visiting tourists are perceived by locals as 'predatory voyeurs' and tourists' photographic shots of Sumbanese 'natives' are locally understood as embodying the sort of violence that enshrouds the touristic images of the island. On Alor, excluding staged dances for cruise ship tour groups, I encountered only one instance where the theme of violence colored the exchange between a tourist and a local villager. While hiking with a young Eastern Indonesian government worker from the provincial capital of Kupang, we encountered a teenager who was heading out on a hunt. My Indonesian companion whipped out his camera and the teenager raised his spear as the camera clicked. While the motives behind the teen's gesture are unknowable, his grimace hinted at a *mélange* of humor, parody, and annoyance. My Indonesian companion, however, made his interpretation of the encounter clear to me, declaring his excitement at having captured his conception of the 'typical Alorese' on film.¹⁶ As someone from a neighboring island, my Indonesian companion was well-versed in the regional imagery of Alor as a place of violence and danger, and it seemed that this Alorese male understood that expectation. This episode, however, was atypical of the encounters I witnessed.

The few encounters I observed between independent foreign tourists and Alorese villagers more closely resembled those described by Erb (2000) in the Manggarai region of nearby Flores, where local ideas concerning host-guest relationships set the template for encounters with foreign visitors. As Erb writes,

The relationship between host and guest in the Manggaraian social world is one filled with multiple referents that give this relationship a rich, sometimes contradictory,

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flavor. Guests are honored, respected, and shown a great deal of deference; at the same time there is an element of dependency created by the debt incurred in being a guest....The host-guest relationship is infused with differential statuses and is overlaid with questions of power and control (Wilson, 1988: 92–8). Being hosts means having an element of power over their guests. Hosting and rituals that are associated with hospitality, are always to domesticate and control the unknown ‘other’ who has penetrated into the circle of one’s home, hearth, and social world. (p. 720)

As on Flores with the Manggarai, guests on Alor are generally treated with honor, although it is expected that guests understand that they are incurring a debt. In short, for the Alorrese I knew, treating foreign guests with honor promised to reap subsequent rewards. On many occasions, when I expressed my gratitude for the generous hospitality extended at ritual events in remote villages, my Alorrese hosts were quite explicit about their expectations that I would reciprocate by promoting their villages to other wealthy foreigners. Although tourism is still embryonic on Alor, as on more touristically-frequented Flores, it appears that foreign visitors are being slotted into the traditional role of ‘guest,’ with the attendant expectations generated by that role.

Returning to Haji Ladang’s self-produced guide to Alor, another key ingredient in his representation of Alor’s significance is harvested from anthropology. As we sipped afternoon tea on my second day at the homestay, Haji Ladang brought up the subject of anthropologist Cora DuBois’ early research on the island. With relish, he recounted how the few western travelers who had made their way to the island were interested in visiting the mountain village of Atimelang, the site of DuBois’ research. His own heavily-fingered copy of DuBois’ *The People of Alor* had been given to him by one such tourist. As Haji Ladang told me, he treasured the book and hoped that I would bring him more copies when I returned for more extended fieldwork, as most tourists toting DuBois’ volume did not offer to part with it. Ironically, I had traveled to Alor seeking a field research site far from the embrace of tourism, and I discovered instead an island with embryonic anthropology-pilgrimage tourism. Here, as in other locales frequented by anthropologists, it was our writings and our imagery that appeared to be fueling the initial touristic forays. In some ways, I, too, could fit the category of anthropology-pilgrimage tourist. My selection of Alor as a site for new fieldwork was, after all, inspired by DuBois’ classic volume. Anthropology’s role in seeding initial touristic images is not unique to Alor. In fact, I would contend that it is a more widespread pattern than we realize, meriting further research attention. Surprisingly, while movie and literature induced tourism have become popular topics for research (cf. Beeton, 2001; Busby and Klug, 2001; Delyser, 2003; Riley et al., 1998; Squire, 1996), the role of ethnographies in generating tourism has been overlooked.¹⁷

Although the early anthropology-driven tourists visiting Alor were few and infrequent,¹⁸ their consistent interest in DuBois inspired Haji Ladang to make arrangements for overnight treks to the village. For visitors unable to manage

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the arduous trek, Haji Ladang also promoted a closer village, Takpala, which featured traditional houses and enterprising elders who were happy to bring out their *mokos* drums for curious tourists. In our conversations, Haji Ladang's descriptions of the island echoed those of other Alorese I encountered on this visit. Highlighted in his imagery was the island's ruggedness, linguistic diversity, and the importance of *moko* drums for young men with marriage aspirations. No mention was made of magic, scenery, or geographical anomalies, although some young Alorese men regaled me and the few Indonesians staying at the inn with tales of a nearby seaside village where deep sea channels occasionally yielded frozen fish, prompting much curiosity. As a local man quipped, 'Who needs electricity and refrigerators when we have that?'

DuBois' classic volume on Alor also inspired another equally sporadic type of foreign visitation. Once or twice a year in the early 1980s and about three times yearly by the early 1990s, small luxury cruise ships docked for half a day in Kalabahi's bay. The number of these cruise ship visits greatly accelerated in the mid-1990s, jumping to about five cruise ships annually.¹⁹ Many of these cruises were billed as educational voyages, replete with lecturing anthropologists and naturalists. An expatriate American cruise organizer claims to have pioneered these cruise visits to Alor. As she explained to me, she had devoured DuBois' book in an undergraduate anthropology course and, when interest in Eastern Indonesian cruises began to blossom in the early 1980s, she pushed for Alor to be included on their itineraries (Searly, 1997, pers. comm.). Likewise, when Haji Ladang went to Jakarta in 1995 to entice more cruise line visits to the island, DuBois' classic book was one of the key ingredients in his pitch.

While not all Alorese residing in Kalabahi knew of DuBois' volume, those familiar with DuBois' work clearly envisioned it as a promising avenue for attracting attention and potential resources to their little-known island. These Alorese's fantasies of spurring tourism on their island were deeply entwined with their hopes for cultural recognition and economic security. In short, anthropology and anthropological publications formed the basis of cultural strategizing on Alor. By embracing and promoting images of themselves as celebrated anthropological Others, subjects of foreign researchers' books, Haji Ladang and his friends strove to put Alor on the touristic and national map. The very availability of 'classic' anthropological imagery gave Haji Ladang and other Alorese tourism boosters a political edge over groups on other equally remote islands about whom books have not been written. Yet, even as this anthropological imagery enables visibility, it also imprisons Alorese in archaic and problematic imagery. As a number of Alorese lamented to me, they are not *all* like the Atimelangers depicted in DuBois' 1930s research: they are now 'modern,' 'wear clothes' and are comprised of many distinct groups with 'different rituals.' Yet visitors schooled by cruise ship lecturers are approaching the residents of Alor as if they were all Atimelangers.

Other images of Alor: The 'black magic island'

While Haji Ladang's early touristic imagery of Alor stressed the island's anthropological and linguistic richness, as well as its prized *moko* drum antiquities, others spotlighted a different image for the island. On my 1993 visit I became acquainted with Hasan, an adolescent who worked doing odd jobs in Haji Ladang's inn. Hasan recounted one of his initial impromptu guiding experiences with a German guest who was staying at the inn. Apparently drawn to the island by a passing reference to magic in a German adventure guide book, the young male guest confided to Hasan that he had ventured to the island hoping to study black magic. Hasan sought out an elderly man from a nearby village who tutored the young German traveler in the use of black magic to attract women. By 1996, when I returned to the island, Hasan had hosted the German on subsequent visits (as well as acquaintances of the German) for additional magic lessons on topics such as 'how to fly without moving.' Hasan proudly displayed a letter the German had sent him, thanking him for arranging the black magic lessons. As Hasan declared, people now knew to come to Alor for such things, as it was a 'place where black magic was still alive,' unlike other regions of Indonesia.

Over the course of my visits with Hasan in 1996, he recounted how he had gradually become a freelance guide, supporting himself and his family with small trading activities in the long months between tourist visits. Hasan reported that there were now eight aspiring guides on the island, most of them his protégés. However, clients were rare and Hasan was careful to guard his edge – his reputation as the guide with the most experience in the realm of Alorese magic. Alluding to the knowledge of Alorese magic that he had acquired through these guiding activities, Hasan asked me on a subsequent visit if I was ready to study Alorese black magic. When I demurred, he gently chided me that, as an anthropologist, this was an important aspect of Alor that I should be studying. In a period of little more than three years, Hasan had blossomed into a skilled crafter of Alorese imagery. He had captured a trickle of foreign tourists by nourishing European fantasies of Alorese peoples as exotic magic-bearing Others, offering fulfillment he claimed was unavailable elsewhere in Indonesia.

Hasan was not the only Alorese promoting this image of Alor as a land of magic. Other young residents of Kalabahi told me that Eastern Indonesians were beginning to recognize Alor as a place to go for magical cures to distressing ailments. By 1996, Alor was being promoted by word of mouth to Eastern Indonesians as the island where one could find magical cures to ailments such as asthma and arthritis. While I did not encounter any Indonesians who come to Alor seeking cures during my time on the island, I heard many tales from Alorese (as well as Timorese) of the magical healings of visitors to the island.

The image of Alor as a land of black magic is consistent with previous Othering images (that of Alor as a realm of mysterious *mokos* drums of unknown ancient origin, and that of Alor as homeland to fierce warriors), as in all three of these images we find the consciously constructed notion of Alorese

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peoples as uniquely different Others living in a timeless, tradition-bound land of mystery. In these nascent touristic images we see the process whereby certain dynamic cultural practices that may not even be ubiquitous on the island (e.g. knowledge of black magic) are transformed into ubiquitous cultural products.²⁰ As these micro cases illustrate, the genesis of touristic images does not simply entail the projection and amplification of authoritative outsiders' visions, but rather illustrates how images of place are negotiated, sculpted and re-sculpted in a complex dialogue between local aspiring entrepreneurs, anthropologists, national tourism bureaucrats, and intrepid travelers.

Alor as pottery homeland

Not all of the representations sculpted by Alorese met with success. It is instructive to look at an image campaign that did not take root. In the fall of 1996, after several years of Indonesian government-sponsored tourism consciousness campaigns, local government officials and villagers on Alor were becoming increasingly aware of the potential riches tourism could bring. Pak Linus, a thoughtful and ambitious administrative head of a pottery-making district near Kalabahi, sagely recognized an opportunity for touristic fame, economic revival and political success. Knowing that a team from the provincial museum in Kupang (on the adjacent island of Timor) had been researching the history of pottery manufacture and trade in the area, Pak Linus guessed that tourists might be drawn to his area if it were known for its pottery production. With this in mind, Pak Linus had recorded the mythic history of pottery making in his district. When he learned that I was an anthropologist seeking a field site, he presented me with a copy of his report and invited me to tour the home and workshop of a pottery-making family in his district. Following our visit to the pottery studio, Pak Linus conveyed his hopes that I would translate his report on pottery, write an article spotlighting his pottery-oriented district, and promote the venue for tourists. When I explained that my writings were not the sort read by tourists, Pak Linus patiently reminded me that DuBois' academic book had brought the first tourists to Alor's Atimelang area. Grinning triumphantly, he declared that he anticipated that my writings, once published, would do the same for his district. From Pak Linus' perspective, the book he envisioned me writing would serve multiple purposes: it would bring me fame, it would promote his area, it would lure tourists whose pottery purchases would enrich his district and, finally, it would enhance his own political prospects. Try as I might, I could not convince Pak Linus that the images I might propagate via my writings could not possibly have the power of DuBois' time-tested early images.

Image evolution in the late 1990s: From savage to tranquil

In the late 1980s, Indonesia briefly opened East Timor to foreign visitation, which had ramifications for incipient tourism and imagery on nearby Alor. By

the mid-1990s, Alor was receiving a regular trickle of overnight tourists, most arriving by ferry from Dili (East Timor) in transit to the city of Kupang or the island of Flores. Most of these tourists had not intended to visit Alor. Some were obliged to change ferries in Kalabahi where they faced up to a week's wait. Other foreign passengers on passing ferries debarked spontaneously, their curiosity piqued by the natural beauty of Kalabahi's harbor. Many of these travelers en route home from danger-zone 'adventures'²¹ in Dili were seeking a place to recuperate from the tensions and turmoil they had witnessed in East Timor. For them, Alor appeared to be the ideal spot for a rest. Some of these tourists had studied basic Indonesian in preparation for their travels and, as they recovered, they shared their travel stories with employees at the inn. Relaxing on the verandah of Haji Ladang's homestay, these returning danger-zone tourists gushed to their hosts about Alor's beauty and tranquillity. While most ordinary visitors would probably agree that Alor is a lovely place, for these recovering danger-zone tourists, it was doubly so. The contrast between tension-filled Dili and tranquil Alor was a repeated theme in their conversations and in the blogs they posted on the web.

By late 1996, there was evidence that some of this imagery of 'lovely,' 'tranquil' Alor was being repeated and embraced by some of the residents of Kalabahi, overshadowing the earlier imagery of ruggedness and warfare. It appeared that the conversations between Alorese and these returning danger-zone tourists were subtly shifting Alorese perceptions of themselves and their island. As an Alorese proudly proclaimed to me on a visit in the late 1990s, 'This is a peaceful place.' Others reaffirmed his sentiment and underscored that the absence of violence and drugs on their island should add to their touristic appeal. While the themes of Alor as a 'language island' and as homeland of *mokos* and magic persisted, added to them was a new motif of beauty and tranquility. Ironically, whereas older ethnographies described Alor as torn by war and Alor's history of inter-group violence had long been a theme in the early guidebook descriptions of Alor, danger, warfare and ruggedness was now being downplayed in the emergent verbal imagery of the island. It is noteworthy that this new 'peaceful' imagery was emerging and flourishing in the late 1990s, during the Post-reformation era, at a time when Indonesia was experiencing increasing crime and unrest.²²

This is not to say that these verbal (and blog) images of peacefulness have overtaken the wilder imagery in more recent guidebooks. Lonely Planet's 2003 Indonesia guidebook now highlights the island of Alor with a three page section accompanied by glossy photos of *mokos* (bronze drums) and young Alorese divers in the Island's brilliant coastal waters. Hailing Alor as a 'beautiful island with a diverse group of cultures concentrated in a small area...with some of the best diving spots in Indonesia' (Witton et al., 2003: 632), the guidebook goes on to describe Alor's history of tribal warfare and the challenges faced by Dutch colonialists who 'installed local rajas along the coastal regions after 1908...but had little influence over the interior where people were still taking heads in the

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1950s' (Witton et al., 2003: 633). Offering a bit of lurid history, the writers describe how Alorrese 'warriors put western imports to good use by twisting wire from telegraph lines into multibarbed arrowheads, over the tip of which they pressed a sharpened, dried and hollowed chicken bone. When the arrow hit, the bone would splinter deep inside the wound' (Witton et al., 2003: 633). These general remarks on Alor are accompanied by an inset box on *mokos*. The section concludes with a discussion of religious diversity on the island and the familiar assertion that 'indigenous animist cultures still survive, mainly because travel around the island has been very difficult' (Witton et al., 2003: 633). In short, the earlier themes of violence, animism and remoteness persist. A subsequent section on the town of Kalabahi, however, introduces the emergent themes of tranquility and natural beauty: 'Kalabahi is the chief town on Alor and is located at the end of a long and spectacular palm-fringed bay on the West Coast. It is a clichéd tropical port – lazy and slow-moving, with boats scattered around the harbour. The sea breezes make Kalabahi cooler than most other coastal towns in Nusa Tenggara...' (Witton et al., 2003: 633). Likewise, the book offers tips on several 'lovely white sand beache[s]' and snorkeling venues. In short, the emerging verbal imagery of Alor as a tranquil spot appears in this newer guidebook entry on the island, but it does not supplant the more sensational imagery of war-prone head-hunters.

In contrast, Insight Guide's latest book on Indonesia (Anon, 2002) makes no mention of the island's history of inter-group violence. Instead, it highlights the island's mysterious kettledrums, the Papuan features of the island's residents, and the diversity of dialects found on the island. While the themes of tranquility and scenery do not emerge in this entry, they are appearing with more frequency in other recently-published tourist guidebooks. The latest edition of *Let's Go Southeast Asia* offers this passing description of Alor: 'The Solor and Alor archipelago offer scenic seclusion and the chance to join a whale hunting expedition in Lamalera' (Richards, 2000: 282). Similarly, the most recent edition of *Southeast Asia on a Shoestring* also notes Alor's scenic beauty, in addition to its mysterious *mokos*: 'Famed for its highly prized *mokos*, bronze drums found mysteriously buried all over the island, Alor is a rugged, scenic island. The island has excellent diving, best arranged in Kupang.' (Finly et al., 1999: 289). In short, in these emerging guidebook images of Alor we can see a montage of insider and outsider representations.

Conclusions

While most studies of touristic imagery focus on well-established destinations, examining the ways in which these images are idealized, exoticized or removed from their socio-economic and historic contexts (cf. Albers and James, 1983; Dann, 1996; Selwyn, 1993), or offer systems for analyzing touristic imagery and the responses they prompt (Cohen, 1993), the study of the genesis of touristic imagery in out-of-the-way places has been largely overlooked. This exploration

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of embryonic tourist imagery of Alor has relevance for understanding dynamics of the Othering process entailed in tourism development. As the cases presented here illustrate, the idiosyncratic quests of sporadic visitors to Alor were grist for the imagery-shaping mill. Some tourists came seeking black magic, others found themselves accidental tourists on Alor, haphazardly selecting the island to recover from their danger zone exploits in nearby Dili (East Timor). Harvesting from the images offered by these varied visitors, local Alorese leaders and visionaries crafted new images of themselves, fusing them with some of the older more established images. From the Alor case, one might deduce that touristic images emerge and evolve as hybrid forms, fusions of historical, local, and visitor imagery.

Moreover, the Alor case underscores that, even in locales where tourism is still in its infancy, local people can and do engage with outsider imagery. Some of this imagery is ignored, but much of it is digested, processed, reshaped and rearticulated. When it comes to imagery, local leaders and visionaries can act as savvy architects, experimenting with new forms for their own agendas. It is not always outsider tourism developers who are the primary architects of the Othering process entailed in the marketing of ethnic tourism. In this case, the national government had bypassed Alor as a site for tourism development: instead, it was the Alorese themselves (drawing on anthropological writings and encounters with travelers) who were actively sculpting self-images in the hopes of luring tourists. Contrary to assumptions commonly made in the classic tourism literature, the loss of local agency is not endemic to all touristic spaces.²³

Here, the politics and power-dynamics entailed in these Othering processes merit underscoring. As Cheong and Miller (2000) have argued with regard to tourism, a Foucaultian understanding of power (recognizing that power is something that flows in multiple directions and that the various players in tourism are both power wielders and targets of the power of others) can yield a more nuanced understanding of tourism dynamics. The Alorese image-sculptors chronicled in this chapter were both strategizing political actors and by-standers caught in the eddies of the politics currents on neighboring islands and in the larger nation. Alorese individuals actively lobbied for and promoted their own interested touristic images of Alor (as black-magic island or pottery center). These locally-promoted images were often in competition with one another, as they carried promises of political or economic security for different groups of people on the island. By virtue of their education, accessibility to periodically-visiting tourists, or their relative wealth, some aspiring tourism promoters (such as Haji Ladang, who was well off and ran a Kalabahi homestay) were better positioned to produce authoritative images than others (such as Pak Linus, the pottery village administrator). Moreover, it is noteworthy that the most recent 'tranquil Alor' imagery now embraced by many residents of Kalabahi, was not of their own doing. Rather, it was an outgrowth of a war on neighboring Timor (and political turmoil elsewhere in Indonesia). That is, the emergent imagery of 'tranquil Alor' was largely a product of foreign danger zone

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tourists' perceptions of difference and contrast (Alor versus to war-torn East Timor). So this imagery, too, is based on yet another layer of outsiders' Othering. In short, as the Alor case suggests, local and national politics and politicking are embedded in the genesis of touristic images.

Finally, the role of DuBois' ethnographic writings in the genesis of Alor tourism imagery indicates another under-explored theme in tourism studies: the interplay between the work of anthropologists and the development of tourism. DuBois' historic research on Alor not only inspired a number of early anthropology pilgrimage tourists but became fodder for cultural strategizing on Alor. For Alor, anthropologists are now seen as potential cultural resources to draw upon in the promotion of their villages, rituals and sites. In this regard, there is a pressing need for further attention and ethical reflection on the role of anthropologists in the embryonic phases of the Othering process.²⁴ Through our writings and our presence in remote locales, we are not only sculpting images of others, but we are also sculpting expectations.

NOTES

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2. Moreover, it is not only residents who are engaged with the touristic imagery of their homeland. As Maribeth Erb's (2003) research among the Manggarai of Flores has ably documented, migrants returning to their ancestral lands for visits also consume and shape touristic versions of their own culture promoting generalized ideas of Manggaraian heritage.
3. Andrew Causey (2003) coined this term to refer to those visited peoples whose lives intersect with tourists.
4. Recently, Andrew McGregor (2000) has extended this work in Tana Toraja, interviewing tourists in the highlands to illustrate how these texts of guidebooks shape and structure tourists' gazes and assessments of the 'authenticity' of what they viewed while in the Toraja highlands.

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5. I concentrate on verbal images primarily because the visual images of Alor circulating on global mediascapes are relatively limited. Of the few visual images in circulation, the vast majority feature divers and the undersea life off the shores of Alor.
6. For a fuller discussion of the relevance of Michel Foucault's and Edward Said's work to tourism studies, see Morgan and Pritchard (1998: 14).
7. Blogs are on-line web journals.
8. For fuller discussions of domestic tourism's role in Indonesian nation-building, see Picard (1997) and Adams (1998).
9. Unless otherwise designated, when I use the term 'Alorese' in this chapter, I am referring to residents of the island.
10. The German physical anthropologist Brouwer, who worked on the island between 1928 and 1931 delineated four physical 'types' on the island, although he notes 'strong local differences in blood group classifications' which he suggests might be partially attributed to 'prolonged mutual isolation and a keen sense of tribal unity' (1935: 120). While Brouwer's research tells us little about ethnic sensibilities (which in his day would have been termed 'tribal'), he does give us a sense of the tremendous variability on this small island.
11. More recently, an Italian ethnologist, Pietro Scarduelli conducted short-term research on architectural symbolism in the coastal community of Alor Kecil, a predominantly Muslim village comprised of both indigenous Alorese and immigrant groups (Scarduelli, 1991). Suzanne Rodemeier has also conducted MA research on the eastern end of the island, focusing primarily on the Kolana area (Rodemeier, 1995).
12. Portugal ceded the island to the Dutch in 1954, as part of a larger package. The Dutch chose Alor Kecil, at the mouth of Kalabahi Bay, as their base for their garrison, however it was not until 1909 that they moved their headquarters to the town of Kalabahi and began to make their presence more widely felt.
13. For more on Taman Mini's role in nation-building, see Hitchcock (1998).
14. Some of these Indonesian travel agents were so clearly befuddled by my enquiries about Alor that they politely suggested I was confused [*bingung*] and must be thinking of Lombok.
15. This and all other names used in this article are pseudonyms.
16. My own experiences with photography on the island never provoked such responses. Even residents of more remote villages were not shy when it came to being photographed by a foreign visitor: in fact, villagers shyly approached me on numerous occasions with the request that I photograph them or their *mokos*.
17. Two exceptions are Dennison Nash and Michael Hitchcock. Nash (1997) reports on how the Vaucluse region of France became a pilgrimage site for a certain genre of tourists as a result of Laurence Wylie's classic ethnography *Village in the Vaucluse*. In a similar vein, Hitchcock (2004) has recently explored the potential for anthropological heritage tourism in Bali, focusing on one of the villages in which Margaret Mead and Gregory Bateson worked.
18. Tourism records were not yet recorded at this point in time, however some estimate that about 30 tourists per year were arriving on the island, many stopping only long enough to make a ferry connection on to Kupang.
19. Since inter-ethnic and inter-religious turmoil began to erupt in Indonesia in the late 1990s, however, the number of cruises to this region has greatly declined.
20. For a discussion of the touristic transformation of socio-cultural processes into cultural products, see Richards (1999).

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21. See Adams (2000, 2003).
22. According to Alorese sources, while the island experienced some crime, for the most part it managed to escape the rioting erupting elsewhere in Indonesia.
23. For parallel arguments see Adams (1995) and Silverman (2001).
24. For an example of some of these ethical issues, see Adams (2005).

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