

10-31-2023

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Recommended Citation

Sudarmadi, Tular (2023) "Borobudur temple and the megalith villages of the Ngadha and Manggarai in the light of Indonesia's tourist promotion; A legacy of colonial representation," *Wacana, Journal of the Humanities of Indonesia*: Vol. 24: No. 3, Article 5.

DOI: 10.17510/wacana.v24i3.1660

Available at: <https://scholarhub.ui.ac.id/wacana/vol24/iss3/5>

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Borobudur temple and the megalith villages of the Ngadha and Manggarai in the light of Indonesia's tourist promotion

A legacy of colonial representation

TULAR SUDARMADI

ABSTRACT

As a foreign exchange earner for the Indonesian government, the tourism industry has currently prioritized ten tourist destinations. Problematically, this promotion of the beauty and diversity of nature and ethnicity marginalizes and exoticizes a number of ethnic group and their areas. This promotion, which can be traced back to colonial times, still reflects the Dutch colonial legacy, particularly Darwinian social evolution. To clarify this situation, this article illustrates tourism promotion in the historical and socio-cultural contexts of Borobudur in Java and the megalith villages of the Ngadha and Manggarai people of Flores. It investigates the representation and articulation of colonial perceptions which influence tourist promotion programmes, and their impact on the perceptions of tourists and local residents. An examination of the formation of the Indonesian tourist industry also reveals between the Dutch colonial control of knowledge, the vision of the Indonesian government, tourists desires, and local stakeholder expectation of this promotion. It ends with an outline of the efforts of local residents in the megalithic villages in Flores to decolonize the tourism promotion narratives of the Indonesian government.

KEYWORDS

Indonesia's tourism promotion, social Darwinism coloniality, the Borobudur temple, the Ngadha and Manggaraian megalith villages, decolonizing tourism promotion.

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1. INTRODUCTION¹

By the 1970s, Soeharto – the second President of the Republic of Indonesia – instructed the Indonesian government to promote cultural tourism among domestic and international travellers. Consequently, sites such as the island of Bali, Borobudur temple, and the Toraja megaliths are now known across the world, while increasing numbers of tourists visit regions such as Nias, Sulawesi, and Nusa Tenggara (Sudarmadi 2019: 264-267). In 2016, Jokowi – the seventh President of the Republic Indonesia – expanded Soeharto's tourism programme by designating ten priority tourist destination. This included Mandalika, Kepulauan Morotai, Tanjung Kelayang, Lake Toba, Wakatobi, Borobudur, Kepulauan Seribu, Tanjung Lesung, Bromo, and Labuan Bajo. With the development of these locations as tourist destinations, the Indonesian government no longer depends solely on Bali – the most famous foreign tourist destination in Indonesia – to attract visitors (Iqbal M. Alamsyah 2016; Bambang Ismoyo 2021).

As more Indonesian tourist destinations develop, governmental tourism campaigns generally portray Indonesia as a tropical archipelago, inhabited since ancient times, and home to a vast, diverse array of living cultures, flora, and fauna. Hence, these campaigns not only promote tourism, they also serve as a medium to convey a national ideology while highlighting national and regional identities (Kementerian Pariwisata dan Ekonomi Kreatif 2020: 21-22). Consequently, various scholars have scrutinized governmental tourism policies and campaigns. They have concluded that, by emphasizing the diversity of the archipelago, the Indonesian government not only implicitly exhibits its success in unifying such a diverse nation, but is also engaging in the marginalization and exoticization of local stakeholders of cultural heritage (Mark P. Hampton 2005; Stroma Cole 2007; Maribeth Erb 2000). In short, the Indonesian government makes policies based on the point of view of official government agencies, which have never consulted nor thought to seek the opinion of local heritage owners.

Despite the message of these recent government campaigns, the development, featuring these focal points, can be traced back to colonial times. Therefore, in this article I argue that, in its cultural heritage management, the tourism imagery of the Indonesian government stills reflects the Netherlands East Indies colonial legacy. I hope to illustrate how Dutch colonial domination produced a perspective on history and cultural values of Borobudur temple in Java and the megalith villages of the Ngadha and Manggarai in Flores. I have done so by investigating how this colonial perspective is represented and articulated, influencing the tourism programmes of the Indonesian nation-state and subsequently the outlooks and behaviour of both tourists and local people. In the end, I show how the people of Ngadha and the Manggarai are attempting to try to decolonize the portrayal of their cultural heritage and identity. In this survey of the historical formation of Indonesian tourism, my purpose is to

¹ Much of the data used in this article is based on the results of my PhD research and added with recent updates.

unearth the complex relationship between Netherlands East Indies Colonial control of knowledge and subjectivity, the successive Indonesian official government narratives from the 1950 to 2022, and the demands of tourists and local stakeholders in relation to Ngadha and Manggarai Regency in Flores, whose megalith villages have featured in government advertisement campaigns bringing in increasing numbers of visitors.

Such a study is important. Cole (2007) has studied the commodification of cultural heritage from the perspective of local government tourism authorities, tourists, and local people in the Ngadha megalith village, whereas Erb (2000) observed the way in which the Manggarai people have understood and interacted with tourists during the last few centuries, as well as showing how the national government imagery mirrors the colonial promotion of tourism in this region. In this the interplay between all stakeholders involved is still an understudied topic.

This article argues that the Indonesian government's portrayal of these groups has been influenced by a colonial derivative of Darwin's ideas about social evolution. The idea was that, as a western nation, the Netherlands had already "passed through the entire process of social evolution" – prehistory, kingdoms, and modern nation-states – and therefore the Dutch colonial government had a *mission civilisatrice* ('civilizing mission') to guide and educate the inhabitants of the Archipelago who still lived on the level of a prehistoric society towards modern statehood (Michael Prager 1999: 339-340; Bruce G. Trigger 1984: 363-364, 1989: 145, 1995: 266-269; Bernard S. Cohn 1996: 78; Frances Gouda 1995: 130). An added advantage was that these people were also a desirable object of study for Dutch scientists and scholars as they were considered to be at an earlier stage of social development. Within five years after Indonesian independence in 1945, the Indonesian government had clearly adopted this way of thinking, to which tourism advertisements bear unvarnished witness. This governmental promotion painted a picture of the Ngadha and Manggarai people of Flores who were still practising a megalith tradition on a level described as survivalist prehistoric and primitive, while the civilized people of Java – epitomized by the World Heritage Borobudur temple represented modern society (Marwati Djoened Poesponegoro and Nugroho Notosusanto 1983a, 1983b, 1983c).

Websites, social media, and press coverage continue to reveal that this governmental narrative is still being reiterated, mainly in press coverage, and reverberates among tourists. On the other hand, the perception and agency of Ngadha and Manggarai villagers show that the Ngadha and the Manggaraian are still struggling to escape this internally imposed, inherited colonial framework. They strive for autonomy in the portrayal of their cultural heritage and identity. These locals challenge the image of their megalithic tradition as primitive and exotic by reinvigorating and commodifying aspects of their cultural traditions cast in a distinctively modern tone. Before delving into these topics, this article begins with an historical overview of the genesis of the Indonesian tourism industry, tracing its influences on the present,

before focusing on the specific cases of Borobudur and the Ngadha, and the Manggarai people and the megalithic tradition. I consider these two case studies to be representative because Borobudur is situated in Java, the centre of Indonesian government and is a World Cultural Heritage Site. In contrast, the megalith villages of the Ngadha and the Manggarai are situated in Flores, a remote East Indonesian Island, and are not world cultural heritage.

2. THE FORMATION OF THE INDONESIAN TOURISM INDUSTRY

In the distant past, Indonesian people were already familiar with tourism. The Nagara Krtagama *kakawin* by Mpu Prapanca, composed in the fourteenth century, describes King Hayam Wuruk's royal progress through his royal domain to the temple where his ancestors were buried (J.L.A. Brandes 1902). This account of King Hayam Wuruk's journey introduced the concept of both tourism and religious pilgrimages as noble activities for those who had the leisure and the wealth and were seeking pleasure by escapism from the environment of the royal court in an inspirational landscape (Andrew Holden 2005: 28; Theano S. Terkenli 2004: 341). It might not be an exaggeration to claim to tourism in the form of pilgrimages and the studying of religious knowledge, both Hindu and Buddhist, had also been happening even centuries earlier. While evidence in the ancient palm-leaf manuscripts has not been found, the travel records of Chinese travellers and of monastic dormitories in temples from the Javanese Classical Hindu Period of the eighth and ninth century confirm data about tourism activities in the past. Moreover, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, traces of travel traditions in the Islamic period, particularly during the Islamic kingdom of Mataram, can be found in the myth of Panembahan Senopati's journey from Pajang to the south coast of Java to meet Nyai Roro Kidul. However, these activities are usually not considered tourism since their purpose was intended to be a spiritual journey to deepen religious insight (Sudarmadi 2019: 258-259). Nevertheless, I consider these activities tourism because, in a more technical sense, Douglas Pearce (1995: 20) has stated that tourism can be thought of as the relationships and phenomena arising from the journeys and temporary stays of people travelling primarily for leave or recreational purposes.

2.1. THE EMBRYONIC FORM OF INDONESIAN TOURISM (1800-1900)

My contention is that the Dutch colonial government sowed the seeds of the current tourism industry in Indonesia, commencing in the 1800s. Earlier, young British aristocrats and scholars undertook their Grand Tours of Europe in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries primarily to educate and the cultivate their aesthetic tastes by studying history and the arts but ignoring nature (Brent W. Ritchie, Neil Carr, and Chris Cooper 2003: 9-11; Prokopis A. Christou 2022: 45-47). However, in the late eighteenth century a new trend arose: the Romantic Movement emphasized emotions, freedom, and beauty. These feelings could be nurtured by visiting "untamed" landscapes and "supernatural worlds". Culture was re-imagined by rationalizing nature as

something which could be constructed and controlled. This was a modern world vision and provided the two most crucial recreational tourism attraction areas – culture and nature – to serve as focal points for modern tourism (Eric G.E. Zuelow 2016: 30-43; Holden 2005: 22-23). This new worldview triggered Dutch scientists, traders, missionaries, and adventurers to visit and travel in the Indonesian Archipelago, a Dutch colony, to trade but also to appreciate the beauty of nature and culture, as well as to collect objects, animals, and plants considered unique and rare.

In 1828, King William I sent a scientific expedition to the Indonesian Archipelago to map and compile an inventory of the natural wealth, culture, and ancient objects to be found there (Pieter ter Keurs 2011: 165-166). While the purpose of this expedition was to expand scientific and academic knowledge of the far reaches of the Dutch imperial metropole, John M. Mackenzie (2005: 19-36) has argued that traveling to acquire new knowledge beyond one's own place of residence was a modern world vision of recreational tourism. After the expedition of King William I, more Dutch people visited the Indies colony, and more expeditions were mounted, such as expeditions to Bali in 1846, 1848, 1849, and 1866, and the Lombok Expedition (W. Cool 1896). However, not all these can be categorized as attempts to cultivate aesthetic tastes. For example, the Bali and the Lombok expeditions were punitive, Dutch colonial military invasions of the kingdoms in Bali and Lombok (G. Nypels 1897; Cool 1896).

Leaving this military aspect aside, the results of the expedition of King William I, subsequent tourists visits undeniably also provided information about new, spectacular facts for the inhabitants of the kingdom of the Netherlands, detailing flora, fauna, and climate. Other expeditions produced descriptions and discussions of monuments, such as the Borobudur monograph (C. Leemans and F.C. Wilsen 1873) and an introduction to Hindu-Javanese art (N.J. Krom 1923). Improvements in printing technology in the 1830s, resulted in the publication of reports of expeditions, visits, monographs, and the arts. These technological advances made it possible to have vast landscapes and all the information (population, culture, art, natural resources) about them summarized between the two covers of a book and disseminated to all corners of the world. After reading, viewing, and consulting expedition reports, photographs, postcards, and guidebooks, the fascinated inhabitants of the metropole were tempted to take a trip to the Indonesian Archipelago. As scholars like Ter Keurs have stated, visiting the colony was not only a prestigious romantic adventure, it also sometimes led to successful careers as government officials, soldiers, and lawyers, guaranteeing respectable socio-political positions upon returning to the Netherlands. In a nutshell, the relationships between empire and the colony, including the social and financial opportunities which arose from travelling, enjoying, experiencing, and obtaining new knowledge of different cultures, holidays, which took a place alongside leisure, recreation, visiting friends and relatives, education and training, health and medical care, religion/pilgrimages, and business. Improvements in transport also meant that many Dutch visitors to the colony

now remained less than a year before they returned to the Netherlands. (Leonard J. Lickorish and Carson Jenkins 1997: 14; Benedict Anderson 2003: 182-183; Holden 2005: 11-12; Mackenzie 2005: 19-22; United World Tourism Organization 2008: 10, 24-27; Ter Keurs 2011: 169-172; Hans Meulendijks 2017: 9).

Tourism was greatly stimulated by some important inventions around the middle of the nineteenth century. The invention of the steam engine led to the development of the railways and steamships. As a result, the revolution in travel marked the opening of the first railway engineered by George Stephenson the northeast Stockton and Darlington railway in 1825 (Christou 2022: 57; Mark Casson 2009: 1, 13, 60, 126; Holden 2005: 26).

The development of the railway and shipping line networks was essential, as demonstrated by the success of Thomas Cook's company – the world's first travel agency – organizing tours from the provinces by train to the Great World's Fair at the Crystal Palace, London, founded in Britain in 1851. Further, the introduction of travel packages, organized tours, posters, and brochures marked the embryo of mass tourism (Zuelow 2016: 60-75; Lickorish and Jenkins 1997: 11).

Formerly, as a product of leisure and itinerant business, tourism was only for the elite. In Europe this changed in the relatively peaceful period during most of the middle nineteenth century. The Industrial Revolution gave rise to prosperous businesses with no noble ancestry. The nobles were rapidly losing their standing at the same time. As the new upper class of society, businessmen and factory owners started to govern the world. A new educated class arose as education grew throughout the Industrial Revolution. It included managers, secretaries, physicians, attorneys, educators, and engineers. They were referred to as the middle class. In addition to having higher pay on average, at least when compared to equally competent laborers, they also needed little to no physical effort. The increased income also brought about new leisure opportunities. After a long workday, the middle class wants to let off some steam. They sought entertainment in bars and popular music theaters, often known as vaudevilles, and as a result, tourism as we know it today was created (Matt Clayton 2020: 188, 198-199).

Gradually tourism reached other parts of the western population. In the light of this opportunity, newly founded travel bureaus sought custom by trying to attract new customers: the western middle class. This was the period in which figures such as John Stuart Mill, William Morris, and John Ruskin preached the transformative effects of art and the deliberate function of culture in elevating the moral status of the population. Their premise was that exposing people to wider educational objectives was essential. Seizing upon this doctrine, entrepreneurs in the tourism business marketed their new product to the burgeoning middle class. To reach their goal, travel bureaus marketed their product under the mum of the government's obligation to provide education for the masses via world fairs and exhibitions (Nick Prior 2002: 37). No wonder, railway corporations were pressured to provide

discounted trips specifically for working-class customers. The Workers Travel Association (WTA) – established in Britain as an offshoot of the Workers' Educational Association (WEA) – played a role alongside market forces in catering to workers who could pay a little bit towards their visit to the World's Fair at the Crystal Palace in 1851 (Holden 2005: 27; Lickorish and Jenkins 1997: 15; Prior 2002: 15).

In this event, the enterprises of Thomas Cook and other tour operators transported 160,000 tourists, or nearly 3 percent of the total 6 million visitors to the Great Exhibition in London. The fairs supported the idea that touring abroad was desirable as well as stressing the idea that the world was growing evermore globalized in the wake of innovations in steamships and steam trains (Holden 2005: 27-31; Zuelow 2016: 93).

2.2 EARLY DEVELOPMENT OF INDONESIAN TOURISM INDUSTRY (1910-1940)

In the Indies, between 1902 and 1916, travel restrictions were gradually lifted and foreigners were permitted to travel in Java and the outer districts. Anticipating the arrival of increasing numbers of foreign tourists, in 1910 the Dutch colonial government under Governor-General A.W.F. Idenburg, established the Official Tourist Bureau (the *Officieele Vereeniging voor Toeristenverkeer/VTV*). This new institution commenced the promotion of Java, Bali, Lombok, Sumatra, and Sulawesi, by providing information in travel guides in the form of brochures and books. In 1920 The Colonial East Indies government opened the Official Tourist Bureau for Holland and the Netherlands Indies in Paris (H. Kodhyat 1996: 47-49). It is essential to realize that situating this office in Paris was the first step towards introducing and promoting the Dutch colonial territory in the East Indies to international tourism. Another step came in 1928 with the establishment of a subsidiary of the Royal Dutch Packet service (*Koninklijke Paketvaart Maatschappij*), Royal Dutch Airlines (*Koninklijke Luchtvaart Maatschappij*), and Royal Inter-ocean Lines, under the name of Nitour (*Nederlandsche Indische Touristen Bureau*). As the number of foreign tourists visiting to the East Indies rocketed, international standard hotels were built in Jakarta, Bandung, Semarang, Surabaya, Medan, and Makassar to accommodate them. This occurred in tandem with the expansion and development of road infrastructure and rail transportation in the island of Sumatra (Sudarmadi 2019: 260-261). By this time, steamships connected the Netherlands East Indies to major ports in Asia, Australia, and Europe. Travel agents such as Thomas Cook and Son were already present in Southeast Asia. Travel in the Archipelago became more accessible as expanding railway and highway networks connected important island cities (Meulendijks 2017: 29).

Coinciding with the Dutch colonial government's implementation of the Ethical Policy in 1901 to raise welfare of the colonized subjects and set them on the road to progress (Susan Legêne 2007: 221-224; Elsbeth Locher-Scholten 2001: 120-123; Thomas van den End and Jan Sihar Aritonang 2008: 163; Gouda 1995: 24, 51), tourism was considered the perfect way to show foreigners

the proud Dutch role in modernizing and developing the people of the East Indies. Alongside this ambition, prosaically foreign tourists also offered a new and significant source of revenue (Robert Cribb 1995: 195). Considering these potentials, the Paris International Colonial Exhibition in 1931 was seen as a great opportunity to promote the East Indies as a tourist destination and to exhibit what Dutch imperialism had accomplished with its Ethical Policy *mission civilisatrice*.

At the Paris exhibition, the Dutch colonial government presented Balinese dances and exhibited a variety of foods, ancient artefacts, and models of miniature temples from Indonesia, especially Java, Bali, and Sumatra. Brochures distributed at the World Fair promoted the Indonesian Archipelago as a colonial territory, a vast emerald archipelago of Indonesian Islands intended to showcase the majesty of the Netherlands. The exhibition propagated an image of a glorious Dutch empire in which the Netherlands, despite its limited size, had been able to control the expansive Indonesian Archipelago – including its various ethnic groups, exotic cultures, and “primitive” societies (Marieke Bloembergen 2006: 269-275; Gouda 1995: 213-218; Gloria Wekker 2016: 5). The six-month Paris World Fair exhibition succeeded in establishing an image of the natural beauty, exotic ethnic images, and authentic primitive culture of the East Indies, a subordinate, inferior colony, flourishing under the tutelage and rule of the Dutch imperial power (Bloembergen 2006: 296-302; Gouda 1995: 220-222; Edward W. Said 1993: 10-11; Sudarmadi 2014: 61).

At the end of the World Fair in Paris, Bali had been definitively launched as a tourist destination for foreign tourists from Europe and North America. Although the global economic downturn of the 1930s meant a decline in visitors over the next few years, traffic increased again in 1934, resulting in 250 foreign tourists visiting the island of Bali each month (Zuelow 2016: 148). Simultaneously, improvement in transport technology (cars, trains, steamships) enabling large numbers of passengers to be transported in a shorter time. The expansion of existing roads and the addition of new ones, the availability of international standard hotels with a large number of rooms, and the emergence of tourist bureaus resulted in a travel revolution. Gradually trips from the Netherlands to the Indonesian Archipelago by steamship were more scheduled and safer for mass passengers at cheaper fares. In the colony, the rail transportation between cities in the Island of Java and Sumatra were made more regular and the price of tickets reduced, so that more people travelled. No wonder the Netherlands East Indies colony attracted the interest of foreign tourists from the whole world (Europe and United States) and the industry blossomed. The outbreak of World War II and the Japanese occupation of the Netherlands East Indies in 1942 resulted in the cessation of tourism activities (Kodhyat 1996: 50-53; Holden 2005: 26-28; Zuelow 2016: 148; Sudarmadi 2019: 260-261).

2.3 MID-TERM DEVELOPMENT OF INDONESIAN TOURISM (1950-1990)

Indonesia proclaimed independence from the Netherlands on 17 August, 1945, after the defeat of Japan in World War II. Given the precariousness the government of the Indonesian nation-state had to face in the early Independence period between 1945 to 1950 as the Dutch tried to retake their former colony, Sukarno, Indonesia's first president, and politicians and advisors, continued to build unity in the Indonesian nation. Implementing the ideology of "Pancasila" under the motto "Unity in Diversity", flying the Indonesian flag "Sang Merah Putih", and encouraging the Indonesian language were all tools to maintain and demonstrate the burgeoning patriotism at the time as 77.2 million people from different islands, religions, and tribes were bound together (Sudarmadi 2014: 64-66).

The post-World War II era brought an era of technological advancement, massive factory construction, and changes in everyday life in the industrialized societies of the western world. The doctrine preached was that more production increased work opportunities, created a higher income, and stimulated consumption. Undoubtedly industrial society has brought achievements, progress, and modernity, but in the West people have apparently been trapped in a modern life-cycle. To bear the burden imposed by everyday work, they need holidays and this required a journey, a chance to take in other places, cultures, people, climates, nature, and landscapes before returning to the tediousness of the industrial grindstone. This trend marked the beginning of the mass tourism industry in the 1950s. Supported by the emergence of large-bodied jet aircraft which can carry large numbers of passengers and fly between continents in next-to-no-time, affordable discount tickets, and accommodation in international hotel chains, western people began to venture tropical countries to enjoy the sunshine and beaches. Mobilizing mass tourism meant that, in comparison to holidaying at home, foreign travel could be competitively priced (Lickorish and Jenkins 1997: 13-23; Jost Krippendorf 1999: 19-21; Fred Inglis 2000: 98-100; Stephen Page 2004: 150-151; Davis Weaver 2006: 5; Holden 2005: 35).

In 1955 the Indonesian government established the National Hotels and Tourism (Natour) Corporation to manage the Kuta Beach Hotel in Bali, the Garuda Hotel in Yogyakarta, the Dibya Puri Hotel in Semarang, and the Simpang Hotel in Surabaya. This anticipated mass tourism from western countries in search of beaches, sun, and exotic culture in the former Dutch Colony. People were lured by the romantic view of Indonesia constructed during the colonial period: palm-tree fringed beaches, wild tropical jungle, a culture of scintillating passion, evoking fantasies of indigenous man as primeval hunters, and the extravagant sexuality of the indigenous women (Meulendijks 2017: 56-59). Three years later, the Samudera Beach Hotel in Pelabuhan Ratu, West Java, the Ambarukmo Palace Hotel in Yogyakarta, and the Bali Beach Hotel at Sanur Beach, Bali, were built using war reparations from Japan. These three hotels were managed by Indonesian government in conjunction with several foreign hotel chains (Inter-Continental, Sheraton,

and Okura). Step by step, to earn foreign exchange from implementing and managing mass tourism, the Indonesian government developed tourist attractions, accessibility, amenities, and institutions. (Kodhyat 1996: 70-73; Sudarmadi 2019: 263-264). However, after Sukarno's campaign against anti-western imperialism in 1956, relations with the Netherlands were broken, followed by a movement to nationalize the remaining Dutch commercial companies from the colonial period. As a result, European and United States tourists were disinclined to visit Indonesian destinations, afraid of Indonesian people's hatred of westerners, and Indonesia's embryo tourism industry collapsed (Sudarmadi 2019: 263-264; Sudarmadi 2014: 74).

After the fall of Sukarno in 1968, Suharto became the second President of Indonesia. At that time, the economy in Indonesia was teetering on the brink of collapse. To overcome the national debt and trade deficit, the Indonesian finance minister, Sri Sultan Hamengku Buwono IX, visited the Netherlands to discuss aid and debt rescheduling for Indonesia. The pledges of assistance to Indonesia paved the way for western donor countries, including the Netherlands, to coordinate financial aid via international consultative institutions. Thereafter, western superpower authorities and the Netherlands – the former colonizer of Indonesia – dictated the politics and economy of the Indonesian state (P.A.M. Malcontent and J.A. Nekkers 2000: 25; G.A. Posthumus 2000: 149-151, Sudarmadi 2014: 79-80). This was clearly observable in the advice of the Inter-Governmental Group on Indonesia/IGGI, the International Monetary Fund/IMF, and the World Bank to develop a tourist industry instead of setting up heavy industries (automotive, aeroplanes, machinery). Western monetary consultative institutions played their part by arguing that developing countries would find it difficult to compete with western countries in selling heavy industrial products. On the other hand, the tourism industry provided a mechanism to become a developed country; to progress without going through a heavy industrial stage. This was the situation in which Indonesian tourist products were commodified and sold to mass foreign tourism demand. The pipe-dream was that, by generating foreign exchange, the mass consumption of tourism products in developing countries would eventually reach a level equivalent to the stage of mass consumption of heavy industrial products in western countries (Holden 2005: 113-115; Sudarmadi 2019: 265).

Having taken international financial advice in 1969, the Indonesian government opened the country up to international tourism. Recognized by the international tourism industry since 1931, in 1969 Bali was designated the primary tourist destination by the Indonesian government (Michel Picard 1997: 181-182). As noted in the Indonesian Nation Government Directives (Garis-Garis Besar Haluan Negara/GBHN), tourist promotion generated not only economic benefits, it also was strengthened national identity, encouraged national pride, shaped national unity, and guarded and preserved both cultural traditions and archaeological remains which represented the past golden age and the Indonesian national revolution (Arnicun Aziz 1994: 417,

431-432). Accordingly, Borobudur Temple – a magnificent Javanese Buddhist monument – was submitted to UNESCO in 1982 for nomination as a World Heritage Site. This status was granted in 1991, putting Indonesia on the World Heritage map alongside the seven wonders of the ancient western world. Its status as a world cultural heritage site provides Borobudur with benefits in obtaining grants and participating in UNESCO international network activities. In a nutshell, this great monument has placed Indonesia on the world map and given the Indonesian nation state a chance to present itself as being linked to the cultural organizations in the international arena. The Borobudur Temple World Heritage project was a crucial link in the Indonesian nation-state's plan to construct a collective memory of the nation's past glory. However, it also reflected the absorption of the Dutch colonial cultural heritage management ideas, especially in how cultural heritage was used to situate Java at the core of Indonesian activities and strengthen Java's ethnic authority over the people of the Outer Islands. While Java could present a complete series of cultural development from the primitive stage – prehistory, Hindu and Buddhist kingdoms and the Middle Ages to the modern colonial government and an independent nation-state – the Outer Islands were mired in the image of primitive cultures. This narration echoes the Dutch colonial concept shaped by the evolutionist tenets of progress from a lower-level simple stage of civilization into a more advanced civilization.

Among the examples of those less developed cultures and peoples were the Ngadha and the Manggarai people. According to colonial scholars like Jaap Kunst (1942: 1-2) and Frank M. LeBar (1972: 80), the Flores megalith cultural heritage revealed the racial and cultural ancestry of the "simpler" lives and "pre-modern" cultures of the Negroid, Papua, or Melanesian physical characteristics, still at an "earlier stage of human development". The upshot was that, even after Independence, the megaliths in Flores were not considered a symbol of the glory and progress of the Indonesian nation-state.

2.4. RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN INDONESIAN TOURISM (2000-2022)

In 1998, Suharto resigned as Indonesian president and, with his withdrawal, the Indonesian government's hegemony in the authorization, monitoring, and controlling "top-down" authority could no longer be sustained. The people seized the chance to ask for more significant progress in democratization, good governance, and the decentralization of planning and financing. Unfortunately, in the upheaval of these changes, the implementation of the tourism industry policy on control, coordination, and the degree of authority proved ambiguous and unclear. A closer examination of the Bali tourist industry exposed inadequate planning and a lack of control leading to environmental chaos. The Balinese cultural heritage was promoted and commodified for foreign tourism, creating an imbalance in the distribution of profits raised from tourism, both between the districts and among the local population (Picard 2003: 115-116).

Another example of a mega-project tourism installation is the 150-hectare

Formula One racing circuit in the Regency of Jembrana, in West Bali. This exposed a lack of transparency, democratization, and good governance. Although this project planning had already evoked harsh criticism from the Balinese people in 2001 and was shrouded in a sense of desperation, the head of Jembrana Regency completely ignored their objections (Picard 2003: 112, 116). The shift from the Indonesian-centred government under the New Order to the era of regional autonomy in the Reformation era did not bring fundamental changes to the tourist industry practices of the Indonesian government. Undoubtedly the central government has introduced decentralization in the administration of the provinces, the tourist industry is still managed in a top-down style. As a result, the local government continues to cling to the concept of the top-down approach (Picard 2003: 112, 116). This is the nub of the problem in the Indonesian government's tourism promotion on which I want to focus. In 2016, the government gave top development priority to ten Indonesian tourism destinations, including Borobudur, Central Java, and Labuan Bajo, Flores (Cabinet Secretariat of the Republic Indonesia 2019). This programme is currently underway, launched not only for domestic tourists but also for international tourists, aiming to create ten new Bali-like tourist destinations (Ismoyo 2021).

This is the point at which to pause and see how this new Indonesian government tourism programme has turned out for two case studies: Borobudur and the Ngadha and Manggarai villages and how deeply current views of this heritage are rooted in colonial, evolutionist perceptions of cultural and societal development.

3. GENERAL VIEW OF BOROBUDUR

Borobudur Temple is located in Borobudur village, Borobudur District, Magelang Regency, Central Java Province. This temple lies between 7° 36' 28" South Latitude and 110° 12' 13" East Longitude. What is now world's most significant Buddhist temple was constructed under the Sailendra dynasty between AD 780-840. Architecturally, this temple consists of six vertical square surmounted by three circular terraces. Horizontally, it consists of nine levels and a primary stupa on the highest terrace level (Figure 1).

Philosophically, the vertical section delineates the Buddhist cosmological concept of *Kamadhatu* (the world of desires), *Rupadhatu* (the world of forms), and *Arupadhatu* (the formless world). Horizontally, *Arupadatu* depicts the law of cause and effect (*Karmawibhangga Sutra*), represented in 160 reliefs. *Ruphadatu* recounts the transitional realm, in which people are freed from earthly concerns, depicting the transitional realm in which humans have been freed from worldly cares, shown on 1,300 carved stone reliefs depicting episodes from *Gandhawyuha*, *Lalitawistara*, *Jataka*, and *Awadana*, and 328 Buddha statues. Finally, *Arupadhatu*, the supreme, formless realm is portrayed in a combination of seventy-two stupas resembling an inverted bell. The largest stupa in the middle has a diameter of 9.9 metres, a height of no fewer than 42 metres, and does not contain a Buddha statue (UNESCO

World Heritage Convention 1992-2022; TWC 2023; TWC Indonesia Heritage Management 2022; Balai Konservasi Borobudur 2016).



Figure 1. Candi Borobudur (source: <https://sikidang.com/candi-borobudur/>).

4. COLONIAL LEGACY OF BOROBUDUR TOURISM PROMOTION

To understand the colonial legacy in today's tourist promotion of Borobudur, we need to go back to the nineteenth century. After Raffles left Batavia on 25 March, 1816, ending the British Interregnum, he published *The history of Java* a year later. The majestic work of art that was Borobudur described in this book stirred the admiration of the people in the imperial metropole Europe (Thomas Raffles 1830: 6-7, 30-32). It took two decades before the images of Borobudur in Java spread worldwide. Entranced by the romantic illustration of this temple, Sieburgh, a Dutch painter, travelled to Java to draw the monument. In 1839, for three months Sieburgh drew while writing a 420-page manuscript recording his experiences and romantic perceptions of Borobudur (Marieke Bloembergen and Martijn Eickhoff 2013: 99-101).

Aware of the admiration they aroused, later in the century, the Netherlands Indies government presented Javanese antiquities, above all Borobudur, to the general public at World Fairs. Considering the new technology of photography the way to capture the best images of Javanese antiquities, Van Kinsbergen produced photo albums of "The antiquities of Java and Borobudur", presenting 332 images of monuments and antiquities between 1863-1873. His album was admired by the crowds when it was displayed at the Vienna Colonial Exhibition between 1 May and 31 October, 1873, and the Paris World Exhibition held at the Parc du Trocadéro from 1 May to 1 November, 1878. At the close of the former exhibition, the Dutch Colonial

government was awarded a gold medal and Van Kinsbergen received the award. (Gerda Teuns-de Boer, Saskia Asser, and Steven Wachlin 2005: 136-140; Pauline Lunsingh Scheurleer 2007: 94).

By disseminating these images to the general public through the modern technique of photography, the Dutch colonial government transformed the cultural heritage of some of its other colonial subjects into an emblem of Dutch achievements in their colonies, displaying their knowledge of the “natives”.

Colonial scholarly research also defined the view of the Borobudur. Scholars like Brandes, Krom, Bosch, and Stutterheim, the head of the Netherlands East Indies Antiquities Service, worked on the preservation of the grandeur of the Hindu-Javanese monuments by establishing the Borobudur Commission which carried out salvage, reconstruction, and restoration work on Borobudur. They also published monographs and articles about Borobudur. In fact, they promoted Borobudur as the zenith of the East Indies civilization.

Scholars of the Dutch colonial era claimed that the temple was built on the guidelines laid down in the Sanskrit *Śilvasastra*, brought to Java from India. The implication was that, just as the Dutch Colonial Empire was now doing, the knowledge brought by the ancient Indian empire elevated the native Javanese, bringing them development, progress, and civilization (Krom 1923, 1931, 1926; F.D.K. Bosch 1921: 93-169). In its turn, this introduced their classification of the cultures of “indigenous peoples” who had not yet arrived at this stage of Hindu-Javanese culture as “primitive”, “underdeveloped”, and “backward” (Sudarmadi 2014: 57-64).

After Indonesian Independence in 1945, work on and the promotion of Borobudur by the colonial scholars proved a suitable starting point for constructing the project of Indonesian nation-building and representing the Indonesian nation-state as a newly emerging force in the international political arena. In the late 1960s, in its turn the Indonesian government decided to use Borobudur to attract the attention of an international public and promote this monument as a world cultural heritage site. To achieve this objective, it set out the Indonesian Government Five Year Development Plan 1969-1974 to display the nation’s pre-colonial golden age and promote tourism.

By 1980 the Indonesian government had set up PT Taman Wisata Candi Borobudur, Prambanan, and Ratu Boko, a state-owned enterprise (Badan Usaha Milik Negara/BUMN) to manage heritage parks, cultural parks, amenities, and other attractions. (TWC 2023; Carol Westrik 2012: 28; S. Atmosudiro and D.S. Nugrahani 2002: 43, 99-110). It was significant that this national cultural heritage project received 33 percent of its funding from the Indonesian government for restoration, and the rest was provided by UNESCO in 1983. Borobudur became a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1991 and was promised support of USD 5,000 per year in international assistance and USD 42,000 in extra allocation finance to 2009. The Netherlands was also one of the parties which provided technical assistance amounting to USD 35,000. From the guidelines of the Mignolo Colonial Matrix Power/CMP setting out the discourse of modernity/coloniality production, it seems the coloniality on the Borobudur Temple World Heritage Project was most apparent in

how, as the successor to its Dutch Colonial predecessor, the Indonesian government transformed into a sovereign modern country and accomplished this monumental restoration project via donations from former western colonial powers. In order to be acknowledged by the International Forum, the Indonesian government submitted this monument to the consideration of UNESCO, to achieve legitimation as a World Heritage site, doing so deftly with a narrative inherited from the colonial era.

How heritage is represented and by whom is where coloniality becomes visible. The Indonesian government professionalized Borobudur as a heritage site, even nominating it to a western-based international body, UNESCO. It achieved this by presenting a narrative inherited from the colonial era. It held on to the colonial narrative of progress and development with an example of the progress of the Javanese from the embryo of the Indonesian state to the modern Indonesian nation-state. In the meantime, its overall project was disguised by the promises and premises of modernity (Walter D. Mignolo and Catherine E. Walsh 2018: 143).

The Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Natural and Cultural Heritage 1972 (UNESCO) – an international legal document – established a framework for the protection, conservation, and restoration of this monument under the guardianship of universities, museums, and research centres. The language of the Convention is obvious: the conservation and restoration are progress, and the development of the monument is for the benefit of present and future generations. This language universalizes the assumption that Borobudur reveals vital information about the human past. This idea of universality underlines the expression of modernity/coloniality as Mignolo sees it. He argues that coloniality means that other, local narratives were transgressed in favour of the dominant narrative of the glorious past to which Borobudur refers and this premise supports Javanese ethnic domination over Indonesian ethnic minorities. Heritage is always about meaning-making and therefore will obviously have different meanings for various people and groups and therefore universal values and meanings of certain heritage sites do not exist.

In this light, the Borobudur World Heritage management should adhere to the participation of individuals, communities, and stakeholders.

5. THE STAKEHOLDER RESPONSE TO THE IMAGE OF BOROBUDUR IN INDONESIA

As a World Heritage site, Borobudur is held in trust by the Indonesian nation-state. The tourist promotion of this site is designated to enhance national unity anchored in the glory of ancient Javanese Hindu-Buddhist civilization. Campaigns based on this premise promote tourism and simultaneously serve as a medium to convey a national ideology and fix national and regional identities. Paradoxically, at Borobudur, the tourist promotion of the site was intended to enhance the unity of the Indonesian nation anchored in the glory of ancient Javanese Hindu-Buddhist civilization. However, the rub is that the local population living in the surrounding area is Muslim. The

representations on the monument and the neighbouring local communities no longer coincide and the religious rituals, whether Hindu or Buddhist, are no longer performed by the local populace. In short, they are at odds with each other. Despite the government's power to control the discourses, Cole (2007), Erb (2000), and Hampton (2005), have argued that the local small-scale businesses at Borobudur, and the management of the tourist industry there by PT Taman Wisata Borobudur – an Indonesian government enterprise – and their portrayal of the cultural heritage, is nonetheless negotiated through the activities of all actors involved – the Indonesian government, tourists, and local stakeholders. Hampton argues that the inclusion of locals – their business practices and perceptions of cultural heritage – as well as (national or international) tourists and the local government should result in a more balanced management policy and portrayal of Borobudur. His probing of the relationships between the host communities, their local heritage sites, and tourism management structures has proven fruitful in suggesting more benefits from new approaches to planning and managing local assets and empowering local stakeholders to gain control over their cultural heritage. In this way a more decolonial approach towards heritage, mindful of local interests and meanings attached to the heritage site, can be achieved.

6. GENERAL VIEW OF THE NGADHA AND MANGGARAI MEGALITH VILLAGES

In the case of Flores, the Regency Official of Culture and Tourism has been behind the promotion of the Ngadha Regency² and the Manggarai region³ and their Manggarai and Ngadha megalith villages, as a genuine native Indonesian cultural heritage (Kementerian Pariwisata 2018: 24-26, 90). Today, between one and two hundred Indonesian and foreign tourists visit these megalith villages daily (Gordi Donofan 2020).

While a Ngadha megalith village consists of ten to thirty traditional houses and is inhabited by thirty to one hundred and fifty villagers, Manggarai megalith villages have no more than one to seven traditional houses inhabited by ten to fifty people. These settlements are more than just places to live. The spatial arrangement of the megalith structures, traditional houses, and the placement of the *woe* symbols (sub-clan identity-markers) creates, reinforces,

² The Ngadha people are mainly concentrated in four districts: Aimere, Bajawa, Ngadha Bawah, and Golewa (Stephanus Djawanai 1983: 1). Up to the late nineteenth century, they had a *raja* (king), and Bajawa was the capital of the kingdom (Andrea K. Molnar 1998: 15). Today the remnants of the capital of the Ngadha kingdom constitute a district, Ngadha Bawah, but the descendants of the king live in *kalurahan* (sub-district) Jawa Meze. The Ngadha people are not a distinct ethnic group but seem to be a Malay-Melanesian mix (LeBar 1972: 84).

³ The indigenous Manggarai people or Ata Manggarai are mainly concentrated in Manggarai Regency (LeBar 1972: 81). In the West Manggarai Regency the Manggaraians have mixed with the coastal people and migrants like the Bimanese and the Bajo, but the Manggaraians who live in the East Manggarai Regency have close affinity with the Ngadha people. Today, Labuan Bajo is the capital of the West Manggarai Regency, Ruteng is the capital of the Manggarai Regency, and Borong is the capital of the East Manggarai Regency. The western Manggarai people are mostly Malay in physical type, and the eastern Manggarai people are Malay-Papua (LeBar 1972: 80-81; Kunst 1942: 1).

and maintains their ideology, social organization, genealogies, and hierarchy. The typical layout of a Ngadha megalith village is rectangular and divided into three main parts: first, the *loka* (courtyard), where the material objects of the *woe* identity-markers (sub-clan) – menhirs, stone tables, stone walls – are constructed; second, the *vevva* (front yard) where a number of *sao* (traditional houses) are located; and third, the *logo nua* (outer village) where toilets, ordinary houses, and pigsties are placed (Sudarmadi 1999: 79-80). (Figure 2). The layout of Manggarai megalith villages, in contrast, is oval-shaped but also tripartite: first, the *natas* (courtyard), where *compang*, material objects of *wa'u* (sub-tribe) identity – menhirs, stone tables, stone walls – are erected (see the rectangular structure in Figure 3); second, the front yard, where various *mbaru tembong* (traditional houses) are located; third, the outer village, where there are *wae teku* (springs), *boa* (graves) (see the inner rectangular structure in Figure 3), modern houses (see letters H1-H9), toilets, and rubbish dumps (Sudarmadi 2014: 166-168).

Among the Ngadha and Manggarai, social position is established by kinship relations. The primary social part of the sub-clan is the extended family – matrilineal for the Ngadha and patrilineal for the Manggarai. Typically, these extended families occupy a *sao* (traditional house) for the Ngadha (see numbers 1-37 in Figure 2) and a *mbaru tembong/niang* (traditional house) for the Manggarai (see round structure in Figure 3). The people generally attach their nuclear family's habitation to their traditional ancestral house.

A Ngadha's membership of a sub-clan determines individual claims and responsibilities, such as inheritance and land access, relationship to the sub-clan insignia, and preserving its material identity, such as the *ngadhu* (menhir) – representation of the first male ancestor –, *bhaga* (a miniature version of the traditional house) – the embodiment of the initial female ancestor –, and *ture* (menhirs and stone table structures) – delineation of warrior forebears – (see letters N, B, and Tr in Figure 2).

The authority for land claims by sub-clans is determined by sub-clan mythology. Typically, such myths refer to the origin of the sub-clan and how their ancestors discovered and reclaimed certain lands. In particular, the placing sub-clan identity symbols, including megaliths, provides a permanent claim to use and control vital resources. It explains domain-based lineages and discourses of political rule. It is also clear that conceiving the functional connection between megalith villages and other forms of Ngadha and Manggarai culture is significant to understanding the current meaning of Ngadha and Manggarai life (Sudarmadi 2014: 150-154, 175-179).

Maintaining the megalith villages as a heritage is expensive. The livelihood of the Ngadha and the Manggarai is mainly from farming, cultivating dry rice, wet rice, corn, sorghum, millet, and eggplants. Nonetheless, only 25 percent of the area is suitable for agriculture as most of the land consists of steep hills, gravel plains, and deep gorges covered by secondary forests and shrubs. Land and other sources of income, like tourism, which enable the maintenance of these symbols of identity, are therefore fundamental aspects of Ngadha and Manggarai culture.

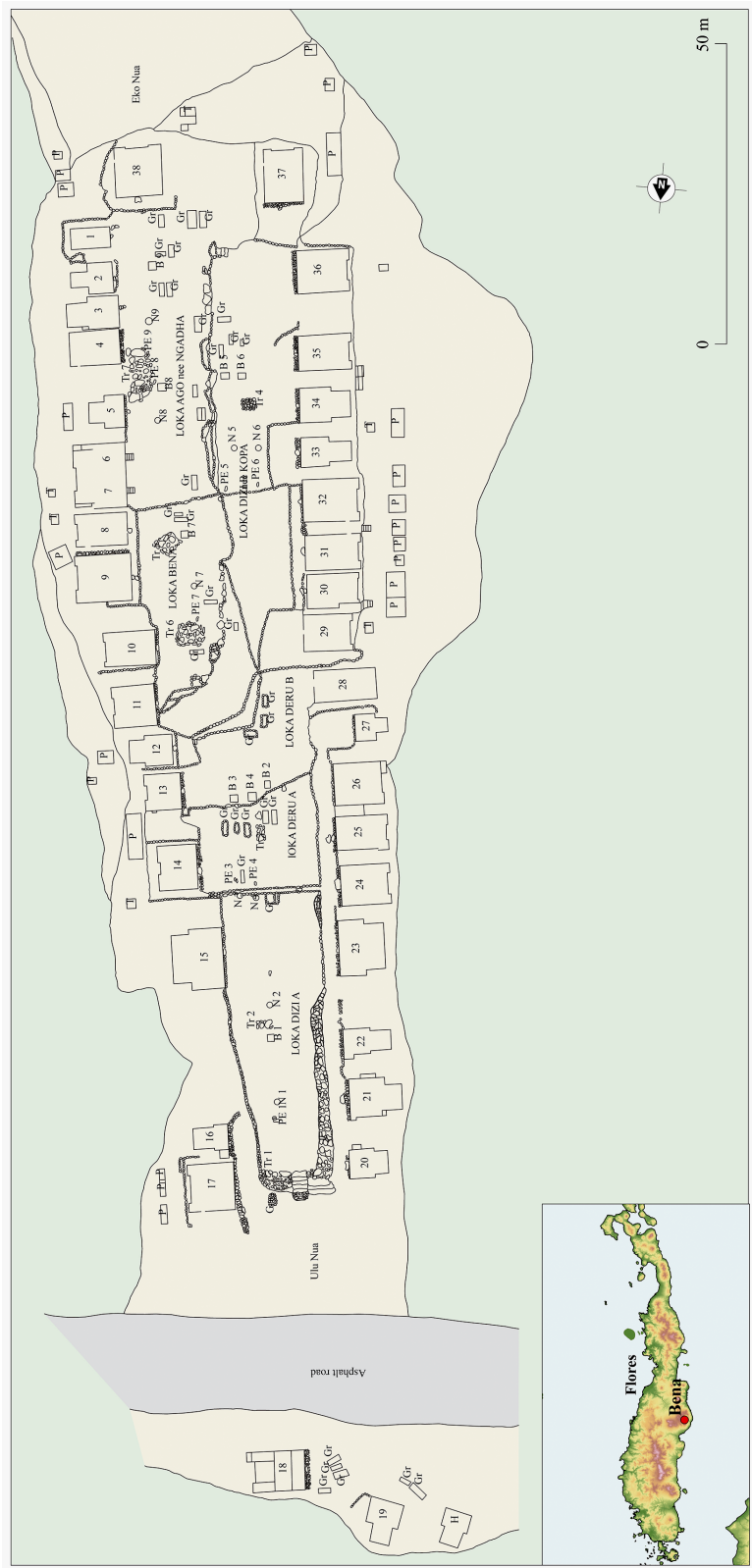


Figure 2. Bena megalith village layout (surveyed by Tular Sudarmadi (drawn by Tular Sudarmadi and Jaap Fokkema, 2013).



Figure 3. The Todo megalith village layout (surveyed by Tular Sudarmadi (drawn by Jaap Fokkema and Tular Sudarmadi, 2013)).

Previously, the strict social hierarchy mentioned above structured the lives of the Ngadha and Manggarai people. This social stratification needs to be clarified because the Indonesian government has enacted new regulations which encourage upward social mobility by encouraging educational and entrepreneurial attainments. Although the formal social status of the Ngadha and Manggarai people is still ascribed at birth, they also move up and down the hierarchy based on their occupation. In short, the Ngadha and the Manggaraian still observe the megalithic heritage as a living tradition, but in the sense of dynamic culture adapted to the *Zeitgeist*.

7. THE COLONIAL LEGACY OF THE NGADHA AND MANGGARAI MEGALITH VILLAGES TOURIST PROMOTION

Tourism has contributed to the development of Indonesia,⁴ and continues to be promoted by the Indonesian government in order to accelerate economic development and modernization. Since the New Order, the Indonesian government has commoditized the cultural heritage across its vast archipelago in a bid to attract tourists. In this grand plan, the Ngadha and the Manggaraian megalith villages are promoted as prehistoric survivals who still practise hunting using primitive weapons, surviving in a primeval wilderness. This image is presented to tourists via brochures, leaflets, television, films, videos, and the social media – websites, blogs, Twitter (now X), Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, and e-mail. Usually, the distinctive alleged aspects of these primitive sites in which time has stood still, sealing them in a prehistoric capsule, are promoted to tourists with the implication that they would never encounter these features in their daily lives in more modernized regions (SampaiJauhCom 2021; Nico Prianto 2022; Aritco HomeLift 2022; Chynd_0205 2022). Tourists do visit places far away from their usual daily lives, where they can dream and fantasize. This allows tourists to construct, reproduce, recapture, distribute, and consume pleasurable experiences. Tourists linger in such places, committing them to memory via films, videos, literature, and the mass media (John Urry and Jonas Larsen 2011: 16; J. Fletcher et al. 2018: 57-58).

In the case of the Ngadha and the Manggarai megalith villages, how the representation of certain places creates expectations and thereby transforms the experience of tourists. My observations of these tourists are that they intend to gaze upon and capture what they believe are “authentic scenes” via their cameras and mobile phones, and duplicate, retrieve, and share these experiences of these romantic and supposedly authentic prehistoric primitive megalithic traditions on social media. In their turn, tourists recapture and embrace an image of a megalithic village which they believe is authentic, natural, and unspoiled. Their views are influenced by the Indonesian

⁴ In 1969, approximately 86,001 international tourists visited Indonesia and contributed USD 10.8 million to the economy. By 1991, this number had increased to 2,569.9 (two thousands five hundred sixty nine point nine), international tourists contributing USD 2,518.1 million (Esti 2013: 28), and in 2019 the number rocketed to 16.11 million international tourists contributing USD 15.6 billion (Statista Research Department 2021).

government's promotion campaigns and by the mass media which largely copies the government narrative. A correspondence of the texts on a number of websites strengthens the perception of the authentic, age-old Ngadha megalithic tradition (Reygina Wisata Indonesia 2016). For example, speaking of Bena megalith village (Figure 2), the website mentions it is 1,200 years old, even though it was only built in the early nineteenth century. Ignoring the facts, certain media reiterate this governmental narrative and praise the authenticity of the Bena traditional houses. In another example: in 2013 *Kompas.com* devoted a report to the megalith village of Bena, in which the reporter claimed that time seemed to have been frozen in the stone age. In it he complements the villagers praising the friendliness, even as he exoticizes them by emphasizing that their smiles reveal their teeth stained red from chewing betel nut (I Made Asdhiana 2013). Clearly, the reporter's description of the everyday life of Bena villagers is a romantic pastiche of a prehistoric time which no longer exists. Undeniably, archaeological evidence in the form of prehistoric tools and human prehistoric remains (*Homo floresiensis*) have recently been found at Liang Bua sites. However, today the villagers have electricity and other modern appurtenances. Their culture has certainly evolved, even though this runs contrary to the idea among common international and domestic tourists who remain enthralled by the dominant narrative of a pre-modern, even prehistoric, society in which time has stood still. The following quote exemplifies the impressions of international tourists after visiting the megalith village of Bena.

One of the highlights of any trip to Flores is certainly a visit to the Ngada tribal villages near Bajawa. As with the Sasak tribe in Lombok, the Ngada are struggling to balance their ancient traditions with the curiosity of outsiders and gradual modernization. (Tony and Thomas 2014).

A more detailed impression of the megalith village of Bena follows:

It's pretty clear by their names that Catholic missionaries have had their influence on the Ngada as well as the other tribal peoples of Flores. But a quick look around Luba and neighboring Bena immediately reveals that many of their animist traditions are still very much intact. Ancient megalithic tomb structures, many with offerings, decorate the terraced village squares. Along the stone-walled terraces, families erect *ngadu*, thatched umbrella structures representing the male, and *bhaga*, small thatched huts representing the female. Apparently *ngadu* and *bhaga* are used in rituals relating to ancestor worship. (Tony and Thomas 2014).

The tourists cited here have even used the term *tribe* (wild peoples, primitives) to refer to the Ngadha social structure, expressed in the sentence, "the Ngada are struggling to balance their ancient traditions with the curiosity of outsiders and gradual modernization". Domestic tourists are caught up in the same narrative as reporters from the newspaper *Nasional*, *The Jakarta Post*, and a private Indonesian television broadcaster have all described the atmosphere in the megalith village of Todo, highlighting the unique traditional

houses, with conically shaped, thatched roofs which look so obsolete to modern Indonesian citizens. The exoticism of their sacred traditions, ancestor worship, superstitions, belief in magic, ancestral dreams, and animal sacrifice, has also be expounded (Campbell Bridge 2014: 24-25; Markus Makur 2019; Gabby Getal and Benny Souissa 2002). Overall, Indonesian and foreign tourists, as well as mass-media personalities who have visited the megalith villages of Ngadha and Manggarai, betray a desire for authenticity, uniqueness, and tradition. These tourists seem to dissociate from modernization occurring in these megalithic villages – for example, electric grids, paved roads, and brick houses with metal roofs and ceramic tile floors. They express their desire for these megalithic communities to be preserved, for the maintenance of traditions and practices which – at least in their eyes – have been carried over unbroken from prehistoric times in a timeless, unchanging pattern.

The most significant conclusion to be drawn from all these reports is that these views mirror their modern consciousness of the absence of civilizing influences in the Bena and Todo villages. The fact that both the tourists and mass media alike are yearning to ascribe authenticity to the megalith village shows that coloniality, colonial thinking, and their corresponding narratives, are still alive. Visitors gazing at the “authentic” day-to-day life of the Bena and Todo villagers are influenced by social Darwinist ideas formulated in colonial times which continue to affect people today. They reiterate these views, validating ethnic and cultural ancestry, distinguishing levels of primitivism or modernity, and generalized dispositions of the primitive to the civilized; from the traditional to the modern; from the savage to the rational (Anibal Quijano 2007: 176).

8. THE LOCAL STAKEHOLDER RESPONSES TO THE IMAGES OF MEGALITHIC VILLAGES IN INDONESIAN STATE TOURISM PROMOTION

In general, after the fall of the New Order government in 1998 and the subsequent decentralization of central power, the younger generation in Indonesia has been able to oppose the central government and promote their own identity (Sudarmadi 2014: 212-213; Picard 2003: 109-110). Based interviews I conducted with Ngadha and Manggarai villagers, I want to say that, on the one hand, these villagers feel marginalized by the Indonesian government in terms of identity formation, gaining profit from and managing their cultural heritage. On the other hand, they have deftly employed strategies to challenge the government misrepresentation of their villages and partake of the economic benefits of cultural tourism in their villages.

In both villages, in its promotional activities to attract tourist to see supposedly primitive, static traditions, the Indonesian government has accentuated these aspects. In doing so, it has unintentionally influenced notions of self-identity in these regions. This has been contested by the locals, for example, by younger Ngadha villagers in their refutation of the representation of their flute culture (Sudarmadi 2015). In actions which would be alien to a static tradition, young Ngadha musicians have embraced modern

music genres to create a new distinct Ngadha musical style. In the 2000s, a genre called Ngadha pop music emerged. Although this pop music uses modern musical instruments, such as drums, guitars, synthesizers, and violins, the main rhythm is rooted in traditional bamboo orchestral music, using a synthesizer, to mimic the sound of the *foi* (traditional bamboo flute). Locally born Bonney Zua has successfully launched his first album in VCD (Video Compact Disc) format, supported by his friends and local music producers. The album has been successfully disseminated in the local market. Over 3,000 copies were sold in the local market, showing a net profit of approximately IDR 30,000,000, and creating fifteen new jobs with recording sessions and public entertainment. Bonney Zua is the pioneer of modern musicians and singers in Ngadha Regency.

His creation is rooted in the local community's eagerness to preserve its cultural heritage, reaffirm its power over its own native identity construction, and co-construct and benefit from tourism. P. Hogget and J. Bishop (1986: 40-42) have argued that local efforts to respond to national government narratives are featured by free organizations which employ various media (audio, video, and word of mouth) to advertise their tourist destinations as consumable commodities (G.J. Ashworth 1994: 16-18). This idea prevails in Ngadha pop music, which has recently become widespread. Ngadha people who have migrated from Flores to major Indonesian cities – Jakarta, Batam, Medan, Bandung – and overseas – Hong Kong, Malaysia, Singapore – have distributed this music to relatives and other Ngadha who have become permanent residents of those cities. Better Internet access has allowed people to upload music to social media websites such as Facebook, YouTube, and blogs. More importantly, the first Ngadha pop album indicates a striving towards developing a modern representation of the Ngadha megalith village to contest the primitive depiction of the Indonesian government.

Most importantly, the liberation of the Dutch colonial cultural heritage by the Indonesian government after Indonesian independence has not meant liberating the static, frozen cultural heritage practices, such as *foi* bamboo music and prehistoric life labels. The Ngadha Regency Government, as the Indonesian government's representative, has taken over a top-down cultural heritage management, which has resulted in the restriction of the occupants of megalith villages to a choice between various cultural orientations and the freedom to create, disagree, change, and exchange culture with the world community. Therefore, the young megalith villagers' creation of a new modern music genre – rooted in traditional *foi* ensemble music – can be seen as a decolonial movement to liberate their cultural heritage from all content of colonial power, including discrimination, inequality, control, exploitation, and domination (Quijano 2007: 178).

Another example in which villagers have acted against the dominant official heritage narrative of the government and seized control of the meaning and exploitation of their own heritage are whip duel (*caci*) performances. In 1976 Manggarai Regency announced that *caci* was officially regarded

as a cultural heritage of Manggarai Regency, to be carried out once a year on Indonesian Independence Day. Furthermore, this sport has now been preserved, standardized, modified, and inserted into the Indonesian nation's cultural heritage by the Manggarai Regency government. By this action, the Manggarai government has emphasized its unique, authentic Manggarai cultural identity. It was realized that it could thrill foreign and be marketed to international tourists if appropriately managed. The upshot is that *caci* was cut out of and exiled from its native cultural context, and elevated in its new context of the Indonesian project of nation unity. It has been listed as a nation cultural heritage property, guarded, protected, and stewarded by the Indonesian government. Dismayed, the Manggarai people have fought against the Regency by freezing aspects of specific, authentic Manggarai cultural traditions. Some villagers in Manggarai Regency have recently been charging tourists between one and three million rupiahs to watch whip duels. Omitting the traditional rituals performed before such a duel, they have turned *caci* performances into a commodity. They have also reduced the duration of the whip fights from two to seven days to two to three hours. Traditional ritual rules that *caci* should be performed by at least twenty to thirty fighters. In the *caci* tourist display, this number has been reduced to two. Manggarai villagers have taken these initiatives to contest the government's expediency measure to standardize whip-duel performances, shorten the performance, and minimize the number of players to commodify their traditions. Indeed, the dynamization of a *caci* exhibition by the Manggaraian villagers has created more room to manoeuvre in the local government's cultural heritage mainstream construction. It has given them more freedom to celebrate their cultural heritage performances. Moreover, the dynamization of *caci* exhibition by the Manggaraian villagers has transformed the Indonesian government's standard cultural heritage practices, that is, the centralized control of cultural heritage, the domination of the cultural heritage discourse, and the ways in which cultural heritage issues are tackled in the service of the state, steering them towards more freedom for the community to appreciate their cultural heritage and allow them to share the benefits of the cultural heritage capital.

Given the example of the cultural heritage management in the Ngadha and Manggarai, it is imperative to realize that tourism promotion should propagate not only the national identity of the cultural heritage Indonesian mainstream civilization, but also every simple manifestation of cultural heritage which is valuable to the marginalized public and significant to people who are culturally or historically linked to the resource. Applying this sort of cultural heritage management perspective would pave the way for more dynamic and democratic public participation because it would allow for a bottom-up approach.

9. CONCLUSION

The current Indonesian government's tourism promotion extolls a tropical archipelago of great diversity, inhabited by exotic people, flora, and fauna. However, this imagery stems from western colonial views, particularly evolutionary ideas about the (hierarchy) of civilisations and cultures, evolution, and modernity. In the Dutch colonial era and later the Indonesian state, the Hindu-Buddhist antiquities in Java were considered artistic achievements worthy of the zenith of socio-cultural evolution. At the other end of the scale, megalith villages and other prehistoric material cultures were seen as primitive, on a lower level of development. After Indonesian independence in 1945, Dutch colonial ideas did not disappear, but were internalized by the Indonesian government as universal, inevitable – “God-given” – knowledge and perception. Evolutionary, hierarchical imagery was taken to mirror the Indonesian government's achievement in integrating great diversity of people and cultures in various stages of evolutionary “development”: from simple prehistoric societies, evolving, through the Hindu-Buddhist, Islamic, and colonial eras, into modern society under the unitary Indonesian Republic.

In the context of tourism promotion, the appropriation of cultural heritage and the use of evolutionary concepts in the Indonesian official governmental heritage evaluation has resulted in the fabrication of competing narratives between Borobudur in Java and the megalith villages of the Ngadha and the Manggarai people in Flores. The aim is to promote Borobudur in support of the unity of the Indonesian nation anchored in the glory of ancient Javanese Hindu-Buddhist civilization and listed in the UNESCO World Heritage inventory. This cultural heritage narration of tourism promotion puts Indonesia onto the same level as modern western countries which have completed the process of social evolution from a simple to a contemporary society.

This contrasts with the supposedly primitive developmental stage of the Ngadha and the Manggarai megalith villages which has also been seized, revived, commodified, and sold for tourist consumption. The influence of this governmental narrative is repeated by journalists and tourists, both reiterating this exotic portrayal of the Ngadha and Manggarai people. Based on texts on social media, tourists seek to experience the “exotic” Ngadha and Manggarai and see the daily life in megalith villages as authentic, natural; threatening to lose interest in this destination if a more modern lifestyle were to be achieved. This has contributed to essentialized, fixed, exoticized, and romanticized images, catering to what the tourists want to see.

Attempting to counter the colonial evolutionary framework in which their villages have been thrust and in pursuit of another existence, the Ngadha and Manggarai megalith villagers have produced competing narratives, in which their heritage and aspects of modernity are combined, and this has also enabled villagers to take advantage of the economic benefits of tourism. For example, the traditional bamboo flute orchestra has now been mixed with modern musical instruments and also plays pop music. In a similar way, traditional whip duels (*caci*) have been commodified for tourist consumption. Frankly,

the attempts of the megalith villagers of the Ngadha and the Manggarai to counter the Indonesian Tourist Board's colonial imagery can be seen as a decolonial act to liberate the knowledge, management, and identity of the megalith cultural heritage from the colonial stranglehold.

In short, the way the Indonesian Tourist Board still promotes places of national interest is still strongly rooted in colonial visions of people and cultures. In a reciprocal process, visitors' images and expectations are influenced by these long-standing concepts and, in turn, are influenced by it. Looking at the situation of the Ngadha and the Manggarai megalith villages, to make situation less colonial, the government should include local communities in the management of their cultural heritage, acknowledging and co-opting the fluid nature of their cultures, including decolonial strategies displayed by local communities to liberate knowledge of modernity narratives.

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