

Sea as a Critical Threshold for Economic, Ecological and Cultural Survival: The Vernacular Community in the Area around Alor Kecil in Makassar, Indonesia.

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Abstract

Alor Kecil is a coastal community in Makassar, Indonesia. Globalization has been one of the main factors in the formation of the Alor Kecil vernacular community due to the high tolerant attitude of the community. The latest manifestation of globalization comes there under the label of coastal tourism which is still in infancy. However, the practices of coastal tourism start to show some socio-cultural and ecological issues in the vernacular settlement by the sea being a critical threshold. This paper explores the transformations of the meaning of the sea from different periods examines the setting of vernacular life in this coastal habitat from the perspectives of the local actors.

The study employs the perspective of three local actors who offer some insights through their narrations of their life stories in the coastal habitat. Because of their special knowledge and political power in the community, they could represent the community in Alor Kecil.

Findings of this research has shown the specific transformations taking place in Alor Kecil vernacular community. These are the oblivion of local skills, rupture in the relations between the inhabitants and their natural cycle, the vulnerable marine ecosystem, and social inequality in the cultivation of natural resources.

Keywords: Alor Kecil, Coastal Tourism, Globalization, Critical Threshold, Transformations, Indonesia.

Introduction

As Paneliya and Suhane (2024) show, in various coastal vernacular communities, sea is seen as a source of interminable protein provider. Mutia (2012) demonstrates how the spatial planning experiences of living on the water differ from the Netherlands to Indonesia. English, and Klink (2023) show how different communities thrive with water, by means of developing Amphibious architecture. In fact, Barker and Coutts (2016) have coined the term Aquitecture to refer to the buildings and cities designed to live and work with water.

However, this pragmatic understanding exists side by side among many communities with the philosophical idea of the sea as the place of origin of the ancestors. In fact, this sacred area of the sea is depicted in a lot of local narrations as an unknown space, a dynamic exploration arena that is hard to conquer.

Alor Kecil Village is situated by the West side of the Alor Island directly adjacent with Pantar Strait which separates it with its closest island, known as Kepa Island. Up to this day, for the vernacular community in Alor Kecil Village, the sea is also a medium that shapes their community from a series of waves of bringing groups of people who at the end stay in the village.

Far before Kalabahi, the current capital city of Alor Regency in the province of Nusa Tenggara Timur was established as the main port in 1911 (Wikipedia.org, 2016). Alor Kecil was always a main port and also at the same time, a garrison headquarters for the Dutch army since the year of 1854 (Scarduelli, 1991).

The vernacular people of Alor Kecil live in some areas of ethnic groups. Pietro Scarduelli (1991) recounts that in the late 19th century, various groups of people from other Indonesian islands saw Alor Kecil as a strategic landing place. Indeed, they eventually settled as a vernacular community in Alor Kecil. However, the Alor Kecil community today comes from several ethnic groups: Javanese, Ambonese, Makassarese, Chinese, Timorese, and Pantar people.

Since first formed, Alor Kecil community showed high tolerance to share their living spaces with the newcomers. In other words, the society of Alor Kecil is no stranger to globalization. Ethnic diversity outside Alor Island on the vernacular society of Alor Kecil showed that globalization has been practiced even before the concept of nation is introduced.

Alor Kecil is the closest port to reach Kepa Island that also became a place for fishermen to anchor or rent a boat. Residents' houses are built with concrete walls directly facing the beach and only separated by the main street. Since the popularity of a French owned island homestay in Kepa, "La P'tite", foreign tourists who want to stay and use the services for diving began to be discovered around the Alor Kecil port.

Thus, tourism began growing in 2001, when an immigrant from France got legal permission to operate an 'Inn' in the area of Kepa Island by hiring at least 350 m² of land owned by the local community. He began promoting his business that was initially only a form of accommodation. However, it is now developing into diving services through an online advertisement. Foreign nationals who built homestay in Alor District can be found also in Serani beach on the Southern Island of Alor, but more tourists who visit the Kepa Island are there mainly due to access from Kalabahi port to Alor Kecil which is fairly close compared with the direction from the Serani beach. The arrival of foreign tourists transiting in the island has marked the next wave of globalization in Alor Kecil.

The latest tourism developments in Alor Kecil raises a lot of questions regarding their impact on the vernacular community in Kampung Makassar related to the economic, social, political, cultural, and ecological transformation of the existing patterns of living. Although tourism is still in its infancy, it has provoked some issues. The coastline facing the residential area will be a negotiated threshold which in time may very well be increasingly critical. The littoral zone (intertidal zone) and the neritic zone (shallow sea) are two zones that most likely will experience the intervention of coastal tourism activities. Ironically, these two zones also house high bio-diversity that ensures balance to variety of marine life. Thus, it would be a zone with high ecological fragility (Green, 2009).

The vernacular community dominated by the fishermen will soon feel the effects of damage to the marine ecology. Tourism activities have a different economic approach to the skills possessed by the indigenous community to meet their daily needs during this time. Exploiting the potential of the coast by various key actors in Kampung Makassar will determine the direction of the ecological, socio-cultural, and economic transformation of vernacular life. In this context, this paper examines the nature of the transformations of this coastal habitat. It takes a viewpoint of the three kinds of local actors related to the various waves of globalization

in the village to examine the issue. Its intention is to deepen the understanding related to the intertwined idea of global vernacular. Its aim is to uncover the reaction of the vernacular society to the changes in the context of living space in the periodization of time since the unification of the society, characterized by a specific plural society. Specifically, Kampung Makassar has become a field study because of its position directly facing the port. On my second visit to the island of Alor in August 2016, I intend to visit the island to see the life of the community of Kepa Beach after being recommended by an Alorese that hosts the place I lived in.

Its objectives are:

1. To map the forces that use the sea as a medium from some periods of time to latest arrival of force in the form of tourism.
2. To ascertain the common mental maps regarding the transformation of the vernacular lives of the citizens.
3. To uncover typical adaptation strategies of the local residents against waves of outsiders coming into their area, so they were able to survive and sustain coastal habitats today and will do so in the future.

The Theoretical Framework

Exercise of Politics, Knowledge and Power in Coastal Tourism

Upadhyay and Pal (2019) show the commonality of architecture associated with water and specifically the seas. Barker & Coutts (2016) add to this with the coining of such architecture as 'Aquatecture.' They show that the sea is no longer just a carrier of water. For the Indonesians, it is a catalyst for change, a dynamic space for the vernacular community of Alor Kecil, but also a new territory of contestation and negotiation that can be dominated. As a fishermen community, Alor Kecil people understand the sea in sectional-depth perspective and not just as a surface because the fishermen recognize the signs of tide, the sound of water, the wave characters, as well as the sea creatures (Mathur, et al., 2010). Sea, in this way, is looking as an informal and uncertain realm, while the map often depicts the sea as a connected blank space. Thus, it shows illiteracy in understanding the sea as a living space that is productive, which quite survives from human occupation. In his study of political power, Foucault (1982) called the possibility of access becomes an indispensable concept in creating political tension of territory and power. Local people will see access as an opening that leads to lucid experience, while the newcomers are not always innocent. Foucault saw migrants tend to engage in a power system of an indigenous society by bringing in a political agenda. Local people who are closer to the access, due to certain political positions or the provision of education, will soon be involved in contestation of power in their own homeland. Besides the agenda of community development, there is also a desire to improve the family well-being of the local actors.

Ecologically analyzed, development of coastal tourism will bring a problematic issue. Green (2009) predicts by 2020, the coastal occupancy will rise up to twice the current numbers in the world and will have an impact on greater ecological burden for the coastal environment. Tourism is recorded as one main factor that accelerates the damages in coastal areas, mainly due to increased commercial activities around accommodation businesses. High densities in the beaches will result in great changes on the structure of the coastal habitat. Environmental imbalance in the system will soon affect crucial natural resources that ensure the survival of the local communities and automatically change the social-cultural and economic system of the vernacular society. If not well anticipated by the local people, coastal tourism may result in the loss of cultural and ecological resiliency. Identity of place would disappear, replaced by the global culture.

In response to the environmental crisis with capitalist economic system as the main factor, Felix Guattari (2000) suggested three manifestations of the concept of ecology which consists of social, mental, and environmental aspects by considering the great power of market and media. In line with Foucault, Guattari saw that access becomes crucial in capitalism and warned anyone involved to be aware of the benefits to be more inclusive in the level of macro

politic and micro politic. Activities that utilize natural resources should not be merely profit-oriented. Therefore, the presence of access can help more people achieve a better life. This agenda is also expressed by Fainstein (2010) in the concept of environmental justice that anticipates the crisis of habitat for the powerless community. In this agenda, practice of coastal tourism in Alor Kecil will place the sea as a critical space and the coastline as a critical threshold. The vernacular communities along the shoreline will earn more money from the commercialization of their habitat. On the other hand, they will lose their self-sufficiency in producing food and goods relating to dedication in tourism. It is very likely to find the disappearance of local skills, such as traditional techniques of fish-catching and craftsmanship of canoe-making. Subsequently, the economic system will be very dependent on the availability of money.

The Historical Setting and the Review of Literature

Various historical documentation of Alorese civilization have explained that terminology of Alor was widely introduced by Antonio Lombardo Pigafetta who sailed to Eastern Indonesia in 1522. In her study, Adams (2005) has shown the key role played by the anthropologist in introducing the people of Alor since the publication of Du Bois in 1944, as well as another anthropological publication since 1920s until late 1930s (Scarduelli, 1991). The area of this rugged mountainous island is 2800 km². It is inhabited by at least 140,000 people scattered in the mountains and the coastal area. Alor Island is the biggest one in the Alor District, Kalabahi. The chief town of Alor District, is the only flat area in the island, where the main port takes place. Each vernacular group in Alor Island shows diversity of cultures and languages. Indeed, Dalton (1984) has found 70 spoken languages that cannot be understood by people outside a radius of 20 km. Those who live in the mountainous area are practicing different ways of life with a coastal dweller. Due to the isolation area of habitation and linguistic diversity, mutual distrust has frequently led to warfare.

Every community has a group of warriors who practice as head hunters in the old days. This fact had encouraged Pigafetta to label Alor people with an eerie image: animal-like, savage, and wild. This is the earliest depiction of the Alor society from the perspective of an outsider. In the New Order era, the government began a tourism program as a strategy of nation-building since the late 1980s in relation to two major events: Visit Indonesia Year in 1991, followed by the Visit ASEAN Year in 1992. This propaganda is known as a "National Tourism Campaign Awareness Program." It is comprised of seven-standards called "Seven Charms", including points of security, orderliness, friendliness, beauty, comfort, cleanliness, and memory (Adams, 2005). This standard has been clearly oriented to the expectations of the international tourists. The program has encouraged the rural society in Eastern Indonesia to pursue the standards in order to participate to take economic advantage. The greater agenda of the program seemed to achieve increasingly civilized conditions throughout the nation. Unfortunately, the national tourism campaign in the 1990s has not considered Alor as a potential destination and has skipped the island in the Eastern Indonesia tourism route.

The economic result from the global recognition of Eastern Indonesia tourism charms in the neighboring islands, such as Flores and Komodo, has been noted by several actors in Alor. This has encouraged them to make independent strategies apart from the government programs. The actors usually have certain political power in their community, either because of their roles as savvy persons, coordinators of the village, as well as hotel owners. Local actors have enticed more and more guests as sources of new capital through such access to meet the researchers and the tourists. Their strategies have shown a pattern of forming tourist attractions, which Adams (2005) has referred to as crafting of touristic imagery.

By utilizing the world-famous publication of Du Bois as a description of the vernacular community of Alor, since the 1990s, the local actors have begun to promote cultural and linguistic richness, mysterious discovery of *moko* (ancient bronze drum), traditional village of Takpala, rituals through *lego-lego* dance around ancestor altar as well as the dance of war, *cakalele*. The latest touristic image of Alor is generated by the foreign tourists themselves under

the label of tranquility and remarkable scenery and diving spot, highlighted by the Traveler's Guidebook, "Lonely Planet" (Witton et al., 2003). This is in comparison with the conflicted neighboring area of East Timor after the Indonesian Reformation. Evolution of images formed by this outsider has been read as expectations that need to be attached to the awareness of local residents in order to gain commercial benefit from the fulfillment of the expectation.

Through commercialization of the underwater natural beauty in Kepa Island, Alor District has been actually initiated by a foreign migrant who first visited Alor in 1998 and eventually settled there until today. Supriyadi, whose house directly faces the Alor Kecil Port, said that Cedric Lechat, owner of "La P'tite Homestay", brought his wife and children to live in the homestay since 2004. Cedric also employs a small number of Kepa people as kitchen hands and boat crew, while he acts as the main diving guide. Visitors who come to the homestay usually transit in Alor Kecil Port and take 10-15 minutes of travel using rental boats.

The inhabited area of Kepa Island could be identified in two main areas: vernacular housing and the sacred beach, "Haribatang". There are also two commercial areas of homestay, "La P'tite" and Alorese-owned "Merangki Homestay". Majority of the Kepa people are members of *Manglolong* ethnic group. They are fishermen who also cultivate dry-field agriculture. Supriyadi (2016) highlighted the scarcity of fresh water in Kepa. Therefore, both citizens and homestay management must fetch water for free from a well in Alor Kecil. Alor Kecil and Kepa people are mastering fishing skills to provide daily food. Electricity is produced from photovoltaic panels in each house, provided by the local government. Through tourism business in Kepa Island, Pantar Strait has served as a medium of economic development for Alor Kecil people, especially Kampung Makassar, with all constructive or destructive impact of this embryo of coastal tourism.

The Intricate Idea of Vernacular in Alor Kecil Society

Description of vernacular living system from time to time could be derived via observation of local technology (Saliya, 2008). This system of technology is related to people's reaction of natural phenomenon in the habitat to require optimal value. Since it is very local, the methods and materials are highly concerned with natural mechanisms. Generally speaking, local communities have collective skills that define the identity of place and the art of craftsmanship. This skill also becomes the mainstay of survival and will be transferred to the next generation in order to preserve life. Local technologies will describe the knowledge of economic, social, and ecological values without forgetting the sacred root stored in the local myths as an existential orientation.

In the context of Alor Kecil, Murji Patinasarani (2016), an Ambon descent and one of the chieftains of Makassar has shown the idea of diversity in the lineage of his community as an excellence, especially in Kampung Makassar as the area of migrants with a smaller number of a native of Alorese from two ethnicity groups of *Manglolong* and *Baorae*. Murji recalled his memory of how the arrival of diverse ancestors coincided with the arrival of the Dutch in Indonesia in the 1600s. Land along the coast has been owned by an ethnic group of highlander, well known as *Bampalola* people, who have been very modest to accept the migrants from Makassar, Ambon, and Java. They have invited them to settle down and live as brothers. The migrants have brought new skills and goods that are not owned by the earlier indigenous people. Several skills have been exchanged such as trading, agriculture, deep-well making, and religious practices. Meanwhile, Alorese have taught the newcomers about fishing techniques with traditional traps, *bubu*, and by diving. This acculturation of shared-skills has constructed the living pattern in Kampung Makassar today.

In his unpublished notes during his study, Supriyadi mentions that Alor Kecil vernacular community consists of five ethnic groups: *Baorae*, *Manglolong*, *Lekaduli*, *Makassar*, and *Mudiluang* (Supriyadi, 2013). Murji is very proud of tranquility in his village of facing different migrant groups who still have the freedom to practice their culture of origin for certain rituals. Although Alor Kecil people are Muslims, they still have ritual to honor their ancestors which often combines with the religious events. The biggest event, the circumcision

ritual, lasts for 7 days and includes all ethnic groups in Alor Kecil by positioning the ancestor stone altar as the axis mundi (Scarduelli, 1991). Marriages and funerals are social events which also rely on the solidarity of the whole community in Alor Kecil, in order to supply food and the other necessities.

Every ethnic group in Alor Island has one central sacred space in the form of a stone altar. This place serves as a meeting area with a living ancestor, believed as their guardian spirit. In the old era of warfare, head-hunters will present an enemy's head at this altar. Typically, an altar made of stone or coral which are arranged in a circular form to symbolize female element and, on top of it, forked wooden post is invested, as a symbol of the male element (Waterson, 1990). One of the nearest altars of Kampung Makassar takes place in the sacred beach of Kepa Island and is maintained by the Chieftain of *Manglolong*.

Manglolong people believe their ancestors came from and still inhabit the sea. *Manglolong* fishermen are relying on the generosity of their ancestors to provide many fish. Thus, at certain times, rituals of gratitude are held in the restricted area of "Haribatang." Symbolic function of the wooden post in *Manglolong's* altar is replaced by the existence of an ancient giant banyan tree. This sacred navel is understood as the wedding place of the sea guardian, "Buiharipanatu", and the land guardian: "Muji Mujemo" (Sere, 2016).

Life in the Alor Kecil vernacular settings seem rooted in hunter-gatherer groups. This group possesses a specific cosmological perspective of their habitat as the arena of adaptation, where people are eager to engage and reciprocally nurtured the element of their natural habitat. They own less property. This local behavior is very different with agriculture societies who tend to exploit and occupy Nature as their own property to create artificial and conditioned settlements (Waterson, 1990). After all, the root of pluralistic society of Alor Kecil performs a great tolerance of changes that come from the outside. They process knowledge from the outside to eventually mix it with daily practices to generate new life forms with more benefits.

This paper explores the transformations of Alor Kecil with the employment of these theoretical ideas to understand the processes and their manifestations.

Research Method

This research takes the case study of the village of Alor Kecil, especially Kampung Makassar, and Alor Island, NTT. It is oriented to generate insights and findings related to the issues of coastal habitat and vernacular community. Through the search of historical, socio-cultural, and ecological, it examines the reaction of the residents against symptoms of life changes influenced by different understanding of the oceans' role for the vernacular community as an incentive of transformation. The research engages descriptive narrative as a method as a form of an ethnographic approach. It employs the local speakers as the main source of knowledge about their spatial and temporal experience.

During the study the researcher communicates intensively with three local actors who can represent proper character roles of the local people: Mr. Murji, Mr. Supriyadi, and Mr. Sere. They reveal the symptoms of the coastal habitat along with the life settings of the vernacular community of Alor Kecil.

In addition, other local residents offered the idea of the realm of the coastal life through conversations about daily lives and collective memories. Observations were made on the citizens' daily activities in the context of coastal habitats which produced a wide range of questions that became the subject of conversations with the local actors. Notes from Mr. Supriyadi about cultural life in the village during his study years in Malang were collected that show how today's Alor Kecil society was formed.

The research was conducted from March 2024-June 2024, during which the author travelled to Makassar and resided among the community. This 'lived-in experience' is reflected upon in generating the insights, buttressed by the findings from the conversations with the community and the three informants.



Fig. 1: Alor Island in the Republic of Indonesia map: marked by a red circle
Source: www.alor-diving-kepa.com, 2016

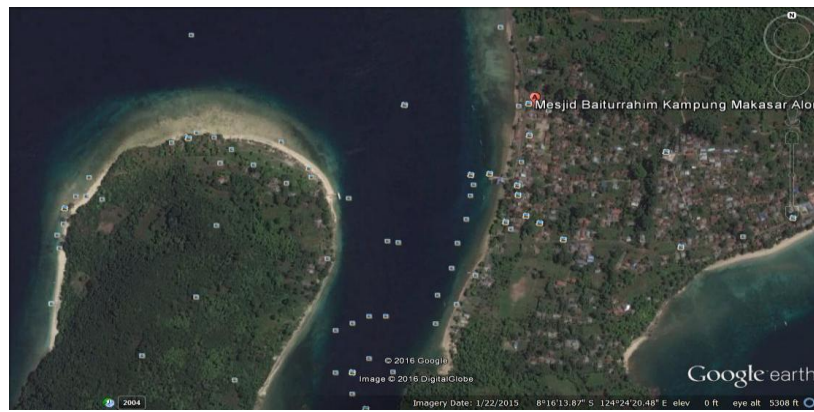


Fig. 2: Kampung Makassar, Alor Kecil in Alor Island (right) and Kepa Island (left), separated by Pantar Strait in the middle
Source: Google Earth, 2016

Findings and the Discussion

“Sea is always our habitat”: Reproduction of Values in Past, Present, and Future Globalization

Pantar Strait has confronted indigenous people of Alor Kecil with global society since a very long time ago. Sea has been explored from the surface to the depth by the fishermen of Kampung Makassar. Alor Kecil boys master the techniques of diving to catch a fish from the age of 8 years old. They also learn other techniques by using nets and light. Since “La P'tite Homestay and Diving” was built, local people have a new awareness of the underwater world in Pantar Strait. Enjoying the beauty of the coral reefs while swimming and diving without equipment is a daily pleasure of children in Alor Kecil and Kepa Island. This amenity was not seen as the Other of everyday schedule before. However, since underwater beauty of Alor starting to be recognized by a publication of international tourism media in the early 2000s, local residents started to exoticize their daily perks and see it as a tourist expectation with potential profit. This mental map about the sea has marked the pre-physical encounter between local people and another global society and has described the sort of political exercise of power and knowledge.

Fishing activities around the port began at 4:00 am using a canoe or boat that is usually owned and operated by two people. Fishermen will be returning to the shore at 6:00 am to sell their catch to the wholesaler, known as *papa lele*, which will bring the entire fish to Kalabahi market. From my conversation with local women, the catch may include fish, shrimp, squid, and octopus. *Papa lele* is considered very helpful in reducing the burden of work in fish sales. First, fish are caught to be sold, the rest are consumed as source of daily protein. Children who

lived before 1980s were encouraged to assist parents in fishing activities. Education was not a priority. However, since the elementary and secondary schools are developed, the parents began to encourage their kids to have a better education in pursuing a better life. Fisherman is not prioritized as future profession for the next generation. In 2014, the only high school building in the village of Alor Kecil has been established.

Fishermen life is vividly described by Mr. Sere (2016), which is almost 60 years old and still mastering variety of traditional techniques in fish-catching. Sturdy and well-built body has shown that he is still doing physical exercise. When dive without equipment, Mr. Sere can hold his breath up to 15 minutes. Traps and nets were still used to get fish. For catching higher value big fish, such as tuna, Mr. Sere will use a fishing rod. When the west monsoon passes through Pantar Strait, from October to April, the fishermen will not go to the sea due to risky currents and big waves. During this period, the land of Alor Kecil receives rain to allow people grow and harvest cassava and corn. The surplus of yield will be stored for consumption during drought periods from April to October which is also a good time for fishing. This complementary pattern demonstrates a sustainable cycle of survival based on an understanding of the ecological system in the coastal habitat.

As a chieftain, Mr. Sere still performs the ritual to ask blessing from the ancestor who inhabit the sea. Before move to the sea, he will pray to the seven sea guardians to ensure the availability of fish. For local people who have a particular intention, Mr. Sere provides service to carry out the ritual of "Puhari", by bringing offerings to the sea accompanied by special prayers for the sea guardians. Residents who hold this ritual is relatively rare because it takes big cost to prepare the offerings of goat meat, tobacco and betel nut. By bringing all the difficulties of life to the guardian of sea, which is understood as parents, Alor Kecil people has built an attachment that goes beyond pragmatic view of the sea. Human-sea relationship in Alor Kecil shows personal and communal contemplation of existential crisis toward the sea. Any physical changes in the coastal habitat will result in degeneration process of socio-cultural-ecological cognition of vernacular society. By selling fish, the fishermen have purchasing power in the form of money to meet their needs. Fish is still the main commodity, but crops are not reliable anymore. Rice and corn can be purchased any time. Carbohydrates fulfillment pattern these days has unleashed Alor Kecil citizens from natural cycles.

Mr. Sere also pays attention to various restrictions on the destructive fishing practice. This behavior seems to be driven by the awareness of keeping the coral reefs and marine ecosystems because he has already involved in coastal tourism since 2001, when he first served as director at CV. "La P'tite Kepa". While he may seems to enjoy the marine life, Mr. Sere showing positive gesture about a new trend in Alor Kecil: youngster should wander to more developed island in educational or working mission. Mr. Sere also told me, he has a miserable memory as a 12 years old kid to dedicate himself in catching fish all night long and in the morning he had to deliver the fish in a very rush manner to Kalabahi (14 km away), only by foot, because of that time, town road was not opened yet. He left school to earn some money. This old days experience has motivated Mr. Sere, as well as most parents, to avoid the same difficulties in their descendant's life. Affirming this perspective, 26 years old Mr. Supriyadi proudly presents himself as the product of seven years wandering in Java Island. He believes coastal youngsters should be migrated first to be more knowledgeable and then they are expected to develop village of Alor Kecil.

Children are still taught to catch fish and operate boat by parents as survival strategies, however education still comes first. Nowadays, children will learn this traditional knowledge once they reach high school. Although he has held a bachelor's degree, Mr. Supriyadi still good in operating his boat. After returning from Java, Mr. Supriyadi has discovered the potential of embryonic coastal tourism in the village. If he is not on duty as a temporary teacher in a public elementary school, he will guide tourist to Kepa Island. He is excited to participate in the diving business and now he is searching for capital. Mr. Supriyadi sees sea as a strategic space to open businesses, and he realized that a series of globalization were coming from the sea that has brought transformation in his village to become more advanced. Homestay in Kepa Island is

also considered as business opportunities for local people. Acculturation traces from the past seem to generate entrepreneurship talent in some of Kampung Makassar people.

When asked to explain the impact from each era of national government, Mr. Sere mostly feels the impact of physical development during the Soeharto era. That period is remembered as a time that was safe with rare social conflicts, as well as economic stability. Cement and brick since the 1990s has also been distributed from Surabaya and available in Kalabahi. The new building materials immediately replaced earlier bamboo housing. Today, the whole house in Kampung Makassar already made of brick, cement, wood, glass, and zinc roof. The Soekarno regime, which preceded Suharto, was remembered as a time of great difficulties with rare physical development. Building materials of house and school were still dominated by bamboo, wood, and straw. Socio-political conflicts were still common. One of the events that most sticks out was when an uprising of "30 September Movement" (G30S / PKI) in late October 1965. At that time, villagers cannot go to the sea or into the fields because they had to carry out night watch in the entire village. Starvation was occurring until 1966, when Suharto finally inaugurated. The Megawati era was marked by the opening of asphalt road to Kalabahi which helps residents meet various needs. Mr. Sere does not really feel the impact of current reign of national government and is likely to initiate changes independently, especially to his family well-being.

According to Foucault's concept (1982) of access, it appears that local people still rely on the sea as the main unlimited access and to bring progress from the outside. I have found congruent thought of Mr. Supriyadi and Mr. Sere about stagnant condition of their existing vernacular society. This view is also inseparable from their political bias. The two have been in touch with life outside the village. Although never wander, Mr. Sere previously collaborated with Cedric Lechat to legalize and operate "La P'tite Kepa". Currently, Mr. Sere is no longer involved in the management of homestay and decides to open a diving service with his son, Sam, one of the young Alorese men who own diving certification. Role of Cedric Lechat seemed to prove the theory of Foucault about access from the perspective of an outsider. Since his first arrival to dive around Alor Kecil and Kepa Island, he has found access to exercise power on Kepa Island by cooperating with the chieftain of *Manglolong* in approaching local residents related to permission. His knowledge of professional diving gives a confidence to colonize an area of Kepa Island in one package with its gorgeous underwater world.

The acceptance of foreigner in their habitat shows the vernacular gist of *Manglolong* people (as part of Alor Kecil) who mostly see positive change from outsider to renew their communities. However, the result from this perspective is not always good. Foreigners will be very easy to take commercial advantage of the resources in Alor Kecil habitat for their personal interests only by showing friendliness and hospitality to the locals. Cedric Lechat has rented for decades for an area of Kepa Island and got a warm welcome from the local residents. But he also privatizes the beach at his homestay area and in the holiday season, his whole family will spend time in their home country. This condition has been revealed by Yuswadi Saliya (2008) as a new form of colonization that comes in innocent cover. He added that current development of an area is assessed by the acceleration degree of change, which means speeding up the oblivion of local value. I can clearly find this understanding began to be played by local political actors to build perspective as the Other of their own vernacular context. The local actors are the first party to absorb the views from outside and affirm those views as milestone for future action.

"Tourism is our next opening": Local Actor's Imagination of Attraction and Local Development

Bitterness of coastal tourism is now faced by Mr. Sere. Since the change of business system from CV to PT in 2013, Cedric Lechat took over director position of "La P'tite" from Mr. Sere. Mr. Sere reacted by suing Cedric to give 50% profit from 2001 to 2013, because he felt "La P'tite" can run smoothly because of his political power as chieftain of *Manglolong*. From the beginning, Mr. Sere mediated local contractor from Takpala Village to build 10 units

of homestay with typical house of Abui ethnic group, the highlander, who called their house as *fala* house. Design of homestay unit is promoted by Cedric in his as a "traditional village" (www.alor-diving-kepa.com, 2016) is actually not a house of coastal habitat. Mr. Sere also once submitted a proposal to the district government for funding several lounges and chairs for the homestay. During the work with Cedric, Mr. Sere made contact with foreign tourists who know Kepa Island from the website. Legal conflict between Mr. Sere and Cedric are still going on to this day and there is no way out for Mr. Sere, which he analyzed was influenced by money politics in the body of law enforcement authorities. However, Mr. Sere still sees coastal tourism as the opening with a perfect momentum, so he built collaboration with diving businessman from Surabaya to run a local diving guidance service while still trying to apply for government grants to buy additional diving equipment. Although there is another homestay owned by an Alorese in Kepa Island, Mr. Sere said that the local government was promoting Cedric's homestay at the first place. The government's attitude seems driven by the potential for foreign tourists of "La P'tite" to promote Alor globally and bring the benefits of capital for Alor District.

When discussing opportunities of local people's collective involvement in Alor Kecil coastal tourism, Mr. Sere still sees his people have a very limited knowledge of coastal tourism and diving service. Because diving is a sort of indulgence since childhood and people have collective skill as a fisherman, basically they aware of the beauty of underwater world around Alor Kecil. Residents have not been able to be completely engaged in its business because they need costly diving certification from standardized course in Java or Bali. In addition, big capital is required for providing safety equipment. This situation creates a limitation for most local residents. Hygiene is also a local problematic issue which is raised by Mr. Sere about diving business. Currently the majority of residents in Kampung Makassar, besides Mr. Sere and Mr. Supriyadi, appear to be still bizarre in receiving tourists in their everyday life. The awkward expression of embryonic coastal tourism could be indicated from the very limited number of local food-sellers in the area of Alor Kecil Port.

Although Cedric Lechat does not seem to improve well-being of the local people, the popularity of his homestay is considered by Mr. Supriyadi and Mr. Sere as being able to create alternative business. It is very clear that local actors of tourism business are growing sporadically and not as a group. In terms of analysis, tourism will open a wider access that finally leads people to the dependence on money. Money will be a significant factor in modifying local life, especially related to the cultivation of local resources which on one side could be too exploitative, in case of diving business, or even no longer untouched, in case of field cultivation. In fulfillment of the most basic needs, namely food, residents will lose resiliency and depend on the availability of money as purchasing power to buy daily carbohydrate needs. The neglect of field will lead to broken bonding between local people and their mother nature which ensures their survival. Afterwards, the destruction of land would be very easy in pursuing commercial goals in the future.

The local actors, who will become agents of change, see tourism as a reliable future enlightenment. They urge the government to include tourism as the main agenda. The absence of tourism in current development strategy of Alor District (Strategy of 2014-2019) on the other side needs to be seen as critical available time for local people to create a collective plan about coastal tourism and its impact for the condition of their habitat before finally involve in this risky business. In a report on coral reef destruction all over the world, it is noted that coastal development becomes one of the main causes of damage, together with destructive fishing practices (World Research Institute, 2011). Coral reef destruction will affect the availability of local fish and coastal settlements' security from ravage of the storm.

The report also states that since 2010, the sea around the world have become significantly warmer and has been accompanied by the bleaching on coral reef which indicates the loss of colorful symbiotic algae that exposes the white skeleton of coral reef. Globally, increased levels of CO₂ in the oceans due to human commercial activities causes acidification process of the sea and rapidly destroys the structure of coral. It was widely published in 2011

that more than 75% of coral reefs in the earth are under high risk condition. Indonesia is becoming one of the most vulnerable regions of coral reef destruction. In Figure 3 it appears that Indonesia has a very high degree of social and economic dependence on the preservation of coral reef.

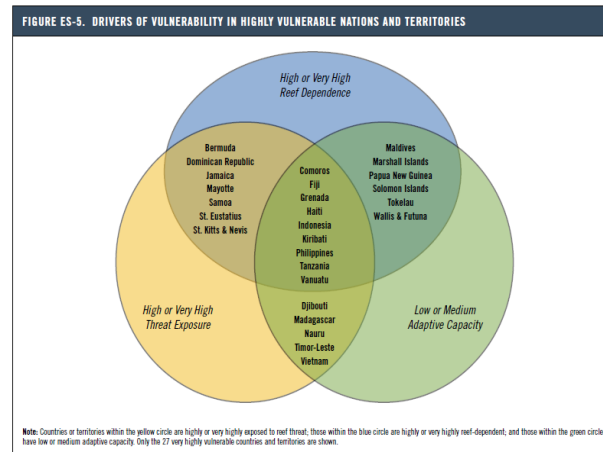


Fig. 3: Highly Vulnerable Nations and Territories of Coral Reef Degeneration in Diagram
Source: World Research Institute, 2016

Ecological risk, which apparently has not become local concern of coastal tourism activities in Alor Kecil, will generate anomie community who will face a state of confusion about their landscape and neighborhood if it is not anticipated from now (Hester, 2006). Cedric on his website states that his wife, Anne Lechat takes an active role in coral reefs conservation and in campaigning non-destructive fishing practices. I suspect that her activism movement is also driven by an effort to save Lechat's family business since their homestay and diving service are highly dependent on coral reefs existence. In other words, Lechat mission is mainly related to their personal business agenda rather than the survival of coastal communities in Alor Kecil. Label of eco-friendly homestay attached to "La P'tite" gives emphasis on scarcity of water and electricity in Kepa Island. It is possible to read these labels as a survival strategy of foreign entrepreneur in the context of natural source scarcity. By viewing Kepa Island as a place of business, foreign entrepreneur showed lesser responsibility for ecological and socio-cultural changes that occur as a result of their business activities.

Those who could play role as local activists are local actors who already involved in coastal tourism business, Mr. Sere and Mr. Supriyadi. With their political power and respected opinion, they can prevent the victimization of their indigenous gist for commercial tourism. Independence of the natural cycle is a short-term freedom which brings great long-term consequences for local people in the future. The alienation process from natural pattern of life will break sacred and mythical bonding with Mother Nature that underlies vernacular society's existence. This condition is probably just an irrational illusion of future if the local actors aware of their role to maintain the survival of their vernacular society, first of all by understanding their power as a representation of people power, then by involving all forms of power that belongs to the whole community. High appreciation should be granted for the vernacular skills to prevent transformation of vernacular life into a superficial tourist attraction.

Good condition of sea as habitat must be the fixed price, uncompromising. This effort should be less profit-oriented, but must be based on local people sacred engagement with nature as their father and mother. Thus, it will be produced a mutual relationship of human-habitat through local culture and indigenous technology as successors. Our habitation will enrich the meaning of life when its inhabitants understand how it works while the inhabitants themselves play a role of mutual nurturing process in it. Diving tourism as a standardized activity needs to

be reviewed in conjunction with local diving skills and local knowledge of the marine life to minimize bad social effects and guarantee democracy and equality in the cultivation of natural resources. After all, Alor Kecil people are sea people. It is in their very nature to be the dancer of circle ancestor altar as well as the dancer of deep-sea.

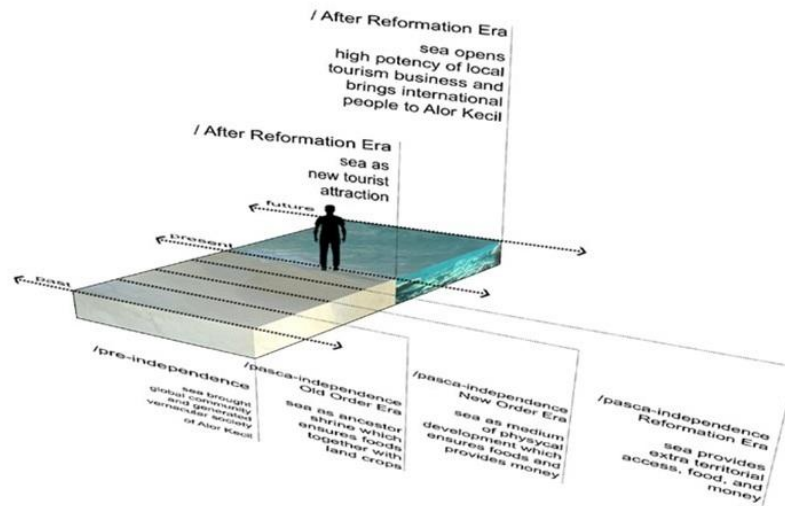


Fig. 4: Common Mental Map of Alor Kecil Coastal Habitat in Past, Present, and Future
Source: Klara Puspa Indrawati, 2016

Conclusions

Local people keep showing a tolerant attitude to the changes that come from outside. This attitude brings enlightenment for the vernacular society to enrich their knowledge and experience in processing their life together with the natural system of coastal habitat. On the other hand, this attitude has viewed sea, which is believed as ancestor's throne and life guarantor, as a political space for the exercise of knowledge and power in the context of embryonic coastal tourism recently. Coastal tourism as the new face of globalization has positioned the sea in a critical state. The imbalance condition in the marine habitat will impact on the transformation of vernacular life in Alor Kecil. Some transformations that need to be reviewed related to the loss of local skills for survival in a coastal habitat, disjunction between local life cultivation with the natural cycle with new paradigm that tends to be more commercial-pragmatic, high dependence on the availability of money to provide daily needs which also lead to the loss of vernacular resiliency, damaged marine ecosystems due to tourism activities, and social conflict among Alor Kecil community because of inequality in the distribution and cultivation of natural resources. To deal with those effects, the role of local actors is critically needed to advise and guard a series of communal actions and protect indigenous noble gist of their vernacular society by re-exercising their knowledge and political power for the sake of communal well-being.

The research extracted the mutual idea linked from various residents' mental maps regarding the transformation of the vernacular lives of citizens abstracted from explanations by Mr. Sere (*Manglolong* chieftain and former Director of "La P'tite" Kepa), Mr. Murji Patinasarani (*Makassar* chieftain), and Mr. Supriyadi May (temporal history teacher who had migrated to the Java Island). Mental maps in this narrative will also uncover typical adaptation strategies of local residents against the waves of various outsiders coming into their area, in such a way that they were able to survive and sustain the coastal habitats today and will do so in the future.

This finding is expected to be used as an assessment of the underlying strategy of Alor Kecil's development in the face of the next wave of globalization, so that local residents become

resilient ecologically, socially, and economically against the many faces of globalization that keeps on approaching their homeland.

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Availability of Data: Data presented in this research are available for scrutiny if so required. In any case, they were used in this paper with the consent of the owners of that data.

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