

Summary

This dissertation is based on my research into distinction processes (Calhoun, 1994; Cerulo 1997) between tourists and inhabitants of West Sumba in Eastern Indonesia. The imaginaries (Castoriadis, 1987; Strauss, 2006; Lacan, 1977; Anderson, 1991; Salazar, 2012) of West Sumbanese people about foreigners also emerge from *diving rumors* (Bysow, 1928; Allport and Postman, 1947/1965). Their origins, dissemination, and sharpening processes, as well as their consequences will be analysed herein. This case study demonstrates how mental models of otherness are formed and reified, how they clash, and for what purposes they may be utilized. It will also analyze how imaginaries influence behavior and may lead to miscommunication in West Sumba.