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Copra Production at the “End” of the World

*Commodity Dynamics, Peripheralisation, and (Under)Development
in the Port Town of Ende, Flores, Eastern Indonesia*

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Abstract

Often mentioned only as a brief reference, the port town of Ende was a crucial player in a network connecting Arabic, Chinese, Indian, and Javanese merchants with the trade in valuable commodities from Eastern Indonesia. This article explores the cultural and economic exchanges at the heart of Endenese identity through archival research, historical ecology, oral histories, and ethnography. Known to the Dutch as a pirate and slaving centre, Ende was the most significant force in the Savu Sea until 1907. With the local economy reshaped to produce agricultural staples in the early twentieth century, Ende experienced a minor boom by exporting copra, or dried coconut husks. In this article, I reconstruct the complex commodity dynamics that silently shaped Ende. “Invisibilised” by colonial and Indonesian forces, I identify Ende’s peripheralisation as the deliberate consequence of the consolidation of governance power among outside elites and the disempowerment of local groups. I conclude by showing the value of ethnographic tools in retelling the stories of those who were once at the centre of the world.

Keywords

port towns – commodities – copra – transregional trade systems – Southeast Asia

Introduction

Over the past two thousand years, Eastern Indonesia has witnessed the emergence of numerous coastal ports, entrepôts, and cities. At the crossroads of maritime trade routes, coastal settlements represented highly dynamic and diverse communities.¹ In the complex multi-ethnic fabric of coastal hubs, interchanges between colonial powers, migrant merchants, and indigenous groups have led to unique pathways of sociocultural and economic change that are relevant to understanding current challenges in eradicating poverty and fostering economic growth.² In Indonesia at large, trajectories of (under)development and low rates of industrialisation have been chiefly interpreted as the outcome of a combination of factors, including Dutch colonial intervention, outdated traditional institutions of land and resource management, and the interests of private international firms.³ Within this rationale, environmental and economic history studies have mainly explained the role of entrepôts through a centre–periphery approach.⁴ Coastal towns are seen as part of larger systems and their economic activities and social lives are dramatically shaped in their development by their position within more extensive maritime networks and their relation to inland societies.⁵ Such a perspective has driven the studies of coastal settlements in Eastern Indonesia and Southeast Asia.⁶ Yet this approach tends to simplify the local processes of power formation and economic growth in many of these “peripheries”, disregarding their distinctive paths.⁷

Several assumptions, which have been recently challenged,⁸ are critical to centre–periphery development models. First, colonial powers often play a considerable role in shaping entrepôts and port towns by controlling and monopolising commerce.⁹ For example, in the case of Eastern Indonesia, the dominance of the Dutch East India Company (VOC) in the spice trade and the trade in other high-value commodities is invoked to account for the lack of advancement of what is deemed non-profitable regions and towns.¹⁰ Many

1 Reid (1988); Knaap and Sutherland (2004); Gaynor (2016).

2 Sutherland (2021).

3 van der Eng (2007); Kristiansen (2018).

4 Andaya (1993); Pearson (2006); Sutherland (2015a); Sutherland (2015b); Kadir (2021).

5 Parimartha (2002); Abdurachman (2008).

6 Manguin (2002).

7 Tooker (1996); Gaynor (2016); Sutherland (2021).

8 Basa (1994); Liu (2001); Touwen (2001), chapter 5.

9 Heersink (1999).

10 Tooker (1996).

settlements and ports, such as Ende and Solor along the Savu Sea, a secondary maritime route connecting Timor, Flores, and Solor with the trade centres in Malacca, Singapore, and Makassar, fall within this category. A revised account, however, indicates that it is within these contested areas that piracy and slave trading remained rampant well into the nineteenth century.¹¹ Challenging the modernist idea of European supremacy,¹² it is possible to identify local stories that speak of indigenous hegemony and bureaucratic colonial powers lacking military and political support to dominate resource-poor provinces.¹³ Second, centre–periphery models have often relied on the notion of European entrepreneurs as the driving force behind economic development and dynamism in Eastern Indonesia, a process controlled from the colonial centre in Java.¹⁴ It is now known that Eastern Indonesian societies participated in extensive networks of inter-Asian maritime trade that included Chinese and Arab partners, even after the consolidation of the Pax Neerlandica in the early 1900s,¹⁵ rendering the theoretical framework inadequate to capturing these interactions.

Moving away from purely centre–periphery models of development into more nuanced examinations of what happened at the extremes implies the recentring of the periphery as a place of dynamic agency and change.¹⁶ In such a process, the understanding of the failures of colonial and state actors in establishing a foothold on “peripheral” towns, of the implementation of agricultural development mechanisms, and of the designation of *entrepôts* and active port towns under the rubrics of “backwaters” and “cash crop providers” become crucial steps to better elucidating the role played by both indigenous and external forces in the continuous exercise of nation building.¹⁷ In maritime landscapes, such an approach can help establish how colonial and state legacies of governance and economic growth policies have contributed to ongoing ecological crises in biodiversity management and habitat degradation.¹⁸ While infrequently encountered among anthropological studies, explorations of the varied historical trajectories of resource use and extraction can help paint a broader picture of networks and circuits of wealth that have given origin to current subsistence strategies.¹⁹ Most significantly, the consequences of

11 Barnes (2013); Hägerdal (2020).

12 Goh (2004).

13 Dietrich (1989); Barnes (2013); Gaynor (2016).

14 Heersink (1999).

15 Parimartha (2002); Ardhana (2005).

16 Gaynor (2007); Kaps and Komlosy (2013).

17 Solomon (1970); Touwen (2001), chapter 5; Scott (2010).

18 Boomgaard (2007); Henley et al. (2015).

19 Touwen (2001), chapter 5; Ramenzoni (2017).

development policies speak of underlying conflicts that continue to permeate everyday life in Eastern Indonesia. These conflicts result from the dispossession of land, natural resources, and commercial agency among indigenous actors.²⁰

As this article will argue, despite differing intentions, both colonial and state development programmes are responsible for instituting the economic structures that have resulted in the deindustrialisation, exclusion, and marginalisation of thousands. To that end, I explore the story of coconut cultivation in Ende over the past 150 years. As a commercial town and maritime port in Eastern Indonesia, Ende is second in importance only to Kupang, in Timor, or Waingapu, in Sumba. Through this case study, I investigate how the dynamics among colonial, state, and indigenous actors have resulted in a prolonged peripheralisation of an otherwise thriving and diversified society. Looking into the production of copra, dried coconut husks employed in manufacturing coconut oil, I seek to identify the characteristics that have impeded the emergence of sustainable resource management and hindered long-term economic growth. Through archival and ethnographic work, I revisit the challenges Endenese communities faced as they transitioned through agricultural development, mechanisation, and market integration. From avid entrepreneurs, merciless slave traders, and skilled sailors to artisanal fishermen and subsistence producers, this trajectory includes the institution of a monocrop economy in the early 1900s and its (dis)continuation into present times.

Seen by the colonial apparatus as the way to domesticate a “rebellious” group, I also contextualise the failure of development processes as suggestive of a society that resisted integration into a particular ideal of progress. This model, built from rational and moral imperatives, sought to implement intensive agricultural production and pursued the reformulation of customary land institutions restricting the implementation of the new practices. It strongly relied on the proletarianization of the workforce by introducing cash crops, labour programmes, and taxes. Fiscal obligations became essential in domestication and control because of the tendency to use crops to cover taxation. Imposed by colonial, foreign, and national forces as ways to bring modernisation to a stagnant society, development programmes assumed different versions over time. Still, they kept their primary goal: building a “pliable” citizenry prepared for a future of “green” growth and fishing intensification. Yet these policies have had long-term consequences for the regency. Like sugar planters in Java,²¹ any potential that the Endenese had for generating the conditions for internal growth, such as an independent marine mercantile

20 Jotzo et al. (2009).

21 Geertz (1963).

sector, was slimmed down by top-down agricultural programmes and critically diminished by political and economic crises. As of 2020, the Eastern Indonesia region, now characterised by high migration and poverty, has over 70% of its workforce still engaged in the agriculture and fisheries sectors.²²

Thus, a history of patterns of resource use in Ende offers essential lessons for new models of sustainable development and natural-resource management. Albeit at the fringes of the Indonesian archipelago, communities like the Endenese have been neither isolated nor disconnected from major economic centres like Ternate, Ambon, and Makassar.²³ Recent policy instruments such as decentralisation laws or the new agrarian social forestry reform have sought to recreate a federal system that can effectively capture these regional and internal dynamics.²⁴ Efforts continue to contend with top-down implementation formulas and conflicting regulations that impede local participation. Failures to harness local agency into the realisation of a decentralised model allow for the continuation of non-sustainable resource use and corruption, with severe consequences for biodiversity conservation.²⁵ I conclude the article by analysing how governance policies in Indonesia will benefit from looking at the periphery to develop structural long-term solutions across multiple geographical and institutional scales.

Methods: Historical Data and Archival Sources

Data were collected during three field seasons in May–August 2009, November 2010–January 2011, June 2011–January 2013, and subsequent visits in 2019, 2020, and 2022. Research objectives, protocols for data collection, and instruments were reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the University of Georgia (IRB 2010-10808-2) before any activities began. Research permits were also procured through RISTEK (Kementerian Riset dan Teknologi), the Indonesian government ministry that oversees international research and from the proper authorities (Propinsi NTT, Kabupaten Ende). The author followed strict ethical procedures outlined by the IRB and has no conflicts of interest to report. Interviews were used to recreate the genealogical history of the raja of Ende's family, the Aroeboesman, and the history of two important clans in the area, the Ngobbe and Rodja. Interviews also shed light on

22 Kristiansen (2018); Badan Pusat Statistik Kabupaten Ende (2019).

23 Wolf and Eriksen (2010); Kaps and Komlosy (2013).

24 Shivakoti and Shivakoti (2008); Ostwald et al. (2016).

25 Heazle and Butcher (2007).

the relations between the towns of Numba and Baraai (the latter being less than five kilometres from Ende) and the initial settlement of Ende. Archival research was conducted in Ende and Maumere (Flores, Indonesia), in Yogyakarta and Jakarta (Java, Indonesia), at the Royal Tropical Institute (Koninklijk Instituut voor de Tropen) in Amsterdam, and at the Catholic Archives at Radboud University in Nijmegen, the Netherlands. The reviewed materials included travel accounts, narratives of expeditions, compilations of church and religious activities, and official government reports. Digitised copies of the recollections of Dutch residents in Timor and Dependencies Residencies and of other colonial offices stationed in Sumba and Flores were also consulted on the online website of the National Archives of the Netherlands in The Hague. The primary sources for district-level statistical information were the Bureau of Statistics of Ende (Badan Pusat Statistik Ende, or BPSE), the Bureau of Statistics of Nusa Tenggara Timur Ende (Badan Pusat Statistik Nusa Tenggara Timur, or BPSN), and the Fishing Commission of Ende District (Dinas Kelautan dan Perikanan, or DKP). These offices produced numerous yearbooks and reports that were compared and consolidated to portray the town's development.

Ende

Arrived at via a multi-leg air journey from Jakarta or a five-day ferry from Surabaya, the city of Ende is politely characterised by Indonesian central government officials as *remote* (see Figure 1). In a clever twist of words,²⁶ it was described as the “end of the world” by one of the first anthropologists to visit the area in 1949.²⁷ Limited to the south by the Savu oceanic basin and to the north by the Flores Sea, the region is known for its coral reefs and pelagic fishing grounds. In 2020, the population was close to 300,000 people of different ethnic classifications, including Bajau and Bugis immigrants.

The coastal Endenese constitute a littoral society with a rich cultural and religious identity forged over eight centuries of interactions between migrant and local groups.²⁸ Due to their importance in commercial shipping and boat building, Ende and the smaller island of Pulau Ende maintained numerous ties with merchant communities in Java, Malacca, Lombok, Ternate, and Makassar.²⁹ As early as the 1300s, the town participated in the inter-island

26 *Ende* means end in German.

27 Kennedy (1955).

28 Fernandez (1990); Soenaryo (2006); Nakagawa (2007).

29 Nooteboom (1936); Kristiansen (2018).

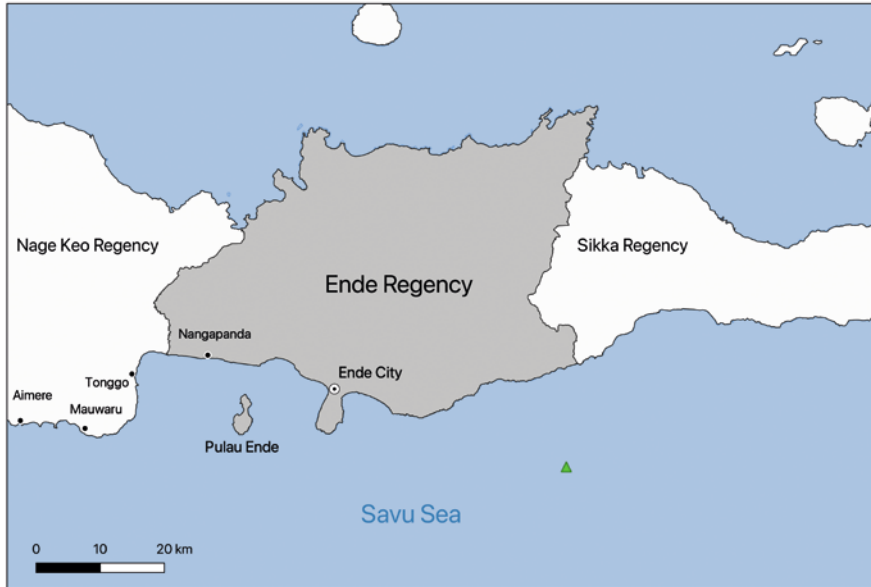


FIGURE 1 Map of Indonesia

SOURCE: DEVELOPED BY THE AUTHOR

trade network, operating as a node facilitating exchange between hinterland agricultural products and high-value items such as textiles and guns. During the northwest monsoon winds, the port provided a harbour to Chinese and Javanese merchants on their way to the sandalwood and spice centres in Timor and the Moluccas.³⁰ The arrival of Portuguese and Dutch forces in the following centuries brought conflict to an already unstable region. Groups of Makassarese and Bugis merchants relocated to Ende during numerous migratory waves in the seventeenth century,³¹ and competition between colonial and indigenous powers led to constant skirmishes.

Some local sources that combine interviews and historical evidence indicate that a rajadom was created in the 1630s to combat the Portuguese, making the Coastal Endenese a separate, self-identifying group.³² Only recognized in

30 Heuken (2002); Abdurachman (2008).

31 Roos (1872); Alderwerelt (1905).

32 Bao (1969); Edjid (1979); Soenaryo (2006); Kartika (2009). Further compilation of the local genealogical history of the Aroeboesman by a descendant, Haji Abdul Madjid Inderadewa, traces through interviews the foundation period to the early 1600s; see Murtadho (2015) for genealogy. Other unpublished documents from Dr. Piet Petu, a priest from the Society of the Divine Word stationed in Ende and a specialist in the archaeology and history of the region, about local clans seem to suggest that the polity may have existed for over

VOC documents (*korte verklaring*, or brief treaties and agreements conducted by the company) in 1793, the kingdom of Ende relied on the commerce of enslaved people and other commodities such as birds' nests, beeswax, cinnamon, beads, horses and cattle, lime and sulphur, textiles, and cotton.³³ Rarely discussed in commercial documents, Dutch merchants used the port of Ende in their route from Batavia to Kupang in the first half of the 1600s to restrict Portuguese influence and secure commercial relations.³⁴ Such relationships are mentioned in 1638 when the Dutch missionary Heurnius visited the area.³⁵ Yet additional evidence suggests that exchanges with the Dutch occurred as early as 1613, if not before, when an officer from Apollonius Schotte, a captain from the Dutch East India Company, reached Pulau Ende.³⁶ In 1691, a postholder was established in Barai, confirming Ende's subordination to the company.³⁷ However, the control of trade in this region was beyond the company's intent and capacity, as later sources discuss when assessing Endenese piracy in Sumba, and the presence of Dutch officers was discontinued.³⁸

Around the mid-to-late-1700s, Ende's influence in the region began to grow, and by the first decades of the nineteenth century, Endenese groups controlled most trade throughout the Savu.³⁹ Its religious and cultural identity, mixing Muslim, Bugis, Bajau, and local belief systems, facilitated the establishment of commercial operations across nearby islands. Although Bima attempted to claim sovereignty over the polity, the Endenese remained relatively independent until Dutch military intervention one century later.⁴⁰ Each year, hundreds of boats left Ende in expeditions and military campaigns against any potential competitor that could challenge its dominance. In alliance with other groups, Endenese chiefs conducted raids as far as Timor and Rote and plundered foreign ships. Despite colonial efforts to cease all slavery as far back as 1839, the polity represented a relatively consolidated maritime force in the inter-island slave trade.⁴¹ At the time of its commercial apogee in the 1880s, local clans

three hundred years; see Petu (n.d.). Yet, despite its existence it is important to indicate that the rajadom may have been rather loose in its exercise of power over other local groups, see Dietrich (1983); Dietrich (1989).

33 Parimartha (2002); Abdurachman (2008).

34 Heurnius (1855); Heuken (2002); Citra Kabupaten Ende Dalam Arsip (2017).

35 Alderwerelt (1905), 58.

36 Alderwerelt (1905); Van Suchtelen (1921).

37 Veth (1855).

38 Van Suchtelen (1921); Nooteboom (1936).

39 Needham (1987).

40 Bao (1969); Aritonang and Steenbrink (2008).

41 Veth (1855).



FIGURE 2 Map of Ende regency

SOURCE: DEVELOPED BY THE AUTHOR

engaged in a burgeoning shipping and merchant industry with an extensive presence in coastal towns elsewhere in Flores, such as Aimere, Mauwaru, and Tonggo.⁴² This was also documented in interviews conducted by the author in 2011, 2012, and 2023 with village and lineage (*suku*) leaders from Ende, Numba, and Pulau Ende, who still have families in these towns. Colonies were established in northern and western Sumba, from which thousands of enslaved people were dispatched each year to Timor, Bali, Lombok, Bima, and Makassar (see Figure 2). Enslaved people also travelled as far as the islands of Madagascar, Mauritius, and Reunion.⁴³

Even though the shipments of Endenese trading vessels often included high-priced textiles, coconuts, and cinnamon, the trade of enslaved prisoners constituted the most valuable cargo. Enslaved people were exchanged for rice, gunpowder, and firearms, which helped support marauding and plundering. In his article of 1877, “Iets over Endeh” (Some facts about Ende), the Dutch officer Samuel Roos described the local Endenese economy as predominantly sustained by selling slaves and piracy.⁴⁴ Given the geography and soil quality of the southern coasts of Ende, the area was unsuitable for intensive

42 Nooteboom (1936); Needham (1983).

43 Alderwerelt (1905); Needham (1983); Sholihah et al. (2023).

44 Roos (1877).

agricultural production. Except for a few dry-season cultigens such as beans and tubers, Endenese relied on slavery for much-needed agricultural imports. This dependence posed very concrete challenges for colonial control. Yet the trade in enslaved people was not only an economic strategy but a culturally sanctioned means of subsistence.⁴⁵ Like other Indonesian groups, Endenese society was highly stratified into three classes: nobles, warriors, and commoners. Considered part of the populace, enslaved people were at the bottom of the social hierarchy and could be inherited as property.⁴⁶ Most significantly, enslaved people were not only procured through warfare; falling into slavery could be the result of unpaid debts or the failure to meet other obligations.⁴⁷ Anyone could become a slave, and the number of slaves that a person had was a mark of status.

Notwithstanding the social and cultural functions performed by the institution of slavery, enslaved people were essential to the Endenese economy for several reasons. Chief among them was the production of foodstuffs, as observed by Roos. In fact, he indicates that productive activities such as farming and fishing were less intensive among Endenese households than in other coastal societies.⁴⁸ When not procured through exchanges with hinterland groups or due to inter-island trade, food resources were harvested by enslaved people or the poor.⁴⁹ Emphasising their acumen in business, Roos describes the Endenese as traders in the true sense of the word. Following Makassarese and Bugis customs, then deemed the most advanced in the region, Roos mentions that the Endenese had seen much more of the world than other indigenous groups and had a highly developed intellect.⁵⁰ In the eyes of Roos, Ende was a very active town with lower poverty levels than other places in the province.

In the decades that followed Roos's accounts, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, integration into the world economy became inevitable, which led to a rapid conversion of economic and production patterns. The Endenese economy transitioned from the trade of enslaved people, shipbuilding, and cargo freight to the production of agricultural staples such as coconuts and coffee for export to Java (see Table 1).⁵¹ Under the guise of eliminating piracy and securing the region for trade, the direct intrusion of the colonial government in Flores in 1903 terminated slavery and dramatically altered

45 Needham (1983); Sholihah et al. (2023).

46 Edjid (1979); Nakagawa (1989).

47 Needham (1983); Vink (2003); Hägerdal (2020).

48 Roos (1872), 493.

49 Weber (1890); "Kolonial verslag" (1908); Van Suchtelen (1921).

50 Roos (1872); Roos (1877).

51 Needham, 1987; Parimatha, 2002; Kartika 2009.

TABLE 1 Main historical events at Ende, Nusa Tenggara Timur

Period	Historical context and repercussions
1300s	– Ende features in the <i>Negarakertagama</i> manuscript from the Javanese kingdom of Majapahit as an active entrepôt.
1560s–1620s	– Conflicts between local Endenese, Sikka, Dutch, and Portuguese forces. – Expeditions from Makassar to support the Endenese against the Portuguese.
1630s–1800s	– The Endenese rajadom comes into existence. – Active trade between Ende and Bugis centres. – Different contracts with the Dutch East India Company (VOC) signed in 1750 and 1798.
1838–1880s	– Golden period of trade. – Conflicts with the Dutch government over piracy (1838–1839). – Endenese intensify raids in Sumba in the 1860s–1870s for slaves (Sumba wars). – In the 1880s, the Dutch government intensifies control over the larger region, contracts of exclusivity are signed between controleurs/governors and local chiefs.
1903–1907	– Dutch intervention in Flores. – Pax Neerlandica. Occupation of territory and introduction of <i>corvée</i> labour.
1917–1929	– Colonial policies concentrate on agricultural development of cash crops.
1930–1950	– The 1929 Great Recession inaugurates a period of famine and retrocession. – Introduction of the Copra Funds in 1940 by the colonial government. – Occupation by the Japanese imperial army. – Independence from Dutch government in 1945.
1951–1967	– Nationalisation of the Copra Funds in 1953, Yayasan Kopra replaces the former organisation. – Creation of the Indonesian Copra Cooperatives Association in 1957. The first marketing cooperative is created in Flores. – Presidential Decree 12/1960 makes coconut an essential commodity.
1967–1998	– The 1967 military coup inaugurates the transition to the “New Order” under President Suharto. – REPELITA quinquennial economic development plans are introduced.

TABLE 1 Main historical events at Ende, Nusa Tenggara Timur (*cont.*)

Period	Historical context and repercussions
1998–present	– Badan Tunggal Urusan Kopra (BTUK) created in 1969.
	– Koperasi Unit Desa (KUD) nationally instituted in 1973 and 1978. Gabungan Wiraswasta and Badan Tata Niaga Kopra instituted in Ende in 1979 by provincial government decree.
	– Domestic demand for coconut products experiences a steady increase.
	– Liberalisation of coconut trade in 1991.
	– 1997 Asian Economic Crisis.
	– 1998 marks the fall of the New Order and the beginning of a democratic transition.
	– 1999 marks a shift to the production of palm oil, demand for which displaces that of coconut oil in the early 2000s.
	– Important policy changes including decentralisation and trade and horticulture laws.
	– Program Gratiex (Gerakan Tiga Kali Lipat Ekspor) launched in 2020.

local shipping and commercial activities.⁵² With the destruction of the city in 1907 and the introduction of KPM (Koninklijke Paketvaart Maatschappij, or the Royal Packet Navigation Company), the main royal shipping line, the balance of power shifted hands, and the Endenese lost their trading supremacy to Dutch, Arab, and Chinese merchants.⁵³ As a result, the number of freight ships of Endenese origin travelling as far as Singapore declined, and important trade networks that had remained hidden or ignored by colonial powers disappeared. Regular visits from Makassarese, Butonese, and Bugis merchants to the bay decreased considerably.⁵⁴ The steamers of KPM represented a strong competitor: smaller local vessels were at a disadvantage in navigating the strong currents and reefs of the many straits of the Savu.

In addition to the reorganisation of shipping in the area to the advantage of the colonial state,⁵⁵ the territory within the regency was financially

52 Dietrich (1989).

53 Clarence-Smith (2002).

54 Nooteboom (1936).

55 Dick (1975).

restructured to fund infrastructure development.⁵⁶ A system of taxes, forced labour, and tolls was established that supported the rebuilding of the port and the completion of major roads.⁵⁷ As a result of colonial intervention, the Endenese entrepreneurial merchant spirit rapidly and dramatically changed.⁵⁸ Elicited through interviews that told stories of oppression by the Dutch, the disintegration of coastal clans seems to have been contemporary to assimilation processes and changes in internal polity borders.⁵⁹ With new systems of education and civil administration, the district was apportioned between the two major kingdoms of Lio and Ende, a division that continued until the late 1960s and early 1970s. Most importantly, changes in customary institutions further eroded economic relations at the clan and lineage level, with colonial programmes and missionary propaganda demonizing indigenous inheritance and land use practices that obstructed progress.⁶⁰ In the decades that followed Japanese occupation and the creation of the Indonesian Republic, Dutch and European influxes of funding tied to religious instruction made critical contributions to agricultural development in Ende.⁶¹ Nowadays, the regency is known for its limited technological modernisation and high dependence on agricultural outputs for subsistence. However, more details are necessary to understand this shift in economic direction and its long-term consequences for the population. In the next section, I discuss significant policies from both colonial and state actors and how they have set the frame of agricultural development in the regency and Eastern Indonesia at large.

Colonial and State Policies for Agricultural Growth in Flores and Eastern Indonesia

In the early 1900s, when almost all of Eastern Indonesia came under the control of the colonial government, new government policies focused on the socialisation of agriculture and the production of agricultural commodities for the external market.⁶² As colonial officers noted, the intention behind this shift was to transition from extensive agricultural production to more sustainable means that could restore soil quality in some cases but also increase crop

56 Dietrich (1983).

57 van Suchtelen (1921); Kartika (2009).

58 Nooteboom (1936).

59 Kennedy (1955); Needham (1968); van Wouden (1968).

60 Bosselaar (1932).

61 Aritonang and Steenbrink (2008); Kristiansen (2018).

62 Dietrich (1989); Ardhana (2005).

yields.⁶³ The administrative intervention of islands like Bali, a major copra producer, and the high global demand for copra led the colonial government to pass specific measures that sought to regulate the quality and processing of copra around the 1910s. The trade of insufficiently dried nut husks or mixtures was banned in ordinances from 1915 and 1917, and a system of indigenous agricultural officials, called *mantri*, was implemented.⁶⁴ In the districts of Flores, programmes were introduced to facilitate rice irrigation and the adoption of other crops, such as coffee. At the larger regional level, the colonial government was interested in positioning this area as a premium source of copra, which was highly valued due to its multiple applications.⁶⁵

Copra was not only used for its culinary attributes but was also employed in manufacturing soap, margarine, explosives, and other derivatives. Coconut oil was regularly used in cooking, lighting, and hair care.⁶⁶ Given the increasing demand for the commodity, colonial plans sought to aggressively increase production against the competition from the Philippines and the Malayan peninsula. Throughout the archipelago, new plantations were opened in Java, Sulawesi, Sumatra, and the Moluccas in 1889.⁶⁷ By the inter-war period, the Netherlands Indies provided about one-third of world exports, and coconuts represented approximately 80% of the total volume of exports for Eastern Indonesia.⁶⁸

Most significantly, the development of this commodity for export in Eastern Indonesia not only resulted in new production and distribution relations but also held strategic value in the birth of a new industrial and economic era in the Netherlands Indies. In the larger towns, such as Makassar, the colonial government created the necessary financial conditions for credit systems that enabled export and shipping companies to operate, solidifying the structure of an internationalised economy that could conduct transactions in foreign currencies. By “relatively” opening through programmes that encouraged external investment, European and American traders now had access to Indonesian commodities for the first time. In this context, copra exports could function as a warranty against declines in the domestic economy. While in the newly expanded plantations coconut production was seen as a source of employment and poverty reduction,⁶⁹ changes fell short of altering production conditions.

63 Schultz (1927); Bosselaar (1932).

64 Camphuis (1920).

65 Heersink (1999); Abdurachman (2008).

66 Heersink (1998).

67 Hunger (1920); Akmal et al. (2021).

68 Information Office of the Republic of Indonesia (1950); Heersink (1994).

69 Purba and Lisanty (2021).

Capital investments were predominantly oriented towards improving the commerce in raw materials and not necessarily modernising methods of cultivation, processing, or industrial manufacturing.⁷⁰ As indicated by colonial officers, copra was seen as an attractive crop to the local population due to its low level of effort during cultivation, lack of maintenance and demand for technical expertise, and high resistance to aridity.⁷¹ For example, in Ende, speculation was made that professionalisation would render cultivation unappealing and possibly run against long-standing customary institutions.⁷²

Albeit indirectly, colonial policies that facilitated the creation of financial institutions offered the basis for protecting large-scale European interests against those of indigenous trade operators.⁷³ Makassar became the economic and political centre of Eastern Indonesia. Under the guise of organising the sector, long-standing connections between international exporters and local ports ruled by indigenous polities such as Ende were severed.⁷⁴ The dominance of Singapore as a free port was challenged, and Chinese and Arab merchants were integrated into the colonial monopoly of coconut oil production. Taking over the role of indigenous middlemen and seafarers in many places, these migrant populations could mobilise critical resources on a scale that was probably not available to the smaller polities, which were now struggling with incorporation into the colonial apparatus. For example, some Arabs obtained leases to grow coconuts before the First World War, and Chinese companies opened new subsidiaries throughout the eastern archipelago's smaller ports.⁷⁵ The large entrepôt of Makassar was the central hub for all of Eastern Indonesia's copra and integrated all inter-island trade carried out by middlemen and intermediaries.⁷⁶ In this port, the machinery required for producing, storing, and exporting coconut oil was to be found.⁷⁷ Displaced from the role of traders within the productive cycle, indigenous economies became the providers of the dried coconut husks that would be pressed into oil in the colonial centre and then shipped to China, France, Germany, and Denmark.

Seen from this perspective, colonial efforts were very profitable. For example, the share of indigenous products in agricultural exports for the outer provinces of Indonesia combined increased dramatically from 43% in 1911–1915 to 65%

70 Hunger (1920); Abbott (1967); Asba et al. (2020).

71 Akmal et al. (2021); Heersink (1994); Heersink (1998).

72 van der Poel (1934).

73 Asba et al. (2020).

74 Heersink (1999).

75 Clarence-Smith (2009); Peeters (2016).

76 Asba (2006).

77 Asba et al. (2020).

in 1936–1940.⁷⁸ Agricultural concessions in the outer islands, including Flores, saw a dramatic growth from 40,200 hectares under state lease or management in 1875 to a peak of 3,430,000 hectares in 1927.⁷⁹ Crops like copra produced significant earnings, as will be discussed below. Yet, the story of commercial success on a national or provincial scale does not accurately reflect what happened at the lower regency level in the eastern provinces. In Flores, because there were few to no estates regulating production, local households relied on a combination of strategies, including arboriculture with dry-season food crops such as maize, manioc, and green beans. Given the limited nature of these subsistence economies, the growth in export volumes at the province level did not necessarily improve living standards among the population.⁸⁰ Furthermore, demographic changes probably increased pressures on subsistence staples, leading to scarcity.⁸¹ The coconut-based economy experienced additional setbacks due to the 1929 Great Depression, the outbreak of the Second World War, and the Japanese occupation of the archipelago in 1942. Falling prices in the external market led to a decrease in the exporting of raw materials such as copra and considerably diminished values on the local market.⁸² Agricultural production saw a time of stress, including losses in total cultivation area and average productivity per hectare, as all development programmes stopped and substantial loss of equipment and gear was experienced.⁸³

Important changes in the economic development of Eastern Indonesia were only seen in the 1950s, post-independence, and more systematically in the 1960s and 1970s. The germ for these macroeconomic policies originated in the economic direction adopted by the new Indonesian government. After the war, the country faced staggering rates of poverty, a sizeable agrarian workforce, and minimal levels of industrialisation. Efforts were made to increase the production of staples such as rice and the production of export goods such as rubber, coffee, and coconut.⁸⁴ However, achieving a high level of agricultural performance that could increase Indonesia's competitiveness in foreign markets was a complex problem. The country lacked basic civic, financial, and industrial infrastructure that could support an orderly development process, including adequate management and administration institutions. Most of the population lived below the poverty line without access to essential

78 Touwen (2001), chapter 5.

79 Soen (1968).

80 Dietrich (1989).

81 Geertz (1963); Akmal et al. (2021).

82 van der Poel (1934).

83 Soen (1968); Butcher (2004).

84 Information Office of the Republic of Indonesia (1954); Soen (1968).

health, sanitation, and educational services.⁸⁵ Thus urgent plans for industrial development, such as “Sumitro”, ran parallel with efforts focusing on improving agricultural management based chiefly on cooperatives and empowering smallholders.⁸⁶ Crucial reforms in village-based institutions, training, and capacity development programmes were instituted to support the larger economic plan.

But throughout the 1950s the country suffered high inflation rates, instability, and malcontent, creating a complex socioeconomic situation. The position of foreign enterprises was highly uncertain as the country pursued nationalisation in line with socialist policies. The early 1960s were characterised by conflict between more moderate and radical factions of the government, the military, and the Communist Party of Indonesia that led to nationwide purges, massive killings, and violence.⁸⁷ Beyond the volatile political context, fuelling dissatisfaction were the revenues from booming prices for commodities that drove prices in the domestic market higher. Earnings continued to be concentrated in intermediary sectors and were distributed unevenly along the production chain, with farmers only receiving a small fraction of the total proceeds.⁸⁸ These difficulties ultimately translated to declining output in crucial crops, especially from estate agricultural concessions. As an illustration, the number of Coconut estate crops decreased nationally from 684 in 1940 to 112 in 1958, remaining at that low level until at least the early 1960s.⁸⁹ The levels of copra purchased from eastern provinces, the country’s primary copra producing region, dropped in 1958 and 1959 due to political instability in Sulawesi, along with logistical difficulties, smuggling, and under-invoicing practices, as reported in the following sections. Given their trade connections to Makassar, it is hard not to project similar impacts for smallholders in Flores. In fact, in interviews, older Endenese boat captains recalled this as a time of uncertainty, where decisions were made about continuing shipping and freight activities. In short, in its first attempt at agricultural development, the new government failed to realise its ambitious growth programmes, maintain pre-war production levels, and institute the sustainable modernisation of the sector. Total Indonesian copra exports were reported to decrease from 346,100 metric tons in 1952 to 112,100 metric tons in 1967, according to official records.⁹⁰ Amid

85 Geertz (1963); Lindblad (2008).

86 Rice (1969).

87 Coppel (2005); Aoki (2008); Hearman (2018).

88 Information Office of the Republic of Indonesia (1954).

89 Soen (1968).

90 Rice (1969).

political and economic challenges, the perspective was “bleak” for coconut smallholders in the short and long term.⁹¹

After the fall of President Sukarno in 1967 and with the beginning of the “New Order” under President Suharto, a set of quinquennial development programmes was introduced. The REPELITA programmes (Rencana Pembangunan Lima Tahun, five-year economic development plans) ran from 1969 to 1999 and oriented efforts towards developing the agricultural industry. The objectives were to support the growth of production for export along with trade value in foreign markets.⁹² Internally, actions were directed at achieving self-sufficiency in foodstuffs and substituting imports by exploiting provincial resources to an “optimal level”.⁹³ First, among commodities, rice became the focus of government efforts through programmes like Operation Fertile Islands (Operasi Nusa Makmur).⁹⁴ To achieve the self-sufficiency goal, investment priorities were placed on large-scale irrigation and rice cultivation projects in Java, Sumatra, and Sulawesi, leading to an imbalance in the distribution of resources among regions.⁹⁵ Most significantly, the policies of the New Order inherited the crucial challenge of securing agricultural growth in a country that lacked the basic infrastructure and technological development needed to support such expansion. Facing this reality, funds from programmes were predominantly allocated to improving communication, transportation, and infrastructure, with agricultural sectors receiving a tiny portion of the total budget. In Eastern Indonesia, a region characterised by swidden agriculture, smallholder plantations, subsistence fishing, and forest arboriculture, work was directed at the husbandry sector, which was perceived as the critical potential for the area. Despite the poor soil conditions and lack of available water, rice was favoured over dry-season crops such as maize or green beans in the first programmes. Considering this, from 1968 to 1972, copra exports declined critically from two-thirds to 6% of total exports, while other agricultural commodities made substantial gains in the province.⁹⁶ The planting of coconuts and the development of factories only became a target of the REPELITA programmes in the late 1970s and early 1980s,⁹⁷ along with the intensification of the fisheries sector.⁹⁸

91 Soen (1968), 28.

92 Rice (1969).

93 “Indonesia Membangun” (1988).

94 Evita and Abdurakhman (2017); Timmer (2019).

95 Japan International Cooperation Agency and Directorate General of Water Resources Development, Ministry of Public Works (1995).

96 Partadireja and Makaliwe (1974), 40.

97 Mawardi (1984).

98 Ramenzoni (2017).

One key factor in understanding the limited success of the REPELITA programmes is the adoption of a static pattern of growth to attain economic development. This constitutes a type of expansion defined by increases in production through traditional practices with low levels of technological innovation.⁹⁹ Agricultural intensification occurs as the frequency of cultivation of plots increases, fallow or resting periods are eliminated, and cultigens are extended to other areas. To that end, geared to assisting individual small croppers, initial REPELITA interventions in Eastern Indonesia focused on developing extension services, making planting resources accessible through a few scattered seed nurseries, and strengthening the limited available credit for farmers.¹⁰⁰ Operations met with poor results due to a lack of staff and funding resources. In fact, after the first REPELITA programme, the overall advance of the eastern provinces was prolonged and only sped up with the expansion of the mining and industrial sectors.¹⁰¹ The central government incorporated plans in REPELITA II and III for realising regional and limited liability companies that could catalyse essential infrastructure development. But in the eastern provinces the programmes made few inroads at modernising agricultural production. Farmers continued to rely on simple tools such as sticks and hoes to cultivate their parcels or harvest copra,¹⁰² and did not employ fertiliser or insecticide regularly.¹⁰³

A second factor that explains the lack of success of the initial REPELITA programmes was their structure. To prioritise and distribute funds efficiently, the Directorate of Rural and Urban Planning, with the help of local governments, selected new areas of development within provinces for each REPELITA programme. Sectoral projects created an uneven pattern of growth at the regional and local levels that did not result in the harmonious or consistent improvement of productivity in the agricultural sector or among farming households. Focusing only on a handful of individuals in each locality to introduce innovations, who were usually the most politically influential farmers, contributed to processes of elite capture.¹⁰⁴ As a consequence, in locations like Ende practices continued to rely on artisanal methods.¹⁰⁵

The 1990s saw economic liberalisation policies through REPELITA V and VI, specifically through the creation of Pakjun 91 (Paket Kebijakan 91), a new packet of policies. These new instruments were intended to generate

99 Heersink (1999).

100 Abbott (1967); Barlow and Tomich (1991).

101 Kementerian Lingkungan Hidup dan Kehutanan (1988).

102 Barlow and Tomich (1991); Barlow and Gondowarsito (2009).

103 Partadireja and Makaliwe (1974).

104 Ramenzoni (2021).

105 Partadireja and Makaliwe (1974), 47; Butcher (2004); Ramenzoni (2017).

significant investment opportunities for private sectors that could reduce unemployment, raise rural incomes, and incentivise growth. To this end, the Pakjun 91 programme reduced import tariffs, simplified marketing channels, and created more favourable conditions for investment. The programme effectively opened the coconut trade by reducing inter-island trading tariffs. As a result, merchants were virtually free to export and import copra and coconut oil at meagre costs, once again increasing the vulnerability of smallholders to price fluctuations on the market. In 1997, the Asian Economic Crisis brought the New Order to an end, and with the country's transition to a democratic type of government the REPELITA programmes were abandoned.

However, the new economic direction consolidated some of the changes introduced by REPELITA VI, which marked the beginning of decentralisation efforts in natural-resource management, among other issues.¹⁰⁶ These changes were subsequently formalised in the 1999 “decentralisation laws” (Law 22/1999 and Law 25/1999) aimed at promoting devolution and local autonomy.¹⁰⁷ The government perceived decentralisation as a critical factor in devolving control to provincial and local authorities that were in a better position to carry out and implement economic growth plans. Most importantly, with the new policies, the authority to decide revenues was now in the hands of the regional and district governments. Additional instruments such as Law 7/2014 on Trade, Law 18/2012 on Food, Law 13/2010 on Horticulture, and Law 19/2013 on the Protection of Farmers also sought to improve overall conditions in the agricultural sector, including local welfare and protective measures against foreign markets.¹⁰⁸ None of these measures, however, have made any dents in the conditions of agricultural production in Ende to this day. Facing high levels of corruption, the implementation of decentralisation policies has run into impediments associated with a lack of resources and coordination, strong top-down, centralised control, and the absence of a continuous flow of funding support that could support the long-term sustainability of most efforts.¹⁰⁹

Today, most regencies of Eastern Indonesia, like Ende, are characterised by a combination of traditional and non-mechanised agricultural production, with individual incentives driving modernisation. Colonial programmes, state-sponsored REPELITA programmes, and decentralisation efforts have made only a modest difference in the well-being and incomes of the rural sectors.¹¹⁰

106 Susilowati (1996).

107 Mamma (2016).

108 Rumokoy (2020).

109 Aoki (2008); Ramenzoni (2017); Kristiansen (2018).

110 Jotzo et al. (2009); Kristiansen (2018).

The trend of industrialisation and modernisation that could support economic growth and prosperity still needs to be realised, and substantial needs continue to be experienced in basic infrastructure. Most importantly, the static pattern of intensification has resulted in the overuse and degradation of topsoil, erosion, and deforestation. Habitat degradation due to excessive labour, modification in periods of fallow, and introduction of variants that deplete soils of nutrients have led to a progressive reduction of the marginal benefits that farmers perceive over time. Responses to the environmental crisis mimic those experienced elsewhere in the developing world since the 1980s. Fostered by pressures from the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the United Nations Development Programme, the country has welcomed the expanding role of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in resource management.¹¹¹ Economic growth is partly driven by environmental sustainability concerns, at least superficially.¹¹² Throughout Eastern Indonesia, numerous NGOs funded by international organisations, such as the Nature Conservancy, the United Nations Environment Programme, Swiss Contact, and Oxfam, have opened offices and implemented small-scale projects. Much work remains to be done to assess these new mechanisms’ contributions to rural livelihoods.

In the next section, I examine coconut cultivation in Ende to better understand how colonial and state-led policies have impacted coastal communities within this regency. Based on the timelines of significant policy changes, I establish a periodisation that characterises five different phases in the evolution of coconut production.

Green Gold: Coconut Production and Commodity Dynamics in Ende

The Pre-colonial Period

Even before colonial intervention, Ende was immensely rich in coconuts. At the time in which Ende offered its allegiance to the VOC, in the early 1790s, deliveries of coconut oil reached Kupang, suggesting some accumulation and processing of copra.¹¹³ In addition, J. C. M. Radermacher from the Batavian Society of Arts and Sciences in his 1786 description of Flores references Makassar and Selayar traders obtaining coconut oil from the island along with

¹¹¹ Aoki (2008); Kristiansen (2018).

¹¹² Nesadurai (2019).

¹¹³ “Copie-missieven van het opperhoofd” (1794–1795).

slaves and rope at very convenient prices for the locals.¹¹⁴ By 1855, remarks from P. J. Veth, a Dutch ethnologist and the first Chairman of the Royal Netherlands Geographical Society, upon traveling in the region stated that “Nowhere in the whole archipelago is there perhaps a greater abundance of coconut trees than in its [Ende’s] periphery, and both the fruits and the coconut oil prepared from them are exported in great abundance to Singapore”.¹¹⁵ In the 1870s, the colonial officer Roos described the widespread consumption of coconuts in the area and called the country the “land of coconuts”.¹¹⁶ Referred to as “green gold”,¹¹⁷ village leaders owned thousands of trees along the southern coastal fringes of the regency.¹¹⁸ The most coconut-dense areas were located around the city of Ende, on the small island of Pulau Ende, and in Nangapanda.

While probably the most important agricultural product next to tubers and cinnamon, Roos observed no regularity in the planting of new coconut trees or their cultivation. Because of the dry ecological conditions in the region, coastal Endenese could not produce rice or other critical subsistence crops.¹¹⁹ Coconuts and copra, along with products such as indigo and enslaved people, were part of a well-established commodity circulation system that linked Ende with hinterland villages and coastal settlements in Flores and other Bugis and Bajau settlements beyond.¹²⁰ In the early-to-mid-1800s, Endenese vessels regularly reached numerous ports across the Indonesian islands, including Sumba, Bima, Lombok, and Java, and visited accumulation centres like Makassar, Surabaya, and Singapore.¹²¹ For example, in 1876, a three-month summary of exports for Ende included close to 200,000 coconuts and 12,375 litres of coconut oil; annual values were deemed to oscillate between 400,000 and 1 million coconuts just in trade with Sumba.¹²² The business was deemed profitable enough that in the 1880s a European merchant settled in Ende to buy copra and ship it to Makassar, exporting nearly 55,000 kilograms in that year.¹²³

It is important to mention that only a small portion of the district’s coconut production was destined for export, with most yields consumed locally. Coconuts were immensely important for day-to-day activities. People would

114 Radermacher (1786).

115 Veth (1855), 157.

116 Roos (1877).

117 Heersink (1994).

118 Roos (1877).

119 Van Suchtelen (1921); Bosselaar (1932); van der Poel (1934).

120 Nooteboom (1936).

121 Roos (1877); Parimartha (2004).

122 Roos (1877), 499.

123 “Koloniaal verslag” (1886).

use coconut water to wash their bodies and employ coconut oil for cosmetic purposes. Most significantly, coconuts were considered locally as a sign of wealth and could function as currency, with coastal Endenese at all levels of society owning groves and bartering nuts for agricultural produce with hinterland groups. Trees were regulated according to *adat* or customary institutions. Clear signs demarcating ownership of property and provisions were made in case of violations. The theft of coconuts was recognised as a punishable offence under indigenous law, often incurring disease if reparation was not procured.¹²⁴ The village customary leader placed a marking known as *semba* in the garden to prevent the picking of unripe fruits and to regulate the harvest time. The closing or opening of coconut picking was also a mechanism that village elders used to control prices. Tribute was paid to higher village and clan leaders for coconut cultivation.¹²⁵ Beyond their nutritional importance, to this day coconuts have significant symbolic value for the local population.¹²⁶ Coconuts are used in rituals to celebrate or appease the ancestors and by shamans to liberate the soul of a sick patient from a witch.

From Colonial Intervention to the Post-Second World War

Despite the abundance of coconut groves on the southern shores of the district of Ende, official accounts mention the lack of intensive plantations or estates at the time of Dutch intervention in the late 1900s.¹²⁷ Embodying the mandate of combatting stagnation, subsequent agricultural growth policies were introduced to incentivise and develop agriculture, to the detriment of other economic practices.¹²⁸ Concerted efforts were made to expand coconut cultivation, leading to important landscape changes.¹²⁹ For example, in neighbouring districts like Sika, each farmer was required to plant at least fifty coconut trees.¹³⁰ Similar compulsory policies were instituted among Endenese smallholders, with an estimated total of nearly one million trees planted due to the new planting policy in the area.¹³¹ Official numbers for the province, including Timor and the whole island of Flores, however, report some 1.8 million trees in or around 1918; of these, about half did not bear fruit.¹³² Attempts at

124 Weber (1890).

125 Van Suchtelen (1921).

126 van der Poel (1934).

127 Van Suchtelen (1921); Bosselaar (1932); Metzner (1982).

128 Metzner (1982); Dietrich (1989); Ardhana (2005).

129 Van Suchtelen (1921).

130 Metzner (1982).

131 Kartika (2009).

132 Fowler (1922).

incentivizing planting in Ende survive in a Catholic missionary film produced by the Societas of Verbi Divini called *Flores Film*. The movie showcases the many toils of mission workers to teach the natives the techniques of tree planting as a tool to eliminate poverty and civilize.¹³³

In addition to cultivation, the administration also invited Chinese traders to move to Flores to establish and develop commercial enterprises, creating a dominant class that still maintains a stronghold in the trade of agricultural products.¹³⁴ As elsewhere, the Dutch government was only indirectly involved in the trade of copra and coconut products until the creation of the Copra Funds (Het Kopra Fonds) in the 1940s.¹³⁵ The Copra Funds were a semi-governmental corporation established at the beginning of the Second World War by the Dutch East Indies Government to control the stocks and prices of the commodity. Initiated by the Director of Economic Affairs in Jakarta, its board included a director along with trade representatives, shipping and processing industries, and banks. Still, taxes on crops and trade regulations existed in commercial hubs such as Ende, and a port officer from the colonial government was placed to oversee transactions. Given the nature of this structure, the colonial government institutions did not benefit directly from the export revenues as they had in the case of the highly regulated spice trade. Indirect intervention was a source of profits for European elites in charge of processing, shipping, and marketing goods.

At the local level, due to colonial policies, copra exports experienced a boom in Ende between the 1910s and 1920s, jumping from 1,008,000 tonnes to 1,993,000 tonnes.¹³⁶ Revenues increased threefold, from 762,221 gulden in 1915 to 2,129,500 gulden in 1929.¹³⁷ Therefore, by the end of the 1920s, coconut crops dominated all agricultural production along with coffee and constituted over 70% of all exports. The planting of coconut trees, from domestic courtyards and gardens to more significant territorial extensions along the coast, was simultaneous to the reorganisation of the district and the relocation of mountainous hinterland villages to lower regions. Coconut plantations, while demanding low levels of labour, necessitate large expanses of uncultivated land to grow, thus the expansion of coconut production was a process that can be better described as extensification than intensification.¹³⁸ Due to the

133 Ray (2016).

134 Kristiansen (2018).

135 Heersink (1998).

136 Mawardi (1984); Parimartha (2002); Kartika (2009).

137 Kartika (2009).

138 Metzner (1982); Heersink (1998).

nature of the productive changes that were brought about, extensification and coconut monocropping probably amplified land competition, creating new incentives for the fragmentation of communal parcels.¹³⁹ Because village customary leaders controlled what was cultivated and to whom parcels were allocated, friction and disputes were probably common.¹⁴⁰ Some of these struggles are well documented for the neighbouring regencies of Manggarai, Sikka, Nage, and Nghada.¹⁴¹ Beyond renewed pressures for land, the reliance on one agricultural commodity also meant an increase in the dependence on imports of other foodstuffs.¹⁴² The problem was exacerbated in the case of coconut plantations, where achieving successful intercropping was challenging. Smallholders who could not diversify or maintain small gardens were especially vulnerable to the oscillation of market factors and pests. When copra prices dropped, households could not purchase essential items like maize or rice, aggravating the impact of shortages and famines.

In addition to the detrimental effects of monocrops, the relation between prices, demand, and the nature of coconut production exposed local suppliers to certain risks. Because coconuts constitute a staple of the indigenous diets, all productive output tends to be absorbed locally or exported to nearby islands, rendering demand inelastic. However, as the integration with European markets of coconut-derived products became more popular and the indigenous population experienced growth from improved sanitation and health, demand increased, driving prices higher. Given that, on average, it takes about a full year for a coconut fruit to reach maturation and six to eight years for a tree (*Cocos nucifera*, known locally as *kelapa bias*) to produce fruit, there is a temporal lag between demand and the capacity to fulfil requests, mediating prices. Those producers who could not balance this relation between stock, market, and price, or who could not mobilise their production efficiently, would harvest their crops earlier to profit and cover operational costs. Coconuts picked or processed in an unripe condition resulted in lower quality copra, affecting prices further. In other cases, small producers largely independent of any association would exit the market altogether, incapable of coping with mounting debts and creditors. Due to the limited availability of land in Ende, small croppers would enter contracts with landowners who would rent their land to be used to plant coconuts in exchange for a rate. However, when copra prices fell, trees were repossessed for the time necessary to repay the debt. Interest rates

139 van der Poel (1934).

140 Kristiansen (2018).

141 Dam (1950); Nakagawa (1989); Tule (2004).

142 Touwen (2001), chapter 5.

from loans made such repossession permanent, and many small producers became wage labourers.

Another example of the precariousness to external conditions of copra livelihoods in the eastern provinces can be seen in the Great Depression of 1929. Loss of markets due to reduced expenditures created a surplus of copra and coconut oil. Prices declined dramatically, yet production continued, and even increased, as yields could be absorbed locally.¹⁴³ However, with declining prices, repossession of trees and concentration of production capacity ensued. Signs of recovery were observed in the mid-1930s as conditions improved, yet production failed to achieve 1920s export levels.¹⁴⁴ Recuperation continued into the 1940s and until the outbreak of the Second World War, when demand plummeted again, and production collapsed.¹⁴⁵

In 1940, the colonial government responded to the broader crisis by creating the Copra Funds to manage fluctuations in the very labile market of Eastern Indonesia. As discussed above, this semi-official organisation sought to control prices and quality. But, post-Second World War, when famines and food shortages were ubiquitous, copra production became almost worthless given current needs. The colonial government tried to restart the monopoly to the criticism of countries like the United States, which saw the importance of redirecting efforts to cultivate essential foodstuffs.¹⁴⁶ Despite concerns about dietary sufficiency, after Indonesia initiated its complex process of independence and nation-building in the late 1940s, copra production rapidly increased in the eastern provinces. In Eastern Indonesia, the new country of East Indonesia, which existed from 1946 to 1949 and was sponsored by the Dutch, clustered copra production provinces into an independent state.¹⁴⁷ The country subsisted until 1950, when it was assimilated into the larger Indonesian Republic. With integration, copra exports were truncated as all eastern provinces' production was subordinated to policies established in Jakarta. Under the unitary administrative system, federal regulations prescribed how export profits would be distributed across the central government and the regions. The dispute over the reallocation of earnings was the basis for renewed demands for independence in this part of the archipelago.¹⁴⁸ Local coconut organisations became vehicles for achieving political goals. By capturing, stockpiling, and distributing

143 van der Poel (1934).

144 Akmal et al. (2021).

145 Ibid.

146 Peeters (2016).

147 Partadireja and Makaliwe (1974); Negara Indonesia Timur et al. (2017).

148 Foreign Areas Studies Division (1964); Asba (2006).

copra, associations financially supported the fight for autonomy among the eastern regions and the central government.¹⁴⁹

From the 1950s to 1967: Independence to New Order

In 1953, the new central government effectively nationalised the Copra Funds, renaming the organisation Yayasan Kopra. National copra exports remained stable throughout the 1950s and 1960s following institutional changes. However, the eastern provinces saw a slow export decline, showcasing the struggles in allocating revenues between provinces and the central government.¹⁵⁰ The main problem that the national government faced in increasing production was dealing with the multitude of middlemen and intermediate parties that dominated actual trade and created uncertainty in regulating prices.¹⁵¹ Uncertainty also reflected the need for coordination in logistics and shipping that permeated operations. Resolving these two issues became the main remit of Yayasan Kopra and subsequent government policies. Rules from the central government remained ever changing and contradictory,¹⁵² and the placement of the Yayasan Kopra main office in Jakarta made local producers incapable of influencing legislation or procedures. To streamline processes, branches of Yayasan Kopra were also established in some provinces and regencies. For example, Ende had its own office, which continued operations until the Indonesian Copra Cooperatives Association replaced it in 1957.¹⁵³ The offices of Yayasan Kopra were the largest and most important instruments for copra regulation in Flores.¹⁵⁴ Yet, as has been discussed in depth in studies of other regions like Sulawesi, the functioning of the local branch of the board could have been more effective and local branches even became strategic instruments for dominant factions.¹⁵⁵ The central government had to contend with the collusion between the military and the local elites to secure the provision of raw materials from small-scale croppers.¹⁵⁶ In Timor and Flores, as elsewhere in Eastern Indonesia, corruption and the diverting of copra-related resources from the Yayasan Kopra offices were frequent.¹⁵⁷

149 Anwar (2018); Asba et al. (2020).

150 Asba (2006); Asba (2015).

151 Djohadikusumo (1972).

152 Soen (1968).

153 Mawardi (1984).

154 Metzner (1982).

155 Anwar (2018).

156 Asba (2006); Asba et al. (2020).

157 Foreign Areas Studies Division (1964); van Klinken (2015).

In the late 1950s, the central government issued a presidential decree (17/1960), replacing the Yayasan Kopra with the Indonesian Copra Cooperatives Association (Induk Koperasi Kopra Indonesia, or IKKI).¹⁵⁸ Copra was declared an essential commodity, and marketing, distribution, and pricing were placed under government oversight. The new association became responsible for regulating the shipment and export of copra to Java and establishing the domestic price throughout Indonesia. The creation of credit and village cooperatives was promoted intensively. In Flores, the first cooperative dedicated to marketing copra was created in 1957.¹⁵⁹ However, because of the low prices set by IKKI, the smuggling of copra achieved considerable levels.¹⁶⁰ It is unsurprising that given the conditions in which the market for this commodity operated, the first attempt at forming cooperatives remained unsuccessful at producing any significant change in smallholder conditions.¹⁶¹ Because farmers were required to sell all production to the cooperative according to the price fixed by the government, the system incentivised a parallel market for copra where non-official prices were substantially higher. Challenging the local boards and cooperatives, farmers began illegally selling copra to private vendors. By 1967, when the government liberalised the trade, many village cooperatives in Flores went bankrupt and ceased to exist as they could not compete with the prices offered by the private sector.¹⁶²

From 1967 to the 1990s: New Order to Democracy

With the introduction of the REPELITA programmes in the late 1960s, the government again tried to exert control in the copra production process, which was in urgent need of organisation and expansion.¹⁶³ To that end, an independent agency called Badan Tunggal Urusan Kopra (BTUK) was created in 1969, and it included central, provincial, and local government members. Plans for expanded production paralleled the increase in demand for domestic coconut products within the archipelago between 1970 and 1986, as coconut oil became the principal cooking oil.¹⁶⁴ Production ran short of demand, with supply only achieving a 47% growth rate while demand rose by 87%.¹⁶⁵ Therefore, there

158 Abbott (1967); Akmal et al. (2021).

159 Metzner (1982).

160 Abbott (1967).

161 Akmal et al. (2021).

162 Metzner (1982).

163 Rice (1969).

164 Coca (2020).

165 Akmal et al. (2021).

was an immediate need to increase the coconut harvest and support the industrial development and transformation of the agricultural sector.

Yet, as indicated above, the first REPELITA programmes relied on a static pattern of agricultural growth, which resulted in scant technological modernisation. For instance, short-term efforts implemented in the 1970s and early 1980s to intensify harvests included recurrent soil tillage and the use of chemical fertilizers (both highly detrimental to soil quality) and the eradication of pests.¹⁶⁶ Capacity development programmes, such as “Mass Guidance” or BIMAS, were hosted to improve overall management. In addition, new extension services that established a direct communication and translation of knowledge between agricultural experts and smallholders were introduced. Longer-term efforts for increasing agricultural outputs comprised rejuvenating coconut plots with trees fifty years or older by planting new and higher quality seeds (insertion) between older trees. Some variants incorporated artificial or naturally hybrid seeds imported from other parts of Indonesia, the Philippines, and Malaysia.¹⁶⁷ Whereas this could be considered to some extent agricultural innovation, the support for developing local seed nurseries and experiment stations remained fragmented.

Regarding industrialisation and modernisation, growth was predominantly fostered in the eastern provinces by promoting oil factories through improved access to credit and loans.¹⁶⁸ Reflecting technological practices inherited from older generations, farmers relied on two simple methods of desiccation to produce copra. They sun-dried or smoked the coconut shells by placing husk pieces on tarps or roofs. While the harvesting of trees could happen every three months each year, the season for copra was concentrated between April and July, with some extensions into November – lack of advanced technologies for desiccation restricted production to the dry season.

In Ende, the production of coconut oil received a stimulus in the late 1960s with the opening of three oil factories that remained accessible to all copra producers and the broader public. Two other industrial factories were added in the first half of the 1970s, and copra production in the district peaked in the 1980s. The combined total coconut oil production capacity from these establishments was approximately 3,960 tonnes per year;¹⁶⁹ however, the actual output was around 75% of this, which varied significantly from year to year due to issues obtaining copra for processing. Reflecting a more significant national

166 Mawardi (1984).

167 Ibid.

168 Akmal et al. (2021).

169 Mawardi (1984).

problem of shortages of raw materials in general, copra from within the district accounted for less than 35% of the inputs needed to achieve total operational capacity. Factories relied on the importation of raw coconut from the neighbouring regencies of Sika, Ngada, and Nage Keo. But, as in other regencies, imports experienced significant hurdles, such as the lack of representatives that could sell in bulk and logistical difficulties.

As in the national context, these shortages translated to an urgent need to intensify the expansion of coconut plantations within the district. With the transition to REPELITA III and IV, policies were executed to encourage the growth of coconuts locally. This was coupled with the critical loss experienced in the regency of several fields due to the eruption of the Iya volcano in 1969. The expansion in the total area under coconut cultivation during REPELITA III and IV was significant. For example, Mawardi Dewi indicates that in 1977 Ende had 7,065 hectares of coconut plantations.¹⁷⁰ This number increased in 1982 to 8,644 hectares. Changes in the area under cultivation had immediate effects. The volume of imported copra decreased significantly from 66% in 1977 to 48% in 1982. However, two main issues hindered the development of the coconut oil industry. First, rapid population growth within the regency increased demand for coconut products. Second, farmers had no incentive to sell locally as better prices could be secured by exporting raw stocks outside the district. While the first problem could only be solved by increasing total production, the second issue was determined by the conditions in which the coconut market operated.

In terms of the composition of the sector, in 1977, 100% of all Endenese plantations were in the hands of smallholders, with the most significant proportion of producers clustering in village cooperative associations. Despite previous difficulties, cooperative associations were reintroduced throughout the country in 1978 to address the challenges faced by the sector, which were perceived as mainly logistical.¹⁷¹ Known as *Kooperasi Unit Desa*, or *KUDs*, these organisations continued operating until the late 1980s in Ende.¹⁷² An entrepreneur association (*Gabungan Wiraswasta*, or *GW*) was created in 1979 to help solve some of the obstacles related to the availability of copra for both local and industrial demand. The association was instituted by the district governor (Decree 41/1979), and it was also responsible for granting loans to the *KUDs*, buying in bulk from the *KUDs*, regulating local businesses in terms of prices, and provisioning the coconut oil factories in the district with copra.

170 Dewi (1984).

171 Kementerian Lingkungan Hidup dan Kehutanan (1988).

172 Minyak Goreng Kelapa (2022).

Another institution, the local agency of the coconut trade (Badan Tata Niaga Kopra Ende), determined the price of copra bought directly from the smallholders or through the GW. The district governor integrated the agency, the sub-director of economy, the directors of the office of trade and cooperation, the chairman of the GW and local leaders of KUDs and represented the local branch of the BTUK. In addition, other organisations like the Rural Community Resilience Institution (Lembaga Ketahanan Masyarakat Desa, LKMD) aimed to support local economic development (Presidential Decree 28/1980). Despite their presence, the functioning of these institutions could not offer assurances against complex market oscillations or provide the necessary logistical infrastructure or environmental conditions to make copra production rentable.¹⁷³ Farmers continued to tend to their coconut plantations even when returns were negligible and operational costs exceeded benefits.¹⁷⁴

From the 1990s to the Present

The conditions of copra production did not improve in the years that followed. Despite increasing output, the end of the 1990s brought a boom in palm oil in the Indonesian archipelago that challenged the utility of copra as a primary source of vegetable oil.¹⁷⁵ State subsidies and international investment programmes made palm oil considerably cheaper compared to other alternatives. Moreover, as coconut oil became displaced by palm oil, the coconut industry continued to be limited by the same impediments experienced in the past, which hindered its potential for competitiveness. Throughout the 1990s and until now, the industrial coconut sector has suffered from further shortages of raw material supplies, equivalent to 30–40% of the installed capacity.¹⁷⁶ Issues related to rentability and low copra prices have continued to persist.¹⁷⁷ For example, a financial analysis of the costs and revenues for the village of Bheramari within the regency of Ende in the year 2005 calculated a farmer's average net income as 750,000 rupiah, or US\$75 at the exchange rate values for that year, which was derived from ten months of copra production.¹⁷⁸ Barely covering labour costs, the authors of the analysis indicated that around 97% of coconut plantation areas did not play any role in increasing smallholders'

173 Djojohadikusumo (1972).

174 Mawardi (1984).

175 Coca (2020).

176 Lay and Pasang (2012).

177 Barlow and Tomich (1991).

178 Meke et al. (2006).

revenues. As producers of raw materials exclusively, farmers were forfeiting the added value of processing copra into final products.

As of 2019, there are 12,109 hectares of coconut plantations with a total production output of 9,690 tons, the second largest in the Nusa Tenggara Timur province. Compared to the early 2000s, total production has increased from 7,386 tons in 2002.¹⁷⁹ However, the number of hectares under cultivation only underwent a minor incremental increase, and production rates per hectare continued to be below average at 1,071 kg/ha in 2010,¹⁸⁰ suggesting the importance of diversifying products to maximise outcomes. Presently, the coconut industry in Ende is limited to the confection of primary goods such as oil and grated coconut.¹⁸¹ The industry has yet to be able to expand into other options like nata de coco, coconut flour, biofuels, and cosmetics.

Furthermore, coconut production still constitutes a home-based business, primarily dominated by women entrepreneurs with scarce access to financial services. Small cooperative partnerships are found in the villages of Nanganesa¹⁸² and Jemburea¹⁸³ to manufacture coconut oil. Known for its lower quality compared to other provinces, copra production is carried out in other subdistricts of the regency, encompassing Nangapanda, Wolowaru, Ende, Ndona, Maurole, and Detusoko.¹⁸⁴ The most productive grounds are found around the volcano of Iya, where trees are still young. In the regency, coconut productivity is decreasing because of the preponderance of older trees.

After basic processing, which entails desiccation, copra is sold to village collectors and inter-island merchants from Kupang and Surabaya and refined in Jogjakarta for oil extraction. Trees continue to be individually owned, with parcel leasing a standard practice. One coconut tree is worth about US\$30, and the price of a kilogram of copra oscillates between 3,000 and 8,000 rupiah.¹⁸⁵ Prices are still determined by companies outside Flores, predominantly in Java, based on international market values.¹⁸⁶ As discussed before, farmers and copra producers have very limited, if any, control over prices. Smallholders operate in a sub-optimal fashion as there are scarce opportunities for funding

179 Badan Pusat Statistik Kabupaten Ende (2019); Badan Pusat Statistik Nusa (n.d.).

180 Wangge (2013).

181 Sigaze (2022).

182 “Minyak Kelapa Murni vco Oleh Kelompok” (2020).

183 Adoe (2022); Pius (2022).

184 “Minyak Goreng Kelapa” (2022); Badan Pusat Statistik Kabupaten Ende (2019).

185 Sigaze (2022).

186 Australia–Indonesia Partnership for Promoting Rural Income Through Support for Markets in Agriculture (AIP-PRISMA) et al. (2015).

expansion and industrialisation.¹⁸⁷ Only some institutions beyond NGOs and highly localised village initiatives are motivated enough to invest in this sector. Currently, neither private nor estate plantation companies have been established in Ende.

While local regency governments state the importance of developing the coconut subsector within economic and agricultural strategic plans, no specific programme or agency supports these objectives within the province.¹⁸⁸ Some efforts have been made out of Kupang to identify the potential of coconut production in Ende.¹⁸⁹ Moreover, during the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic, the central government launched a new long-term initiative called Program Grati eks (Gerakan Tiga Kali Lipat Ekspor) to boost agricultural commodities exports by 7% per year. With assistance from the local quarantine, farming, and extension offices, the new efforts seek to strengthen production and post-production activities by increasing intensive cooperation with business actors and community groups, fostering community empowerment to achieve economic independence, and facilitating business investment with the hopes of tripling export traffic by 2024.¹⁹⁰ A vital goal of the new programme is to improve the quality of commodities and to streamline export mechanisms. Government actors are now attempting to incentivise and modernise agricultural activities across villages in the regency.¹⁹¹

In early 2022, Indonesia began to experience a shortage of vegetable oil products due to the military invasion of Ukraine by Russia. As the president of Indonesia has shut down palm oil exports, coconut oil will again be seen as a source of food security in the coming years.¹⁹² However, the coconut industry in Ende and the eastern province of Nusa Tenggara Timur continues to be subjected to the same archaic productive conditions, despite the significant industrial growth experienced by the country since decentralisation was adopted. It is also of concern that due to the current environmental status of the district in terms of land quality, general pressures to intensify agricultural production may exacerbate degradation and aridification. In the following section, I will refer to these issues and what they mean for the Endenese economy.

187 Ibid.

188 Ibid.; Tani (2020).

189 Wangge (2013).

190 “Sosialisasi Program” (2021).

191 Badin (2021).

192 Adoe (2022).

Discussion: Periphery and Uneven Patterns of Development

Archival sources, historical reconstructions, and ethnographic information provide evidence of the singular trajectory followed by the port town of Ende in the past one hundred years. At the local level, Ende transitioned from a marine rajadom specialised in trade to a cash crop economy with negligible food cultivation and finally to a society that consistently depends on migration and agricultural production to meet its needs. Dramatic livelihood transitions are evidenced, for example, in the tenfold increase in fishing landings over the past hundred years and the growth of active fishers that has characterized the past several decades.¹⁹³ Most interesting is the progressive loss of indigenous trade and cultural networks brought about by the pacification process in the early 1900s. These systems, which operated hidden from or ignored by colonial powers, speak of a complex inter-island world in which the Endenese established alliances with kings as far as Ternate. Some of these dynamics, often captured in relations of vassalage and oral contracts, are still traceable through ethnohistorical reconstructions and histories of mobility. With changes in customary institutions and the redrafting of the regency into the Dutch administrative system,¹⁹⁴ the Endenese suffered foundational alterations in their social and power structures that further undermined their economy.¹⁹⁵ In contrast to this cosmopolitan ethos that characterized pre-modern engagements is the hyper localized reality of the coastal Endenese. In the wake of the economic independence and profitability seen in the nineteenth century, Ende is now a subsistence economy that is highly dependent on central government economic aid and remittances from migrants for its survival. For example, in addition to the intensive exploitation of its natural resources, Ende relies now on the importing of essential staples such as rice at subsidized rates to meet nutritional needs. No industries operate in the area, only small independent ventures funded by national and international organisations. What explains such a transition?

In this final discussion, I argue that Ende exemplifies a town exposed to discontinuous development and modernisation policies. At first, such policies were intended to control and demobilise a rebellious, independent, and bellicose population; later policies addressed Ende in terms of a poor and marginalised society. While the colonial and Indonesian state development plans had many differences, both ultimately addressed Endenese as subjects

193 Ramenzoni (2017).

194 Dietrich (1984).

195 Nakagawa (2006).

of limited agency who needed to be integrated into an agricultural production system to realize development. They were considered human capital, operating within a narrow niche with minimal opportunities for mobility.¹⁹⁶ Contrary to previous observations by chroniclers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries that emphasized the enterprising nature of the Endenese, colonial and Indonesian state government intervention perspectives speak of a society that lacked entrepreneurial spirit, showing a persistent prejudice against local production systems.¹⁹⁷ Such narratives ultimately validate colonial interventions in favour of fostering external capital investments rather than local initiatives. In these discourses, plagued by poverty and insufficiencies, it becomes an essential duty of the government to bring about the conditions of change and to generate the necessary competencies to support independence, self-reliance, and democracy.¹⁹⁸ These ideas are also reflected in the implementation of the first economic programmes adopted by the country, where agricultural growth calls for the involvement of extensive capital, the re-education of the population, and the implementation of capacity improvement programmes. Yet, the various development approaches discussed above, such as quinquennial government plans, have had limited effects on smallholder productivity and incomes.

Colonial and state narratives of development ignore that alterations in the sources of subsistence among the local populations and their exclusion from the newly redrafted trade circuits not only undermined their economic alternatives, but also led to critical recesses in the control of and production of raw materials. The substitution of indigenous commercial actors with Chinese and Arab middlemen curtailed the society's ability to grow in fundamental ways. In the case of coconut exports, the production structure also restricted the capacity to accumulate capital, with high revenues only experienced by producers and not by harvesters. It is probably true that the changes necessary to make the agricultural production sector profitable required fixed or coordinated exchange rates and trade policies that could control prices and fluctuations in conjunction with support for small businesses. Moreover, for village ventures that sought to modernise and expand the range of products manufactured, there was a need to secure the continuous provision of good quality raw materials and to identify trade partners beyond the regency level. Unfortunately, state-level policies that attempted to empower local villages failed to meet many of these conditions, a situation that continues into the present.

196 Dietrich (1988).

197 Metcalf (1952); Peeters (2016).

198 Bosselaar (1932).

In this regard, it should be said that compared to seafaring and shipping, copra and coconut production continue to be unappealing and risky options for smallholders. The market continues to be very unstable, and it requires a level of coordination and logistics that neither the local nor the central governments have been able to produce.¹⁹⁹ In this respect, the compulsory introduction of monocrop economies, both under colonial and more recent export-oriented Indonesian state plans, should be considered an element of the domestication, subordination, and precarization of an otherwise highly dynamic productive apparatus. The reduction in livelihood alternatives makes these populations vulnerable to oscillations in external demand, creating a dependency on a centre that effectively views them as colonies or peripheries, even after the implementation of decentralisation models. Throughout the process of peripheralisation, former *entrepôts* become invisible to the centre as they are transformed into providers of raw resources. Most significantly, the positioning of rural economies as subservient to the larger commodity market makes them highly susceptible to the policies issued by a centralised government that ignores local conjunctures and adaptation strategies that rely on agricultural diversification.

As a result of static growth models and unequal development programmes across Eastern Indonesia, de-industrialisation has become an outcome of peripheralisation.²⁰⁰ For example, the modernisation of small-scale fisheries, marine stocks being the resource with the highest potential for growth in Eastern Indonesia, has been undertaken tangentially; cumulative investment from 1967 to 1999 was reportedly only 1.37%.²⁰¹ Insistence on self-sufficiency in rice has also relegated the agricultural development of subsistence crops such as maize and beans, which are of crucial importance to the population and the ecosystem.²⁰² Farming policies that have led to the peripheralization of Ende probably exacerbated the use of damaging resource extraction practices and had critical effects within the communities themselves.²⁰³ Uneven intensification of agricultural outputs, inconsistencies, and short-termism towards the externalities associated with environmental exploitation have compromised the sustainability of resources. With negligible long-term income effects, these top-down, centralized policies have facilitated the loss of traditional land

199 Djojohadikusumo (1972).

200 Kaps and Komlosy (2013); Touwen (2001), chapter 5.

201 Satria (2009), 87.

202 Kristiansen (2018).

203 Ramenzoni (2017).

allocation management systems and a prosperous shipping industry that was essential in supplying resources in the inter-island trade in the past centuries.

In the future, environmental historians, anthropologists, and natural resource managers should consider the importance of peripheralization processes to the establishing of resource dominance. This includes exploring how what once were rich cosmopolitan hubs have been relegated to marginality, a process that has led to their “invisibilisation” by central elites. It also may require careful documentation of informal trade networks tangled within larger commercial circuits, the value of moral economies, and the embeddedness of economic institutions into patterns of mobility and circulation of people. Such a study allows for eliciting hidden subsistence strategies and their continuation as forms of resistance and adaptation to new economic uncertainties. Peripheralisation does not indicate irrelevance to maintaining a central elite but speaks of the need to relegate others to usurp their resources.²⁰⁴ Ports like Ende become invisible yet essential to the continuation of dominance within a struggle or contested space.

Looking at the broader interconnections, the bundle of relationships and rights that emerged in these littoral societies, with a keen ethnographic and critical eye, becomes essential to envisioning the characteristic patterns of development that these societies followed and how processes of proletarianization have resulted in ecosystems’ degradation. Life histories and interviews provide the only cues to the consequences of economic transitions and development programmes and how local communities have coped. Collaboration with indigenous leaders is crucial to attaining realistic and practical natural resource management policies that acknowledge the realities of different economic trajectories. Awareness of the biases and asymmetries in the interpretation of the role played by entrepôts and port towns, how such centre–periphery models may dismiss the influence of “backwater” colonial districts and localized patterns of development, constitutes a much-needed step to understand better the current resource crises we are facing.

As new governance regimes are being proposed at the provincial level to address resource depletion, it is essential to see that entrepôts and former port towns are not isolated relics of tradition. The cultures and interactions that emerged in these locales are highly relevant to understanding the wider context in which resource use and competition issues arise in this region.²⁰⁵ Thus, even when considered peripheral geographically, communities like Ende are

204 Kaps and Komlosy (2013); Kadir (2021).

205 Hoogervorst (2012); Hoogervorst (2018).

connected to trade and technological centres in a plurality of ways.²⁰⁶ While they have been relegated to government priorities, they have become very attractive to illegal fishing operations such as shark finning or slash-and-burn practices that bring about erosion and further degradation.²⁰⁷ In these cases, Chinese or Javanese market partners create demand pressures for illegal commodities. Not accounting for these interconnections within policy and governance mechanisms has severe consequences for biodiversity conservation and the success of any development programme. Ultimately, environmental degradation reverts to the long-term sustainability of local livelihoods within the community, which are based on resource commodities and contribute to exacerbating poverty. Understanding the outcomes of peripheralization at the fringes of more centralised systems is essential to navigating the trade-offs between economic growth and environmental degradation.

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²⁰⁶ Wolf and Eriksen (2010).

²⁰⁷ Ramenzoni (2013); Christensen and Tull (2014).

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维多利亚·拉门佐尼 (Victoria Ramenzoni), 在世界“尽头”的椰干生产： 印度尼西亚东部弗洛勒斯岛恩德港镇的商品动态、边缘化和（欠） 发展研究

恩德这个港口城市在连接阿拉伯、中国、印度和爪哇商人与印尼东部贵重商品贸易的网络中扮演着至关重要的角色，但通常只是作为一个简短的参考提及。本文通过档案研究、历史生态学、口述历史和人种学，探讨了作为恩德人身份核心的文化和经济交流。恩德被荷兰人称为海盗和奴隶中心，在1907年之前一直是萨武海最重要的势力。二十世纪初，随着当地经济转型为生产农业主食，恩德通过出口椰干（即干椰壳）经历了小幅繁荣。在这篇文章中，我重构了默默塑造恩德的复杂商品动态。在殖民和印尼势力的“隐蔽”下，我发现恩德的边缘化是外来精英巩固治理权力、剥夺当地群体权力的蓄意结果。最后，我展示了在重述那些曾经处于世界中心的人的故事方面，人种学工具的价值。

关键词

港口城镇 – 商品 – 椰干 – 跨区域贸易体系 – 东南亚

維多利亞·拉門佐尼 (Victoria Ramenzoni), 在世界「盡頭」的椰乾生產： 印尼東部弗洛勒斯島恩德港鎮的商品動態、邊緣化與（欠）發展研究

恩德這個港口城市在連接阿拉伯、中國、印度和爪哇商人與印尼東部貴重商品貿易的網絡中扮演著至關重要的角色，但通常只是作為一個簡短的參考提及。本文透過檔案研究、歷史生態學、口述歷史和人種學，探討了作為恩德人身份核心的文化和經濟交流。恩德被荷蘭人稱為海盜和奴隸中心，在1907年之前一直是薩武海最重要的勢力。二十世紀初，隨著當地經濟轉型為生產農業主食，恩德透過出口椰乾（即乾椰殼）經歷了小幅繁榮。在這篇文章中，我重建了默默塑造恩德的複雜商品動態。在殖民與印尼勢力的「隱密」下，我發現恩德的邊緣化是外來菁英鞏固治理權力、剝奪地方群體權力的蓄意結果。最後，我展示了在重述那些曾經處於世界中心的人的故事方面，人種學工具的價值。

關鍵字

港口城镇 – 商品 – 椰乾 – 跨區域貿易體系 – 東南亞

ビクトリア・ラメンゾーニ (Victoria Ramenzoni), 世界の「果て」でのコプラ生産：インドネシア東部フローレス島エンデ港における商品動態、周辺・疎外化、および（低）開発

しばしば簡単に言及されるだけの港町エンデは、実際にはアラブ、中国、インド、ジャワの商人をインドネシア東部の貴重な商品の取引と結びつけるネットワークにおいて重要な役割を果たしていた。本論文では、公文書調査、歴史生態学、口述歴史、民族誌学を通じて、エンデのアイデンティティを形作る文化的小および経済的交流を探求する。オランダ人にとって、エンデは海賊および奴隷貿易の中心地として知られ、1907年までサブ海で最も重要な勢力であった。20世紀初頭に地域経済が農業の主力商品生産に再編されると、エンデはコプラ(乾燥させたココナツの殻)を輸出し、小規模なブームを迎えた。本論文では、エンデを密かに形作った複雑な商品の動態を再構築し、植民地およびインドネシアの勢力によって「見えなくされた」エンデの周縁化が、外部エリートによる統治権力の集中と地元グループの権力喪失という意図的な結果であることを示す。最後に、かつて世界の中心にいた人々の物語を再び語り直すことの意義を、民族誌的手法を通じて示す。

キーワード

港町 - 商品 - コプラ - 地域間交易システム - 東南アジア

빅토리아 라멘조니 (Victoria Ramenzoni), 세계의 “끝”에서의 코프라 생산: 인도네시아 동부 플로레스 섬 엔데 항구에서의 상품 동태, 주변화 및 (저)개발

종종 간단히 언급되지만 하는 항구 마을 엔데는 실제로 아랍, 중국, 인도, 자바 상인들을 동부 인도네시아의 귀중한 상품 무역과 연결하는 네트워크에서 중요한 역할을 했다. 본고는 공문서 조사, 역사생태학, 구술 역사, 민족지학을 통해 엔데의 정체성을 형성한 문화적 및 경제적 교류를 탐구한다. 네덜란드인들에게 해적 및 노예 무역의 중심지로 알려졌던 엔데는 1907년까지 사부해에서 가장 중요한 세력이었다. 20세기 초, 지역 경제가 농업 주력 상품을 생산하는 방향으로 재편되면서 엔데는 코프라(즉, 말린 코코넛 껍질) 수출로 약간의 호황을 누렸다. 이 논문에서는 엔데를 조용히 형성해 온 복잡한 상품의 동태를 재구성하고, 식민지 및 인도네시아 당국에 의해 ‘보이지 않게’ 된 엔데의 주변화가 외부 엘리트들의 통치 권력 집중과 지역 집단의 무력화라는 의도적인 결과였음을 밝힌다. 끝으로, 민족지학적 도구를 활용해 한때 세계의 중심에 있던 사람들의 이야기를 재조명하는 작업의 가치를 강조한다.

키워드

항구 마을 – 상품 – 코프라 – 지역 간 교역 시스템 – 동남아시아

Виктория Раменцони (Victoria Ramenzoni), Производство копры на «краю» света: динамика товаров, периферизация и (недо)развитие в портовом городе Энде, Флорес, Восточная Индонезия

Портовый город Энде, который часто упоминается лишь в виде краткой справки, был важным звеном в сети, связывающей арабских, китайских, индийских и яванских купцов торговлей ценными товарами из Восточной Индонезии. В этой статье через призму архивных исследований, исторической экологии, устных историй и этнографии исследуются культурные и экономические обмены, лежащие в основе идентичности Энде. Этот город, известный голландцам как центр пиратства и работорговли, был самой значительной силой в море Саву до 1907 г. Когда в начале двадцатого века местная экономика была переориентирована на производство основных сельскохозяйственных продуктов, Энде пережил небольшой подъём за счет экспорта копры, или сушеной кокосовой шелухи. В этой статье я реконструирую сложную динамику товаров, которая исподволь сформировала облик Энде. Я считаю периферизацию Энде, «незаметно проводимую» колониальными и индонезийскими силами, преднамеренным следствием консолидации управленческой власти среди внешних элит и бесправия местных групп. В заключение я демонстрирую ценность этнографических инструментов для пересказа историй тех, кто когда-то был в центре мира.

Ключевые слова

портовые города – товары – копра – трансрегиональные торговые системы – Юго-Восточная Азия