

Forgotten Port: Economy, Colonialism, And The Fall Of Panarukan

Ani Juwita¹ and Sukidin²

¹Master of Social Studies Education, University of Jember, Jember-Indonesia
240220303002@mail.unej.ac.id

²Master of Social Studies Education, University of Jember, Jember-Indonesia
sukidin.fkip@unej.ac.id

Abstract: *The former Panarukan Port become vital trade hub colonial at the end east of Java Island now almost forgotten, good in discourse development and also in historiography economy national. In fact, Panarukan Once play role strategic as connector between the plantation hinterland (Jember and Bondowoso) and the global market through track train fire and pier export. Unfortunately, the study academic during This more Lots highlight aspect functional or geographical, without dig dynamics harbor This in system capitalism colonial in a way historiographical. This article aiming fill in emptiness the with reconstruct history Panarukan Port economy use approach historiography economy. Research done through studies library and analysis document colonial, report plantations, visual archives, and reference history local. With method study history narrative-analytical, data analyzed through stages heuristics, criticism sources, interpretation, and writing history. Research results show that collapse The Greatest No solely consequence sedimentation or lag technology, but is consequence systemic from dislocation network economy colonial: malaise crisis, occupation Japan, until nationalization post-independence. When the structure logistics and capital are cut off, ports This lost its function as knot trade and change become a memory site. Implications research This open room reflective about importance read history local in global framework, as well as urge the need integration historiography economy in narrative more Indonesian history whole and balanced.*

Keywords— Panarukan Port; Economic Historiography; Capitalism Colonial

1. INTRODUCTION

When the name "Panarukan" is mentioned, it is often associated with a legendary colonial-era infrastructure project: the Anyer–Panarukan Post Road. Built in the early 19th century by Governor-General Herman Willem Daendels, this road became a monumental project spanning 1,000 km connecting the west to the east of Java Island. In the official colonial historical narrative, this development is often praised as a symbol of modernization and infrastructure expansion. However, behind the hustle and bustle of this narrative lies a human tragedy: thousands of local workers were forced to work without pay, many of whom died from disease and exhaustion, making this project one of the largest "infrastructure genocides" in the history of Dutch colonialism in Indonesia (Toer, 2005).

Panarukan, as the final part of the Great Post Road, automatically entered the colonial historical record not only as an infrastructure point, but also as a strategic economic and military point. However, the historical value of Panarukan actually goes beyond the colonial narrative. This city was once an important ancient port since the Majapahit era, and was even mentioned as a stopover for King Hayam Wuruk in the *Negarakertagama* manuscript. Not only as a stopover point, Panarukan also had a royal defense fortress, indicating that since the 14th century this area has had a strategic military and economic function (Madjid & Wahyudi, 2014). Entering the 16th to 20th centuries, Panarukan continued to play a vital role

in the maritime trade network in East Java. Its location between land and sea routes made it a connecting port between inland areas such as Bondowoso and Jember with regional and global markets. The infrastructure built by the Dutch East Indies government, ranging from railways for transporting export commodities to shipyard facilities and port management offices, made Panarukan a busy and dynamic port city (Aprianto, 2019).

So far, studies on Panarukan have focused on local history, which tends to be viewed from the perspective of the history and function of the port, as well as the commodities produced in the Panarukan region. Several studies have raised Panarukan in the context of the history and function of the port, for example: Anugerah Yoseph Baggio's research (2016) highlighted the vital role of the Kalisat-Panarukan railway line (1897-2004) as the economic lifeblood of Jember-Situbondo, especially for the export of commodities through Panarukan Port. This line also encourages population mobility and the development of the surrounding areas. Research in Syahrial Ardi's thesis (2015) explains the results of the analysis of the development of Panarukan Port since its construction by George Birnie in the late 19th century until its decline after nationalization by the Indonesian Government, as well as its impact on the social and economic life of the heterogeneous Panarukan community. This research highlights how the port, which was originally built to support the tobacco plantation trade and supported by railway infrastructure, ultimately experienced a decline in function due to changes in

government policy after independence. In addition, this thesis also emphasizes the role of the Panarukan community with their various professions in supporting port activities at that time. Another study by Akhmad (2011) presents the results of identifying geographical factors that affect port conditions, such as shallowing due to sedimentation and coastal dynamics, and evaluating how passengers assess the quality of existing services. The results of the study indicate that Panarukan Port is experiencing shallowing problems and although most passengers generally consider the service to be good, there is a need for improvements to facilities such as waiting rooms, seats, toilets, places of worship, and cleanliness of the port environment. Meanwhile, studies that raise Panarukan in the context of Panarukan commodities, for example, the results of Fiyak's (2011) study analyze agricultural commodities based on regional potential (LQ and growth-share), production conditions, and demand destinations. Furthermore, the study compares the shipping costs of potential commodities by land and sea to determine which commodities are most efficient and have the potential to be shipped through Panarukan Port. Meanwhile, popular writings such as Pramoedya Ananta Toer's (2005) work explore more about the Post Road and its impact on the Javanese people, with Panarukan only mentioned in passing as the end point of the project. In terms of economic historiography, Panarukan's involvement in the colonial trade network and its relationship with the private plantation system in the interior have not received adequate attention. From the existing studies, it is clear that there has not been a single in-depth study that uses an economic historiography approach to dissect the dynamics of Panarukan Port. In fact, this approach is important to understand how the port was not only a transportation hub, but also an economic institution that regulated the distribution of value, labor, and capital in the colonial system.

The absence of such studies has resulted in the absence of Panarukan's role in the colonial capitalist network. Not many people know, for example, that this port was once a vital route for the export of superior commodities such as coffee, cocoa, tobacco, and sugar transported by rail from the plantation hinterland. Or that the deindustrialization process of this port was not only due to technology, but also due to changes in capital structure and post-independence nationalization policies that were not balanced by strong local economic institutions (Zed, 1999). This article aims to fill this gap by presenting an economic historiography study of Panarukan Port. This article also highlights how economic historiography can reconstruct the chronology of this port in relation to the structure of colonial capitalism.

This article will not only serve as an academic reference, but also contribute to enriching the understanding of how a small port like Panarukan has a direct connection to the dynamics of global capitalism and colonial logistics networks. Shifting the focus from mere explanation of infrastructure (the Post Road) to the economic and social roles of local communities involved in the colonial distribution system. And providing enrichment materials for history teachers and

lecturers who want to teach history with a local economic approach based on real historical evidence.

This article will be divided into several parts. The first part after the introduction will outline the methodological basis and theoretical framework used, namely economic historiography with a structural and narrative approach. The second part will discuss the chronological development of Panarukan Port: from the Majapahit era, the colonial era, to the early independence period. The third part outlines the factors that led to the collapse of the port, including the global economic crisis (malaise), the Japanese occupation, and the nationalization policy. Finally, the closing part will reflect on the importance of the economic historiography approach in reconstructing the history of a forgotten port city like Panarukan.

2. THEORETICAL BASIS

This study uses the framework of economic historiography as the main approach to analyze the development and decline of Panarukan Port. This approach allows the reading of history not merely as a chronology of events, but as a social and economic construction formed by power relations, capital flows, and infrastructure transformation in the context of colonialism.

2.1 Historiography as the Science of Writing History

Historiography, according to Kuntowijoyo (1999), is not only about what is written in history, but also how history is written with a certain approach, source, method, and perspective. In this context, economic historiography is tasked with rereading history by placing aspects of production, distribution, consumption, and economic power as the center of attention. This is in line with Zed's opinion (1999) who stated that the historiographic approach allows researchers to dismantle the dominant narrative and explore layers of meaning hidden behind historical texts.

2.2 Historical Economic Theory: Colonial Trade Structures and Systems

In the context of the Dutch East Indies, the trade and production system was largely determined by export commodities such as coffee, sugar, tobacco, and other plantation products. Production was regulated through a large plantation system (onderneming) which was usually owned by foreign companies. Panarukan, as a connecting port between plantation areas such as Jember and Bondowoso, was included in this structure as an important distribution node. The railway built from the interior to the port shows how the transportation structure was formed to channel economic surplus from villages to ships and finally to the world market (Aprianto, 2019).

2.3 Postcolonial Political Economy: Nationalization and the Collapse of Old Structures

Postcolonial political economy theory also serves as a foundation for understanding the collapse of Panarukan Port. After Indonesia's independence, the government launched a

nationalization policy against foreign companies in 1957-1958 in response to the political and economic crisis that hit the country. However, this process did not always run smoothly, because many foreign companies easily transferred their assets to hidden subsidiaries (Hill, 2000). On the other hand, the state did not yet have the institutional and technological capacity to manage a trade and logistics system as large as that previously controlled by the colonial government. In the case of Panarukan, the collapse of the port was not only a result of the nationalization decision, but more deeply, due to the loss of logistics networks, capital, and international trade actors that previously supported the port's economic life. This makes Panarukan a classic example of *the collapse of a logistical node*, a phenomenon that is common in colonial ports around the world after independence, but has not been studied in depth in Indonesia.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study uses a historical qualitative approach with the main method of historiography. The focus of the study lies in the interpretation of historical sources to reconstruct the economic development of Panarukan Port from its heyday to its collapse. This study is based on historical research using a narrative-analytical model, where the narrative is built on the basis of empirical evidence that is studied in depth in the context of economics, social, and politics.

This research is included in the type of historical research that is descriptive-interpretive. Historical research does not merely reveal past events, but also interprets their meaning and relevance in a certain context. In this context, the approach used is the economic historiography approach, namely historical writing that focuses on the economic aspect as the main variable in understanding the dynamics of local history (Zed, 1999). The economic history in question does not only look at production figures or exports-imports, but also touches on aspects of infrastructure, institutions, and power relations in the colonial and postcolonial trade systems. Thus, this approach allows for a structural analysis of the dynamics of Panarukan Port as an economic entity integrated into the colonial capitalist system.

Historical research itself basically has four main stages, namely Heuristics-Criticism-Interpretation-Historiography. No matter how many steps are applied by historians in research, these four stages must be presented or must exist. Kuntowijoyo (2001:91) has another assumption regarding the stages of historical research, namely "Historical research has five stages, namely; (1) topic selection, (2) source collection, (3) verification (historical criticism, source validity), (4) interpretation: analysis and synthesis, and (5) writing". In line with that, Louis Gottschalk (1983:18) stated that writing history must refer to four main activities, namely (1) collecting contemporary objects, (2) removing materials (or parts thereof) that are not authentic, (3) concluding reliable testimony regarding authentic materials, and, (4) compiling reliable testimony into a meaningful story or presentation. These four stages are explained as follows:

3.1 Heuristics (Historical Data Collection)

This stage is the process of tracing and collecting primary and secondary sources that are relevant to the research topic. The sources used include:

1) Primary sources:

- Dutch East Indies colonial documents relating to ports, transportation infrastructure, and import-export activities (e.g. Maatschappij Panaroekan records).
- Plantation company reports and records of goods transport via the Jember-Panarukan railway line.
- Colonial and national government regulations, such as PP No. 28 of 1972 concerning the relocation of the capital of Panarukan Regency.
- Oral interviews with community leaders and former port employees (where available), which were used as supplementary sources.

2) Secondary sources:

- History books, academic journals, popular articles, and research reports relevant to the history of Panarukan, the colonial port, and the plantation economic system (Toer, 2005; Aprianto, 2019; Madjid & Wahyudi, 2014).
- The literature of economic historiography, including the works of Fernand Braudel, Immanuel Wallerstein, and Andre Gunder Frank, as a theoretical basis.
- Historical maps, archive photographs from the Troopen Museum, as well as other visual artifacts support the spatial reconstruction of the harbor.

3.2 Source Criticism (Data Verification and Validation)

This stage aims to test the validity and credibility of the sources that have been obtained. Source criticism is carried out externally and internally:

- 1) External criticism checks the authenticity of the source (authenticity of the document, background of the publisher, authority of the author).
- 2) Internal criticism evaluates the content of a source (whether the information presented is in accordance with historical facts, whether there is any ideological bias, and what the context of the time and purpose of writing the source is).

3.3 Interpretation (Historical and Symbolic Interpretation)

Researchers interpret the content of historical sources in the context of the colonial economy. For example, reports of coffee transportation from Jember to Panarukan are not only seen as logistical data, but are also interpreted as part of the structure of plantation capitalism and the center-periphery relationship in the colonial system.

3.4 Historiography (Compiling Historical Narratives)

The results of the interpretation are presented in the form of a historical narrative based on chronology, periodization, and thematic analysis. In this case, the narrative is built based on the transformation of Panarukan Port from a royal port, a colonial export port, to its decline in the post-independence era.

3.5 Research Limitations

This study is limited to the study of the economy of Panarukan Port from the 14th century to the 1970s, with a primary focus on the colonial and early postcolonial periods. This study does not examine socio-cultural dynamics in depth, unless they are directly related to the port's economic activities.

With this methodology, the research is expected to be able to present the economic historiography of Panarukan Port in depth, systematically, and based on valid historical evidence, as well as open up new interpretations of the port as an important node in Indonesian economic history.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION USING THE TEMPLATE

4.1 Panarukan as an Ancient Port and Strategic Point of Majapahit

In the 16th century to the early 20th century, Panarukan developed as an important port serving the trade activities of spices, coffee, sugar, and other plantation products. With the presence of a railway connecting Jember and Bondowoso to the port, Panarukan became a crucial point in the Dutch East Indies export network. Port facilities such as shipyards, docks, and commodity processing warehouses show that Panarukan was not just a small port, but part of the colonial economic logistics system. Panarukan is not a new entity in the maritime history of the archipelago. Since the Majapahit Kingdom, this area has been known as one of the important *trading ports* in the eastern region of Java. This is confirmed through the *Negarakertagama manuscript* which mentions King Hayam Wuruk's journey to visit various coastal areas on the east, including Panarukan. As a port, Panarukan was not only a stopover for the Majapahit fleet, but also functioned as a military post and trade in agricultural products from the eastern interior (Madjid & Wahyudi, 2014).

4.2 Colonial Era: Panarukan in the Plantation Economic System and the Postal Highway

The colonial period marked a point of structural transformation in the economic history of Panarukan. The construction of the Post Road (1808-1809) by Daendels connected the city to the administrative and economic centers in western Java. The main purpose of this project was indeed militaristic: mobilization of troops and acceleration of communication. However, in practice, the Post Road became the main axis of economic growth because it connected commodity-producing areas with export ports, one of which was Panarukan (Toer, 2005).

The construction of a railway by the Dutch colonial government from Surabaya to Jember, and then extended to Panarukan in the late 19th century, strengthened the role of this port as an export hub. Plantation products such as coffee, cocoa, tobacco, and sugar were transported from plantations in Bondowoso and Jember to Panarukan by train. At the port, these commodities were transferred to export ships to be sent to Europe and international markets (Aprianto, 2019). Panarukan functioned as a semi-peripheral region that

supported production centers in the parent colonial country. Local people acted as laborers and farmers providing commodities, while management and control of economic value were in the hands of foreign capital.

Development economy plantations in Jember show that formation system plantation capitalists in the region are heavily dependent on foreign capital injections, policies liberal colonialism such as *Agrarische Wet 1870*, and expansion infrastructure transportation. Findings This strengthen argument, that the existence and glory of Panarukan Port No can released from Jember's role as a hinterland producing commodity export like tobacco, coffee, and rubber. The railway fire from Jember to The Greatest become manifestation concrete from connectedness structural between center production and ports export in system capitalism colonial (Nawiyanto: 2018). System logistics colonial not only create spaces economy new (like plantations and ports), but also form dependence interregional. When the system colonial collapse and network logistics disconnected consequence global crisis, occupation Japan, and nationalization Good sector plantations in Jember and harbor The Greatest experience stagnation even disintegration. Therefore, historiography economy on The Greatest must placed in a more regional framework wide, namely as knot from economy colonial built on system Jember plantation.

Panarukan Port was equipped with various modern infrastructures at that time; shipyards, warehouses, lighthouses, water piping systems, and lorry tracks connecting the docks to commodity warehouses. The head office of *Maatschappij Panaroekan*, a private trading and shipping company, became a symbol of the importance of this port in the colonial capitalist network. All of this shows how Panarukan entered the orbit of a highly organized global logistics system.

4.3 A Time of Crisis and Dislocation: Malaise, Japan, and Nationalization

The 1930s were the starting point for the decline in the economic function of Panarukan Port. The global economic crisis (Great Depression) paralyzed international trade and hit the Dutch East Indies export sector. Commodities such as coffee and sugar experienced drastic price declines, causing many plantations to close down or cut export activities. The situation worsened when Japan occupied Indonesia in 1942. Panarukan Port, like many other ports, was no longer used for trade purposes, but instead functioned as a logistics point for the Japanese military. The economic function of the port was completely diverted to support war mobilization, while the port infrastructure was left neglected (Madjid & Wahyudi, 2014).

Post-independence, the nationalization of foreign companies in 1957–1958 became a critical momentum in the collapse of this port. Although nationalization was intended to end the dominance of foreign capital, this policy was not accompanied by institutional, capital, or technological readiness to manage the port efficiently. Many foreign companies transferred their assets abroad, while warehouses

and facilities were taken over without long-term utilization plans. Port activity also declined drastically. There were no more large ships docking, no flow of commodities flowing, and the connecting rails to the port slowly died (Zed, 1999).

4.4 Panarukan Today: From Economic Pulse to Memory Site

One of the key factors that accelerated the collapse of the economic function of Panarukan Port was the systemic dislocation caused by the global economic crisis in the 1930s. As Nawiyanto showed in his study of the economy of the Besuki Residency, the region experienced severe pressure on the commodity export sector, especially due to falling world prices, plummeting global demand, and restrictions on production capacity by the colonial government as a crisis control measure. Plantation companies in Jember, Bondowoso, and Situbondo were forced to lay off workers, cut production, and stop most shipments of goods to the port (Nawiyanto: 2000).

This situation had direct consequences for the activities of Panarukan Port, which at that time was the main export terminal for plantation products from the Besuki hinterland. The decline in export volume meant reduced ship activity, paralysis of the freight train network, and neglect of port logistics facilities. In other words, this port lost its role as an economic hub due to the disruption of the regional production and distribution chain. This condition proves that Panarukan's decline was not merely local or technical, but rather part of the structural failure of the colonial capitalist system in responding to global shocks.

Ultimately, since the enactment of PP No. 28 of 1972 which removed the name Panarukan Regency and replaced it with Situbondo Regency, this port has declined administratively and symbolically. Panarukan is no longer known as an economic center or strategic port, but rather as a suburban area that holds the remnants of past glory. The port buildings that used to be the pulse of the economy are now archaeological monuments. The remains of warehouses, port offices, lorry tracks, and ship docks can still be found, but they no longer function economically. Panarukan Port has transformed into a living *historical space in local narratives, but is absent from regional and national economic development policies*. Panarukan has become part of the "petrified past" namely a symbol of the long economic structure that has been abandoned by the current of global capitalism that is now moving to large ports such as Tanjung Perak or Tanjung Priok. The absence of the role of this port in the modern economic system emphasizes how colonial capitalism created a space that was originally dynamic to become stagnant once its supporting structure disappeared.

5. CONCLUSION

Panarukan Port is representation important from How harbor local in the archipelago no just become point logistics, but also as knot connected economy close with system capitalism global colonialism. Since the Majapahit era until the colonial period Dutch East Indies, Panarukan show role

strategic as connector between the hinterland of production commodities and world markets through infrastructure rail and port. The splendor This strengthened by the construction of Jalan Raya Pos as well connectivity train fire from Jember and Bondowoso. However, the decline The Greatest No solely consequence factor geographical or obsolete infrastructure.

Study This find that its collapse affected by dislocation structural in system economy: global crisis (Great Depression), transfer function harbor moment occupation Japan, and policies post-1957 nationalization that did not accompanied by readiness institutions. The process of deindustrialization and the loss of network trading international become factor determinant in change The Greatest from harbor active become room archaeological. Approach historiography economy used succeed to reveal that history harbor like The Greatest No Enough explained past chronology and statistical data, but must interpreted through relation power, current capital, and transformation structural from time to time.

Findings This give contribution important in reorientation studies history local, not Again as fragment separate, but as part from narrative big history Indonesian economy. Implications study This stretch from learning history contextual until urgency preservation of economic sites colonial based on research scientific. In the future, studies similar need expanded to other port areas, as well enriched with approach interdisciplinary and resources history alternatives, such as visual archives and testimonies oral public local. With method this, history harbor like The Greatest not Again just become footnotes in history national, but rather window reflective for understand relation between space, economy and power in landscape Indonesian history.

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