

ARABS IN MANADO: NETWORK, CAPITALISM AND IDENTITY IN THE EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY

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DOI: 10.31291/jlka.v20.i2.1015

Accepted: 11 January 2022; Revised: 23 June 2022;

Published: 6 September 2022

ABSTRACT

This paper aims to describe and analyze Arab Ethnic trading activities in Manado from 1899 to 1919 AD. The article employs a social science approach and historical methods to explore the networking activities, commodities, and the formation of Arab identity in Manado. Nusantara experienced a turning point in maritime trading activities around the 19th century to the 20th century. The commerce network had implications for commercial ports, communities, and identity groups in several strategic coastal areas, especially from 1899 to 1919. In Manado, Arab traders played important roles in commodity activities, especially rice, coffee, copra, and other agricultural products. Some of these roles are: being intermediary traders, commodity providers, Islamic preachers and educators in Manado and its surroundings. The modernization of Manado port in 1914 had affected the Manado Arab ethnic group. This situation urged the Arab change their orientation from economics to education to maintain themselves and their identity.

Keywords: Arab Ethnic, Trading Network, Commodities.

ABSTRAK

Tulisan ini bertujuan mendeskripsikan dan menganalisis aktivitas niaga etnis Arab di Manado selama tahun 1899-1919. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan ilmu sosial dan metode sejarah, kajian ini menunjukkan aktivitas

jejaring, komoditas, dan pembentukan identitas etnis Arab di Manado. Nusantara mengalami titik balik dalam aktivitas niaga maritim sekitar akhir abad ke-19 hingga abad ke-20. Jejaring niaga berimplikasi pada bandar-bandar niaga, komunitas, dan kelompok identitas di beberapa kawasan pesisir strategis khususnya pada tahun 1899-1919 M. Di Manado, kalangan pedagang Arab berperan dalam perdagangan komoditas terutama beras, kopi, dan kopra, hingga hasil bumi. Salah satu peran tersebut adalah sebagai pedagang perantara dan penyedia komoditas hingga menjadi kelompok penyebar dan pengajar Islam di Manado dan sekitarnya. Modernisasi pelabuhan pada tahun 1914 di Manado berimplikasi besar bagi kalangan etnis Arab Manado. Mereka kemudian mengubah orientasi dari ekonomi ke pendidikan untuk mempertahankan diri dan identitas.

Kata kunci: *Etnis Arab, Jejaring Niaga, Komoditas.*

INTRODUCTION

Sulawesi Sea area was the heartsea for the northern region of Nusantara that connects the Sulu Strait, Makassar Strait, Maluku Strait, to the eastern coast of Nusantara¹. The flow of commercial traffic at that time was still classified as 'free' without the dominance of traders. Traders took turns visiting Nusantara until the early 20th century with the aim of obtaining spice commodities. One of the active traders was a group of Arabs who came through international trade routes. These Arab traders transitted in mainland India and/or China before continuing their journey to Nusantara. They sailed following the path that connected the international trading ports². They were even known as collectors and distributors of superior commodities in the region long before the influence of Islam developed³. During these activities, Asian traders, especially Arabs, became the

¹Adrian B. Lopian, "Laut Sulawesi: The Celebes Sea, from Center to Peripheries," *Moussons*, no. 7 (2004), <https://doi.org/10.4000/moussons.2445>; Adrian B Lopian, "Peta Pelayaran Nusantara Dari Masa Ke Mas," *Buletin Al-Turas* 2, no. 3 (2018); 1-16, <https://doi.org/10.15408/bat.v2i5.6764>.

² Engseng Ho, *The Graves of Tarim: Genealogy and Mobility across the Indian Ocean, The Graves of Tarim: Genealogy and Mobility across the Indian Ocean*, (2006): xix-xxvi.

³ "Spice: The History of a Temptation," *Choice Reviews Online* 42, no. 09 (2005), <https://doi.org/10.5860/choice.42-5243>.

liaison between the Middle East and Europe. Arab merchant sailors began to settle in non-Arab areas⁴. They took advantage of the Indian Ocean route that connected the Arabian Peninsula and several regions in Nusantara.

The trading activities of Arab traders occurred throughout the region, both coastal and mainland. They used two routes in their commercial activities, namely land and sea, also known as *the silk road* and *the maritime route*. The caravans carrying commercial commodities were connected to each other in the trading network, exchanging commodities that they need. As in the silk road network, Arab traders acted not only as suppliers, but also as commodity providers. They brought several kinds of commodities, such as clothing made from animal skins, wheat, and cloths which will be brought to the spice sources in Maluku. In Nusantara, Arab traders were actively operating from the 10th century to the 20th century AD. The long journey was divided into several periods. Some of the significant periods are the Islam spreading period and the period of opening the maritime route from the coast of South Arabia to Nusantara. They built a trading network with Indian and Chinese traders in several areas of the International Airport which were connected from mainland West Asia to Nusantara⁵.

Maluku spices were the main destination for sailors and merchants at that time. To reach this region, traders had to stop in several ports including Manado and the Sulawesi Sea Region. The presence of Arabs in the region later became a turning point

⁴ Andre Wink., *Al-Hind, vol. I*, London: Oxford, (1999), 65.

⁵ Erik Gilbert, Ulrike Freitag, and William G. Clarence-Smith, "Hadhrami Traders, Scholars and Statesmen in the Indian Ocean, 1750-1960s," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 1998, 392 <https://doi.org/10.2307/221108>; Nico Kaptein, "Indian Ocean Migrants and State Formation in Hadhramaut: Reforming the Homeland," *Asian Journal of Social Science*, 2007, 269 <https://doi.org/10.1163/156853107x203487>; Syed Farid Alatas et al., "Hadhrami Entrepreneurs in the Malay World, c. 1750 to c. 1940," in *Hadhrami Traders, Scholars and Statesmen in the Indian Ocean, 1750s-1960s*, 2021, 297-314, https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004491946_023.

for Manado⁶, in addition to the increase in quantity of Arabs in Nusantara. Arab traders then made Maluku as the main destination, with Manado as one of their transit areas until the 18th century AD. However so, few years later, they had to fight for influence and roles with new people from Europe.

The presence of Arab traders is supported by a report from Moelsbergen⁷ which shows the existence of ships from Asian traders on the Manado coast, including ships belonging to Arab merchants who carried out trading and bartering activities for rice and cloth commodities⁸. Interestingly, they were not only 'seasonal' traders on the coast of Manado, but also distributors for several commodities from the western region of Nusantara. At its peak in the late 19th century, reports indicated that Arab settlements were formed on the coastal area of Manado⁹. In addition, there were many Arab villages in the eastern part of Nusantara, both in Manado and the Maluku Islands¹⁰. They gradually became a commercial community that played a central role in distributing commodities, and so it emerged migrant enclaves, nuclei, in coastal areas through economic networks.

Before the presence of Europeans in Manado, early strategy of Arab traders was by operating as merchants who bartered their commodity with other traders who had influences in Malaka

⁶ Muhammad Nur Ichsan Azis, "DIASPORA DAN PEMBENTUKAN IDENTITAS ETNIS ARAB DI KOTA MANADO," *Handep: Jurnal Sejarah Dan Budaya* 4, no. 1 (2020): 62-86, <https://doi.org/10.33652/handep.v4i1.107>.

⁷ E. C. Goedee, Moelsbergen, *Geschiedenis van den Minahasa tot 1829*, Landsarchivaris: Landskurukkerij-Weltevreden, (1928). 14.

⁸ Jouke S. Wigboldus, "A History of the Minahasa c. 1615-1680," *Archipel* 34, no. 1 (1987): 63-101, <https://doi.org/10.3406/arch.1987.2374>.

⁹ L. W. C. van den Berg, *Oranxg Arab di Nusantara*, terjemahan Rahayu Hidayat, (Jakarta: Komunitas Bambu. 2010), 8-16.

¹⁰ William Gervase Clarence-Smith, *The Economics of the Indian Ocean Slave Trade in the Nineteenth Century*, *The Economics of the Indian Ocean Slave Trade in the Nineteenth Century*, 2013, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315035383>. William Gervase Clarence-Smith, "The Rise and Fall of Hadhrami Shipping in the Indian Ocean, c. 1750-c.1940," in *Ships and the Development of Maritime Technology on the Indian Ocean*, 2015. Clarence-Smith, (2015), 227-258.

and Maluku¹¹. With the domination of European sailor-traders, Arabs then changed their strategy. They were trading by building networks with small traders in order to be free from European trader domination. However, the issue of *Residentie van Manado*¹², Arab traders should surrender to the fact that European traders are in control.

The change in trade routes is concrete evidence in the policy that connects small ports as commodity collectors for the needs of KPM vessels. In addition, the document rules, *jaarpas* and *zeebrief*, exacerbated the limited supply of commodities carried out by Arab traders which resulted in restrictions on supply and commodity transactions in the port area, including in Manado.

With the formation of the KPM, Koninklijke Paketvaart Maat-schappij at the end of the 19th century, the trading space for Arabs in Nusantara became narrower and limited. In Manado, for example, they were only suppliers of commodities on a medium scale to a few small traders. Their economic activities were increasingly limited like never before.¹³ The change in trade routes was concrete evidence as policy regulates those small ports as commodity collectors for the needs of KPM vessels. In addition, the document rules, *jaarpas* and *zeebrief*, exacerbated the limited supply of commodities carried out by Arab traders which resulted in restrictions on supply and commodity transactions in the port area, including in Manado.

This paper attempts to reconstruct and re-analyze commercial activities, including networks, commodity supply, and the formation of Arab ethnic identity in Manado up to the 20th century. At the beginning of the 20th century, there was a shift in the economic activity by Arabs in Manado as a result of the policy of limiting the shipping of merchant ships and due to the colonial domination of the main shipping lanes. The maritime

¹¹ Thomas R. Metcalf and Holden Furber, "Rival Empires of Trade in the Orient 1600-1800," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 97, no. 3 (1977), 379, <https://doi.org/10.2307/600821>.

¹² ANRI, *Besluit No. 10, tanggal 14 Juni 1824*, 1.

¹³ Azis, "Diaspora dan Pembentukan Identitas Arab di Kota Manado, 62-86"

trade network is the starting point in this paper which will be connected to the activities and economic patterns of the Arabs in Manado. Thus, the author tries to answer three questions including: What is the process of the Arab trade network in Manado? What commodities were traded by the Arabs in Manado until the 20th century? How was the process of adaptation and formation of the Arab community in Manado in the early 20th century?

Local historiographies of Arabs in Mandao are still limited, particularly of those present in the 20th century. There were some notes from Muhammad Nur Ichsan Azis (2017a) entitled *Arab-Gorontalo: Sebuah Sketsa Awal Masyarakat Arab di Gorontalo Abad XIX-XX M*; “Arab in Manado: Opening Space and Maintaining an International Trading Network at XIX” in the *International Conference on the Dynamics of Hadhramis in Indonesia* (2017b), a thesis by Muhammad Nur Ichsan Azis (2019) in UIN Sunan Kalijaga entitled *Diaspora dan Perdagangan Maritim Komunitas Arab di Bandar Manado* [The diaspora and maritime trade of Arabs community in Manado ports] (1888-1900 M), and another one is *Diaspora Pembentukan Identitas Etnis Arab di Kota Manado* [Diaspora and the identity making of Arab ethnic in Manado]”,

Some other studies such as conducted by Graafland (1991) entitled *Minahasa: Negeri, Rakyat, dan Budayanya*, trans. Lucy R. Montolalu; Moelsbergen (1928) *Geschiedenis van de Minahasa tot 1829*, L. Adam (1925) “Bestuur: Uit en Over de Minahasa”, *BKI* 81. This study contains documents about Arab people and their trade. Other similar studies were carried out by A. B. Lapien (2009) which portrays the maritime situation of Sulawesi Ocean with his work entitled *Orang Laut, Raja Laut, dan Bajak Laut: Studi Kawasan Laut Sulawesi Abad XIX*; by M. J. C. Shouten (1998) entitled *Leadership and Social Mobility in Southeast Asia Society, Minahasa 1677-1983*; by David Henley (2005) *Fertility, Food and Fever: Population, Economy and Environment in North and Central Sulawesi, 1600-1930*. These three studies describe the situation of Sulawesi region, particularly Manado. They also describe the activities of the sailor-traders from Arab. L. W. C. van den Berg (2010) *Orang*

Arab di Nusantara, trans. Rahayu Hidayat; Nico J. G. Kaptein (2017) *Islam, Kolonialisme, dan Zaman Modern di Hindia Belanda: Biografi Sayyid Uthman (1822-1914)*; work of Huub de Jonge (2019) *Mencari Identitas, Orang Hadhrami di Indonesia (1900-1950)*. Although these studies discuss about Arabs and Arab traders in Indonesia, they miss to discuss the particular context of Manado.

Graafland and Lopian's work imply that trade networks follow wind and seasonal routes, as well as commodity production. Then, Moelsbergen, Schouten, and Henley, describe the condition of Manado in several periods, especially in the 19th century. Furthermore, Van den Berg, Nico Kaptein, and Huub de Jonge provided information about Arab networks spread across Nusantara, including in Manado. Batavia has always been referred to as an information center for Arabs who spread across Nusantara towards the end of the 19th century. The last two works of Azis briefly describe the existence of Arabs through their historical process to form a community, but do not reveal much about the trading network that was formed at the end of the early 20th century. This article focuses on the discussion of the commercial networks that form and build relationships, to the patterns of commerce that took place at the end of the 19th century, as well as the impact that occurred on the networks that was built at that time.

Historical method is employed in reconstructing the Arabs in Manado at the beginning of the 20th century. Heuristics, criticism, interpretation, and historiography are the first steps in history writing with various social science approaches as tools.¹⁴ In the case of Manado, Arab traders were considered to have significant role in the moving commodities in Nusantara through maritime trade networks. Although experiencing fluctuations, Arab traders continued to carry out trading activities. Data for this study was collected through primary and secondary literature related to the activities of Arab traders in Manado. Several

¹⁴ Kuntowijoyo, "Pengantar Ilmu Sejarah," *Jurnal Ilmu Sejarah Dan Kebudayaan*, (2013); Kuntowijoyo, *Pengantar Ilmu Sejarah*, (Yogyakarta: Bentang Pustaka, 2005): 90.

contemporary Dutch Indies reports, books, and newspapers were used to analyze and describe the events of that period. Source sorting is carried out through a verification stage before interpretation and explanation stage. Descriptive-analysis approach is used to build a historical description prior to writing or historiography. By this procedure, sustainable data on the maritime trade process of Arab traders in Manado is obtained.

The first stage, heuristics, was carried out by collecting various kinds of literature sources, both books, travel reports, and articles obtained from several libraries, especially from the Library of UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, UGM Library Yogyakarta, National Archives of the Republic of Indonesia (ANRI), North Sulawesi BPNB Library, and Sulawesi Archives in Makassar. The author also used the Mendeley software and compiled resources from Dutch newspapers obtained from websites such as www.delpher.nl and <https://researchgate.net/> publication. The second stage, source criticism or verification involved data selection that is in accordance with the research topic. For the main sources, the author selects several archives published by the colonial government relating to Arab maritime trade and shipping networks in the Sulawesi Sea Peninsula, especially in the Karesidenan of Manado until 1919. For supporting data, books and research journals discussing the circumstances at that time were also collected. The third stage, interpretation, involved looking back at the correlation and relationship between historical sources and the context of historical events at that time. The fourth stage, historiography, was conducted by writing historical works as stated in this scientific journal.

The present study is a development of previous studies such as: field study by Muhammad Nur Ichsan Azis in his work entitled *Arab-Gorontalo: Sebuah Sketsa Awal Masyarakat Arab di Gorontalo Abad XIX-XX M* (2017a); “Arab in Manado: Opening Space and Maintaining an International Trading Network at XIX” dalam *International Conference on the Dynamics of Hadhramis in Indonesia* (2017b); Muhammad Nur Ichsan Azis (2019) in UIN Sunan Kalijaga *Diaspora dan Perdagangan Maritim Komunitas Arab di Bandar Manado (1888-1900 M)*, and Muhammad Nur Ichsan Azis (2020) in his work “Diaspora

dan Perdagangan Maritim Komunitas Arab di Bandar Manado 1888-1900 M” published in *Jurnal Handep*, BPNB Kalimantan Barat, and finally an unpublished paper entitled ‘Jejaring Niaga di Karesidenan Manado, 1900-1919’ in the National Congress on History XI 2021 conducted by Indonesian Historian Society cooperating with Kemendikbudristek (The Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology). All of these academic words indicated that Arabs in Manado had a central role in the establishment and development of maritime trading activities.

In this article, author adopts the views of Antonio Serra who stated that mercenary brings benefit to a nation, they could either manage commodities to be exported, or they could peruse it for their own in-country needs.¹⁵ In addition, capital ownership is not only to gain economic benefits, but also has an impact on social benefits, so that it can have implications for the existence of certain individuals or groups in maritime trading network activities. This view is also reinforced by Cheong and Warren who also believe that the influence of maritime commerce forms the identity and entity of a 'new' community group. The formation of the new community occurs not only by colonialization or war, but also by social-economic powers¹⁶.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Manado as the Central of Nusantara Maritime in The End of 19th Century

Contextualization of space and networks of maritime trading in Manado has been going on for some time; almost at the same time frame as the spice trading in Maluku. Notes about Manado that conducted maritime activities by the coastal areas were indicated by the presence of foreign trade ships by the

¹⁵ George Soule, *Pikiran Sarjana-Sarjana Besar Ahli Ekonomi*, terjemahan L. M. Sitorus, (Jakarta: Pustaka Rakyat, 1952), 36.

¹⁶ W. E. Cheong and James Francis Warren, “The Sulu Zone, 1768-1898: The Dynamics of External Trade, Slavery, and Ethnicity in the Transformation of a Southeast Asian Maritime State,” *The American Historical Review* 87, no. 5 (1982): 1449, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1857050>.

Manado Sea¹⁷. It was even reported that since the 17th century, Manado especially Minahasa was considered as one of supplier areas in the Nusantara.¹⁸ Activities and maritime networks were more open in Manado and Minahasa when European traders found Maluku as the spice producer.¹⁹

Geographically, Manado is located at a position at 124°40' – 124°50' East Longitude and 1°30' – 1°40' North Latitude or at the intersection of the Sulawesi Sea, the Maluku Strait in the east and the Makassar Strait in the west. This area, when linked to the past, was often traversed by sailors heading to Maluku. This condition also made Manado known as one of the closest connecting areas between the Philippines-Maluku-Makassar until the 20th century and served as a route in the trade network in Nusantara.

The arrival of Europeans had implications for relations and the formation of commercial networks in the past. In the early 17th century, for example, Minahasa and Manado became areas contested by the Spanish and Portuguese as connecting areas. As a result, Spain was able to build a garrison at Kema as a commercial area in Minahasa and the Sulawesi Sea area²⁰. In addition to the space war between Portuguese and Spanish, the Dutch then began relations with Minahasa when they succeeded in controlling Ternate and the Padt-Brugge 1679 trip to Minahasa began political relations between Minahasa and the Netherlands²¹. Interestingly, this relationship opened up more space for Manado to carry out maritime commercial activities with merchant sailors from various regions.

¹⁷ Moelsbergen, *Geschiedenis van den*, 1928, 7.

¹⁸ Wigboldus, "A History of the Minahasa c. 1615-1680.", 63-101.

¹⁹ Adrian B. Lopian, "Laut Sulawesi: The Celebes Sea, from Center to Peripheries Laut Sulawesi : La Mer de Célèbes, Un Centre Devenu Pépiphéries," *Moussons*, no. 7 (2004); Lopian, "Peta Pelayaran Nusantara Dari Masa Ke Masa.", 1-16.

²⁰ Lopian, "Laut Sulawesi: The Celebes Sea, from Center to Peripheries Laut Sulawesi : La Mer de Célèbes, Un Centre Devenu Pépiphéries"; Wigboldus, "A History of the Minahasa c. 1615-1680, 63-101."

²¹ Robertus Padt-Brugge, "Beschrijving Der Zeden En Gewoonten van de Bewoners Der Minahassa," *Bijdragen Tot de Taal-, Land- En Volkenkunde* 13, no. 1 (2013): 3014-3331, <https://doi.org/10.1163/22134379-90000917>.

Although the main goal of the traders at that time was Maluku spices, but Manado remained as a transit point en route to Maluku. This is strengthened by the fact that these trader-sailors did not only contribute in economic activities, but also in the maritime traditions²².

During the VOC period, Manado became an area controlled as a rice supplier to Ambon. Manado did not only supply for rice, but also other commodities monopolized by the VOC government. Evenmore, the development of the coastal area of Manado could not be separated from the ongoing hegemony and commercial monopoly. A fort and a trading lodge were built by the colonial government to strengthen their position on the Manado coast. This lasted until the 20th century when the role and influence of the Dutch became part of the life of the Minahasa and Manado people.

The colonial government's policy was to restore Manado in one administrative area, and the policy was abolished again through the Gouvernement der Moluksche Eilanden system through Governor General's Decree no. 2 dated 6 December 1866. As a result, Manado was no longer included in the Maluku subordination area, but became an independent region with an assistant resident as the government ruler the area. This appointment had implications for the course of political and economic activity in Manado, especially in the development of the Manado coastal area and the movement of commodities.

Towards the middle of the 19th century, Manado was designated as a commercial area through Staatblad van Nederlandsch Indie No. 42 year 1848. The appointment was due to the rising price of rice, coconut, and copra commodities, so that traders from various ethnicities were seen in Manado, even became big distributors. It was recorded that in 1856, trading activities in Manado experienced consistency where traders

²² Alex John Ulaen, "LAUT YANG MENYATUKAN: MENGUNGKAP RUANG-JEJARING LAUT MALUKU," *Lensa Budaya: Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu-Ilmu Budaya* 12, no. 2 (2017): 9-14, <https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.34050/jlb.v12i2.3046>.

strengthened their network to Gorontalo through the copra and coconut trade.²³

Manado became a bustling area for merchant sailors in the 19th century with high-value commodities. To support the coastal area of Manado as a commercial port, the colonial government then built facilities and infrastructure, including residential areas, docks, warehouses and markets. This development could not be separated from the policy of the colonial government through an agreement with the residents of Manado. To support this, the local ruler, *walak*, became a partner for the assistant resident, the controleur, to manage the running of the government in Manado. This appointment aimed to facilitate community regulation, commercial activities, social relations, for tax collection, as well as the data census each year.

Of the 26 districts under the control of the *walak*, Manado was positioned as an area that received several commodities from various areas in the Minahasa mainland. Like Kakas, Remboken and Tondano that produce rice, Tonsea produce coconut, copra, coffee and forest products, all of which are brought to Bandar Manado for distribution to several areas, especially Singapore and Surabaya. The above conditions were also supported by the process of developing settlements in Manado where irrigation infrastructure was built to support plantation productivity.

In Algemeen Verslag in 1868 it was reported that two prominent Arab traders, Amr al-Taijb and Sayyid Akhmad bin Alawi Alaydrus, were active traders in Manado. They settled in the coastal area of Manado by providing various commodities including rice, and conducting transactions by barter or money-based selling²⁴. The number of traders who came and go to Manado opened opportunities for some new workers in Manado. One of the influences was an economic pattern called *commenda*

²³ David Henley, Fertility, Food and Fever. Population, Economy and Environment in North and Central Sulawesi, 1600-1930," *Internationales Asienforum* 37, no. 1-2 (2006): 45, <https://doi.org/10.11588/iaf.2006.37.354>.

²⁴ Bambang Suwondo, *Sejarah Daerah Sulawesi Utara*, Manado: Pusat Penelitian Sejarah dan Budaya Depdikbud (1977/1978), 76-77.

where casual workers and laborers were brought in from several areas around Manado. The flow of movement indicated that Manado was getting busier and growing in the maritime trade network and traffic. On the other hand, the commercial climate in Manado had also affected several areas. The flow of population increased in parallel, settlement arrangements were regulated, and a local ruler were indications that Manado is a bustling area by traders.

The commercial activity formed in Manado led Manado as a maritime trading axis area that connected several main areas, including Makassar, Surabaya, Batavia, Singapore, and Maluku. Several ships of the KPM company, Koninklijke Paketvaart Maatschappij were seen passing through Manado on the Batavia-Singapore trade route via Bangka and Riau and also Batavia-Pontianak-Surabaya-Makassar-Maluku-Surabaya-Singapore²⁵.

The newspaper *De Loco-motief* in 1894 wrote that Manado was a port of liaison that transported various commodities, especially coconut and copra from Manado, so that Fiber Rami was also a local commodity which was traded as fishing gears²⁶.

Arab Sailor-traders, Early Presence and Commodities

The definition of Arab seafarers needed to be established prior to discussing about their presence and influence. In previous studies, unequal descriptions were often found between Arabs and Hadhramis, people who came from Hadhramaut to Nusantara, especially Maluku. The author then separated Arabs and Hadramis who came to Nusantara based on the roles they played. Referring to van den Berg, Arabs and Hadramis' arrival to Nusantara before the spread of Islam was originally for trading. Berg's²⁷ view was then strengthened by other records, which showed that Arab networks, including Hadhrami, had

²⁵ I Gde Parimartha, "Contextulizing Trade in East Nusa Tenggara, 1600-1800" dalam Peter Boomgard (ed.), *Linking Destinies: Trade Town and Kin in Asian History*, Leiden: KITLV, (2008), 75.

²⁶ ANRI, *Kolonial Verslaag*, 1909, 259

²⁷ Van den Berg, *Orang Arab di Nusantara*, (2010): 8-16.

been connected to Maluku through the spice trade and continued to the modern age²⁸. Simply put, the meaning of Arabs and Hadhramis should be given a periodization based on their activities and roles before and after the influence of Islam. Therefore, in this section the author in the article will alternately use the words Arab and Hadhrami based on their activities and roles.

Trade networks connecting regions, ethnicities, commodities, and cultures had implications for the emergence of groups known as traders. In the context of Manado, this trade network had an impact on the arrival and presence of Arabs who worked as traders. However, another source mentioned that the presence of Arabs in Manado could not be separated from the political influence of the Islamic Sultanate of Ternate before the 16th century. This source also wrote about an Arab named Said (sayyid) Abdul Wahid Rahis who first arrived in Belang.²⁹ However, according to the author, Said Abdul Wahid Rahis, later known as Said Abdul Wahes, was a trader who came from Ternate and visited Manado to buy commodities. This data was strengthened by the work of Taulu who wrote that the immigrants to Manado were traders, as well as experts who were deliberately imported from several areas before the 19th century by the colonial government³⁰. However, the presence of Said Abdul Wahid Rais confirmed that the presence of Arabs in Manado has existed before the domination of the colonial government in the 19th century.

Accordingly, there were two prominent Arab figures namely al-Said bin Zen bin Alwi Zenalds (Alaydroos) and al-Said Zen

²⁸ “Spice: The History of a Temptation”; Wink, “Merchants and Faith: Muslim Commerce and Culture in the Indian Ocean”; Ronald H. Fritze and Ronald S. Love, “Maritime Exploration in the Age of Discovery, 1415-1800,” *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 38, no. 4 (2007), <https://doi.org/10.2307/20478689>; Ho, *The Graves of Tarim*.

²⁹ Hamri Manoppo, Donald Qomaidiansya Tungkangi, et, al, *Dinamika Islamisasi di Bolaang Mongondow Raya, Sulawesi Utara, Abad ke-17-20*, (Jakarta: LITBANGDIKLAT Press, 2017), 85.

³⁰ H. M. Taulu, *Sejarah Masuknya Islam di Sulawesi Utara*, Manado: Yayasan Manguni Rondor, 1977, 7-9; Azis, *Diaspora dan Perdagangan Maritim*, 35-60

bin Zenaldus (Alaydroos) in 1789 who existed during the spice trading to Maluku.³¹ They were Arab traders who carried out commercial activities to Maluku to collect spices. Both were known to have visited and died in Manado as Arabs who made Manado a hub port to Batavia, and *vice versa*. Their main activity was supplying rice commodities obtained in Manado through cloth barter. The term 'slam'³² reinforced the assumption about the presence of Arabs who were Muslim and other Muslims have been in Manado. In fact, they also actively involved in several commercial activities including buying and exchanging gold, iron, sea cucumbers, turtle scales, bird's nests, seashells, sandalwood, resin, rattan, and slaves in the Tomini Bay area until the 19th century.

They were collectors and suppliers of commodities in several Minahasa areas and shipped to Manado port. Rice from Manado and Minahasa not only went to Maluku and Java, but also to Singapore³³. They used sailing ships as a means of transporting commodities from Manado to big cities to other small ports with their own capital³⁴.

These traders took advantage of the monsoons to sail or anchor for a while while gathering commodities. For them, the best places were coastal areas or river estuaries due to easy access to transport commodities. In Manado, this was clearly

³¹ Ichsan Azis, "Islamisasi Di Kawasan Laut Sulawesi Pada Abad Ke-19", *Jurnal Penelitian Sejarah dan Budaya*, (2019) 12-15; Azis, "Diaspora Dan Pembentukan Identitas Etnis Arab di Kota Manado", *Handep* (2020) 78.

³² See K. Van Dijk, "From colony to independence state: The Changing fate in Minahasa of a tiny Muslim minority amidst Christian" in R. Schefold, *Minahasa past and Present*, (Amsterdam: CNWS, 1995), 75. Van Dijk mentioned 'Slam' for Muslims in the Manado coastal areas and the majority of Slams was Arabs at the time. Although this interpretation seemed to be awkward, but this note strengthened assumption that Arabs' influence was present far before the European traders such as VOC and Dutch.

³³ J. F. van Bamelien, dan G. B. Hooyer, *Guide through Netherlands India, Compiled by order Koninklike Paketvaart Maatschappij*, London dan Amsterdam: Thos. Cook & Son dan J. H de Bussy (1903), 57-58.

³⁴ Azis, "Diaspora dan Pembentukan Identitas Etnis Arab di Kota Manado", *Handep* (2020): 76-77.

seen when Arab villages were built on the shores of the Tondano River estuary across the Manado Bay³⁵.

The Arabs in Manado were getting stronger as an active seafaring-trade group. Coffee production was one of the proofs of the survival of the Arab merchant group in Manado³⁶ where they were able to distribute coffee to several small traders. In Batavia, Arabs became a medium-scale supplier of coffee for the needs of the commercial market. On the other hand, a coffee warehouse, koffiepakhuisen, could be seen standing among the residential areas. In turns, it made Manado's coffee production increased. This condition reinforced that the presence of Arabs in Manado cannot be separated from the production of the resulting commodities and the profits along with it.

The distribution was strengthened through the sea transport network and shipping. KPM's ships became commodity 'collectors' for medium-sized traders, including Arabs. As in the voyage of the Pakolombian ship which sailed from Gorontalo to Manado with vinegar, coconut, and rice, as well as slaves led by Arabs³⁷.

An Arab merchant named Sheikh Aoem Alamri who transported copra in Manado is proof that the presence of Arabs in Manado was able to survive until the early 1900s. The merchant transported coconut and copra commodities to Ternate and Singapore. On the other hand, the appointment of a wijk-mestee (village head), with the status of Luitenan Arabieren te Manado, known as Said (sayyid) Mansjoer bin Abdoellah Alhasni, further strengthened the existence and influence of Arabs in Manado.³⁸

³⁵ N. Graafland, *Minahasa Negeri, Rakyat dan Budayanya*, 11-13.

³⁶ Alex J. Ulaen, "Masyarakat Minahasa Pada Abad Ke-XIX: Sketsa Perubahan Dan Transformasi," *Antropologi Indonesia*, no. 51 (2014), <https://doi.org/10.7454/ai.v0i51.3307>; Alex J. Ulaen, "Koffiecultuur dalam Sejarah Daerah Minahasa" dalam *Journal of Research and Development*, Vol. 1 (1), (Manado: Sam Ratulangi University, 1989), 31-37.

³⁷ A. Jacobsen, *Reise in die Inselwelt des Banda-Meer*, (Berlin: Mitscher und Rostell, 1896), 191-192.

³⁸ *Soerabaiasch-Handelsblad*, No. 57. 09 Maret, 1895, 3. Dalam surat kabar tersebut memberikan informasi yang menegaskan pengangkatan seorang kepala kampung yang ditunjuk pemerintah kolonial di Manado

Capital and Commodities of Arab Traders in Manado in the 20th Century

Manado's position was an important path when several commodities were needed in the maritime trade market. The main trading post at the end of the 19th century was Batavia which became the area for supply and distribution of commodities. The reports and notes shown at that time were the production of coffee and copra commodities which were the main choices of the Manado city³⁹. Although the production of these commodities did not fluctuate every year, several groups of traders made promising profits at the time.

Arab traders in Manado, for example, consistently supplied and distributed commodities to several connecting port areas such as Makassar, Surabaya, Singapore, to Kalimantan⁴⁰. Through these activities, Manado became known as a port hub, to several major ports and other smaller ports. In terms of rice supply, for example, Arab traders in Manado consistently supplied it to Ternate using sailing ships and steamers until the early 20th century^{41,42}. Meanwhile, coffee was distributed to Java via Makassar. Reports of coffee commodity yields at that time reached 16,000 pikul which was also supplied by several regions, especially Surabaya and Singapore⁴³..

³⁹ Bambang Suwondo, *Sejarah Daerah Sulawesi Utara*, (Jakarta: Depdikbud, 1977/1978), 77.

⁴⁰ Bambang Surowo, "KPM VERSUS PELNI: PERSAINGAN MERE-BUT HEGEMONI JARINGAN PELAYARAN DI NUSANTARA, 1945–1960," *Jurnal Sejarah Citra Lekha* 1, no. 1 (2016): 11–23, <https://doi.org/10.14710/jscl.v1i1.11857>.

⁴¹ William Gervase Clarence-Smith, "The Rise and Fall of Hadhrami Shipping in the Indian Ocean, c. 1750-c.1940," in *Ships and the Development of Maritime Technology on the Indian Ocean*, 2015, 227–58.

⁴² Clarence-Smith, "The Rise and Fall of Hadhrami Shipping in the Indian Ocean, c. 1750-c.1940."

⁴³ David Henley, "Fertility, Food and Fever. Population, Economy and Environment in North and Central Sulawesi, 1600-1930," *Internationales Asienforum* 37, no. 1–2 (2006), <https://doi.org/10.11588/iaf.2006.37.354>.

Profits from the supply and distribution of commodities eventually brought Arab traders to a profitable position⁴⁴. Trading system of Arab traders in Manado underwent a slight shift, especially when currency was used as the main transaction tool. In commodity production, for example, 56-100 tons of commodity supply is an advantage for Arab traders which are distributed to Java⁴⁵. The record showed a profit of 40% in one year of commercial activity in Manado.

Another pattern carried out by Arab traders in Manado was *commenda* or providing capital to small traders and making them partners and trading partners. From an economic perspective, *commenda* is defined as an economic system that connects the owners of capital and workers. The practice of *commenda* carried out by Arabs in Manado is part of a simple capitalistic practice between owners of capital and workers. This is evidenced by the emergence of several trading companies owned by Arabs in Manado with several workers from local residents around Manado. They even established cooperative relationships with Chinese traders as providers of ship and warehouse rental services around the coast of Manado. Arab traders were often directly involved in the distribution channel and transportation to several surrounding islands using small tonnage ships⁴⁶. When the demand for supply increased, they participated in the transportation of commodities to major ports, especially Surabaya, Makassar, and Singapore, as ship captains.

The production of commodities in Manado, for example, reached 56-100 tons distributed and supplied to Java and several

⁴⁴ Rosdalina Bukido and Laila F. Bamastraf, "The Acculturation of Local Culture and Arabic Culture in Manado of North Sulawesi," 2017, <https://doi.org/10.2991/iconeg-16.2017.42>.

⁴⁵ Kolonial Verslaag 1895, 188; J. S., Furnival, *Hindia Belanda Studi tentang Ekonomi Majemuk*, trans. Samsudin Berlian. Jakarta: Freedom Institute, 2009, 220

⁴⁶ H. W. Dick, Juli 1975. "Prahau Shipping in Eastern Indonesia" dalam *Bulletin of Indonesia Economic Studies*, vol. XI (2), England: Routledge, 1975, 71-72

other areas and made good profit for Arab traders⁴⁷. From this activity, the average profit earned was 40% per annum⁴⁸. From these profits, the colonial government felt disadvantaged by Arab traders, hence they issued a policy through Sayyid Uthman ordering Arabs living in Nusantara to abide by the policies issued by the colonial government⁴⁹. Interestingly, Arab traders responded to this by looking for alternatives to be able to sail. It could be seen from Arab traders' initiatives for establishing relationships with local traders from Gorontalo, Ternate, Makassar, for the supply and distribution of commodities. Their involvement was not only to provide capital and ship facilities, but also to avoid paying large taxes to the government⁵⁰.

Coconut and copra commodities made a raise in the early 20th century in terms of production and price. Before, coconut and copra worths f3 per 100 units. But since 1901, the price skyrocketed to f16-f17,5 with montly profit of f80. This increase was due to the strategic position of Manado and the active initiatives of Arab traders in making relations and supplying commodities.

The success of *commenda* system brought positive impact for Arab traders in Manado. These middle to big capital holders traded commodities such as coconut, copra and coffee beans. While they cooperated with Bauerman dan Parmentier ships, they also built companies with Chinese merchants operating in Gorontalo and Manado. Arab traders rented their ships and were

⁴⁷ Arsip Nasional Republik Indonesia, *Kolonial Verslaag, Bijlage, Tweede Kammer, 1895. C. 5. 62, 1-7.*

⁴⁸ Azis, "Diaspora dan Pembentukan Identitas Etnis Arab di Kota Manado," 73.

⁴⁹ Gilbert, Freitag, and Clarence-Smith, "Hadhrami Traders, Scholars and Statesmen in the Indian Ocean, 1750-1960s."; Huub de Jonge, *Mencari Identitas: Orang Hadrami di Indonesia (1900-1950)*, trans. Arif Bagus Prasetyo. Jakarta: Kepustakaan Populer Gramedia, 2019, 45

⁵⁰ Ichsan Azis, "Islamisasi di Kawasan Laur Sulawesi Pada Abad Ke-19", *Jurnal Penelitian Sejarah dan Budaya*, (2019); Dick, "Prahu Shipping in Eastern Indonesia" *Bulletin of Indonesia Economic*, (1975): 72.

in charge of the shipment of coconut as well as the customs.⁵¹ It is worthy to note that Arab traders were able to maintain their position in Manado at the time. 28 Arabs and their descendants resided in the city, as traders, distributors and brokers of medium-to-large tonnage ships of more than 300 tonnes.

Sayyid al-Habsyi was one of many figures who had big impact in Manado port through the coconut supply. He run his business with *commenda* system; he also served as an agent and supplier of copra sent to Makassar. In addition to these commodities, al-Habsyu also supplied clover and nutmeg from Ambon and Banda to Surabaya. His influence exceeded the Chinese merchants who also operated in Makassar; he disrupted the trading activities of Chinese traders in Manado and Makassar.⁵²

Lederboer & Co. company was managed by an Arab merchant and became one of leading companies who provided transportation facilities for copra to Makassar⁵³. The trading perused some systems called *commenda* and *ijon* (the capital was given with the crops as the collateral).

Motor Kuutsvaart Maatschappij, *Mokumij*, is a solid proof that Arabs around Sulawesi Sea were capital holders in the commodity distributions. A prominent figure named Sayyid Abdurrahman bin Syaikh Al-Hasni owned 45% stock in a company *Celebes Development Compeny* (Codeco), a company making business with a Japanese company that serves interisland and intercoastal trading. *Mokumij*'s main commodity at the time was coconuts and copra (until mid 20th century).

Two Arab merchants who were still actively trading up to the early 20th century were Syekh Aoem Al-amri and al-Hasni. Al-Amri traded spices and other commodities in Manado with a medium tonnage ship. Meanwhile, Al-Hasni coworked with *Lederboer & Co.* who provided some essential commodities at

⁵¹ J. F.van Bemellen dan G. B. Hooyer, *Guide thorough Netherlands India, Compiled by order Koninklijke Paketvaart Maatschappij*, London and Amsterdam, 1903, 157-159.

⁵² R. Broersma, "Koopvaardij in de Molukken in *TNI*, vol. 23, issue, 129-147.

⁵³ J.H. Boeke, *Perkapitalisme di Asia*, Jakarta: Sinar Harapan (1983), 9-20; H van Kol, *Uit onze kolonien: uitvoreig reisverhaal*, (1903), 323.

the cost of paying concession to the Dutch East Indies for export import activities. The decline of Arab trading roles in Manado, some Arabs then decided to reside in the city.

It may be safe to conclude that with the *commenda* system run by Arab traders in Manado until mid 20th century, it strengthens an assumption that these Arab traders indirectly used capital system in the practices of maritime trading.

The roots of Manado Arab identity in the 20th century

The early existence of Arabs in Nusantara was much related to the contribution of Sayyid Uthman in Batavia in the late of the 19th century.⁵⁴ Arabs inhabiting coastal areas gradually adapted to the local residents. In Manado, they were active as a trader at the sea, and some other were actively interacting on the land. The latter established some grocery stores at the market near Tondano river. Some local notes also reported that there was cooperation between Arab and Chinese traders for some commodities. Arab traders provided places to trade, while Chinese traders picked up and shipped the goods to Makassar or other regions. *De indische Courant* edition 1932 wrote copra export and import in Manado involving some Arab traders in small scale, who were also shipping copra to Makassar.⁵⁵

On the other hand, the change of activities in Batavia had impacted widely, including those in Manado. Some Arabs who travelled through Manado-Makassar-Batavia routes were the ones who obtain the information regarding the change. The trading network that used to be mainly economic, shifted into socio-cultural relation, in the form of non-formal schooling. One of pioneering Islamic schools was the one established by Syekh Said (*sayyid*) Achmad Alan in 1854. He developed the non

⁵⁴ Jajat Burhanudin, "Diaspora Hadrami Di Nusantara," *Studia Islamika* 6, no. 1 (March 30, 2014), <https://doi.org/10.15408/sdi.v6i1.750>; Natalie Mobini-Kesheh, "Chapter 2: Nahḍah: The Hadrami Awakening," in *The Hadrami Awakening*, 2019, 34–51, <https://doi.org/10.7591/9781501-732522-005>.

⁵⁵ *De Indische Courant*, 1932, 3.

formal school *sabilihuda* in Kampung Arab and he died in 1886 buried in Kampung Islam (Islam village).⁵⁶

The establishment and development of Arab village in 1894 side-to-side with Islam village suggests that socio-cultural relations also strengthened the existence of Muslims in Manado, let alone the Arabs. Manado's Kampung Arab, as in the colonial type of housing complex⁵⁷, serve as the turning point for religious identity for both Arabs in particular and Muslims in general. The establishment impacted in the appointment of a village head, *wijkmesester*, named Said Mansjoer bin Abdoellah Al-Hasni as a *Luitenan Arab* in Manado since 1895.

The population census confirmed this condition; it was reported that there were 18 Arabs registered as residents in Manado, and in 1930 the Arab population living in Manado (Kampung Arab) increased rapidly to 585 people⁵⁸. Another move to township (*gementee*) status in 1919 had a greater impact on the Arabs in Manado. The spatial planning area in Manado was slowly improving with the opening of several strategic places such as office centers, ports, schools, houses of worship, as well as residential areas. For Arabs, houses of worship and schools are important in maintaining their identity and entity. It was proven that they were able to survive amid the Manado society through educational and religious institutions.

The existence of Islamic educational institutions by the Arab traders⁵⁹ indicates that the development of Islamic thoughts in Manado has been nurturing since the 20th century. Thoughts and education networks become the strengthening knot for

⁵⁶ Yoran Lamangida, "Masyarakat Keturunan Arab di Manado" dalam *Jurnal Esagenang*, Vol. 1 (1), Manado: Balai Kajian Sejarah dan Nilai Tradisional Manado, 2003, 131.

⁵⁷ Azis, "Diaspora dan Pembentukan Identitas Etnis Arab di Kota Manado," 81.

⁵⁸ Henley, *Fertility, Food and Fever. Population, Economy and Environment in North and Central Sulawesi, 1600-1930*," 168–71.

⁵⁹ De Jonge, *Mencari Identitas Orang Hadrami di Indonesia*, (2019), 45.

Manado Arabs to broaden their existence and influence to the other regions.⁶⁰

Arabs in Manado construct their identity and entity driven by internal and external factors in their relations. Apart from the colonial government policy, these people are able to adapt to the local context by building good relations with the local people. Some of Arab descendants built semi-formal schoolings for their own children and local Muslim kids. Some notable figures were actively involved, namely: Syawie, Baftim, Bin Taib, Al-masyhur, As-Seggaf, and Bachmid, the pioneers of Islamic education in Manado.⁶¹

The peak of the identity making of Arabs in Manado can be viewed from many activities which support social relations between Arabs and local, such as in education, religiosity, and Arabic-Islamic cultural practice⁶². Various kinds of Arabic-Islamic traditions help strengthening the solidarities between the ethnicities, in addition to familial relation that has been built. Interviews reveal that Arabs in Manado are related to Arabs in other cities such as Gorontalo, Surabaya, Jakarta, Palu and Borneo (Kalimantan).

CONCLUSION

The existence of Arabs in Manado cannot be separated from the process and axis of the maritime network that was formed before the 20th century. Their presence in Manado is due to the production of spice commodities in Maluku. Abdul Wahid Rahis' presence is considered a milestone of the existence of the Arab community in the 17th century. In 1789, two Arab traders named al-Said bin Zen bin Alwi Zenalds (Alaydroos) and al-Said

⁶⁰ Syed Farid Alatas et al., "Hadhramaut and the Hadhrami Diaspora: Problems in Theoretical History," in *Hadhrami Traders, Scholars and Statesmen in the Indian Ocean, 1750s-1960s*, 2021, 19–34, https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004491946_005.

⁶¹ Bukido and F. Bamastraf, "The Acculturation of Local Culture and Arabic Culture in Manado of North Sulawesi."

⁶² Gayda Bachmid, "Kitab 'Burdah' Karya Sastra Lisan Arab dalam Perspektif Masyarakat Muslim di Manado Sulawesi Utara," *Kajian Linguistik*, 2019, <https://doi.org/10.35796/kaling.7.1.2019.25018>.

Zen bin Zenaldus (Alaydroos) were also notable figures. Their destination was Maluku to collect Maluku spices, but they made Manado a transit point. Arab maritime trade network in Manado had influence to Makassar, Surabaya, Gorontalo, Kalimantan, Batavia, and Singapore through the supply and distribution of rice, coffee, coconut, and copra commodities.

Arab traders in Manado trading systems and patterns that made profits. At first, they were directly involved in maritime trading activities as supplier and distributor of commodities. Once they got promising profits, they then applied the *commenda* system and business lending capital to seafarers and local residents. The rise of the Arabs in Manado cannot be separated from the role of Sayyid al-Habsyi and Ayekh Aoem Alamri as the main movers in commerce. They had a medium-sized trading company that supplies commodities to Singapore. They also employed local people as crew members or even captains of inter-island ships.

The two figures above can be considered as significant actors who played a role in the formation of the Arab community in Manado in the early 20th century. On the other hand, other Arab figures, were also able to use their networks to strengthen the position of Arabs in modern times. Evidence of this power is the construction of an Arab village in Manado in 1894 and headed by an Arab *luitenan* named Said (Sayyid) Mansjoer bin Abdoellah Alhasni. They were finally able to build a trading network through maritime routes, so that they were able to adapt in the heterogeneous society of Manado in the 20th century.

Recommendation

It can be said that writings and studies on the Arab/Hadhrami ethnicity in Nusantara are lacking, especially in Manado. In fact, if you look at the conditions of historical inheritance that still persist today, the role of the Arabs in Manado is quite active and massive. Therefore, the author recommends for academics, lecturers and researchers to study further about the active role of Arabs and their descendants in Manado. Policy makers should pay attention to the relevance of heritage, culture and education in the present and the future. The

author hopes that the survival of 'ethnic based settlements' in Manado, can encourage the government to make it an 'old/historic city' for Manado in the past.

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