

# The Impact of Modernization on Traditional *Perahus* in Banjarmasin South Kalimantan Indonesia in the Twentieth Century

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**Abstract:** This article studies the impact of modernization on traditional means of transportation in Banjarmasin port, South Kalimantan. Model of à Campo which is generally chosen when traditional sector is set against the modern, i.e. adoption, adaptation, relocation, and withdrawal (exit) is used to analyze the issues in this article. The results of this study show only two options that match with the model, i.e. adaptation and relocation when traditional *perahu* (Indonesian) faced modern shipping and trade in Banjarmasin port. Adaptation is the right choice, as the *perahus* will continue to exist. Often *perahus* do not have any other choice but to relocate their shipping and trading activities to a smaller pier in the hinterland of South Kalimantan.

**Abstrak:** Artikel ini mengkaji dampak modernisasi pada alat transportasi tradisional di pelabuhan Banjarmasin, Kalimantan Selatan. Model à Campo yang umumnya dipilih ketika sektor tradisional berlawanan dengan yang modern, yaitu adopsi, adaptasi, relokasi, dan penarikan (keluar) digunakan untuk menganalisis isu-isu dalam artikel ini. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan hanya dua pilihan yang sesuai dengan model, yaitu adaptasi dan relokasi ketika perahu tradisional (Indonesia) menghadapi pelayaran dan perdagangan modern di pelabuhan Banjarmasin. Adaptasi adalah pilihan yang tepat, karena perahu-perahu akan terus ada. Seringkali perahu-perahu tidak punya pilihan lain selain merelokasi aktivitas pelayaran dan perdagangannya ke dermaga yang lebih kecil di pedalaman Kalimantan Selatan.

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## INTRODUCTION

Shipping (or sailing) is an old and historical activity to Indonesian people that can be traced back to hundred years ago. As inhabitants of the widest archipelago country of the world, they live inseparably from the oceans. There is much evidence, represented in relief paintings in temples, ancient manuscripts, and even in documents, describing activities on sea. In Borobudur Temple, for example, there is a relief depicting an image of a boat with *cadik* (outriggers) that was very popular in XIX century. *Perahu* (Figure 1) is a wooden boat with a maximum capacity of 500 m<sup>3</sup>. This vessel operated in shipping from one island to another at short distances (feeder lines). Since 1970s, there are two kinds of *perahu*, i.e. with engine and without engine (Dick, 1975: 70, Hughes, 1986: 103, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), 1991, p. 108). They were used for commercial business (Broek, 1942, p. 3). According to a South Sulawesi chronicle cited by Noorduyn, a Wajonese nobleman sailed from the east coast of Kalimantan to South Sulawesi in the 18<sup>th</sup> century for trade purpose (Noorduyn, 1995, p. 20). Meanwhile, J.C. van Leur explains that in the beginning of 17<sup>th</sup> century a settlement of seamen from various ethnic groups such as Malay, Ternate, Banda, Banjar, Bugis, and Makassar already existed at the Banten port (van Leur, 1983, p. 132). By 1609, there were more than 1500 Javanese



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merchants in Banda (Hall, 1985, pp. 20-25, van Leur, 1983, p. 132). In 1617, hundreds Javanese *perahu* transported rice to Malaka (van Leur, 1983, p. 128).

In their history, *perahus* took an important part in waterways transportation in Indonesia. Evidence shows the important role of *perahus* in interisland shipping and trade. Edward L. Poelinggomang argues that *perahus* in Makassar dominated a large part of marketing of products in the Indonesian archipelago (Poelinggomang, 2002, p. 96). This could be seen from the spread of commercial shipping by traders and seamen. They sailed to many commercial centers bringing commodities produced in the hinterlands and made good relations with many of them. Therefore, their role never paled until the nineteenth century.<sup>2</sup> In Java *perahu* shipping took an important role in eighteenth-century sea trade. Knaap mentions that, besides Chinese junks and Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie (VOC) sailboats, the *perahus* were important in shipping along the Java coast in the middle of 1770s (Knaap, 1996).



**Figure 1.** *Perahus* anchored nearby Banjarmasin Port after 1990. (Source: Private documentation)

One important *perahu* shipping center in Indonesia was in Banjarmasin, South Kalimantan. Later, Banjarmasin became a center for regional shipping and trade activity. Bugis, Makassar, Madura and Java traders came to Banjarmasin regularly to fetch commodities like rubber, woods, rattan, resin, wax, plaited mat, etc (ANRI, *Algemeen Verslag der Residentie Zuider- en Oosterafdeling van Borneo over het jaar*, 1880). In return, Banjarmasin and its surrounding areas needed goods for daily needs such as rice, sugar, salt, flour, maize, coconut oil, textile and household furnishings from Java, Madura and South Sulawesi. In early 19<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> century, *perahus* became the most important vessels linking Banjarmasin and the ports in the north coasts of Java and Madura and in South Sulawesi.

Due to the demand of modernization that began in the early 1980s, *perahus* were no longer the most significant transportation vessels as before. There were other alternatives or choices for the merchants to ship their goods. One of them was the container. This article discusses the impact of modernization in the Banjarmasin port on *perahus*, and how “the *perahu* people” successfully dealt with the challenge of modernization.

Traditional *perahu* had their own market segment. They were merchants and people of small and medium enterprises. However, during the colonial ruled by the Dutch in Indonesia, *perahus* were seen as competitors to the colonial fleet that was organized by the agency of *Koninklijk Paketvaart Maatschappij* (KPM) (Dick, 1987, pp. 104-121; à Campo, 1993, pp. 33-60). Although KPM’s fleet was modern, the Dutch made efforts to reduce the operation area of the *perahus* in order to diminish them (Nur, 1969, pp. 14-15). This was done by way of reducing tariffs and goods shipping costs. Nevertheless, the *perahus* survived and became the favorite choice for interisland shipping. Although more modern, the Dutch fleet gradually lost its grandeur.

In Banjarmasin, modernization began when the port was removed from Martapura River to Barito River in 1965. A new modern port was established in accordance with the economic progress at that time. Although the *perahu* center was still occupying the old port, which remained traditional, the *perahu* attained their position in the 1960s and 1970s. This can be inferred from the increase in the number of vessels and in shipping goods transported by the fleet. The initial phase of decline began during the 1980s as a result of competition with more modern ships or boats. The decline was accelerated from 1986 as Banjarmasin port started using containers to transport goods from one island to another.

To describe the impact of modernization on *perahu* shipping in Banjarmasin, a model of à Campo was used. This model discusses four options that are generally chosen when the traditional sector is confronted with the modern one. They are: adoption, adaptation, relocation, and withdrawal (exit) (à Campo, 1993, p. 34). Adoption means that traditional sector tries to get new equipment or new expertise needed in operating new technology that appears beneficial. Adaptation is when the traditional sector keeps maintaining its conventional technology, but profits from the productivity and opportunities from the innovation of the technology. Relocation happens when the traditional sector has to step out of the competition. It has to relocate

its activities (shipping and trade) away from the previous location (to the peripheral area) because the existence of a modern sector does not contribute benefit to the traditional one. Withdrawal became the last option when the traditional sector has no ability anymore to continue its business. In Banjarmasin port, however, not all options can be observed. Based on collected data, only two match the model, i.e. adaptation and relocation.

The remainder of this article is divided into three parts, and closed by a conclusion. The first part discusses the existence of traditional *perahus* from 1965 to 1985. It was a time when container system had not been used as means of goods transportation in Banjarmasin port. The second part deals with the impact of using containers instead of the *perahus*. The third part describes the life of the people who once supported *perahus*, when they were no longer dominant participants in shipping due to the modernization of the Banjarmasin port.

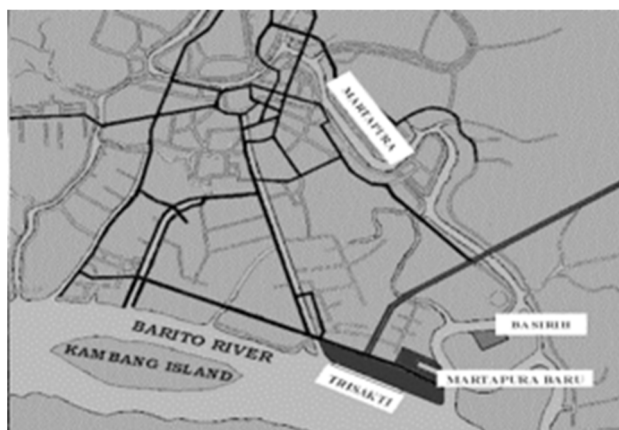
## METHOD

To discuss the issues in this article, the historical method which consists of four steps, namely heuristics (data collecting, includes primary and secondary data), criticism (external and internal criticism), interpretation, and historiography (historical writing) was used. Primary data in the form of archives and documents were obtained from the National Archives of Republic of Indonesia (ANRI), while secondary data in the form of articles and literature were obtained from various libraries in Banjarmasin and Jakarta. Important information from the respondents obtained from interview methods were used in this article as well. To determine the impact of modernization in the port of Banjarmasin to the *perahu* shipping society, I interviewed several key informants, such as former skippers, crews, and officer of Freight and Forwarding Company in Banjarmasin Port.

## THE EXISTENCE OF PERAHUS

Since 1965, Banjarmasin has had two ports, i.e. Martapura and Trisakti ports (Figure 1). Martapura port, the older one, is located on the right bank of the Martapura River. It has a dock made of *ulin* wood (a type of very hard wood from Kalimantan). Its length is 348 meters, and its width is 10.5 meters. The depth of the water around the dock is 4 m (The Port Survey Team of United Nations Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East, 1968, p. 22), and it has a gate that connects with south and central Borneo. Martapura port has several weak points. To reach the port, the vessels sail on Barito

River for 2 couple of hours, then enter Martapura River and reduce speed due to the zigzag nature of the river. When the vessels are about to reach the port, other problems arise, as both banks of the river are crowded with houses and pursuits of people, whereas the supporting facilities on the dock are inadequate. The dock can only contain 5-6 ships. The length of the ships may range from 35 m to a maximum of 85 m. Facilities for loading activities are very simple, only shifting gears and laborers. In spite of its shortcomings, it has for a long time been the most important port in South Kalimantan.



**Figure 2.** Location of the old Martapura Port and the new Trisakti Port. (Source: Badan Pengusahaan Pelabuhan Banjarmasin, 1973.)

In September 1965, the new modern Trisakti port was officially opened (“Pelabuhan Banjarmasin Selayang Pandang”, 1966, p. 12). This port is located 26 km from the mouth of Barito River, and 3.5 km from Banjarmasin. It is situated on the left bank of Barito River, and has a dock of 200 m in length with 15 meter in width. The depth of the water can reach to 8-10 m (Badan Pengusahaan Pelabuhan Banjarmasin, 197, p. 52) where the dock is constructed with concrete. In contrast to Martapura port, Trisakti port is equipped with modern loading equipment like forklifts and mobile cranes. Other supporting facilities are also available, such as a fire unit, water supply, fuel center, guiding boat and speedboats. The port can service ships up to 500 Deadweight Tonnage (DWT) in size.

Since the operation of Trisakti port, all loading and unloading activities are done here. The Martapura port is only for the operation of the sailboats or smaller ships, yet still strategic for some shipping service. It is situated in the centre of Banjarmasin and its proximity from traditional market stands to merchant stands makes it ideal for traders in small and medium enterprises. For example, to unload goods that arrive from Java, it

takes only a small amount of short time and little cost. As the ships dock, laborers unload the goods and send them to the merchant stands, thus goods are not stored at the port warehouse. This is appreciated by both owners of merchandise and of vessels.

The traditional *perahu* are not restricted by time. They can easily reach smaller ports in the hinterland of South Kalimantan and its surroundings at its own time as the owner of the *perahu* is also the captain and sometimes the merchant as well. *Perahu* from Makassar sailed to Surabaya and Banjarmasin with their own goods such as rice and flour. It also transported daily commodities from Java and distributed them to Banjarmasin and its surroundings. Goods transported to Banjarmasin consist of rice, flour, sugar, drugs, housing materials, and light duty machines. Goods transported from Banjarmasin are latex, rattan, plaited mat, handicraft, *damar* (resin of certain trees collected as an article of trade), woods, reptiles' leather etc.

During the 1960s, latex, rattan and woods were the primary export commodities from Banjarmasin. By the year of 1963, the total export weight was respectively 404 metric tons of wood, 4,633 metric tons of rattan and 52,603 metric tons of latex. By 1965, the total export had increased to 3,907 metric tons of wood, 16,000 metric tons of rattan, and 26,000 metric tons of latex (The Port Survey Team of United Nations Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East, 1968, p. 34). As "feeder" shipping, the traditional *perahu* took an important role in delivering these commodities from Banjarmasin to Surabaya, the seaport of export-import and interisland trade.

The role of traditional *perahu* in the transportation of goods during mid-1960s compared with the role of other vessels (iron vessel and Nusantara ship/Regular Liner Service) can be described as follows. In 1966, 82,244 tons of goods unloaded in Banjarmasin port (domestic shipping), 44 % was transported by traditional *perahu*; the rest

of it, 56 %, by other vessels. While 94,178 tons of goods loaded from Banjarmasin port, 63 % was transported by traditional *perahu* and the rest of 37 % by other vessels. By 1970, the numbers changed as follows: 44 % and 56 % for goods coming in (total 123,896 tons), 56 % and 44 % for goods going out (157,382 tons). The number of goods transported by *perahu* from Banjarmasin to the seaports on Java and Bali was large because *perahu* had the flexibility of schedule and the ability to reach remote areas. The traders in remote areas did not have to convey their goods to the big seaport, because the fleet could easily reach such areas.

Tables 1 and 2 show the data about the existence of *perahu* that was operating during 1960s to 1980s one can refer to. From Table 1, we observe that the number of *perahu* operated in Banjarmasin increased over time. A description by a witness shows that from 1960-1970, the landscape of Banjarmasin was unique, filled with masts soaring to the sky. Simultaneously, in Martapura dock, everyday one could see *perahu* lining up for loading activity. From Table 2, we observe that the *perahu* transported more cargo than *Nusantara* or iron (local) ships. Since the middle of 1970s, the data has shown that *perahu* dominated the cargo delivery in interisland transportation. In 1980, the government set a policy regulation limiting log (round wood) export through *Surat Keputusan Bersama* (a co-authorized format document). The document was authorized by three ministers on 8 May 1980.

It caused a decline in interisland cargo transported by all kinds of shipping. By 1980, the volume of log export reached 1,121,906 m<sup>3</sup>, but in 1981, it fell to 528,936 m<sup>3</sup>. One can say that it decreased around 53% (Administrator of Pelabuhan Banjarmasin, 1981). The shortage of cargo from the log was not totally replaced by other log related commodities, like board and plywood. At that time, board and plywood were produced in large numbers. This triggered a decrease on the number of

**Table 1.** Total number of *perahu* and other vessel in Banjarmasin in interisland shippings, 1966-1970

Year	<i>Perahu</i> shipping			Local and <i>Nusantara</i> shipping		
	Number	Load (tons)	Unload (tons)	Number	Load (tons)	Unload (tons)
1966	2,039	36,343	59,039	402	46,001	35,139
1967	1,585	46,950	50,070	791	59,273	76,741
1969	1,999	32,888	61,351	814	49,024	78,853
1970	2,268	54,926	87,371	728	68,970	70,011

Sources:

Pemda Propinsi Kalimantan Selatan, *Kalimantan Selatan, 1963-1968*.

Badan Pengusahaan Pelabuhan Banjarmasin, *Laporan Tahunan, 1969-1970*.

Post Survey Team of the United Nations Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East, *The Port of Makasar, Bandjarmasin and Palembang, April-July 1968*.

**Table 1.** Total number of *perahu* and other vessel in Banjarmasin in interisland shippings, 1966-1970

Year	<i>Perahu</i>		Nusantara ship		Iron (local) ship	
	Number	Cargo (ton/m <sup>3</sup> )	Number	Cargo (ton/m <sup>3</sup> )	Number	Cargo (ton/m <sup>3</sup> )
1973	2,984	193,747	779	153,706	862	121,422
1974	2,369	228,909	423	114,622	634	109,612
1987	3,226	383,951	175	62,118	935	136,439
1980	3,626	415,754	304	163,999	875	141,128
1982	3,212	391,747	275	163,493	931	112,461
1983	2,766	539,798	388	180,516	1,102	145,889
1985	1,903	552,975	263	158,326	850	143,390

Sources:

Biro Pusat Statistik Kalimantan Selatan, Kalimantan Selatan dalam Angka. Tahun 1973, 1978, 1981-1985.

Badan Pengusahaan Pelabuhan Banjarmasin, Laporan Tahunan. Tahun 1973, 1974-1975, 1981, 1983

items transported by the inter-islands. Since 1970, wood was the major commodity of the Banjarmasin port. Except for log, kinds of manufactured wood such as board and plywood began to be shipped (interisland) and exported overseas. In the interisland transport of wood, *perahus* became one of the most frequently used vessels. The roles of *perahus* in transporting woods from Banjarmasin to several ports in Java and Bali can be summarized as shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3 shows that *perahus* dominated the interisland wood transport in Banjarmasin. It carried 62% of the total 147,466 tons/m<sup>3</sup> of wood shipped to Java/Bali in 1978. Meanwhile, the contribution of *perahus* rose from 58% of the total 182,044 tons/m<sup>3</sup> of wood in 1979 to 79% of the total 313,914 tons/m<sup>3</sup> of wood in 1980. The increasing volume of wood shipped within in interisland trade and to abroad was caused by the ill-defined procedure of wood shipping at that time. In fact, Banjarmasin's seaport was incapable of running the shipment of log and products of wood industry (board and plywood) directly from Trisakti/Martapura port. Therefore, the port administrators issued a policy on wood loading in open sea or in the lumber company's pier. Most major wood industries located along the edge of Barito River had their own warehouses and piers in which the depth of the wa-

ter level was highly influenced by the tide of the sea. Thus, only small boats and ships could ply the river. The flexible characteristic of *perahus* had made them the most important means of conveyance in transporting wood and as *perahu* could enter many ports, this did not require organized loading and unloading workers but was done by the crew themselves. It did not need any complicated bill of lading.

As a traditional means of transportation, however, *perahus* had some weaknesses, particularly in dealing with the safety of the cargo and speed to reach the destination as the *perahu* was accident-prone. Sailboats sometimes broke down during the sail, hence shipping required longer time. As a result, the cargo was not in the best condition by the time it arrived at the destination. Furthermore, there was a possibility of the *perahu* sinking with all its cargo. Once a ship's captain who operated his master's ship accounted an accident happened and all the goods sank into the sea, he and all his crew had to meet the consequences by not being paid a single dime. With all its limitations, especially superior technology, shipping goods by *perahus* seemed to be the practical choice for merchants and small entrepreneurs. It could be seen from the increased number of sailboats' visit and the cargo they carried (see Table 2). From 1970s to the mid of 1980s, *pe-*

**Table 3.** Wood transporting by *perahu* in comparison with other vessels, 1978-1980

Means of Transportation	1978			1979			1980		
	Call	DWT	T/M <sup>3</sup>	Call	DWT	T/M <sup>3</sup>	Call	DWT	T/M <sup>3</sup>
<i>Perahu</i>	1,924	181,818	91,992	2,024	187,017	105,162	2,487	226,683	247,774
Iron ship	492	46,936	20,720	548	61,191	25,547	722	80,358	19,395
Nusantara ships	23	33,350	9,018	29	50,025	10,895	45	52,717	7,630
Particular ships	27	54,155	25,736	46	85,430	40,440	46	92,421	39,115

Source: Direktorat Jenderal Perhubungan Laut Kantor Wilayah V Banjarmasin. *Angkutan Laut Kayu Khusus Tujuan Jawa/Bali dan Pengembangan Pelabuhan Banjarmasin*. 1981.

*rahus* in central Banjarmasin port reached its glory.

From the data in Table 1 and 2, we observe that the peak era for *perahus* was from the 1960s until the mid-1980s. It gave benefit not only to merchants and small entrepreneurs but also their owners, *perahu* skippers (captain) and of course the crew. *Perahus* were not only important for wood transporting but also for other goods and general cargo. The contribution of *perahus* in transporting goods interisland can be seen in Table 4.

**Table 4.** Share of *perahus* in interisland shipping in Banjarmasin, 1970-1985 (%)

Year	<i>Perahu</i>	Local/Iron vessels	Nusantara vessels	Total
1970	66.86	2.09	31.05	100
1974	50.52	24.18	25.30	100
1978	65.91	23.42	10.67	100
1980	57.67	19.58	22.75	100
1983	62.32	16.84	20.84	100
1985	64.68	16.78	18.54	100

Source: Annual Report of Administrator of Banjarmasin Port, 1970-1985.

Goods transported by *perahus* to Banjarmasin port in 1970s included rice, sugar, flour, salt, cement, general cargo and accessories. Meanwhile, goods transported from Banjarmasin were all kinds of wood, plywood, board, plaited mat, and general cargo.

In the meantime, iron vessels gradually developed. Table 4 shows that the number of iron vessels increased, except after 1980 when the limitation on log exports resulted in a decline of iron vessels. The situation also applied to all types of shipping. The increased number of ships entering the port and the cargo carried by iron ships could be the result of two possibilities. First, the flow of goods triggered the development of iron vessels. Second, a competition between iron vessels and *perahus* since they served the same feeder lines. The second possibility is based on the increased number of iron vessels entering the port in 1983. That year the recorded number of iron vessels visiting Banjarmasin rose by 8.7% while the number of *perahus* fell by 13.9%. Iron vessels transporting wood showed a rise in number of visits, though the quantity of the cargo did not increase significantly (see Table 3). However, "the pressure" of the iron vessels did not have much effect on the quantity of cargo transported by *perahus*.

*Perahus* and the Martapura pier had never changed since it was first operated in 1965. Mod-

ernization seemed to be beyond reach. Though modernization was initiated in 1970 and the renovation of the Martapura pier was conducted in 1980, *perahus* remained traditional and simple in many ways. Modernization had affected Banjarmasin, applying new technology in loading and unloading equipment at Trisakti pier, increasing length of concrete pier that was not complete, the building of wider warehouses and piling areas in the new pier. In spite of all this, the simple *perahus* existed as one of the important means of transportation. It can be seen from the tonnage of cargo transported by *perahus* at Banjarmasin port, although the number of modern ships and their cargo increased.

Referring to the four options that may be chosen by traditional sector in dealing with modernization, *perahus* inclined to adapt modernization. *Perahus* may remain traditional but it could utilize the opportunity and productivity created by the innovation of technology, i.e. the growing of Trisakti pier with its modern equipment and facilities.

#### **PERAHUS VERSUS CONTAINER**

Until the mid-1980s, data show that *perahus* remained one of the important means of sea transportation for interisland transportation. The development of *perahus* was closely related to the development of trade. For example, as rice, flour, and sugar were considered profitable commodities, *perahus* of Bugis, Makassar, Madura and Banjar became the significant means of transportation for these three staple foods. In the booming period of interisland wood trading, *perahus* experienced huge profit. This being the case, *perahus* are incomparable to other means of sea transportation.

One of the determining factors that caused a preference for transporting goods by *perahus* was its simple and fast loading and unloading process, though conducted by a gang of laborers. Generally, goods were immediately unloaded, and directly loaded onto a truck or carriage which was commissioned beforehand. Transporting goods by *perahu* offered three advantages to the *perahu's* owner/skipper, the crew, and the owner of the goods (Dick, 1975, pp. 88-89). The first advantage was that the loading and unloading processes reduced port costs, the second one was avoided damage of goods during loading and unloading. If there were defects, they could be attended to immediately. The third one was faster transit time at the port, since the customs procedure at the *perahu* pier was less formal than at the main seaport.

In 1986, the Banjarmasin port began to make

some innovations on the containers. It resulted in the decrease of *perahu*. That was because containers offered simplicity and more benefit in the transport of goods. There were two advantages for the container user. First, goods would reach the destination faster with minimum defects. Second, the safety of the goods was a top priority since containers were carried on a modern barge ship in order to minimized damage. Both proved difficult to fulfill by *perahu*. Besides, traders could use the container collectively if there was capacity. Then, the cost would be relatively lower. Therefore, many traders who utilized *perahu* preferred containers. As a result, activities of *perahu* in Banjarmasin were declining.

Only a few years after it was first introduced, the use of containers at Banjarmasin port showed a significant progress as can be seen in Table 5.

In less than ten years, a significant rise occurred in numbers of cartons and volume of cargos shipped by container. Containers could carry all kinds of product. They carried heavy weight goods and consumer goods. Considering the effectiveness and efficiency of a container, some traders who used to transport goods through *perahu*, switched to container instead. This resulted in a decline in the number of goods shipped by *perahu*.

In 1985, the tonnage of cargo transported by *perahu* was 552,975 tons. The volume declined to 469,992 tons in 1990 and 266,731 tons in 1994. Meanwhile, numbers of *perahu* visiting the port were 1,903 in 1985; 1,417 in 1990, and 1,102 in 1994. The decreasing number of goods shipped by *perahu* was not merely caused by the new trend of using container but also by the demand for security and safety of the goods shipped. One of the administrative staff of a shipping company, stated that approximately 200 *perahu* entered Banjarmasin every month from the 1970s up to the mid-1980s, while at the end of the 1980s and early 1990s, the number declined to around 100. A crew of the

Bugis *perahu* claimed that he had sailed since 1976 and noticed that the number of *perahu* entering Martapura pier was declining since the cargo was not as much as it used to be. A former administrative staff of a shipping company in Banjarmasin described the shipping condition at that time as follows:

For the last ten years, “kapal keruk” has carried many goods that are usually transported by iron ships and *perahu*. To be honest, even coal is possible as long as the price is good. Therefore, it is difficult for *perahu* to get cargo.

In order to get cargo, *perahu* sometimes sailed to the hinterland and docked at small ports near Banjarmasin. They even sailed further to Sampit, Central Kalimantan.

The data indicates that the glorious era of *perahu* seems to fade as a traditional sector, the *perahu* fleet is not always in line with modern sector. When modernization is necessary, the traditional sector has to adapt to modernization or become the “victim” of modernization. This was what befell toward *perahu* in Banjarmasin in 1990s.

#### PERAHU COMMUNITY AFTER THE DECREASING OF PERAHUS ACTIVITY

Based on interviews with several respondents, the solution chosen by *perahu* owner, skippers, and the crew in facing difficult time was to relocate the shipping and trading activities to smaller piers in the hinterland of South Kalimantan. Some of them preferred to escape from reality and try other jobs instead (they usually went to their hometown and work as a farmer or in other jobs). However, there were still people who continued to maintain and keep their culture at sea. Hence, relocation was still a rational option since Banjarmasin is surrounded by water and *perahu* are needed.

Banjarmasin remained the destination port for cargo from Surabaya, Makassar and other ports as it was mainly aimed to fulfill the daily needs of

**Table 5.** Total of goods shipped in container in interisland shipping, 1988-1994

Year	Unloading		Loading		Total	
	Boxes	Tons	Boxes	Tons	Boxes	Tons
1988	657	2,967	702	5,482	1,359	8,449
1989	1,491	10,937	2,689	16,126	4,180	27,063
1990	1,389	15,850	1,366	15,527	2,755	31,374
1991	2,165	22,250	2,020	19,457	4,185	41,725
1992	4,638	59,666	4,582	38,540	9,220	98,206
1993	11,293	140,625	11,822	170,048	23,115	310,673
1994	17,535	292,201	16,980	271,059	34,415	564,260

Source: Annual Report of Administrator of Banjarmasin Port, 1988-1994

Banjarmasin and its surroundings. A skipper of a *phinisi* motor sailboat described the difficulty in finding cargo for his boat as,

Our *perahu* still sails to Banjarmasin even though the frequency is not the same anymore. It is very different from the time when cargo is easy to get. After unloading the cargo that we carried from Surabaya, sometimes we had to wait for another cargo to Surabaya for one or two weeks. If we do not get anything, we will go to smaller nearby ports, like Batulicin. If we do not get goods, because of the dry season, we will go straight to Lembar to transport pumice.

*Perahus* that failed to relocate considering the decrease in shipping situation, had to take the last option which was withdrawing from shipping and trading activities or what à Campo calls exit. A shipowner accounted this situation, had to sell his only *perahu* since it did not prove profitable.

I used to have two *perahus*, but one sank in the Java Ocean because of heavy storm in 1978. The other one kept sailing until I decided to stop sailing in 1984. I had to do that because of the high operational cost. Transporting goods was not beneficial anymore. I do not have a vessel but I am dealing with *perahu* shipping by becoming an agent for *perahus* entering Banjarmasin.

He stated that *perahu* shipping in Banjarmasin had at no time improved. He established an agency in 1985 and the situation was getting worse and the number of *perahu* under his agency declined. This shows the need of relocation or even exit from the *perahus* since it was difficult to compete with the modern means of sea transportation.

## CONCLUSION

Modernization in the Banjarmasin port which once was the center of *perahu* shipping, has brought many changes to the *perahus*. Modernization, indeed, has not always had a negative impact. There was a time when *perahus* could compete with modern ships, a situation that was beneficial to the *perahu's* owner, the skippers, the crew and traders or anyone during more than two decades (1965 - 1985). However, by the mid-1980s, *perahus* become "victim" to modernization and had to step aside.

In coping with modernization and its impacts, the *perahus* initially choose adaptation and then relocation. Adaptation is the right choice, as the *perahus* will still have an opportunity to exist. Often *perahus* did not have any other choice but to relocate their shipping activities. The challenges of new technology are extremely difficult to cope with. The final alternative is to withdraw from the sailing-

trading world, but this only held true for a small number of *perahu*.

People maintain that traditional *perahus* is no more than a romantic memory of the past since we live in the modern world now, as stated by a senior official of Banjarmasin port in the year of 2000.

To be honest, *perahus* are highly functional vessels for an archipelago and a developing country like Indonesia. Indonesian territorial waters are vast and it is impossible to reach every single island by using limited and overpriced modern ships. Logically, *perahus* will still have its place in Indonesian maritime world in the long run, as was the case historically; although they have to relocate constantly in the absence of a positive government policy for the traditional sector. To put it differently, "old *perahus* will never die, they just fade away."

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