

TRADE DYNAMICS ON THE BARITO RIVER

Wahyu Akbar¹, Alvarenza Willy Ara²

^{1,2}Faculty of Economics, Institut Agama Islam Negeri Palangka Raya
Jl. George Obos Kompleks Islamic Centre, Palangka Raya, Central Kalimantan, 73112,
Indonesia

wahyu.akbar@iain_palangkaraya.ac.id,
willy.petz73@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The Barito River plays a crucial role in the economic dynamics of Central and South Kalimantan. From the era of ancient kingdoms to modern times, it has been a key trade and social route, connecting inland areas with the international port of Banjarmasin. As early as the 8th century, the Barito River was involved in trade, particularly with the arrival of Muslim traders from Java, Sumatra, Johor, Gujarat, and China. The Dutch colonial era brought significant changes, including trade monopolies and political influences that restricted the freedom of local traders. In modern times, infrastructure and transport development along the river has boosted trade activities, especially for commodities like palm oil, coal, and timber. The research methodology employed is literature review, collecting data from various sources. The findings indicate that trade on the Barito River has not only impacted economic development but has also brought significant social and cultural changes to the local community. The floating market, a local tradition, has been eroded by modernization but remains an important part of Banjar culture. This study explores the long history and trade dynamics of the Barito River, revealing its vital role in local life and providing insights into the future of trade in the region. Despite challenges from modernization and social changes, the Barito River continues to be a vital transportation route for the local community.

Keywords: River, Barito, Dynamics, Economy,

INTRODUCTION

Economic activities of the communities along the Barito River are an integral part of the economic dynamics of Kalimantan Island. The river not only fulfills the community's cultural, economic, and social needs (Prastiwi, 2021). One of the rivers that continues to support the lives of communities in Central and South Kalimantan is the Barito River. From a social perspective, the communities along the Barito River use the river for essential activities such as washing, bathing, and as a medium for social interaction. Economically, the Barito River serves as a transportation conduit, facilitating interactions among diverse communities and forming economic relationships since the 19th century, (Fajari, 2017) especially the distribution of goods and services.

Since the time of the kingdoms in the archipelago, from around the 8th to the 15th centuries and into the 19th century during the colonial era, the Barito River has been involved in trade activities with entities outside Kalimantan (Noor, 2017). In addition, it also served as a central trade route during the era of the kingdoms (Noor & Sayyidati, 2020). This route starts from the river's mouth in the Java Sea, Marabahan, and extends through the Barito River's branches up to its source (Rizali, 2015).

The Barito River not only serves as a major economic route but also as a central hub for extensive social interactions among the surrounding communities. These interactions include transportation, trade, diplomacy, marriage, the spread of religion, and other aspects (Sjamsuddin, 2016). Since the peak of Islamic trade in the archipelago, the Barito River has become an important route for Muslim traders from various regions such as Java, Sumatra, Johor, Gujarat (India), and China, interacting with local communities like the Bakumpai (Muhaimin & Aisyah, 2022) who came from foreign lands also traded with other ethnic communities.

Entering the modern era, the development of infrastructure and transportation along the Barito River has further boosted trade activities. The river not only serves as a link

between the hinterlands and international ports in Banjarmasin but also as a distribution center for various crucial commodities such as palm oil, coal, and timber. Trade activities on the Barito River have had a significant economic impact on local communities, creating job opportunities and enhancing welfare.

Despite undergoing evolution, the Barito River's function as a trade route continues to be upheld with boats serving as the primary means of transportation, which is highly valued by the local community (Subroto & Prawitasari, 2021). In the Barito Hulu region, in particular, trading vessels are the backbone of economic distribution activities (Rizky Ekaputri Swardhani, 2017). In the past, people used to engage in barter by bringing items such as salt, tobacco, cooking oil, cloth, sugar, and household goods. However, this has now evolved into buying and selling a variety of goods.

In recent decades, the Barito River has undergone significant structural changes, such as the development of road and bridge infrastructure that enables the use of other modes of transportation like cars and trucks. However, the river remains an important transportation route, especially for commodities that are not suitable for other modes of transport. This article aims to explore the long history and dynamics of trade on the Barito River, reveal the river's crucial role in the lives of local communities, and provide insights into the future of trade in the region.

LITERATURE REVIEW

History and Evolution of Trade on the Barito River

The river is an important aspect for the Banjar people along the Barito River. Without roads, the river becomes an essential means of transportation for the local community. The history of intensive river use in Kalimantan is linked to poor provincial development in the past. Infrastructure development in South Kalimantan began in the fifteenth century, but in the early era of Indonesian independence, development was still limited due to a lack of human resources and funds. In this situation, the river played a crucial role in the movement of the local population.

Initially, the Banjar people lived in the lower reaches of the Barito River, primarily working in farming, fishing, and gathering forest products. Then, with the arrival of newcomers and the mixing with Malays, Javanese, Madurese, Arabs, and Indians, there began a shift from agriculture to trade, fishing, and craftsmanship (Anggraeni, 2016). This business developed along the Barito River and its tributaries. In trade, the Banjar people maintained regular relations with traders from outside Kalimantan, such as Java, Sumatra, Sulawesi, Maluku, and Timor. On the coastal areas, many Bugis Makassar people settled, continuing their maritime activities. The influence of Arabs, Indians, and Chinese as intermediaries was significant. They were frugal and resilient in running their businesses (Alfisyah, 2013).

When the Sultanate of Banjarmasin was established and grew rapidly, the merchant community played an important role and received special support from the sultanate. The sultanate heavily relied on pepper trade, especially in the 17th and 18th centuries, with merchants being the primary group conducting trade activities, becoming the main support of the sultanate's economy. The Sultanate of Banjarmasin succeeded in forming a trade network that extended from the interior regions to the mouth of the Barito River and directly connected to the Java Sea. As an Islamic kingdom, Banjarmasin also easily established trade relations with Muslim traders and various other Islamic kingdoms in the archipelago. The Sultanate of Banjarmasin's trade routes during this period reached Cochinchina (Vietnam) and directly involved traders from China, Siam, Johor, Java, Palembang, Portugal, England, and the Netherlands. This was followed by traders from France, Ujung Pandang, and Banten. Entering the 17th century, trade in Banjarmasin became increasingly crowded due to the arrival of traders from Java following the expansion of Mataram, the fall of Surabaya, and Mataram's control over ports along the

Akbar & Ara: Trade Dynamics on The Barito River

northern coast of Java. The trade routes shifted and expanded further. Previously, trade to the Maluku Islands took place via the route of Gresik, Bali, Sunda Kecil, continuing to Banda, but then shifted through Makassar, Banjarmasin, continuing to Banten and India. Besides Indonesians who were active in trade along this route, traders from Portugal, China, and India also participated. They passed through Banjarmasin on their trade journeys to Makassar, Maluku, and surrounding areas, making Banjarmasin an important stopover (Hendraswati & Jamalie, 2017).

Jahmin, in his research report, describes the dynamics of development and the role of Banjarmasin as a trading port that reached its peak during the 17th and 18th centuries. Banjarmasin is considered one of the important parts of the Silk Road trade route in the archipelago. This archipelagic Silk Road involved voyages from Asia along the eastern coast of China, then south to the Strait of Malacca, and from Malacca continued to the Maluku Islands via Banjarmasin. As a port city on the Silk Road, Banjarmasin played a crucial role in establishing trade connections. Traders from various ethnic groups and cultures in the archipelago, as well as from various Asian countries (Arab, China, and India) and European countries (Portugal, the Netherlands, England), met here, enhancing Banjarmasin's strategic position. This research also discusses the history of the Banjarmasin port, trade commodities, social groups, and the social, political, and economic conditions of the time (Jahmin et al., 1996).

By the end of the 18th century and the mid-19th century, Bakumpai and Negara traders, as well as Banjar traders from Alabio, Amuntai, and Kalua, had established direct relations with Chinese brokers and traders. The growth of trade led many local traders to experience vertical mobility, becoming the elite middle class in Banjarmasin. Some of them later became pilgrims (haji) and energized the Banjarmasin community. During the movement period, this group of trader-pilgrims became key figures in the resistance against Dutch colonialism. Banjar traders involved in international trade networks and who successfully expanded their businesses beyond Kalimantan were mostly Muslim traders or pilgrims, and their role became particularly significant following the decline of the Sultanate of Banjarmasin due to Dutch political dominance (Hendraswati & Jamalie, 2017).

In modern South Kalimantan, the use of rivers remains crucial, especially for industrial activities and in remote areas where road infrastructure development is challenging. Rivers have become an integral part of daily life for people in South Kalimantan. The floating market on the Barito River is a prime example of how rivers are used as centers of economic activity, with various commodities such as local fruits and vegetables being sold. Natural attractions around villages, such as the village views along the river and village roads, as well as the small rivers that traverse the villages, enhance the river's significance in the local community. Efforts to preserve these natural resources are essential to ensure their sustainability (Normaleni, 2016).

The economic activities of people living along the riverbanks depend on the potential of each area they traverse. They engage in trade by distributing goods from their origin to the city, or vice versa, using the river route. Some also use the river as a source of livelihood, catching and selling fish on land. These communities then choose to live on the riverbanks, providing housing over the water (Hadyan & Gunagama, 2021).

The Impact of Colonialism on Trade on the Barito River

The impact of Dutch colonialism on trade on the Barito River in South Kalimantan in the 19th century had several significant implications. The pepper trade on the Barito River declined sharply before 1793 due to pirates who blocked the river's mouth, thereby crippling trade (Hendraswati & Jamalie, 2017). Subsequently, the VOC (Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie) established a trade monopoly on the Barito River, which resulted in a reduction of the local traders' freedom to conduct transactions (Hindarto, 2010).

The influence of Dutch colonial political and power also led to a reduction in the territorial control of the Banjar Kingdom. Several coastal areas began to fall into Dutch hands, such as Sambas, Sukadana, Kotawaringin, Sampit, and Pasir (Hendraswati & Jamalie, 2017). The Banjar War that took place in the Barito region highlighted the crucial position of the Dayak people. The Dayak community was also divided, with some siding with the Dutch because they were appointed by the Dutch as part of the administration under Sultan Tamjidullah II, who was supported by the Dutch.

The influence of Dutch colonialism on trade on the Barito River included trade monopolies, political and power impacts, as well as significant economic and social effects. This led to a reduction in the freedom of local traders and affected the social and economic development in the region. The Barito River itself played a strategic role as a trade route and cultural center, as well as an arena for community integration (Ikhsan et al., 2006), (Susilowati, 2011).

METHODS

The research method used in this study is library research, where information and data are collected from various sources of literature such as reference books, relevant previous studies, related articles, pertinent notes, and journals related to the research topic. This study applies a qualitative methodology as it uses verbal descriptions of data sources and library research findings. The information used comes from secondary sources, indicating that the data were not obtained directly through research or hypothesis development. Content analysis techniques are employed in this research to explore literature, books, documents, and other sources as a data basis.

RESULTS

The Role of the Barito River in Trade Activities

The Barito River is directly connected to the Java Sea. This fact also facilitated Banjar traders in conducting trade outside of Banjarmasin (Noor & Sayyidati, 2020). The tradition of maritime navigation among the Banjar people dates back to ancient times. Chronicle sources indicate that during the era of the oldest kingdom in South Kalimantan, believed to be the precursor of the Banjarmasin kingdom, there were already positions similar to trade and navigation ministers. Additionally, traditional sources recount the voyage of Lambu Mangkurat to Majapahit using the majestic royal boat, Prabajaksa. Prince Samudra is also said to have visited Mataram and returned to Kalimantan with 50 ships. Although many maritime stories focus on officials or royal families, it is clear that navigation was a crucial aspect of the social and economic life of the Banjarmasin community and its surroundings, given the geographical conditions filled with river networks (Susilowati, 2011).

River navigation in Banjarmasin and its surroundings is generally carried out by the Banjar and Dayak tribes using traditional boats, such as jukung tambangan, sudur, and klotok. These boats have varying transport capacities, ranging from 10 to 200 tons. In addition to jukung tambangan, other types of boats such as sudur and gondol are also used in economic activities. The Banjar people are also known for using large jukung for transportation between Kuala Kapuas and Banjarmasin, as well as lambo boats for inter-island voyages. This navigation activity is vital as it connects the interior regions with ports and markets, and supports both local and international trade (Susilowati, 2011).

River navigation plays a crucial role in transporting trade goods, such as agricultural products, forest products, and other commodities. For example, pepper from Nagara is transported to Banjarmasin and sold to traders from various regions. Timber from the dense forests along the Barito River is floated and transported to the port for further distribution. In addition to timber, jelutung resin and rubber are also transported from the river's upstream to Banjarmasin. In the latter half of the 19th century, river navigation was

especially important due to the limitations of land transportation. Chinese traders monopolized river navigation, and since 1891, steamships from Koninklijk Paketvaart Maatschappij (KPM) increased the intensity of traffic, altering the dynamics of trade in the region.

The Impact of Trade on the Surrounding Community

The Barito River basin is an area of economic growth, encompassing trade, agriculture, livestock, and river transportation. Natural resources serve as production assets in farming, enhancing the role of the community. Socio-economic benefits include efforts to alleviate poverty, balance production and consumption, demographic balance, and public health. This means producing high-quality and diverse goods and services from land, which can reduce economic disparities between the local population and others who benefit from these resources, maintain traditional access to land, and increase job opportunities and business prospects for the entire community (Sopiana et al., 2018).

The impact of trade on the Barito River on the surrounding community has several significant implications. The Floating Market on the Barito River, for example, plays a strategic role in the development and culture of the Banjar community. This market serves as a center for community integration and daily needs, with boat traders selling various necessities on the river (Ikhsan et al., 2006).

The Floating Market also plays a crucial role in preserving the culture and traditions of the Banjar community. It stands as a lasting monument to the Banjar Kingdom, which was established in the mid-16th century. Trade activities on the river uphold a value system crystallized in customary laws, beliefs, and local culture. Additionally, the Floating Market has become a popular tourist destination, where visitors can enjoy various daily necessities and traditional Banjar foods on the river (Firdaus, 2023).

Social and technological changes have transformed the way of life for the community and reduced the activities of the Floating Market. The Floating Market, which is a tradition and local wisdom of the Banjar people, has gradually been eroded by social changes. Despite this, the Floating Market remains an important part of Banjar culture and tradition, and these social changes contribute to the economic growth of Banjarmasin as a leading tourist destination (Admin Utara, 2018).

In summary, trade on the Barito River has had a significant impact on the surrounding community, affecting settlement patterns, trade activities, culture, traditions, and the economy. While social and technological changes have altered lifestyles and reduced the activities of the Floating Market, the Floating Market continues to be a crucial element of Banjar culture and tradition (Sakdiah, 2016).

Modernization and Transformations in the Trade System

The progression of time or modernism, marked by technological advancements, has significantly impacted the cultural changes in the traditional society of Banjarmasin. Banjarmasin has now evolved into a city. The urban style of the city is closely aligned with the ideology of modern development. This capitalistic and consumerist modernization ideology has introduced modern facilities and technologies, as well as better economic opportunities. Traditional ways of life have rapidly begun to transform. The "River Era" has slowly been replaced by the "Land Era." This transformation is evidenced by the development of land transportation infrastructure, such as the construction of new roads, connecting bridges, and the proliferation of various modes of transportation. The organic and sustainable river culture is gradually being replaced by a land-based culture that is physical, environmentally risky, and non-renewable. While technological progress offers conveniences and improved living conditions, it also disrupts local cultural practices and environmental sustainability (R, 2016).

Modernization and changes in the trade system on the Barito River in South Kalimantan have undergone several significant transformations. In recent decades, trade activities on

the Barito River have also impacted the social and economic structure of the community. With the advancement of technology and land transportation, river-based trade activities have started to shift to land. This has reduced the community's reliance on the floating market and affected the social and economic structure of the area. For example, since the construction of the Barito Bridge, the population of traders has decreased, and land-based kiosks have become more popular (Firdaus, 2023). The floating market, which is one of the traditions and local wisdom of the Banjar community, is gradually being eroded by social changes, both structurally and functionally (Fatmawati, 2021).

Changes in the trade system on the Barito River have also impacted the economic development in the region. The ability of the hinterland areas to support the needs of traders traveling to the next port, such as providing fresh water and food supplies, as well as the ability to produce trade commodities required by consumers, is crucial for trade on the Barito River (Sakdiah, 2016).

The influence of Dutch colonial political power also led to a reduction in the territorial control of the Banjar Kingdom. Several coastal areas began to fall into Dutch hands, such as Sambas, Sukadana, Kotawaringin, Sampit, and Pasir. The Banjar War that occurred in the Barito region highlighted the crucial position of the Dayak people. The Dayak community was also divided, with some siding with the Dutch because they were appointed by the Dutch as part of the administration under Sultan Tamjidullah II, who was supported by the Dutch (Hendraswati & Jamalie, 2017). Modernization and changes in the trade system on the Barito River involve the shift of trade activities from the river to land, social changes that reduce floating market activities, and political and power influences that have led to a decrease in the territorial control of the Banjar Kingdom. These changes have resulted in a reduction in the freedom of local traders and have affected the social and economic development in the region.

CONCLUSION

The Barito River has been a vital part of the Banjar community's trade since ancient times. Directly connecting to the Java Sea, the river facilitates navigation and international trade, making it a major route for transporting goods and commodities. Traditional boats are used by the Banjar and Dayak tribes to transport agricultural and forest products from the hinterlands to markets in Banjarmasin. Trade on the Barito River has significantly impacted the surrounding community. Intensive economic activities along the river have spurred growth in the economy, agriculture, livestock, and river transportation. Modernization and land infrastructure development have altered settlement patterns and trade activities, gradually displacing the floating market with land-based markets. Social and technological changes contribute to the economic growth of Banjarmasin as a tourist destination. Modernization has brought significant changes to the trade system on the Barito River. The shift from river to land trade has reduced the floating market's role and altered community life. Land infrastructure development, such as roads and bridges, facilitates land transportation and decreases dependence on the river. However, these changes threaten the sustainability of the organic river culture and have negative environmental impacts. The Dutch colonial influence has also reduced the Banjar Kingdom's territorial control and restricted local traders' freedom. The Barito River's role in trade is crucial for the local community's economic and social development. To preserve the cultural values and maritime traditions, efforts to conserve and promote the floating market as a tourist attraction are essential. Local governments and communities must collaborate to maintain the floating market as part of Banjar culture. Despite modernization's dominance, it is important to continue developing river infrastructure to support trade activities. Improving port facilities and maintaining river routes will ensure the smooth flow of goods and sustain the local economy. The community needs access to new economic opportunities to compensate for lost income due to reduced floating market activities.

REFERENCES

- Admin Utara. (2018). *Pasar Tradisional Pasar Terapung*. Kecamatan Banjarmasin Utara. <https://utara.banjarmasinkota.go.id/2018/05/kecamatan-banjarmasin-utara.html>
- Alfisyah. (2013). *Dinamika Ekonomi Dan Perkembang Perdagangan Urang Banjar*. *Dinamika Ekonomi Dan Perkembang Perdagangan Urang Banjar*, 53(9), 1689–1699.
- Anggraeini, L. (2016). *Dinamika Ekonomi dan Perdagangan Orang Banjar pada Masa Kerajaan Banjar (Studi Kasus Sejarah Ekonomi Kerajaan Banjar Perspektif Pemikiran Ekonomi Syariah)*. 1–10.
- Fajari, N. M. E. (2017). Karakteristik Situs Arkeologi Kalimantan Selatan: Berdasarkan Lokasi Geografis. *Naditira Widya*, 11(1), 61–79.
- Fatmawati, T. (2021). *Peran Pedagang Perempuan di Pasar Terapung Terhadap Pelestarian Tradisi dan Kearifan Lokal di Kalimantan Selatan*. April. <https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.23507.50725>
- Firdaus, A. (2023). *Pasar Terapung Kuin Sungai Barito, Antara Migrasi dan Praktik Kebaikan*. Antaranews. <https://megapolitan.antaranews.com/berita/258855/pasar-terapung-kuin-sungai-barito-antara-migrasi-dan-praktik-kebaikan>
- Hadyan, M. T., & Gunagama, M. G. (2021). The Architecture of Lanting House from The Perspective of Sustainable Living. *Seminar Karya & Pameran Arsitektur Indonesia 2021*, 440–447. <https://dspace.uin.ac.id/handle/123456789/43168>
- Hendraswati, & Jamalie, Z. (2017). *Pedagang Dan Gerakan Perlawanan Terhadap Kolonial Belanda Pada Masa Perang Banjar (1859-1905)*. 132. <http://idr.uin-antasari.ac.id/13938/>
- Hindarto, I. (2010). *Hegemoni Kerajaan Banjar Di Sepanjang Das Barito*. 4(1), 81–87.
- Ikhsan, Johansen, P., & Natsir, M. (2006). *Pasar Terapung Perekonomian Tradisional Masyarakat Banjarmasin Kalimantan Selatan[1].pdf*. Balai Kajian Sejarah dan Nilai Tradisional.
- Jahmin, J., Lestari, N., Handayani, T., Suliyati, T., & Supriyono, A. (1996). *Banjarmasin: Kota Pelabuhan di Jalan Sutra*.
- Muhaimin, M., & Aisyah, L. (2022). *Zakat dan Perpajakan: Teori, Landasan Hukum, dan Penerapan*. Rajawali Press.
- Noor, Y. (2017). The Mobility of Bakumpai Ethnic Along Barito River in the Perspective of Trade and Spread of Islam (From 15th To 19th Century). *1st International Conference on Social Sciences Education-" Multicultural Transformation in Education, Social Sciences and Wetland Environment"(ICSSE 2017)*, 358–360.
- Noor, Y., & Sayyidati, R. (2020a). Tionghoa Muslim dan Dunia Perdagangan di Banjarmasin Abad ke-13 hingga ke-19. *JUSPI (Jurnal Sejarah Peradaban Islam)*, 3(2), 182–194.
- Noor, Y., & Sayyidati, R. (2020b). Tionghoa Muslim dan Dunia Perdagangan di Banjarmasin Abad ke-13 hingga ke-19. *JUSPI (Jurnal Sejarah Peradaban Islam)*, 3(2), 182. <https://doi.org/10.30829/juspi.v3i2.5901>
- Normaleni, E. (2016). Journal of Indonesian Tourism and Development Studies The Floating Market of Lok Baitan, South Kalimantan. *J.Ind. Tour. Dev. Std*, 4(1), 1–4. <http://jitode.ub.ac.id>
- Prastiwi, S. D. (2021). Makna Sungai Dalam Ruang Hidup Yang Berubah: Studi Kasus Dayak Ngaju, Kalimantan Tengah. *Handep: Jurnal Sejarah Dan Budaya*, 5(1).
- R, D. (2016). *Kapitalisme yang Mengalir di Sungai*. Dhanyvironment. <https://dhanyvironment.blogspot.com/2016/06/kapitalisme-yang-mengalir-di-sungai.html>
- Rizali, H. (2015). *Mengungkap Peran Orang Dayak Bakumpai Memelopori Perdagangan Ke Sungai Katingan*.
- Rizky Ekaputri Swardhani. (2017). Aktivitas Perdagangan Di Kesultanan Banjar Tahun 1800-1860. *Avatara*, 5(3).
- Sakdiah, H. (2016). The Role of Floating Market Women Traders in Preserving Local Traditions and Wisdom in South Kalimantan (Perspektif Teori Perubahan Sosial Talcott Parsons). *International Conference on Social and Intellectual*

- Transformation of the Contemporary Banjarese*, 1–17. idr.uin-antasari.ac.id
- Sjamsuddin, H. (2016). *Dinamika Sosial Urang Banjar dalam Sejarah*.
- Sopiana, Y., Chandriyanti, I., & Suherti, L. (2018). Pemanfaatan Lahan Daerah Aliran Sungai (DAS) Barito, Upaya Identifikasi Karakteristik Sosial Ekonomi Masyarakat. *Prosiding Penelitian*.
- Subroto, W., & Prawitasari, M. (2021). Perubahan Orientasi Masyarakat Kota Banjarmasin Dari Sungai Ke Darat Awal Abad XX. *Prosiding Seminar Nasional Lingkungan Lahan Basah*, 6(2).
- Susilowati, E. (2011). The Role of River Networks as Trade Routes in South Kalimantan in the Second Half of the XIX Century. *Historical Journal Citra Lekha*, 15(1), 1–8.