# CHANGES IN BOATS IN THE ADAPTATION OF THE MAMUJU FISHERMEN COMMUNITY IN BONTANG, EAST KALIMANTAN, INDONESIA, 1955-2000

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# ABSTRAK

*As a migrant group in Bontang, East Kalimantan, Mamuju fishermen are required to adapt to coastal and marine conditions. Traditional boats are an important means of survival and economic activity in the region. This study aims to trace the process of change and transformation in boat design as a strategy for adaptation by Mamuju fishermen. The research method relied on oral sources from fishermen who had settled since the early arrival of the Mamuju community in the area. The results showed that changes in boat shape occurred in response to the need for efficiency, environmental conditions, and technological developments. In the early stages, fishermen used* ***Ba'go*** *boats, which were large and wind-powered, but inefficient for daily activities because they required a lot of energy and were difficult to use in shallow waters.* ***Soppe*** *boats then appeared with a slim, small design, using sails and balancers, making them more adaptable even though they still depended on the wind. A significant change occurred when engine technology was introduced, giving rise to* ***Ketinting*** *boats. With a long design, a width of more than one metre, and a flat bottom, the* ***Ketinting*** *boat was able to increase mobility, catch yields, and resistance to sea conditions. The replacement and transformation of these boats reflect the dynamic adaptation of the Mamuju community to ecological challenges and economic needs.*

# Keywords: Adaptation, Boat, Transformation

**Latar Belakang**

Viewing Indonesian history solely from the perspective of the mainland is unfair to the development of Indonesian history itself. Documents from the Dutch colonial era to the VOC fort provide a perspective that has long been embedded in Indonesian historiography. Adrian B. Lapian, in his book, argues that history viewed solely from land-based traces implies that the present and the past are biased (Lapian, 2009: 1). Van Leur often stated that Indonesian history should not be viewed from the decks of Dutch ships and VOC forts. Adrian B. Lapian also adds that the approach and perspective from the decks of indigenous ships and ports should not be ignored. Therefore, it is important and has become the duty of researchers and writers of history to change this pattern to one that is more Indonesia-centric and focused on the common people.

Indonesia has a larger maritime territory than its land area, hence Indonesia is referred to as an archipelagic state (Hamid, 2025 :1). Geographically, Indonesia is the largest maritime country in the world. Its maritime territory covers an area of 3,1 million km2, with a coastline of 81,000 km (Lapian, 2009). These seas are dotted with 17,508 large and small islands (Nontji 1987:4; Dahuri et.al 2004: 1 in Hamid 2015: 1). This vast maritime territory and coastline are key to Indonesia's development, both in terms of its maritime economy and national defence. One potential that cannot be overlooked and developed is the mobility tools of fishermen, which have long been part of fishermen's lives in searching for fish in the sea. The sea, seen with the naked eye, is a barrier between landmasses, but with ships and boats, the sea becomes a connector between the islands of Indonesia. Navigation technology plays an important role for seafaring

communities in various regions of Indonesia. Sailing technology consists of various things that certainly support the continuity of sailing. Liebner (2002) explains that traditional shipping and sailing are a way of life and a static condition of society that has been ingrained and stuck in their blood for generations. This includes traditional boat craftsmen who continuously develop their traditional boats. Not only that, but boat development has increasingly led to changes in terms of sail usage, engines, and boat shape. These changes are not only to keep up with the times, but also as a form of adaptation by seafaring communities in their areas to catch fish.

This can be seen from the Mamuju fishing community in Bontang, East Kalimantan. They have been using boats to support their fishing and sailing activities since ancient times until now. The Mamuju people are known as reliable fishermen and sailors at sea. They have long lived alongside the sea and their boats have sailed across vast oceans. In the Mamuju district, they fish and sail in search of new settlements where the sea is still abundant. They use traditional boats such as the Sandeq, Ba'go and Soppe, which are well-known traditional boat types from West Sulawesi, particularly among the Mandar tribe and in the Mamuju area (Ridwan, 1977 : 78).

Historically, the people of Mamuju were once forced to leave their homeland for safety and security. In 1955, they were forced to migrate due to the Kahar Muzakkar rebellion in the DI/TII movement, which ultimately led them to move to Bontang, East Kalimantan (Naldi, 2025). There were six waves of migration, with the first wave led by a community leader or village head named H. Habibon. During their voyage to Bontang, they used traditional boats that still used sails as their propulsion (Samnur, 16 November 2024). During their voyage to Bontang, they were able to store water and other supplies for the duration of the voyage. They took advantage of the wind blowing from east to west to accelerate the boat's mobility or speed towards Kalimantan (Samnur, 16 November 2024). As a guide, they used natural signs both at sea and in the sky (stars), therefore their experience and memory became their provision to reach their destination.

Upon arriving in Bontang, East Kalimantan, they built two settlements, namely Tihi-Tihi in 1955, Malahing in the 1980s, and one on the mainland called Sampoang in 1957 (Naldi, 2025 : 50). Tihi-Tihi is a village of Mamuju fishermen located above the waters of Bontang. Tihi-Tihi was built using wood obtained from nearby mangrove trees, forming a hut. When they faced difficulties obtaining fresh water and land for farming, for example, to obtain fresh water they had to cross the sea to the mainland or search for rivers (Caman, 72 years old, 8 November 2024). As for farming, they were completely unable to do so because at that time the Mamuju community did not own any land.

In 1957, under the leadership of village chief H. Habibon, they began to enter the Bontang mainland to establish a new settlement and left Tihi-Tihi to be used as a place of rest and relaxation (Naldi, 2025: 53).

H. Habibon's group consisted of several people who were relatives and close family members of H. Habibon himself. The group consisted of H. Habibon, H. Hubbi, H. Paro'dai, H. Juruha, Hamudin (Wa'majid), H. Paiyang, Ambe Tomus a, Ambe Tekeng (Personal Notes of H. Ridwan Habibon). This group requested permission from the Bontang sub-district government in the village of Bontang Kuala to establish a new settlement in the Tanjung Laut village area. This was responded to positively by the government at that time, because the land in the Tanjung Laut area was still wilderness and sparsely populated at that time. The new settlement was named Sampoang. At that time, groups of migrants, or what they called refugees, arrived until 1963. H. Habibon, who was appointed as the village head, had authority over the refugees to arrange the location of their new settlement (Bontang City Regional Archives. Decree on the Appointment of Village Head Habibon). 1957 in Sampoang & Tanjung Laut for H. Taher, Hadida, Pua Tobunga, Baakel, Caman. 1958-1959 in Budong-Budong consisting of Nande, Masyahuri, Ambe Saenong, H. Saidung,

Dadeng, Hamansya. In 1960, Gunung Sari Pagung was filled by H. Pua Edy, Batto, Obeng, Ame, H. Topapo. 1962 Berbas consisted of Pua Ruskia, Pua Syukur, Mubarak, H. Haposar, Pua Onte, Ambe Toisa,

H. Tosina, Karim, H. Torapa. And in 1963, Berbas Pantai was for the group of H. Kulaing, Pua Tosaling, Andi Nassalissi, Ba'duali (Personal Notes of H. Ridwan Habibon).

After leaving Tihi-Tihi and being used only as a temporary shelter until the 1970s-1980s, Tihi-Tihi began to be reoccupied by the Mamuju community. This was due to the difficulty of obtaining land on the mainland of Bontang and also the polemic with the oil and gas company PT Badak LNG. This resulted in the Mamuju community, whose land was taken by the company and who arrived between 1970 and 1980, choosing to live on the sea (Naldi, 2025: 98).

In a similar case, a group of Mamuju people from Karampuang Island tried their luck in Bontang by coming to search for sea cucumbers and fish. This group arrived in the 1990s, led by a man named Nasir La'Kada and consisting of his family and relatives (Nasir Lakada, 12 December 2024). They also crossed the Makassar Strait with only a sailboat and simple equipment. Nasir La'Kada chose to live on the sea in the waters of Bontang, which at that time was known as Kuetang. Kuetang was the name given to the waters, which at that time were also inhabited by Mamuju migrants who had fled their homeland. They used the area to set up Belat, a traditional fishing tool, and it also became a resting place for Mamuju fishermen. Similar to Tihi-Tihi, the Mamuju people used wood from mangrove trees to build their initial huts, which eventually developed into a bustling village.

From the interviews, it was found that during the early migration period, they typically used *Ba'go* boats. *Ba'go* boats are larger in design, equipped with sails, wide and elongated hulls, and rudders at the rear. They took advantage of the east monsoon winds that blew from east to west from April to October. This accelerated their mobility to cross the ocean and reach the island of Kalimantan (Pak Caman, 72 years old, 8 November 2024). Currently, however, the use of *Ba'go* boats has been abandoned. The Mamuju fishing community now uses *Ketinting* boats with engines. This presents a unique problem in terms of understanding how this process occurred.

The fishing community of Mamuju in Bontang catches fish and searches for sea cucumbers around their settlements, with fishing distances that tend to be close. By taking advantage of the pristine waters and abundant marine life, it is easier for them to obtain their catch. At that time, ice was not yet used to preserve the fish catch, nor were engines used on boats to speed up the delivery of fish to collectors on the coast. Therefore, their catch had to be cleaned and dried immediately as a form of preservation before being sold in Bontang Kuala (Caman, 72 years old, 8 November 2024). While in Bontang, the Mamuju fishermen experienced a transformation in the design of their boats as an adaptation to their new environment. This influenced their lives and fishing activities, as they no longer needed to dry the fish first.

Studies on shipping have been conducted extensively by senior researchers, particularly on traditional boats in Sulawesi. As stated by Abd. Rahman Hamid in his book Sejarah Maritim Indonesia (History of Indonesian Maritime Affairs), Adrian Horridge (1985; 1986) and Howard W. Dick (1975; 1987) both provide descriptions of traditional boats in South Sulawesi. Gene Ammarell conducted research on Bugis navigation on the island of Balo-Baloang. Similarly, Christian Pelras studied the Bugis tribe, which also included navigation. From several studies of traditional boats, the focus of study on motorisation has not received serious attention and it is the task of maritime historians to study this (Hamid, 2015 :13).

Traditional boats have had a significant impact on the development of navigation and shipbuilding. Unfortunately, research on traditional Indonesian boats has only been conducted by a handful of Indonesians. As Liebner (Traditional Boats of the Archipelago) points out, much of the contemporary research published in recent decades has been dominated by foreign authors. Not only that, Liebner also regrets that the results of this research can only be found in a handful of libraries in the country. Similarly,

Abd. Rahman Hamid states in (Sejarah Maritim Indonesia) that although there has been a lot of research on traditional boats, there has been very little attention paid to the motorisation of boats in the archipelago. Therefore, it is important to study a traditional boat of a fishing community that will later switch to motorisation. As important as a study is, it requires review material that can provide an overview of similar studies that will be carried out.

Haris Sukendar's book, Traditional Boats of the Archipelago: A Review Through Form and Function (1998/1999), documents various types of traditional boats from Java to Papua, emphasising the form and function of boats and their connection to belief systems from prehistoric times to the modern era. He uses visual sources such as Borobudur reliefs and ancient jars to reconstruct the traces of Nusantara boats. This work is important for understanding the comparison between boats of the past and present. Meanwhile, Ridwan Borahima, Muhammad Arfah, and Muhammad Salim (1977) in Types of Bugis Makassar Boats introduce the variety of boats in South Sulawesi, from Pinisi to Soppe, while explaining the manufacturing process, materials, prohibitions, launching ceremonies, wage distribution, and accompanying rituals of belief.

A broader study is presented by Abd. Rahman Hamid in Sejarah Maritim Indonesia (Indonesian Maritime History), which highlights the role of boats in great maritime empires such as Srivijaya, Majapahit, and Gowa-Tallo, including the famous Jong boat, which was a large ocean-going vessel since the 1st century. However, research on the transition from traditional to modern boats is still rare. Adrian B. Lapian, in Orang Laut, Bajak Laut, Raja Laut (2009), examines 19th-century maritime communities in Sulawesi, highlighting the role of seafarers (such as the Bajau), pirates, and sea kings in social, political, and economic dynamics, as well as how boats became a tool for trade and maritime warfare.

An ethnographic approach was taken by Gane Ammarell in Bugis Navigation on Balo-Baloang Island, which observed the navigation practices of the Bugis people in the 19th century. He emphasised the importance of the intergenerational transmission of maritime knowledge in the daily lives of the Bugis seafaring community. Meanwhile, Horst Liebner in Traditional Boats of the Archipelago highlights the technical aspects of traditional boats, particularly the Pinisi and Sandeq, by explaining the parts of the ship and the integration of traditional knowledge and the adoption of modern technologyFatul Karimul Khair, in his study of Wakatobi, emphasises the inter-island trade network supported by local boats. Boat building is led by Pande Ompu, who plays a role in important rituals, and the motorisation of boats has been shown to increase the productivity and mobility of coastal communities.

Based on the above books, a research concept can be formulated on traditional boats that focuses on the transition process towards motorisation. Initial studies by Abd. Rahman Hamid, Adrian Horridge, Howard W. Dick, Christian Pelras and Gene Ammarell emphasise the importance of understanding the form, function and navigation practices of traditional Bugis-Makassar boats in the maritime life of the archipelago. Meanwhile, Haris Sukendar (1998/1999) emphasises the connection between the form of boats and their social and economic functions, as well as belief systems since prehistoric times, while Ridwan Borahima et al. (1977) enrich the perspective through documentation of the types of Bugis-Makassar boats and the rituals involved in their construction. Furthermore, Abd. Rahman Hamid (2015) and Horst Liebner highlight the lack of research on motorisation, even though studies on traditional boats have been conducted extensively. This concept is then reinforced by Gene Ammarell's ethnographic perspective, which emphasises the transmission of maritime knowledge, and Fatul Karimul Khair, who shows that motorisation has a significant impact on the mobility and productivity of fishermen. Thus, based on these various foundations, the research is directed towards understanding traditional boats not only as technological and cultural heritage, but also as entities that undergo adaptation through motorisation. This concept allows

researchers to examine how traditional values, technical skills, and the socio-economic dynamics of fishing communities transform along with changes in boat technology.

This study attempts to examine the shortcomings in studies of traditional boats up to the motorisation of boats. This study fills a gap in maritime history writing, particularly on the theme of shipping and sailing. The use of engines transformed boats, which had an impact on their social and economic aspects. This study requires an analysis of historical aspects that focus on the changes and continuity of a maritime community.

Through historical methods, it is interesting to see the changes in the shape of the boats used by the Mamuju fishing community who migrated and settled in Bontang, East Kalimantan. They established two settlements above the sea called Tihi-Tihi and Malahing. This study focuses on the use of oral historical sources, which also include their experiences since living in Bontang. Oral historical sources can be obtained from in-depth interviews with informants who have experience with the changes in their boats since they first settled in Bontang. This study takes 1955 as its initial temporal boundary because that was when the Mamuju people arrived in the waters of Bontang by sailing traditional boats. Meanwhile, the final boundary is set at the 2000s, when boats were already using engines.

Conceptually, this study combines an ethnographic approach with a maritime anthropological perspective to understand changes in boat design as a form of adaptation by fishing communities in a new environment. Ethnography allows researchers to understand changes in boat design from the perspective of fishermen by exploring the technical, cultural, and environmental reasons behind the modifications. The focus is on symbolic meaning, traditional knowledge, and boat building and usage practices. The maritime anthropological perspective, as stated by McGoodwin (1990) in Crisis in the World’s Fisheries, views fishermen as part of a dynamic socio-ecological system, in which changes in boat technology are not only influenced by technical factors, but also by cultural values, social structures, and interactions with the marine environment. In this context, material culture (Miller, 2005) provides a framework for examining boats as artefacts that contain indigenous knowledge as well as community identity. This approach is reinforced by Haddon's (1920) view in The Canoes of Oceania, which shows that the shape of traditional boats in various Pacific regions is greatly influenced by adaptation to local water conditions such as currents, waves, and the availability of raw materials.

This study aims to examine the changes in the boats of the Mamuju community, referring to the research question of how changes in boat shape can help the Mamuju community adapt to the waters of Bontang. These changes will have a significant impact on the lives of fishermen, particularly in terms of technology, social life, and economy. This study is expected to describe and explain in as much detail as possible the phenomena occurring in the Mamuju fishing community in Bontang, East Kalimantan. The results of this study are also expected to provide new knowledge for the field of history, especially maritime history. Furthermore, the results of this study can add to the literature and enrich the existing history of Indonesia.

# Method

This study utilises the historical method. The historical method is a process of historical study, a critical exploration of history using reliable and credible sources that record and are directly involved in the historical events being studied. The historical research method consists of five stages, namely topic selection, heuristics (source collection), source criticism, interpretation and historiography (writing) (Kuntowijoyo, 2005). Source collection is carried out by collecting primary and secondary sources. These primary sources were obtained from interviews with Mamuju people in Bontang aged 40-80 years old,

especially those who first settled in Bontang. The search for informants found a number of residents who had directly experienced the changes in the shape of the boat, namely Nasir Lakada, Toyib, Samnur, Arbaim, Maskur, Amir, Caman, Abd. Rahman, Muslimin and Sa'al. In addition, secondary sources were obtained from books and previous studies that provided an overview of this research. Their accounts were critiqued to determine the authenticity and validity of the information provided. The sources were critiqued through collaboration and comparison of the contents of each source found. This included the year of arrival, age, occupation, and experience of each informant.

The next stage is interpretation. Interpretation is the process of interpreting the sources found to provide a more in-depth perspective. In this case, this study uses a maritime anthropology perspective, and the author divides the four processes of boat transformation into socio-cultural meanings that can be revealed. The final stage is to write the results of the interpretation into a narrative and historical text, which must be objective in the study to be written.

This study attempts to develop a concept that will be applied to the important parts of this research. There is definitely a process of boat transformation from the beginning to the end of the process. This point is an important part of this study. The concept that will be used starts from the triggering factors, the adaptation process involving the transition period of the boats, the results of the adaptation in the form of the boats they use, and the impact of each use of these boats.

# Result

The results of the study show that changes in the shape of Mamuju fishermen's boats are based on the need to support their fishing activities to be more effective and in line with their needs. In addition, this shows that changes in the shape of boats are an adaptive response to the dynamics of the natural environment, technological developments, and socio-economic changes in the city of Bontang. In the early phase of their arrival from around 1955 to the late 1960s, Mamuju fishermen still relied on traditional Ba'go boats. These boats served a dual purpose as a means of transportation and for fishing and sea cucumber harvesting, reflecting the maritime traditions of the Mamuju region that were preserved in the waters of Bontang. However, the limitations of this boat type only allowed for slow fishing activities and required a long time for each voyage.

Entering a new phase, the Ba'go boats began to be abandoned and replaced with Soppe boats. These slim and light boats provided fast acceleration for fishermen to reach fishing areas. Despite their slim and small shape, these boats were equipped with stabilisers and had sufficient storage space for fish at the bottom of the boat. However, even though they were faster, the catch could still spoil due to the lack of ice as a preservative. This problem required a solution to bring the catch as quickly as possible to the collectors on the coast of Bontang. It was during these years that the term Penyambang emerged, referring to fish collectors or fish entrepreneurs who visited fishermen in the middle of the sea to buy their fish. These Penyambang used boats with 24-30 GT/PK engines, which they obtained from the Blue Revolution policy or boat motorisation, part of the New Order government's programme to advance Indonesia's fisheries and fishing boat industry. Not only that, the increase in population, especially fishermen, also increased competition in the process of fishing and sea cucumber harvesting. This increase also led to a reduction in the catch of fish and sea cucumbers, which was exacerbated by the destruction of coral reefs and marine ecosystems due to the use of bombs and human greed. This resulted in the need to increase the distance of fishing areas further from the coast, and therefore the use of engines became necessary.

Entering the late 1990s to 2000s, there was a transition phase when fishermen began to modify their boats by installing small outboard engines. This technological adaptation expanded the range of catches and accelerated mobility. The hulls were also widened to support the engines and carry more cargo,

and the bottom of the boats was made flat. Thus, the transformation of boat shapes among the Mamuju people in Tihi-Tihi and Malahing shows both continuity in maritime traditions and openness to technological innovation and economic change. Boats are not only a means of going to sea, but also a representation of cultural adaptation and modernisation.

# Discussion

The geographical conditions of the Bontang waters are one of the main reasons why the Mamuju fishing community came and settled in the area. Administratively, Bontang is located in East Kalimantan Province, bordering East Kutai Regency to the north, the Makassar Strait to the east, and Kutai Kartanegara Regency to the west and south (Saparuddin, 2011: 11). The natural conditions in Bontang are very conducive to fishing, with shallow waters, coral reefs, small islands, and well-preserved mangrove forests. This environment is a habitat for various types of fish and other marine life. The presence of small islands and mangrove forests on the coast also means that the winds and waves in the shallow waters of Bontang are not too strong, making it relatively safe for small-scale fishermen. In terms of land area, Bontang covers approximately 49,757 hectares, with 70 per cent of its area consisting of water (Sumarna, 2006: 3). In 1952, Bontang was still a small village in the middle of a vast forest area (Mustikawati, 2014: 68). The dense and sparsely populated forest opened up opportunities for new settlements for migrants. In addition, Bontang also offered various job opportunities, ranging from the logging sector, the oil and gas industry, to fertiliser companies. These conditions made Bontang the right choice for migrants, especially fishermen from Mamuju, to seek a new livelihood, settle down, and develop marine-based economic activities.

These factors were well utilised by the Mamuju community who arrived in Bontang in 1955. The vastness of the forest area, which was still sparsely populated, gave them the opportunity to unilaterally claim land according to their wishes (Caman, 8 November 2024). They then spread to various areas in Tanjung Laut Village and its surroundings. The freedom to claim land during this early period of arrival eventually led to land ownership disputes, especially when land was acquired for the construction of the PT Badak LNG oil and gas company. Since then, the freedom to claim land has no longer been permitted. This situation made it difficult for migrants arriving between 1970 and 2000 to obtain land for free, so many of them chose to build settlements on the sea. This is how the Mamuju fishing villages in Bontang were formed.

# Figure 1: Tihi-Tihi and Malahing

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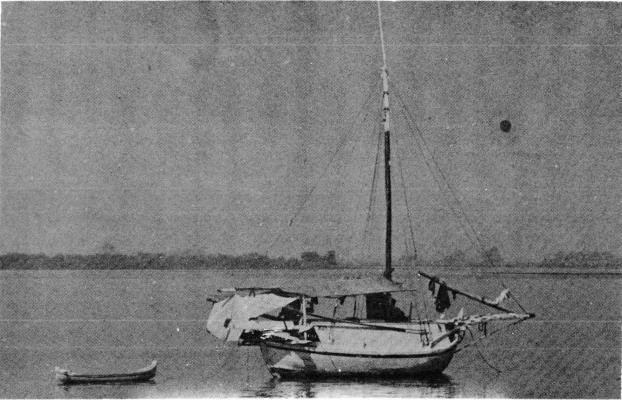
(Source: Google Maps 2025)

Tihi-Tihi and Malahing are now villages in the middle of shallow seas. The people of Mamuju built their huts using wood obtained from mangrove forests. The communities in both villages have utilised the

abundant natural resources to survive to this day. Currently, both villages are part of the administrative area of Bontang City, with Tihi-Tihi becoming RT 17, which is part of the Bontang Lestari sub-district, and Malahing becoming RT 30, which is part of the Tanjung Laut Indah sub-district. During their lives and while settled, the people of Tihi-Tihi and Malahing use their boats to sail out to sea to fish and to go ashore to sell their catch and buy the supplies they need to take home. Their boats are the most important tool for supporting their activities at sea. They viewed boats as a form of their identity and part of their lives, so new boats that were to be launched into the sea would undergo a traditional ceremony. The ceremony, or what they called Barasanji, was intended to provide protection against misfortune that might befall them at sea (Arbaim, 30 November 2024).

According to the informant, the Mamuju community who migrated from Sulawesi to Bontang between 1955 and the 1980s still used traditional boats. They sailed using boats called Ba'go, which could carry up to 5–10 people on each voyage (Samnur, 16 November 2024). This boat is classified as a long- distance boat used for inter-island voyages (Borahima et al., 1977: 70). The Ba'go is a medium-sized boat with one main mast and one small mast, equipped with a cabin, steering wheel, and cooking facilities at the rear. The average size of a Ba'go is nearly two metres wide and approximately 5–7 metres long.

# Figure 2: Ba’go boat

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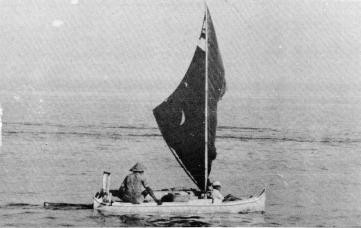
(Source: Ridwan Borahima, Muhammad Arfah & Muhammad Salim, 1977).

In practice, Ba'go boats can be used to catch fish and sea cucumbers. They can fish and set fish traps, which they call Belat (Caman, 8 November 2024). However, their slow mobility or speed and the considerable effort required to row them are major obstacles to their use. In the galley, Mamuju fishermen utilise traditional yet efficient technology to light fires for cooking on the boat. They provide fire on the boat by making a container with a base made of soil or sand and a fire barrier made of stones (Samnur, 16 November 2024). In addition, Ba'go boats can carry a lot of supplies, and even jars for storing fresh water can be loaded onto these boats (Caman, 8 November 2024). In Figure 2, you can see a Lepa-lepa boat, which is likely used to enter rivers or to dock on land. The Lepa-lepa boat is also useful for fishing, as they move slightly away from the Ba’go boat because its large size scares the fish. From its relatively large design to prioritising the efficiency of fish and sea cucumber distributors, these factors were considered when deciding to abandon this boat and replace it with the Soppe.

After settling in Bontang, the Mamuju people replaced their boats with boats called Soppe to catch fish and sea cucumbers to sell to collectors or traders. Soppe boats have a sleek design with a tapered hull,

use layers, and have a counterweight on both or one side at the rear, with a width of approximately 1 metre and a length of 2-3 metres. This boat is useful for speeding up their movement in the ocean compared to the Ba'go.

# Figure 3: Soppe boat with one sail and one stabiliser

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(Source; Ridwan Borahima, Muhammad Arfah & Muhammad Salim, 1977).

As seen in the picture above, the boat can accommodate approximately 1-2 people with fishing equipment. One mast and a larger sail than the boat provide strong propulsion when the wind is strong. The slim design with a tapered bottom requires a counterweight on both or one side of the boat. This difference from the Ba'go boat makes the Soppe boat the preferred choice for navigating the seas in search of fish.

Entering the final phase, the Mamuju communities in both villages modified their boats into motorised boats. Although Soppe played an important role and contributed significantly to the process of fishing and sea cucumber hunting, acceleration, speed, and efficiency in terms of time and energy became the main priorities for further development. Technological developments have influenced the traditional boats of Indonesian fishermen. During Suharto's administration, the blue revolution policy had the most significant impact on the advancement of Indonesian fishing vessel technology (Kusnadi, 2003 : 20). This policy became an important turning point in vessel technology, influencing the socio-cultural life of Indonesian fishermen. The Blue Revolution itself was a plan initiated by the Indonesian government to improve the welfare of fishermen through the renewal of shipping technology and fishing equipment (Kusnadi, 2003 : 75).

The Soppe boat was then abandoned by making a boat shape by adding to the length of the boat, with some being made flat and others retaining their original shape at the bottom of the boat. This type of boat is known as a Ketinting boat. One difference with the Soppe boat is that it still uses a counterweight. Meanwhile, the Ketinting boat no longer uses a counterweight on one or both sides. With the length of the boat increasing, its carrying capacity is greater than that of the Soppe boat.

**Gambar 4**: Perahu Ketinting



(Sumber Bontang Post)

Since the use of engines on boats in the Mamuju community, especially in these two villages, there has been a change in their fishing patterns. Initially, they took advantage of the direction of the wind at night, so they only went out to sea at night. However, this changed since they started using engines. Their fishing area is no longer limited to the vicinity of these two villages, but extends to more distant areas. Their catch is no longer preserved, but is taken directly to collectors on the coast (Caman, 8 November 2024). The important role of the Penyambang has diminished with the use of engines in Mamuju fishing boats. This has had a significant impact on the fishing practices of coastal communities in Bontang, East Kalimantan. Ketinting boats are now increasingly used by the Mamuju fishing community. With a long design that can hold more fish, the bottom tends to be flat, making these boats easy to navigate in shallow waters.

The Mamuju communities in both villages build their boats in the middle of their respective villages. In both villages, there are boat builders whom they call Tukang Lopi. These boat builders play an important role in the distribution of boats and in meeting the boat needs of the Mamuju community. According to Arbaim, the payment system to boat builders is usually made directly in the amount of Rp3,000,000.00 (three million rupiah). This amount is considered the cost of ordering a boat from the boat builder. The type of wood used in the boat-building process is generally adjusted to the budget of the customer. However, for fishermen who want their boats to be more durable and of good quality, the wood of choice is high-quality wood that is known to be strong and able to withstand long-term use.

# Figure 6: Making a Ketinting Boat in Tihi-Tihi

(Source: Personal Documentation)

From Figure 6, it can be seen that boat builders hold an important position in the Mamuju fishing community. Before the boat is launched into the sea or used for the first time, a traditional ceremony is held to express gratitude and ward off misfortune when the boat is used (Arbaim, 30 November 2024).

The existence of boats provides assistance for the activities of Mamuju fishermen in Bontang. Boats have become an important part of the development of the Mamuju fishing community in Bontang. This important part is not just a tool for sailing, but has become a maritime cultural identity that is inherent in the community. Thus, boat builders continue to innovate in order to develop their boats. Life at sea has become an integral part of the lives of the Mamuju fishermen, particularly in the villages of Tihi-Tihi and Malahing. And boats are there to complement and support them.

# Conclusion

The transformation of the shape of Mamuju fishermen's boats reflects the social dynamics of maritime life within the fishing community. This transformation is a response to the community's need for sailing activities on the open sea. Boats play an important role in the activities of a fishing community. However, not all boats can be used as efficiently as possible for sailing activities in their context of use. Sea conditions, weather conditions and community needs are the factors that trigger the transformation of the shape of Mamuju fishing boats. This is supported by the motorisation and modernisation policies for Indonesian fishing vessels and fisheries as outlined in the blue revolution by the Indonesian government during the New Order era. Through this, the transformation of boats has become faster, not only as a form of adaptation but also as part of technological development.

The Mamuju communities in both villages responded as best they could to what they needed to survive at sea. Boat builders played an increasingly important role in supporting the community's need to sail and fish and in innovating the development of their shipping technology. In addition, the role of the penyambang (boat builder) faded as the Mamuju fishing community began to use engines in their boats.

# Final Notes

The scope of this study covers the theme of maritime history, particularly with regard to the Mamuju community as migrants who survived in their new environment. Simple conditions and limitations did not prevent them from surviving and adapting to their new environment. One important note for future studies is to look at the impact of boat motorisation on the Mamuju fishing communities in both villages. Living in the middle of the sea, they initially used wind power and rowed their boats to go to and from the sea, but this changed with the use of engine power. In addition, a comparative study can be conducted between the era of the Penyambang as fish collectors who picked up fish directly in the middle of the sea and the post-motorisation era, which led to the decline of the Penyambang.

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# List of Informants

1. Caman (72 years old) – Sampoang
2. Amir (71 years old) – Bontang Lestari
3. Nasir Lakada (49 years old) – Malahing
4. Toyib (53 years old) – Tihi-Tihi
5. Samnur (67 years old) – Beras Basah
6. Arbaim (46 years old) – Tihi-Tihi
7. Maskur (58 years old) – Tihi-Tihi
8. Muslimin (63 years old) – Tihi-Tihi
9. Saal (73 years old) – Berbas
10. Jamin (52 years old) – Malahing