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The Transition of the Central Port of Colonial Era: From Old Batavia to TanjungPriok Port

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Abstract

This paper discusses the ports and government policy particularly in the transition of the central port of colonial period of the old port of Batavia to the port of Tanjung Priok Year 1887-1930. The aim of this research is to understand the colonial response to the development of international shipping world, which impact on the colonial economy. Here, the position of the Dutch East Indies must dare to take the policy to change the trading center is no longer in the Port near the old city but must move to the east of Batavia namely TanjungPriok. The method used in this research is qualitative. While the data collection is done through literature research and documentation. This data analysis technique based on heuristic techniques, verification, interpretation, and historiography. Based on the research conducted, it is found that the removal of port from the old town of Batavia to TanjungPriok which allegedly the Dutch East Indies economic actors will not grow because of the rarity of people living around the harbor. The facts in the field of TanjungPriok developed into the largest international port in the territory of the Indies Netherlands. The results show that the development of the harbor east of Batavia is at the center of the old city portographic port of Batavia which has high sedimentation of large ships unable to dock to the port. The TanjungPriok central port is growing based on a colonial annual report of the vast number of outposts with 20 other countries that have their homecoming in the Port.

Keywords: Port Policy, Economy, Shipping Activities.

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Introduction

Port activities in the Batavia Old City in 19th century was greatly affected by the opening of the Suez Canal which connected the Red Sea with the Mediterranean in 1869 which shortened shipping routes between Asia and Europe. The trading traffic was increasingly crowded and stevedoring activities at that time required fast time. The trading activities in SundaKelapa also increased dramatically, and it was added with shipping technology innovations. It was risky for the arriving large tonnage steamers when they could not be leaned directly on the port dock at that time, because of the shallow waters in SundaKelapa



in the Fish Market. The Dutch East Indies government in 1870 needed a new port that could replace the old port function. On the other hand, since the 19th century, the role of the Batavia city had turned into the center of colonial power to control the territory of the Dutch East Indies. In addition, it took over the shipping economy competition with Singapore which was established by Raffles since 1819 (Susan Blackburn, 2011).

After various considerations, it was decided to make a large Port in TanjungPriok, which was about 8 km from the old port of SundaKelapa or 5 miles from eastern Batavia as the location of the construction of the new port (Susan Blackburn, 2011). It was not easy for the government to choose TanjungPriok as the best location for the new Dutch East Indies port. The Batavia Chamber of Commerce had rejected the decision, because they were afraid of harming the Barge business, and were worried that they would deactivate the old Port of the Old City. However, entrepreneurs were quite relieved because the new city was not formed to become an old city rival. However, it was known that the environment was infected with Malaria, so very few chose to live there (Susan Blackburn, 2011).

The construction of TanjungPriok Port began in 1877 and was completed in 1887. First, with the construction of deep wave-barrier stones (dam) from 1877 to 1882, and the construction of the new port of TanjungPriok was completed in 1886 and inaugurated in 1887 (De Haven van, 1924). Since then, the visitors of Batavia had landed at TanjungPriok by train to go into the City. Batavia, with the existence of TanjungPriok Port, increasingly developed in various fields, and this development had an impact on the development of economic mobility of the Dutch East Indies (Uka Tjandrasasmita dan Tim Penyusun, 2000).

Methods

The method used in this study is qualitative. While the data collection is done through library research and documentation. This data analysis technique is based on heuristic techniques, verification, interpretation, and historiography. Based on the research conducted, it was found that the economic actors in the Dutch East Indies suspected that the port movement from the old city area of Batavia to TanjungPriok would not make the port develop due to the rare population living around the port and the difficulty of land access to go there. The fact in the field was that TanjungPriok continued to grow to become the largest international port in the territory of the Dutch East Indies.

Result and Discussion

a. Geographical and Demographical Aspect

If we understand, ports in Batavia are generally in one line with Batavia bay, and historically they can be formed due to geological factors or natural factors (Rahardjo, 2007). Batavia Bay has waters protected by islands at the front line, called the Thousand Islands which give a very beneficial impact on shipping and trade developments. The ecological

factors of the fertile Bay of Batavia also play a role in the growth and development of the city (Uka Tjandrasasmita dan Tim Penyusun, 2000). The eruption of Mount Salak, located in Bogor in 1699, caused the coastline of Batavia shifted 75 meters to the sea every year. While in accordance with the opinion of RestuGunawan in his research, he said that between 1625-1873 the coastline of Batavia advanced to 1,300 meters (Gunawan, 2010). The Batavia region itself had a hot climate with an average temperature of 27° C. The west monsoon winds occurring in November-April and the east monsoon occurring in May-November were very influential on shipping and on the morphology of the coast (Gunawan, 2010). This Port City could also develop due to the role of the surrounding rivers and especially the Ciliwung River as a supplier of materials from the forest in the upstream and as an entrance to the hinterland from the downstream. In the 16th to 19th centuries, the number of rivers was more than that of at present (Gunawan, 2010).

Astronomically and geographically, the area of Batavia itself is located between 6°-8° South Latitude and 106°-108° East Longitude with port area of ± 65 Km² (Sedyawati, 1987). The city which was established at the estuary of the Ciliwung river and which was still called Jayakarta had a pattern of urban planning like Islamic kingdoms on the coast of Java in general. Townsquare, mosques, and markets were reinforced by wooden fence as a city defense line (Uka Tjandrasasmita, 2009).

This region has indeed become a very strategic place geographically since the arrival of the first Europeans namely the Portuguese during their visit in Sunda Kelapa in 1513. They were so concerned about this region as a need for trading operation basis in Java Island (Muljana, 1980), because it can be said that this region was in the middle of the popular trade area in the west, namely Malacca and near the Sunda Strait. However, VOC was successful because it could take over this area. Since the beginning, Jan Pieterszoon Coen as the VOC leader at that time had made a plan that the Netherlands would have a series of trading posts throughout Asia to dominate trade in the region (Susan Blackburn, 2011).

On May 30, 1619 Jan Pieterszoon Coen succeeded in taking over Jayakarta from the Vassal of the Sultanate of Banten. And automatically this city fell into the hands of the VOC and was later renamed the colonial-patterned Batavia city (G.J.F. Biegan, 1894). Batavia was designed as the Dutch city with a castle as its center. However, the condition of swampy land encouraged the city inhabitants, in this case the Dutch, applying technology for urban planning, and thus the form of Dutch residency was imitated (Tawalinuddin Haris, 2007). Batavia was designed in such a way as a means of defense and for easy transportation. City was functioned as the center of government and as a port of international trade so that it was more open to foreign immigrants (Leonard Blusse, 2004).

But after a while, the leaders of Batavia, the colonial, consciously felt a problem, that European architecture was not functioning properly in this area. The colonial officials

eventually blamed on the unhealthy climate of swamp region in this tropical country given that the high mortality rate in Batavia was due to epidemic diseases in the 18th century, and for some Europeans, Batavia became an uninhabitable place due to bad sanitation (A.C.Nix, 1935). As a result of the adverse effects for the colonial officials, the central government was moved to the higher and healthier areas of southern Batavia, namely the Weltevreden region during the era of Governor General Herman Willem Deandels (1808-1811) (Leonard Blusse, 2004).

When Java Island generally and Batavia specially were taken over by the British in 1811 - 1816, the British then appointed Raffles as Lieutenant Governor to take care of its interests. In the view of Raffles, the 19th century Batavia was as written in *History of Java* that:

“Of all the beauty and splendor that rest on this capital, ‘ *Queen of the East*’, only a few remain. All the streets were badly damaged, the canals were full of mud, the ports were stalled, and the buildings were gray and dusty. *Stad-house*, in which the supreme judge and board members gathered kept standing strong; traders at noon did their business in the city, and all of the warehouse was filled with the results of wealth from the islands from all directions, but some of the prominent European remained in the boundaries of this region “ (Raffles, 2008).

City sanitation conditions in the mid-19th century could be said still to be unclean and had an impact on the population’s health that was not maintained. The Resident of Batavia in 1851 reported to the Governor General that there were 468 people suffering from cholera, some of whom died. The disease was transmitted in the old city area, and many people living in Weltevreden were also infected by the disease (“Rapporten van de Resident Batavia aan de Gouverneur Generaal Ned. Indie betreffende de lijdende aan de Cholera de stad Batavia,” n.d.).

Although the old city was abandoned, the commercial activities in Batavia continued. The population consisted of mostly Chinese who were born in Indonesia and newcomers from the Hokian, Hakka and Cantonese tribes. They gathered in Glodok area. Among other Asian traders, there were also groups of Arabs and Indians Khoja and Keling groups. Some ethnicities were quite a lot mixing in the environment outside the city of Batavia, and among them, besides the ones mentioned previously, were Javanese, Sundanese, Balinese, Bugis, Sumbawa, Ambon, Malay, Minangkabau, Moluccas, Batak, Madura. In addition, a new ethnicity was born that originated from a mixture of several ethnic groups namely “*Batavians*” (Betawi) in large numbers. Many Betawi people lived in bamboo houses attached to/behind commercial buildings along the main highway and with very minimal facilities. The racial gap was supported by the planned structure of the Batavia city without regard to indigenous needs (Castles, 2007).

b. Impact of Shipping Liberalization and Development of Steamers

During the 19th century, the time needed to travel across the ocean significantly decreased with the advent of steamers and the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 to ease European routes to Asia and vice versa. Between the 18th and 19th centuries, shipping in the Archipelago underwent many changes marked by the evolution of ships with changes in the type or new design of ships from wood materials to iron materials. The captain and shipowners in Europe introduced various types of innovation ships for fast and easy shipping traffic. In this sector, many communities around the port appreciated the evolution of this ship. The reason was that in the 19th century, the most important thing was the changes in the type and kind of ships from sailing ships to steamers after entering the great era of the industrial revolution. (Gerrit J.Knaap, 1996)

After the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, sailing and trading using the sea links between the Asian and European continent became closer. The new line gave rise to the existence of steamer connections over the sailing ship connection. Transportation costs were rather affordable, and the market for tropical products extended by it self because prices could decrease. Moreover, Dutch investors were increasingly interested in investing in the Dutch East Indies (Bernard H.M Vlekk, 2008). Until the end of the 19th century, sailing ships were still used in oceanic voyages in general, such as the type of *clipper* with three to four poles. Between 1869-1870 in the waters of the Dutch East Indies, the steamers were still using wind power assistance with three screen masts such as the ship *Prins Hendrik der Nederlanden* (B Lapian, 2011).

In this era, the Dutch East Indies was jealous of economic growth of the British colony since before 1869. In reaction to the success of the British in developing Singapore as a free port which could attract trading activity in the Southeastern Asia region and the World, the government regulated the establishment of the Dutch East Indies Tariff Act which in the previous era of 1865 had accelerated the process of liberalization of shipping and trade. Since then all Dutch ships, the Dutch East Indies and foreign ships had been treated equally in relation to port tax. This regulation was refined later in 1872 and carried out on January 1, 1874. This regulation was a tool to standardize excise tariffs throughout the Dutch East Indies and marked the end of the differential duties system (Derek Heng, 2009).

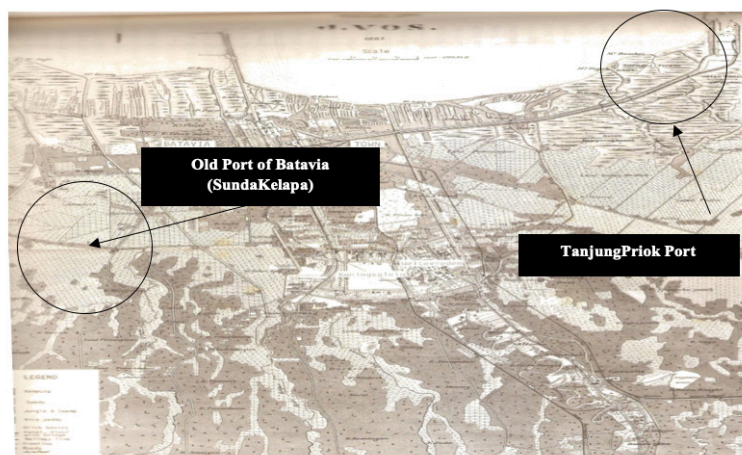
These policies were considered to be ineffective in a few years later; for example, in 1878 the Archipelago was still full of small steamers, most of which raised the British flag, and all traffic was dominated by *N.I.Steamship, Co.* relating to *British Indie*. According to Furnivall, at that time there were no steamers made in Holland, but all of the needs were sent from England. Therefore, the Dutch government since 1870 gave a contract to the *Netherlands Steamship. Co* shipping company and for many years the new company had to buy ships abroad and compete hard with *N.I.Steamship. Co* which renewed its contract with the Dutch

East Indies government with contractual terms that benefited the Indies government. However, after the contract ended, it was later transferred to *Koninklijke Paketvaart Maatschappij* (KPM) which was established in 1888 (J.S.Furnivall, 2009). From here, Furnivall's opinion needed to be reviewed because in the Colonial report several shipyards in the ports of Amsterdam, Feyenord, Rotterdam, and Surabaya had built 2-5 steamers for the navy's need and freight transportation since the 1870s with a tonnage weight between 1350-3900 M³ (Verslag, 1900).

c. Urgency of Tanjung Priok Port

In reaction to the success of the British in developing Singapore as a free port which could attract the trading activity in the region of Southeast Asia and the World, as described above, the Dutch East Indies was correct with the idea of developing this Port as a large port in Java. With the development of the port of Tanjung Priok, public transportation facilities in Batavia also developed rapidly in the late 19th century until the 20th century ("De Mailbode voor Passangers 1 Jaargang," 1919).

Map of *Afdeling* Batavia in 1887



Map of Batavia in 1887. The Tanjung Priok zone when firstly inaugurated is on the right above side. (Photo Source: Susan Blackburn *Jakarta: Sejarah 400 Tahun*. (2011))

The Dutch East Indies should be proud that Java had the first deep sea port where ships could lean on the dock, load coal and be repaired in the dry dock. In other cases, the port also produced a lot of shipping. In terms of exports and imports, it is important to note that there were several important export commodities in trade transactions at the Tanjung Priok Port, including Tea, Rubber, Tapioca and Tobacco (*Advertisement on one of Boards at Tanjung Priok Port in 1920*, n.d.). Some other superior products that were trade commodities included Sugar, Rice, Vegetables, Coco, Coffee, and Coconut Oil. These ingredients

were among several staples which were food commodities exported from Tanjung Priok Port (Commerce report of The Dutch East Indies in Handbook of The Netherlands East Indies 1930, 1939). Van Daventer illustrated that the period of the economic development progress of the Dutch East Indies this time from 1905-1914 was far better (J.S.Furnivall, 2009).

d. Economic Activities

Entering 1912 in line with rapid economic development in the Dutch East Indies, Tanjung Priok Port had trade transactions up to f201,114,233 in 1913, (F.B.Smits, 1914) and there were thousands of ships arriving back and forth to Tanjung Priok port. Because the port area was considered too small, and due to the need to accommodate the increasing number of ships, then in 1912 the port was expanded with the construction of one outer port and three *kuala basin* (deep ponds). The second period of the construction of port pond II was in 1914 and port pond III & IV, which were parallel with the coast, were built in 1915 until 1920 with expansion so that it could accommodate more ships belonging to various shipping companies ("De Haven van Tandjong-Priokin De Indische Gids," 1924). The expansion was followed by the establishment of the station, as well as the Ancol river canal (dead river) for 9 km, which was excavated from Ciliwung to connect Tanjung Priok Port with the old city (*oud Batavia*) (Commerce report of The Dutch East Indies in Handbook of The Netherlands East Indies 1930, 1939).

The shipping companies, both from the land of the Dutch East Indies and from foreign private-owned shipping companies, were very busy going back and forth at Tanjung Priok Port. In the port's annual report until 1915, there were at least 10 countries whose merchant ships often visited Tanjung Priok Port, either for commercial commodity transportation or for passenger transportation services between countries. The fleets of trade ships included 192 Dutch fleets, 5 French fleets, 117 British fleets, 1 Swedish fleet, 5 Norwegian fleets, 2 Denmark fleets, 5 Chinese fleets, 32 Japanese fleets, 1 American fleet, and 6 German fleets. Based on the recapitulation, 1623 ships arrived to this port within one year, and these were dominated by domestic-owned transportation *Koninklijke Paketvaart Maatschappij* (KPM) with 366 fleets (F.B.Smits, 1916).

The ships belonging to the KPM which had been established since 1888 in Tanjung Priok were very dominant in the traffic at the Batavia bay with several ship names used Dutch names. As for routes between ports, *Rumphius*, for example, with tonnage 1246 M³ served Surabaya-Batavia route every 14 days. Then the ship *Droogdok* with tonnage 966 M³ served the Belawan Deli-Batavia route and vice versa (Landsrukkerij, 1915). The Batavia-Deli route also served a private company route *Firma van Nie en Co.* with de Weert Ship with tonnage 965 M³. (Landsrukkerij, 1915) Other routes with tonnage 1,019.35 M³ - 1,019.55 M³ included Surabaya-Batavia-Tegal-Bagan Api-Api-Singapore, and vice versa (Landsrukkerij, 1915).

Meanwhile, private companies with British flags which were the toughest rivals of the Dutch also did business at Tanjung Priok Port and several ports in the Dutch East Indies in transactions of goods and services, and some of the large companies were separately classified with the shipping companies in Singapore colonial areas such as *Blue Funnel*, *A. Holt*, or *Nemazee*. Some shipping companies with other British flags were such as *Oceaan S.S. Co*, *China Mutual S.N.Co*, *Asiatic S.N.Co*, *British Indie S.N.Co*, *Burns Philip Line*, *W.Austr J.S.*, *Australia-East Indies Line*, *Sun Shipping Co*, *Prince Line*, *Hain S.S.*, *Andere*, etc. (F.B.Smits, 1914)

Furthermore, several companies with flags and origin from the Netherlands include *Mij Nederland*, *Rotterdamsche Llyod*, *Java-Bangelen lijn*, *Java New York lijn*, *Java-Pacific lijn*, *Mij Oceaan*, *Ned.Kol.Petroleum.Mij*, *Java-China Japan lijn* (branch), etc. *Mij Nederland* and *Rotterdamsche Llyod* shipping companies were the most active large companies since the end of the 19th century with KPM. Another large Dutch shipping company was the *Java-China-Japan-Line* shipping company which was founded in 1911 (Smits, 1929).

In the period between 1917 and 1926, the intensity of the number of ships that arrived at Tanjung Priok Port continued to increase. At the port, the mobility of ships belonging to the shipping company *Koninklijke Paketvaart Maatschappij* (KPM), *Stoomvaart Maatschappij Netherlands* (SMN), and *Rotterdamsche Llyod* (RL) were the most dominant. In just one week there were an average of 20 ships from these three shipping companies that carried out stevedoring at Tanjung Priok (Razief, 2010). In the previous era in 1912, the number had increased dominantly to reach 40% (Smits, 1929). The steamers and motorboats at that time had controlled the Dutch East Indies shipping traffic, reaching up to 77% of the entire shipping fleets (Singgih Tri Sulistyono, 2012).

After the first World War precisely in 1920, the Dutch East Indies voyage increased significantly. In the news of the *Bataviaasch Handelsblad* on May 20, 1920, until 1920 shipping companies KPM, SMN, RL, and JCJL became the largest shipping companies in the Dutch East Indies (Razief, 2010). Therefore, in the field of domestic shipping, the Dutch East Indies colonial government provided extensive opportunities for private shipping companies to conduct domestic shipping. The Dutch monopoly that was loosened was also in line with the strong KPM shipping fleet on domestic shipping. (Singgih Tri Sulistyono, 2012)

In general, during the busy times at Tanjung Priok Port, 15 ships could carry out stevedoring. Tanjung Priok Port workers could get 7 shifts or 3.5 days a week for stevedoring. For one ship with a volume of 2,900 tons, the stevedoring could be done for about 3 days, but if it was raining, the time needed would add. Meanwhile, ships with 3,500 tons of cargo would need 4 days for stevedoring. At that time, the ship's weight would reach 3,500 tons on average (Razief, 2010). This means that if calculated on average, large tonnage ships were leaned on Tanjung Priok Port between 3 to 4 days or more 1 day if the weather was not good.

The unloading of trade commodities from the Ship warehouse was not easier than other technical matters such as the passenger dropping, and only inspection of passenger goods often took longer.

Table 1

**The Flow of Dutch Great Shipping Company Ships
at Tanjung Priok Port (Jaarverslag van Haven Tandjong Priok 1922., 1923)**

Year	Number of Ship Arrival		
	St. Mij. Rotterdamche Llyod	St. Mij Nederland	St. Mij Oceaen
1914	133 Ships	131 Ships	26 Ships
1919	77 Ships	87 Ships	18 Ships
1920	114 Ships	97 Ships	19 Ships
1921	139 Ships	143 Ships	21 Ships
1922	100 Ships	126 Ships	24 Ships
1923	109 Ships	117 Ships	21 Ships
1924	126 Ships	135 Ships	23 Ships
1925	123 Ships	147 Ships	16 Ships
1926	758 Ships	179 Ships	15 Ships

At that time Tanjung Priok Port became the largest international port in the territory of the Dutch East Indies. In the news of the government magazine *De Indische Gids* on July 15, 1924, both large and medium-size type of port were mentioned in the territories of the Dutch East Indies, including:

Table

Type and Size of Portin Dutch East Indies (De Haven van, 1924)

Type of Port	Name of Port	Region
Large Size	Tandjong-Priok (Batavia)	Java Land
	Surabaya	
	Semarang	
	Cilacap	Sumatra
	Belawan-Deli (Medan)	
	Emmahaven (Padang)	Celebes
Makassar		

Medium Size	Cirebon Banyuwangi Banjarmasin Pontianak Bengkulu Palembang Amboina Menado	Java Land Borneo Sumatra Amboina Celebes
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This port was very vital to facilitate export and import activities of West Java and even the Dutch East Indies. Based on the export and import data in 1928, the transaction accounted for 9.7% of the total port trade in the Dutch East Indies, and the trade transactions could reach f 521,624, 21-. (*Commerce report of The Dutch East Indies in Handbook of The Netherlands East Indies 1930, 1939*) Port revenues were obtained from Customs tariffs, Ship retribution tariff, Port equipment rental, tariffs for repairing ships at the Port, and other revenues. The income was for maintenance and supervision of the Tanjung Priok Port, and even at the same time for the maintenance of the old port of Batavia (*Notulen der 113 de Vergadering van de Commissie van Bijstand in het Belang van het Beheer van de Haven Tandjong-Priok, 1928*).

After entering a period of economic depression in the Dutch East Indies since the early 1930s, the shipping and transporting company experienced a drastic decline, impacting on the decline in the number of ship arrivals to the Port and automatically the decrease of trade transaction values at Tanjung Priok the Port. Between 1930-1932 the decline was up to 9% from the previous years (“De Haven van Tandjong-Priok in De Indische Gids,” 1924). A number of operational shipping companies had dropped dramatically due to the high operational costs.

Thus the wind of liberalization blew in the Dutch East Indies until the Dutch power ended. However, there was a slight tightening in the 1930s when there was an economic depression and the invasion of Japanese products. And until 1936, Batavia with 94 other ports in the Dutch East Indies were designated as international ports. This represented that the shipping traffic, and international trade were growing rapidly in most parts of the Dutch East Indies. In the field of domestic shipping, the Dutch colonial government also provided extensive opportunities for private shipping companies to conduct domestic shipping. The loosening of the Dutch monopoly was also in line with the growing strength of the KPM shipping fleets on domestic shipping (Singgih Tri Sulistyono, 2012).

Conclusion

Based on economic point of view, in general, the need for a new Port for the Dutch East Indies was a top priority along the rapid trade and shipping in the Indian Ocean zone after the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869. This desire had greatly increased due to the

growth of Singapore since 1819 as a *New Destination* for foreign traders. On the other hand, the old Port of Batavia always experienced silting due to the sedimentation of the Ciliwung River which made large tonnage ships unable to lean on the Port.

After the inauguration of the new Tanjung Priok Port in 1887 Batavia developed rapidly along with the development of the Dutch East Indies economy. The peak was when shipping economic growth began to increase rapidly in 1912 to 20%, only slightly decreased during World War I between 1914 to 1917, and then increased significantly when economic boom occurred between 1926-1928. It is known that foreign shipping companies often anchoring in Tanjung Priok came from 32 countries, and it described that Tanjung Priok Port was the largest international port in the Dutch East Indies.

However, when the Dutch East Indies entered a period of economic depression since the early 1930s, the shipping companies experienced drastic stock decline, and impacted on the declining number of ship operations to the Port. Automatically the value of trade transaction decreased at Tanjung Priok Port. In the period between 1930-1932, the decline was up to 9% from the previous years. Several operational shipping companies had decreased dramatically due to the high operational costs.

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APPENDIX: PHOTO**TANJUNG PRIOK PORT, BATAVIA**

TanjungPriok Port, Batavia in 1929



Ship *S.S. Jan Pieterszoon Coen* (owned by *Stoomvaart Maatschappij Nederland*)

Tanjung Priok Port, with Tanjung Priok station background in 1930s.



Dry dock for ship making and repair at TanjungPriokPort, 1920

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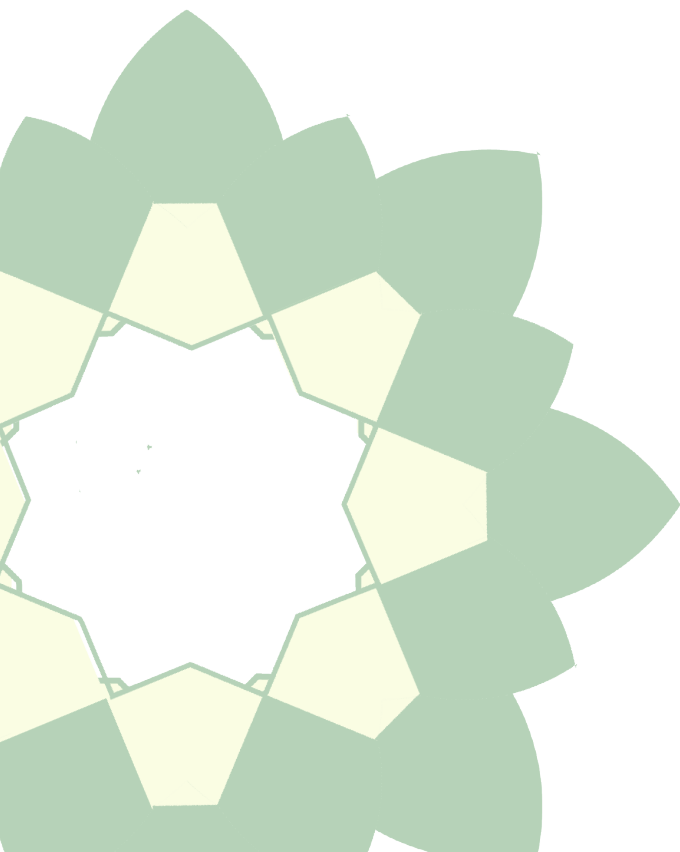
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