MAKING AN OLD CITY
A PLEASANT PLACE TO STAY FOR
MENEER AND MEVROUW:
SOLO, 1900-1915

Kuntowijoyo*

Introduction

In 1900 Solo was already a multicultural city, though the Javaneses were dominating the scene. The whole population was 109,459, out of which 1,973 were Europeans, 5,129 Chinese, 71 Arabs, 262 Other Foreign Easteners, and the rest 101,924 Javanese (RA, 1902). Five years later in 1905 the population increased to 118,378, out of which 1,572 were Europeans, 6,532 Chinese, 337 Arabs, 413 Other Foreign Easteners, and 109,324 Javanese (RA, 1908). The same sources showed that at these times the Javanese population of Surakarta was respectively 1,499,431 and 1,577,986, thus it was only about one-fifteenth of the native lived in the capital city. The reverse was true to the foreigners. Numbers showed that in 1900 in the whole Surakarta there were 3,637 Europeans, 9,265 Chinese, 171 Arabs, and 262 Other Foreign Easteners; meanwhile in 1905 there were 3,335 Europeans, 10,971 Chinese, 337 Arabs, and 417 Other Foreign Easteners. These numbers meant that the Arabs and Other Foreign Easteners practically all lived in the capital city.

The Dutch administration of the city divided the territory into several wijks (neighbourhood), each with its own wijkmester (chief). After expansion, there were three wijks in 1915. First, the wijk of South-East. It was with the Pepe in the north, the Beringawan in the east, the Pepe in the south, and the Pepe in the west. Third, the wijk of the Westside. It was with the northern end of the city and the Pepe in the north, the Pepe in the south, and the Pepe in the west. Third, the wijk of the Westside. It was with the northern end of the city and the Pepe in the north, the Pepe in the south, and the Pepe in the west. The Pepe and the road through the bridge of the Pepe to the south of the Mangkungaran palace in the east, the end of the city in the south, and the west end of the city to the west (DNV, 3-5-1915). The Chinese lived in their own wijk with a wijkmester appointed by the colonial government (RA, 1906: 272). Their kampungs were Jebres (Mesen), Kepalahan, Balipan, and houses along the streets in the Kasunanan part of the city. So did the Arabs who lived in their own wijk, Pasar Kliwon.

Technology

In 1900 Solo was a garden city with cool, pleasant, and shady tamarind trees. A traveler who entered the city from the westside witnessed the tamarind trees along the street, from the Kampung Kloko to the city. There was no news when the trees were planted yet in the end of 1860's a traveler from outside the kingdom called Fanderi Mas Purwakatana who visited the city noted from his carriage that tamarind trees shaded the street as such that a

* Doktor, Master of Arts, Staf pentgas Dr. Soedjono, Fakultas Sastra Universitas Gajah Mada.
traveller would not feel the sunburn (Purwalela, 1877: 9). In 1901 the trees were so thick that a reader of the local newspaper wrote that the roots of those trees emerged above the ground in the dikes along the main street. It seemed that the tamarind trees were so important for the city that the reader worried the open roots would cause the death of the trees (DNV, 20 February 1901).

Flood Control. The traditional government (i.e. the Kasunanan) and the colonial government cooperated in the making of the modern urban ecology in controlling the yearly flood. The city was threatened from the south and the east by the Bengawan with 2,000 cubics per second. Dams were built in the southern and eastern part of the city in order to prevent flood from sinking the city streets. New river was built in the southern part to connect the Jenes and the Bengawan. So was the Pepe which flowed through the middle of the city with 800 cubics per second. It partly redirected its flow so that it did not flood the city during the rainy season (Kol., 1904). Dikes were also rigged to redirect the flows of the small rivers in the city. The longest news reported by the media in the beginning of the decade was the construction of five kilometer long canal connecting the Pepe and the Bengawan. The decision was made in 1902, through a cooperation of the Kasunanan and the Dutch colonial government (Verslag BW 1902). The decision was made due to the fact that in the beginning of the year 1902 the water of the Pepe flooded the city. In January the kampongs of Keleton, Mangkuneigaran, Krapyak, and Ballong were full of water. The next month the water flooded the city for two days, including the Dutch residences around the fort, Mangku- menad, and the main street of Purwakarta.

It was reported that those places at the time looked much like river (DNV, 22 January 1902; DNV, 10 February 1902). A canal would free the above mentioned kampongs from flood. So some 500 people were recruited to work with 30-45 cents a day (DNV, 12.1-1903). While the canal was in the making the flood was still take place. In the year of 1903 on 7 February and again on 20 to 21 December the Bengawan

flooded the city, much like the one which occurred in 1886. European residences and other kampongs were full of water (Verslag BW 1904. 140-143). Flood took place again on 28-30 December 1906, in the streets of European residences water was two feet high, while in the native kampongs water seemed higher (MR, 1907/54, Verslag BW 1908, 207-223).

The city was declared to be free from flood when the canal of the Pepe-the Bengawan finished in 1910. However, in the meantime the city was never free from the threat of water, for often drainage could not hold the water inside. This happened in 1909 when the drainage of Kepatan to the wall of the drainage was overloaded so that water inside came out (INV, 9 June, 11 June 1909).

Without flood and unregulated surface water, Solo would be a pleasant place to stay. The streets were wide and excellent, especially those in European residences. The longest street was the Residenlyaan (street) with 595 meter long and 21 meter wide stretching from the bridge of Gladak to Purbayan. Next was Voorstraat with 370 meter long and 17 meter wide stretching from the bridge of Pasar Klion to Societet Harmonie. Not all the streets were having such a size. Achterstreek was the Dutch settlement had only 4.5 meters in width, Mooiddenaarslaan had 3.5 meters. Approximately one half the width of the streets in the Dutch government streets had been hardened with rocks (MvO van Wijck, 1914).

Transportation. In Purwasi a steam train terminal was built, connecting Surakarta and Yogyakarta. With a horse train, the terminal also connected the plantations westward of the city and the city. People who wanted to catch the train of Surakarta-Surabaya should also travel with the horse train through the city, for the terminal to Sunukaya was located in the eastside of the city, in the kampong of Jebros. Other steam train terminal was Balapac, which connected Surakarta and Semarang in the north coast. Thus, Solo was located in the very heart of the island of Java.

The city train was managed by Soloche Tramweg Maatschappij. Established since
1892, the train ran over an iron tracks laid on block of woods, and was dragged by horses. Those who travelled from Surabaya intended to go to Yogyakarta had to stop at Jebres station and take city train to Purwakarta. The city train connected Jebres train station in the westside of the city with sugar plantations westward of the city. The stopovers were Jasvasche Bank, Ceyodan, Marpujiyiny, Purwakarta, Banaran, Kartasura, Pasier Ngirkos, and Bandak (Verslag STM 1895). Bandak terminal was demolished in 1896, replaced by Banjurodoon terminal, and at the same time the track went westward up to Boyolili. Most users of the city train went from Purwakarta to Jasvasche Bank and vice versa which means that the city train was utilized mainly as city transportation means. Those who travelled from the city center in the nearby Jasvasche Bank to Jebres seemed to choose other means of transportation (Verslag STM 1899). Easily one could plan one's journey, for advertisements of the train schedule would be found in the Dutch language local newspaper (Advertissement DNIV 2 January 1899).

The city train took the southern side of the street along the main street of Purwakarta. The train track was in the eastern side along the streets of Gladak, in front of the Duth fort, crossing the bridge of Pepe forwarding towards Pasar Gede, the Chinese kampong of Warungasaleman, and advancing to Jebres. Terminals were with fences and roof made from tin metal (zeng). The cars were dragged by two or four horses with one wagon containing 20-25 seats (Tivakramto and Mariowagweg, nd: 19; Said, 1984: 58). The driver would always ring the bell which sounds "zeng-zeng-zeng". The first wagon was imported from Europe, but in 1899 new wagon was made by a local workshop, G. Scheltens and the native craftsmen. The new wagon was nicely polished and with silvery iron ornaments. The new wagon seemed larger for its con-tained 30 seats, with enough room in the middle to stand up (DNIV 2 January 1899).

Attempt to enlarge network of city train had been on the move. In fact, Sosokese Tramweg Maatschappij had planned in 1895 to replace horses with machine, especially when in early 1899 the horse disease threatened the existence of the company. In 1901 the permission to combine horse with machine was granted (Vb, 19 August 1902). However, it was apparent that replacement of horse by machine did not soon take place, for years afterwards there were still reports on buying of horses and making of skilts. In 1906 attempt to replace horse with machine was once again tried by the signing of a cooperation between Sokosci Tramweg Maatschappij and Nederlandsch-Indische Spoorweg Maatschappij (Verslag STM 1906). Local "newspaper" mentioned that the replacement would take place in 1907 (DK, 20 December 1906). The replacement of horses with machine was declared all finished on 1 May 1908 by inviting 28 government officials to ride the train free of charge (DNIV, 0 August 1909). The replacement benefited the commoners, for it lowered the fare considerably. Formerly it was only the foreigners, the priaay, and the merchants who rode the city train, then even the commoners or "bunting ile" could afford to buy the ticket (Said, 1946: 69).

In the meantime, while the city train was already run by machine, there was a plan to add up the train services. The government had given permission to build and to manage the train services—either steam or electrical—for the city to a Dutch entrepreneur (MR, 1904/704; Rapport, 12 July 1903 No.27 and 31 July 1906 No. 52). This enterprise was for the native commoners thus still much dependent on traditional anthony (horse carriage). The Dutch, Foreign_EIshomers, and the rich natives could travel on their own private horse carriages. The focus of this enterprise were full of American-style buggies advertisements, workshops of buggy making, and repair places (e.g. advertissement DNIV, 27 March 1903).

Bridges were also built. The longest metal bridge was built in 1910 in the Junag area to enable people to cross the Benga-wan. The bridge connected Solo and the territory across the river, and the further regions of East Java. It was financed by the three governments of the city, the Kasu- nanan, the Mangikunegaran, and the Dutch.
Kuntavijojo

The metal construction was laid down in 1913, and in the end of the year, 31 De-

cember 1913, declared to be ready in a

special celebration. A tent was built at the

terminus of the bridge to welcome the

guests, the Sunn, the Ruler of Mang-

kunepura, the Dutch Resident, the Past

of the Kasuwanan, and other dignitaries. Almost all the dignitaries attended the cele-

bration, among whom the Military Comman-
dant, the Assistant Resident of Sunnawa,

the Assistant Resident of Sragen, the colo-

nial government’s officials, the native go-

vernors’ officials, the princes and the

representatives of landlords. Also attend-
ed the ceremony Sri Pakkajam and Pange-
rat Nektom of the Paku Ram palace in

Yogyakarta. The ceremony was accompa-
nied by the Orchestra of Kepithan and the

gamelan. An automobile with the Sunn and

the Resident in it and other automo-
cines came at 10:00 AM. They took a photo,

then the Sunn walked across the bridge,

and we went up to Paruar, eastward of the

city border (DNV, 25 May 1913, DNV, 31

December 1913).

Other important bridge was the Becin
bridge which connected the city and the

southern, egnos, Woroinj and Pacian.

The 50,000 guilders-bridge was financed by

the Kasuwanan, won a credit from the

colonial government. It was actually started

to be built in 1904, but it had been seriously

constructed in 1912. Metal the bridge was

ordered from The United States Steel

Product Co. at the price of 23,000 guilders.

The bridge was opened by the Sunn on

8 January 1915. Those who crossed the

bridge had to pay the toll as much as 1 cent

for those who walked, and 1 guider for

those who rode an automobile (DNV, 14

July 1908; DNV, 8 January 1915).

Automobile was introduced in early

1906. An advertisement in local newspaper

offered steam-automobile with a “Sepolker”
system, 3 m.p., and 4 cylinder (DNV, 27

February 1906). It was sold doubted whether

the steam-automobile had a buyer at all, so

for seven months later a benzine (gas) car

was introduced (DNV, 1906). It was report-
ed that the Sunn acquired an automobile in

1907, the time when even the Resident

did not (“Kho vo Wilk”). It seemed that

market for automobile was prospective due

to the landlord, that a show was

conducted in September 1907 (DNV, 7

September 1907). In a few years the tele-

graph technology became a lucrative business. In

1912 renting an automobile was fashion-
able, in 1914 people in the smaller cities in

Surakarta (Kleng and Boyolali) knew that to

be an aristocrat was as easy as renting a

telephone (DNV, 6 May 1914) and in 1915

in the city there was already an “automobile

dealer (DNV, 16 December 1912, Hand-

bock, 1915: 141)

Electrification. Electrification of Solo

took place early in this century. The Dutch

government had released a permit to Solo-
sine Elektrichelle-Maatschappij to establish

its factory in 1899. The management of the

company was in the hand of Firma Maintz &

Co. in Batavia, but it soon established its

local commissionaries in Surakarta for the

purpose. The commissionaries comprised all

elements in the society, Adapu Surodinening

(the past of Kasuwanan), J.A.C. de Kock van

Leeuwen (superintendent of the Mangkunnengar’s lands), D. Kwast Klein

(the Chinese captain of Solo), and S.J.W.

van Buren (a midshipman from Jakarta).

The attempt was well responded, and many

orders came in. The chief customers were

the Sunn, the Resident, the Past, the

Chinese captain, and the Dutch busi-

nessmen. The share was already sold to

the amount of 70,000 guilders (MR,

1899/185; DNV, 13 August 1903). The

charter of establishment was signed on 12

March 1903 and firthally announced in the

Javanesse-Courant two months later, on

21 May 1901. One can imagine that the lot of

the electricity was the same as that of the

city train. The first customers were foreig-

ners and the upper layer of society, be-

cause the monthly payment of the light was

high enough, as much as 20 to 30 rupiah per

lamp (DNV, 13 March 1901). The company

built an electricity factory and opened up an

office. The factory was built by G. Scheltes

company, the same one which built the new

wagon of the city train, while for office still

hired a place in the Illen Hotel (DNV, 15

May 1901). One year later, on 19 April 1902

or on 15 Sura Year Be 1892 electricity

eembrightened the city of Solo (Beg, 1904:

74). A few days afterward a feast was held

Hijrahleg Volume XII, No. 2/1900
Kuntowijo

is the electric factory in Purwasiari. The feast was attended by representatives of the company from Batavia, Du Mosch, the President of Firma Maitz & Co. and van Buren, the manager; and the local officials, including the Resident, Mangkuniagane, the Military Commandant, the Assistant Resident of Surakarta, the Resident of Kasurian, Soesloedrignath the Faith, and several others. After speeches of Du Mosch, the Resident, and van Buren, drum and trumpets were also performed (DNV, 28 April 1902).

Soon electricity replaced the place of the former aerogeen (natural gas) and petroleum in the main buildings of the city; and houses in the Dutch residences. Since 1902 on one could see the advertisement for the local Dutch newspaper of a low-priced company, Fabriek C. Sensius of Semarang offering services in installments of electric light, in addition to the installation of natural gas for lighting, heating, and industry (Advertisement DNV, 15 December 1902).

Show business, Schouwburg, had used electricity for its shows. Projected pictures were used in the dance of serpentine (Ard Verzorging DNV, 15 October 1902). The Rusche Hotel renovated its building and installed electricity for its 36 rooms (Advertisement DNV, 6 November 1903). Within one year the company sold as much as 3,866 lamps. The most abundant user was the Sunan, with 700 lamps. The Sunan had planned to buy up to 1,000 lamps for street lighting (NV, 6 May 1903).

In the surface, the customer was large enough, nevertheless some of the customers were still expected to join in order to enable the company to cover the operation cost. In the first year of operation it even ran in a loss. In a meeting of shareholders held in 1902 in Kepiulriak the company reported that in the last eight months it lost 8,000 guilders, and it would be attributed to 22,000 in a year. The expectation that in the first year the company would have as much as 23,000 guilders benefit proved to be wrong. The news dissatisfied the Dutch shareholders, while those of the Javanese and the Chinese were reported to be more calm. The loss was due to the fact that the potential market did not well respond to the new factory. The expected Chinese had failed to be customers. The Sunan did not fully buy the electricity, and expenditure for buildings, all contributed to the unbalanced budget. The report was refused by the share holders. It was recommended that the directors be replaced by some who knew the society well. But, at least two directors were still in the hands of the Batavia, and the Sunan was to consider some commissions (DNV, 6 May 1903).

Construction of the buildings for the electric company was well finished, and the temporary office in the Sier Hotel was relocated to a building in Purwasiari on 1 January 1906 (DNV, 1 December 1905). The loss of the first year of exploitation was then over, and in the following years the records of the company were good, as such that the dividend was increasing from year to year. In 1909 it was only 7.5% and in 1913 it was 10% (Handbook, 1915: 1001).

Electricity was on, but in general the houses were too late in responding to the new facility. Petroleum lamp was still more attractive. In the Zekeren feast (yearly held feast in commemoration of the birthday of the Prophet) of 1905, petroleum lamp made by Best Light & Co. was promoted in the palace square, and sold by its representative in the Sier Hotel (DNV, 15 May 1905). When the house of the Chinese Lieutenant, Be Sitor, was burnt, the Dutch local newspaper blamed the petroleum lamps that the Lieutenant preferred to electricity for its soft yellowish light (DNV, 25 July 1905).

However, the availability of electricity still could not change the face of the larger part of the city. The Sunan could not afford to provide lamps for street lighting for the cost was too high, that the streets were dark at night. In many places people used the petroleum lamp. So in general the city was very dark when the houses had been closed at night. So dark that it was reported that "one could not even see his own hands" (DNV, 20 May 1903).

Others. Other facilities of the city were telegraph, telephone, and clean water. Clean water was taken from artesian well. In Jembe, where many landholders lived, there was a well with a reservoir tower as high as 10 meters. It was from this tower that clean water made available for houses of the Europeans (Verslag BW, 1901).
Service and Leisure

It was only the Dutch who could afford to buy all the amusing new facilities of the city. The Dutch landholders from the whole Surakarta came to the city to do shopping, to get services done, and to pay visits to families and friends. They would subscribe to the Dutch newspaper De Nieuwe Vosre- talingen to know the world, Netherlands East-Indies, and the local events of the city. The newspaper informed them on shopping, services, and entertainments. It was from the newspaper that they knew business, social, and religious events.

Life was easy for the Dutch. The office of the Resident was opened from Monday to Thursday, 9:00 to 12:00 a.m. In the afternoon they would have aisles while in the evening and night there were social programs or social gatherings and enter- tainments. There was monthly gathering at the Residency House. On the first date in the late afternoon (vooravond), the Resident held a monthly open house on every second Saturday of the month, while Mangkunegara-ja who was generous to Europeans opened his house every Monday from 18:30 to 23:00 p.m. (Meetings in House of Luki- an Frederic Royal, a Freemasonry Club which was established in 1872, were held in the second Tuesday every month. Social gatherings were held weekly in the houses of the Dutch families, usually on every Fri- day. Fire extinguishing exercise was held monthly every second Wednesday. The Catholic Church held catechism every Thursday and Friday and religious instruc- tion was held on every fourth Sunday. The busiest office was certainly the Fostal and Telegraphic Service which was opened every day, Monday to Saturday, from 7:10 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. The post office was even opened on Mondays and holidays from 9:00 a.m. to 17:00 p.m. Appearance of the events could be seen regularly in De Nieu- we Vosreprintingen.

The Dutch had made the city busy with business, social, and religious institutions. Javaanse Bank was opened in 1867, espe- cially to do services for the landholders living outside the city. An association of landholders was formed in 1871, Indische Landhuurders te Soerakarta. Later it was renamed into Yoglosche Landhuurder Veree- ning. Meetings were held in Solo, and deliberatively scheduled to enable families outside the city to enjoy the various entertainments. In order to be able to arrange social, art, leisure time activities a mosque was founded in 1874, the Soeoleik de Harmonie. The society had its own build- ing. Small as it is, the Dutch community of Solo enjoyed the life and culture of Euro- pean style (Pahl, nd.).

Services were also flourishing. Hotels grew, possibly due to the many landholder living outside the city. In 1901 there were three, in 1905 four, in 1910 three, and in 1915 four hotels. In addition the hotels there was also pawn shop (Handbook, 1905, 1910, 1915). It was reported that there were also two coffee-houses in 1903 (DNV, 2 April 1903). Slaughter houses for Dutch families numbered four in 1905, including one meat house in Hotel Silver (Advertisement DNV, 25 December 1903). The Dutch had their own wood trader and saw mill (Advertisement DNV, 31 July 1907), cattle and milk trader (Advertisement DNV, 18 De- cember 1909), photography (Advertisement DNV, 3 January 1901). Public library (DNV, in November 1902), bike shop (Advertisement DNV, 7 June 1909, 30 December 1910), dentistry (Dutch, Chinese and Japa- nese dentists were available at different times; see advertisements DNV 4 July 1902, DNV 24 November 1902, also (DNV 25 January 1909), auctioneer (DNV 23 January 1899, DNV 12 March 1900, DNV 26 April 1905) and notary public (RA, 1905). Like those in Europe, the Dutch in Solo were fond of hunting dogs in the houses so that when mouth-sensation attacked the city, the Assistant Resident in charge announc- ed that dogs should be kept inside the yard (Advertisement DNV 24 April 1903).

Thus life for the Dutch was splendid one in Solo, everything was available. Horses certainly had a special place in the Dutch community in the Netherlands, and they did not in the city. Various services were available for horses and horse carriages. There was advertisement in the local news- paper on the availability of horse cooking, advertisements on repair places of horse carriages, news on expensive lines of horses, and advertisement on insurance of horses (Advertisements DNV 1 January
1912 8 presented performers from America (DNV, 23 January 1912). In addition the Schouwburg was sometimes used for biopsies (DNV, 28 April 1913).

Conclusion
With all the facilities, the Dutch in Solo was not lagged behind those lived in the Fatherland. They lived in the streets with Dutch names, they rode the same city train, the same automobiles, and the same horse carriages. They got the same clean water and the same electricity. They did shopping at the similar shops, read the similar newspapers, got the similar services, and having the similar free time activities.

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145
Kuntowijaya

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