



The Role and Social Impact of the Klampok Sugar Factory, Banjarnegara during the Dutch Colonial Period 1889-1933

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Abstract

This study examines the history of Klampok Sugar Factory in Banjarnegara Regency, Central Java. Although the factory has long ceased operations, its historical legacy remains visible in the Purwareja Klampok area. This research aims to investigate the establishment of the Klampok Sugar Factory, analyze its roles and impacts on the local community, and identify the factors that led to its closure. The study employs the historical research method, including topic selection, heuristics, source verification, interpretation, and historiography. Data were collected from colonial archives, historical documents, and relevant scholarly literature. The findings reveal that the Klampok Sugar Factory was established in 1889 as part of the expansion of the colonial sugar industry. The factory played a significant role in local development by creating employment opportunities, supporting the growth of railway transportation for sugar distribution, and contributing to educational development through institutions such as the *Europeesche Lagere School* (ELS). However, the factory ceased operations in 1933 due to the global economic crisis (the Malaise), which severely affected the sugar industry. This study highlights the factory's substantial contribution to the social, economic, and infrastructural development of Banjarnegara during the colonial period.

[Penelitian ini mengkaji sejarah Pabrik Gula Klampok di Kabupaten Banjarnegara. Meskipun telah lama berhenti beroperasi, jejak keberadaannya masih terlihat di kawasan Purwareja Klampok. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menjelaskan sejarah berdirinya Pabrik Gula Klampok, menganalisis peran dan dampaknya terhadap masyarakat, serta mengkaji faktor-faktor yang menyebabkan berakhirnya operasional pabrik tersebut. Metode yang digunakan adalah metode sejarah yang meliputi pemilihan topik, heuristik, verifikasi, interpretasi, dan historiografi. Sumber penelitian diperoleh dari arsip kolonial, dokumen sejarah, dan berbagai literatur yang relevan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Pabrik Gula Klampok didirikan pada tahun 1889 sebagai bagian dari perkembangan industri gula pada masa kolonial. Keberadaan pabrik memberikan dampak penting bagi masyarakat setempat, terutama melalui penyediaan lapangan kerja, pengembangan transportasi kereta api untuk distribusi hasil produksi, serta munculnya fasilitas pendidikan seperti *Europeesche Lagere School* (ELS). Namun, operasional pabrik berakhir pada tahun 1933 akibat krisis ekonomi dunia (Malaise) yang menyebabkan kemerosotan industri gula. Penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa Pabrik Gula Klampok memiliki kontribusi signifikan terhadap perkembangan sosial, ekonomi, dan infrastruktur di Banjarnegara pada masa kolonial.] © The Authors.

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1. Introduction

Banjarnegara is part of Central Java Province. The Banjarnegara region borders Pekalongan and Batang to the north, Wonosobo to the east, Kebumen to the south, and Purbalingga and Banyumas to the west. Banjarnegara Regency has 20 subdistricts consisting of 278 urban and rural villages [1]. One of the subdistricts of Banjarnegara, Purwareja Klampok, was formerly part of Banyumas Regency when it was still under Dutch colonial rule. The Purworejo (Klampok) district was merged with Banjarnegara Regency after the capital of the Banyumas Residency was moved to Purwokerto on January 7, 1937 [2]. The Klampok area, located on the western side of Banjarnegara, has tremendous historical potential in the form of historical sites from the Dutch colonial era. Evidence of this can be seen when passing through Jl. Ajibarang-Secang around the Purwareja-Klampok Subdistrict office, where there are Dutch buildings that are currently being used as post offices and so on.

These Dutch buildings show that during the colonial period, the Purwareja Klampok area was a bustling region. One of the factors that made this area bustling was the Klampok Sugar Factory, which is estimated to have been located around the Purwareja Klampok *Balai Latihan Kerja* (BLK). Currently, there are few references to the existence of this sugar factory. However, if properly explored, the history of the Klampok Sugar Factory is quite interesting because the Klampok area, located on the banks of the Serayu River and on the slopes of hills, is quite difficult to access as a sugar industry area. Interestingly, only a few of the existing references discuss this sugar factory in detail, such as Purnawan Basundoro's work entitled "Transportation Dynamics in Banyumas During the Era of Transportation Modernization in the Early 20th Century" published in 2008 in the *Humaniora Journal*. This article focuses more on the hustle and bustle of transportation in the Banyumas region, including Purwareja Klampok and its railways[3]. The article does not discuss the Klampok Sugar Factory in detail, but it does discuss the influence of sugar factories on the presence of railways. The next study is an article entitled "Efforts to Preserve the Heritage City of Klampok, Purworejo Klampok District, Banjarnegara Regency" by Nugroho Adi Kurniawan and Djoko Suwandono, published in the *Ruang Journal* in 2015. This article discusses Klampok as a Dutch colonial heritage site that needs to be preserved as a heritage city [4]. It discusses spatial planning in the Klampok area and only briefly mentions the sugar factory.

The Klampok Sugar Factory, which was the forerunner of the Dutch building complex, is certainly interesting to be featured as a historical reference in the form of an article published in a journal. So that later, if people want to find out about the history of the Dutch building complex in Klampok, they can look for the article. As done by Himawan Prasetyo, who wrote an article titled "A Historical Review of the Colomadu Sugar Factory" in *Keraton: Journal of History Education and Culture*. Similarly, Albar, Hudiyanto, and Ridhoi wrote an article titled "Development of the Tanggulangin Sugar Factory in Sidoarjo from 1835 to 1933: An Economic History Study", which was published in the *Historiography: Journal of Indonesia History and Education*. Both articles discuss the history of sugar factories. It would be interesting to discuss the history of the Kalibagor Sugar Factory, especially its role and impact on the communities surrounding the sugar factory [5], [6]. Therefore, in this article, the researcher will write an article entitled "The Social Role and Impact of the Klampok Sugar Factory during the Dutch Colonial Period, 1889-1933".

This article discusses the history of the establishment of the Klampok Sugar Factory in the Banyumas region, its environmental and social impacts on the community, and its eventual demise, leaving nothing behind as it stands today. This research does not merely discuss the sugar production of the Klampok Sugar Factory, but rather its role in advancing the Klampok region, making it resemble a small colonial town beside the Serayu River. The purpose of this article is to examine the role and social impact of the Klampok sugar factory after its establishment and its demise. It also aims to expand the limited literature on the history of the Klampok Sugar Factory, providing insight into the Klampok area's former sugar factory presence.

2. Method

The method used in this study is the historical method. The historical method is a stage used to examine past events in order to be more objective and scientific. The historical method is a research method specifically used in historical research through certain stages [7]. The historical method was used because the subject of this study is events that occurred during the Dutch colonial government. The benefits of using the historical method are that there is a process of critical investigation of the circumstances, developments, and experiences of the past, and careful consideration of the validity of historical sources [8]. The historical method is an appropriate method because it involves stages of testing to ensure that information from the past is scientifically reliable. The historical method consists of four stages, namely heuristics, external and internal criticism, interpretation, and historiography [9]. Another opinion is put forward by Kuntowijoyo, who adds that the selection of topics should be done before the four stages of the historical research method are carried out [10]. Thus, the stages of the historical method begin with the selection of topics, followed by the four other stages, namely heuristics, verification, interpretation, and historiography.

The selection of a topic is the initial stage of historical research. This is to determine the subject that will be the object of research. This study chose the topic of the history of the sugar factory in Klampok, Banjarnegara. Kuntowijoyo states that the selection of a topic consists of two choices, namely emotional closeness and intellectual closeness [10]. This research leans more towards intellectual closeness because there is still little written about the history of the Klampok Sugar Factory in the Banjarnegara region. Most of the existing references are about the development of sugar factories in the Banyumas Residency, so writing about the Klampok Sugar Factory in Banjarnegara is an effort to add to the references, especially in the form of scientific journals.

The next stage is heuristic. Heuristics is a stage carried out during historical research by collecting sources related to the material being studied. Heuristics at this level means finding and searching for historical sources to obtain data relevant to the research [11]. Historical sources are collected from various places that are considered to have data relevant to the events being studied. The collection of sources was carried out in several places, such as the History Education Study Program Laboratory at Muhammadiyah Purwokerto University, KITLV, and several colleagues who had conducted research related to sugar factories. Some of the sources obtained were historical photos, journals, and history books discussing sugar and sugar factories. All of these were collected to be processed in the next stage, namely verification.

Verification or source criticism is the stage of sorting the collected sources. Source criticism is the process of testing whether a source is authentic or not and whether it is accountable or not [12]. The collected sources are checked one by one to see whether they are suitable for the required data or not. Researchers check the authenticity of sources through external criticism and the credibility of sources through internal criticism [13]. This checking is carried out on important sources, both primary and secondary. For example, checks were carried out on photos of the Klampok Sugar Factory published by Leiden University Libraries: Digital Collections. This ensured that the sources used were authentic in terms of their year of publication and relevant to the data required for the research. If the data was not relevant, the sources obtained from the heuristic stage were eliminated.

The next stage is interpretation. Prasetyo states that interpretation is a process of analyzing and interpreting data [14]. At this stage, researchers not only collect data but also analyze the relationships between data points to understand the significance of the historical events under study. To do this, researchers use various approaches—such as social, economic, and structural approaches—to compare the findings obtained during the research. In practice, interpretation involves comparing data from written sources, photographs, archives, and field survey results to identify similarities and differences in the information. For example, a photograph obtained from KITLV depicting the Klampok sugar factory is compared with the current conditions observed in the field. Through this

comparison, researchers can interpret the conditions and locations documented in historical texts, thereby presenting them more clearly in historiography. Interpretation is also applied to visual data such as photographs and maps by identifying key elements related to social, cultural, and environmental conditions during the time period defined as the scope of this research. Through this interpretive process, previously disparate historical facts are organized into a logical sequence, thereby elucidating the chronology, development, and historical significance of the research subject. The results of this interpretation then serve as the foundation for the final stage of the research: historiography, or the writing of history.

Historiography is the presentation of the results of the interpretation of research data in the form of writing or research reports [15]. Historiography is an important part of historical research because researchers present their research results for consumption by the wider community. Therefore, it requires carefulness and maturity in presenting historical data that has been processed into a historical story that is easy for the general public to understand. In this study, historiography is written in the form of a research journal in the *Entita : The Journal of Social Sciences Education and Social Sciences* with the title "The Role and Social Impact of the Klampok Sugar Factory during the Dutch Colonial Period 1889-1933".

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 The Beginning of the Sugar Factory

In the 19th century, the sugar industry became an important part of the Dutch East Indies economy. History records that the Dutch East Indies once achieved the distinction of being one of the world's largest sugar suppliers [12]. Sugar became a profitable export commodity for the government to fill the state coffers. In fact, to meet the increase in export production in the Dutch East Indies, the *cultuurstelsel* policy was implemented. The *cultuurstelsel* was a regulation issued by Governor-General Johannes van den Bosch in 1830 that required every village to set aside a portion of its land (20%) for the cultivation of export commodities, particularly coffee, sugar cane, and indigo [16]. During the *cultuurstelsel* policy, sugarcane cultivation reached 32,722 bau, making it the most widely cultivated commodity compared to others such as indigo, tea, cinnamon, and cotton [17]. It should be noted that sugar production at that time only existed in Java because Java had fertile soil that was suitable for sugarcane cultivation [18].

The abundance of sugar cane crops must also be balanced with the development of production facilities, namely sugar factories. Sugar factories grew rapidly in Java, especially after the end of the *cultuurstelsel* and the implementation of the Sugar Law and Agrarian Law. The enactment of these laws in 1870 was the first step towards the modernization of the Dutch East Indies into a country with a liberal economic system [19]. Private companies began to enter to take part in the industrialization process in the Dutch East Indies. One of the areas affected by this development was the Banyumas Residency, as evidenced by the emergence of private sugar factories that also supported the sugar industry in the Dutch East Indies.

Initially, in Banyumas, before the advent of economic liberalism, there was only one sugar factory, namely the Kalibagor Sugar Factory. The Kalibagor Sugar Factory is the oldest factory, established in 1838 [20]. The growth of sugar cane plantations led to an increase in sugar production. This situation led to the emergence of privately-managed sugar factories such as the Klampok Sugar Factory. The Klampok Sugar Factory was established in 1889 under the leadership of Administrator J.T. de Ruijter [21]. Initially, this factory was established by *Soerabaia Bank en Handels Co.*, but due to its poor performance, the company was eventually managed by *NV. Cultuurmaatschappij Klampok* [22].



Figure 1. The Klampok Sugar Factory building seen from the exterior
Source: [23]

The Klampok Sugar Factory managed a large area of land for sugar production. Initially, the factory managed 600 bau of land, which continued to increase until 1920, when it managed 3,425 bau [24]. The Klampok Sugar Factory was an advanced sugar factory in its time. There is a digital document belonging to Leiden University Libraries that reads *Afpakruimte in suikerfabriek Klampok, de eerste elektrische, ten oosten van Banjomas*[25]. This document confirms that the Klampok Sugar Factory, located east of Banyumas, was the first sugar factory to use electricity. The establishment of the Klampok Sugar Factory had an impact on the social life of the surrounding community and influenced the economy of both the community and the government at that time.

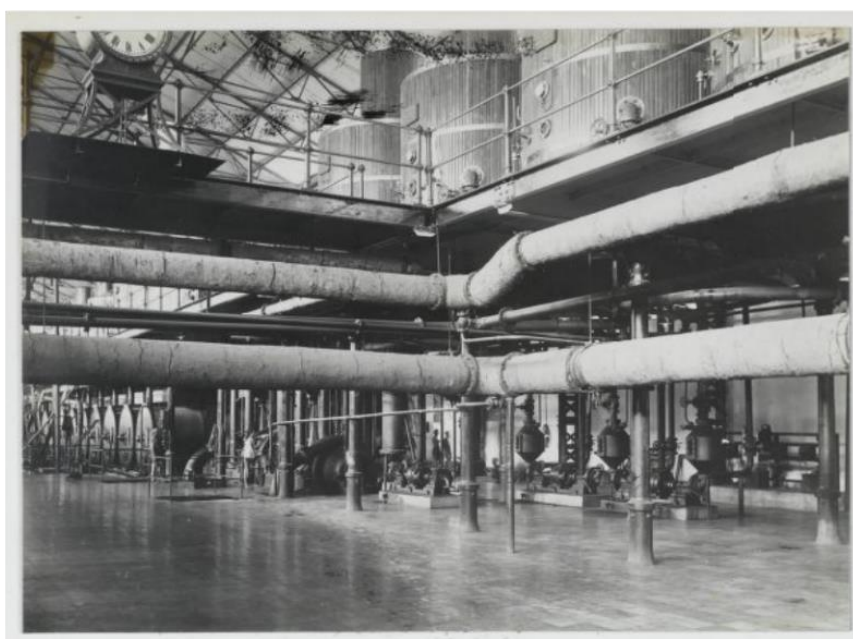


Figure 2. Electric pump at the Klampok Sugar Factory
Source: [25]

3.2 The impact of the Sugar Factory

The Klampok Sugar Factory is not only one of the pillars of the sugar industry in Banyumas, but also has a social impact on the surrounding community. The emergence of the sugar factory has made the Klampok area more crowded, because in addition to the construction of the sugar factory, supporting buildings have also been erected in the surrounding area, such as official residences for factory employees. Another social impact is the creation of job opportunities for the community. For the management of export crops such as sugar, the people's labor was mobilized to plant sugar cane and transport the sugar cane harvest to the factory, while some were also mobilized to work in the factory [26]. At the beginning of the sugar factory's establishment, the transportation of sugar by the company was still carried out using conventional means, namely human and animal labor. The Klampok sugar factory had 98 ox carts and 37 carts pulled by humans [27]. With the operation of commercial transportation, new jobs emerged for the population, namely as drivers or coachmen.

Transportation using conventional means was considered burdensome for sugar factories located in remote areas such as Klampok. Moreover, the sugar produced by the factory had to be sent to the port in Cilacap to be exported by the Dutch East Indies government. The most relevant means of transportation at that time was via the Serayu River. Before the railway network was established in 1890, the Klampok Sugar Factory shipped 1,190 tons of sugar to Maos to be forwarded to the Port of Cilacap via the Serayu River [3]. This situation was certainly dangerous as the Serayu River was not always calm and suitable for use as a transportation route. Sugar factories in Banyumas needed efficient and adequate transportation to transport their products, such as the use of railways. At that time, there were no railway lines to the interior of Banyumas, so the existence of a railway line passing through the Banyumas region was still a matter of debate in the Netherlands. Finally, on August 23, 1891, J.F. de Ruyter de Wildt, manager of the Klampok sugar factory, requested the Dutch government to connect the *Staats Spoorwegen* (SS) railway line to the interior of Banyumas [27].

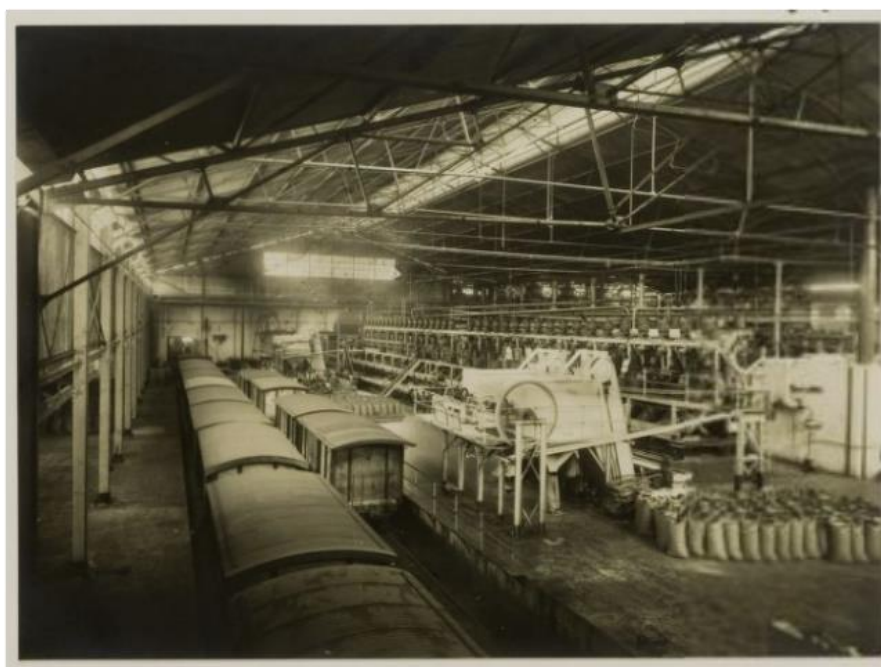


Figure 3. Train carriages in the storage room of the Klampok Sugar Factory.

Source: [25]

The request was taken into consideration in the construction of the railway line in Banyumas. Finally, on April 24, 1894, the Queen of the Netherlands approved the

establishment of *Serajoedal Stoomtram Maatschappij* (SDS), and SDS was officially established on April 30, 1894 [28]. SDS became a private company that managed the railway line in Banyumas. SDS built a relatively short railway line. The area covered by the railway line managed by SDS included the entire Banyumas residency, namely the Maos-Purbalingga and Banjarsari-Wonosobo lines [29]. This railway line was important for the Klampok Sugar Factory because it was used to transport sugar while the factory was still in operation. The line passing through Klampok became the longest line built by SDS, covering a distance of 30 km to Banjarnegara [30].

The Purwareja Klampok to Banjarnegara line was officially opened on May 18, 1898 [3]. At the beginning of the SDS railway's operation, 90.38% of the goods transported by the railway were for the sugar factory [27]. The railway line became the main mode of transportation for transporting sugar production from the Klampok Sugar Factory to the port in Cilacap. In addition, the railway was also used for public transportation and the transportation of other industrial products. SDS also built stops so that people could board trains from the Maos line to Banjarnegara. The SDS railway line was one of the impacts caused by the presence of the sugar factory in Klampok. The factory played a significant role in the development of the Klampok area and its surroundings, leading to the emergence of modern transportation that was faster and more efficient.

Table 1. Train stops and stations on lines managed by SDS

Location	Status	Location	Status
Maos	Train Station	Kemangkon	Train Stops
Pasar Maos	Train Stops	Purwareja	Train Station
Glempang	Train Stops	Gandulekor	Train Stops
Sampang	Train Stops	Bantar	Train Stops
Gambarasari	Train Stops	Mandiraja	Train Stops
Mandirancang	Train Stops	Purwanegara	Train Stops
Patikraja	Train Stops	Gumiwang	Train Stops
Karanggude	Train Stops	Pasar Binorong	Train Stops
Purwokerto	Train Station	Mantrianom	Train Station
Pasar Purwokerto	Train Stops	Pucang	Train Stops
Sokaraja	Train Station	Wangon	Train Stops
Sangkalputung	Train Stops	Banjarnegara	Train Station
Banjarsari	Train Station	Jompo	Train Stops
Muntang	Train Stops	Kalimanah Purbalingga	Train Stops
Karangkemiri	Train Stops		Train Station

Source: [27]

The development of the Klampok sugar factory also had an impact on the community in the field of education. Klampok, located in the interior of Banyumas, had not been touched by school construction before the sugar factory was built. After the sugar factory was established there, the *Europeesche Lagere School* (ELS) was also established. The ELS was intended for children of European descent, East Asians, and children of prominent figures [31]. Therefore, the ELS was established at the Klampok sugar factory for the children of European employees of the sugar factory [21]. However, the ELS in Klampok also accepted students from the indigenous community. In the *Memorie van Overgave Resident Banjoemas* in 1928, as cited in Nurwanti, Harnoko, & Larasati states that indigenous children could attend the school as long as their parents held the position of regent [24]. One of the indigenous people who graduated from ELS was the Regent of Banyumas for the period 1933-1950, S.M. Gandasubrata [21]. The existence of the school made Klampok resemble a small town during the Dutch colonial period. Thus, the sugar factory was not only a means of economic improvement but also had a broad impact on both the indigenous and Dutch communities.

3.3 The End of the Sugar Factory

The romanticism surrounding the Klampok Sugar Factory did not last long. Towards the end of Dutch colonial rule, the economy experienced a severe depression. This was caused by the Great Depression, which affected various economic sectors around the world. The Great Depression was a period of dramatic economic decline worldwide that began in 1929 [32]. The Great Depression was a global economic crisis that was the result of World War I (1914-1918 [33]). This crisis affected all countries in Europe. Its impact also affected the colonies that were the breadbasket for European countries. The collapse of the economies of European countries led to a decline in their interest in colonial plantation products, including those from the Dutch East Indies [34]. This resulted in a decrease in the intensity of plantation product exports. Indonesia (Dutch East Indies) was highly dependent on exports, especially petroleum and agricultural products [35]. When the export sector experienced a deadlock, the economy became sluggish and the wheels of industry slowly began to experience a decline in production and activity.

During The Great Depression in the Dutch East Indies, the sugar industry experienced a decline in production [5]. The inability to maintain economic stability caused sugar factories in the Dutch East Indies to cease operations. Sugar factories in Banyumas also closed in 1933, including Kalibagor, Klampok, Purwokerto, Sumpiuh, and Bojong [36]. These factories bore witness to the severity of the crisis at that time. When the economy improved, only the Kalibagor Sugar Factory resumed operations. In 1936, the Kalibagor Sugar Factory resumed operations, although other sugar factories did not reopen and ceased operations permanently [27]. Based on a proposal from the *Nederlandsche Handel Maatschappij* (NHM) Council, the Klampok Sugar Factory was officially liquidated on September 21, 1936. That day marked the end of the Klampok Sugar Factory's glory days in the sugar industry in Banyumas. This factory, which had a significant impact on the Banyumas Residency, only managed to survive for 47 years.

4. Conclusion

The Klampok Sugar Factory was established during the Dutch colonial period. It was founded following the enactment of the Sugar Act and the Agrarian Act, which allowed private entities to participate in the development of the sugar industry in the Dutch East Indies. The Klampok Sugar Factory was established in 1889 and operated by NV. Cultuurmaatschappij Klampok. This private company managed the factory until it ceased operations.

The presence of the Klampok Sugar Factory also had a social impact on the communities of Klampok and Banyumas. The presence of the Klampok Sugar Factory impacted the income and livelihoods of the communities surrounding the factory. First, the community was involved in the factory's operations, particularly in cultivating sugarcane fields, transporting the sugarcane harvest, and shipping the sugar for export. This created new job opportunities for people who had previously only cultivated land for their own personal needs.

Second, the emergence of the railroad as a means of transportation. Access to the Klampok Sugar Factory was quite difficult because it was located in the interior of Banyumas, so transportation such as the railroad was needed to transport the sugar production to Cilcap for export. On August 23, 1891, J.F. de Ruyter de Wildt, manager of the Klampok Sugar Factory, requested that the Dutch government extend the Staats Spoorwegen (SS) railway line into the interior of Banyumas. The proposal was approved, and SDS was established to manage the railway line from Maos to Banjarnegara. At that time, the railroad was a modern mode of transportation that emerged to serve the sugar industry but also served as a means of public transportation and freight transport in the Banyumas Residency. This facilitated public mobility, replacing transportation that previously relied on animal and human power, which took longer and required higher

maintenance costs. With its faster travel time, the railroad became the preferred choice after it emerged as a means of transportation capable of connecting Banjarnegara to Banyumas.

Third, the presence of the Klampok Sugar Factory also transformed Klampok into a small colonial town inhabited by Europeans who worked as factory employees. These Europeans needed education for their children, leading to the establishment of ELS as a school for the children of sugar factory employees. The emergence of job opportunities, the railway line, and the ELS demonstrate that the sugar factory's presence was not merely about industrial production but also had a significant impact on the social life of the community in Klampok and Banyumas. Nevertheless, this sugar factory which had such a profound influence on the lives of the people of Banyumas did not last long. The second factory established in the Banyumas region lasted only 47 years. The cause was the Great Depression that occurred in 1929. This crisis, which struck Europe, led to a decline in sugar demand. Consequently, sugar production in the Dutch East Indies also decreased. Many sugar factories ceased operations, including the Klampok Sugar Factory. The Klampok Sugar Factory began to cease operations in 1933. In 1936, upon the recommendation of NHM, the Klampok Sugar Factory was officially liquidated on September 21, 1936. From that point on, the Klampok Sugar Factory officially ceased to exist.

Finally, this study still has several shortcomings that must be addressed in future research. Among these are the nature of social interactions and community life during the heyday of the Klampok Sugar Factory. These aspects have not been fully explored in this study due to limitations in time and the data that could be collected. A more detailed examination of these interactions would shed light on the nature of Klampok during the colonial era and provide a clearer historical picture of Klampok as part of the Banyumas Residency.

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