

Kretek Agriculture

Hierarchy and Subjugation

When Indonesia's House of Representatives contemplates adopting new cigarette advertising restrictions or excise tax increases, tobacco and clove farmers routinely appear on Jakarta's streets alongside factory workers and pro-kretek groups to stage raucous, colorful demonstrations. Sporting peasant hats, farmers inhale giant smoldering cigarettes, wave the Indonesian flag, and hoist signs and banners accusing public health-inspired policies of callous disregard for their livelihoods and even homicidal intent. The tobacco industry uses carrot-and-stick methods to ensure farmer turnout, paying them honoraria to demonstrate and threatening to cease purchasing their crops if they do not comply (Chamim et al. 2011, 12, 160). Since Indonesia's post-Suharto transition to democracy, it has become "politically expedient for the tobacco companies to align themselves with popular forces" such as the Indonesian Tobacco Farmers Association (Asosiasi Petani Tembakau Indonesia or APTI, established in 2000) and the Indonesian Clove Farmers Association (Asosiasi Petani Cengkeh Indonesia or APCI, also established in 2000), although such organizations are typically led by wealthier and more powerful farmers (Rosser 2015, 78). The fact that protests are industry funded and elite led, though, does not necessarily delegitimize them in the eyes of Indonesian observers, who regard external funding and ulterior motives as uncontroversial features of demonstrations (Lee 2016).

By sponsoring tobacco farmer demonstrations, Sampoerna exaggerates the degree to which tobacco agriculture is capable of contributing to national prosperity and obfuscates its own multinational character, interests, and global sourcing of cheap tobacco. By appearing to align itself with ordinary Indonesian farmers, Sampoerna aims to generate attachment to kretek capitalism on the national stage and to downplay the subjugation of leaf buyers, farmers, and workers in the fields. The tension between the bold claims about the benefits of kretek

agriculture that industry-sponsored farmers make in public and the hierarchical, exploitative, precarious, and dangerous reality of work at multiple levels of the supply chain is at the heart of this chapter, which provides an account of how PMI and Sampoerna have been able to continue to enroll and control agricultural labor despite the nature of this work. I focus on tobacco as the primary agricultural ingredient in clove cigarettes, while also periodically calling attention to parallel dynamics and industry manipulations in clove cultivation and sourcing. Kretek manufacturers suppress clove prices and import significant quantities, but they also encourage clove farmers to demonstrate against tobacco control and play the part of rural, “little” people whose livelihoods are purportedly attached to the fortunes of single commodities. Clove farmers bear an outsized symbolic significance because, among the numerous ingredients that appear in kretek, cloves (*Syzygium aromaticum*, also *Eugenia caryophyllata*, *Jambosa caryophyllus*) most powerfully represent the nationalist claim that the commodity is indigenous and distinctive (Donkin 2003, 19). In practice, most tobacco and clove farmers derive their livelihoods from a range of economic pursuits beyond the two crops.

The following pages introduce Indonesia’s major tobacco-growing regions and cultivation and curing processes and then move down the supply chain to illuminate the relations of power and subordination that link cigarette manufacturers to leaf buyers, growers, and workers. PMI exercises ever closer control over Indonesian farmers by imposing its global turn toward contract farming (which it claims allows for better social, environmental, and product quality oversight), even while the company has been strategically distancing itself from the crop and rebranding around a “smoke-free future” that assigns an increasingly marginal role to tobacco. Working on behalf of PMI and Sampoerna, large leaf-buying companies that recruit, train, supervise, and grade tobacco farmers are replacing independent traders. Agents at these companies—field technicians, graders, managers—mediate between Sampoerna and the farmers and are evaluated based on their ability to extract large volumes of high-quality leaf from farmers at low prices. Tobacco farmers are precariously positioned as they assume debt to cultivate a capital-intensive and risky non-food crop. Tobacco laborers, finally, often take on this low-pay seasonal work due to a lack of rural employment alternatives, and they face unappealing and sometimes dangerous working conditions. Moving down the supply chain illuminates how maintaining a rigid, separate hierarchy serves as a powerful tool of capitalist exploitation.

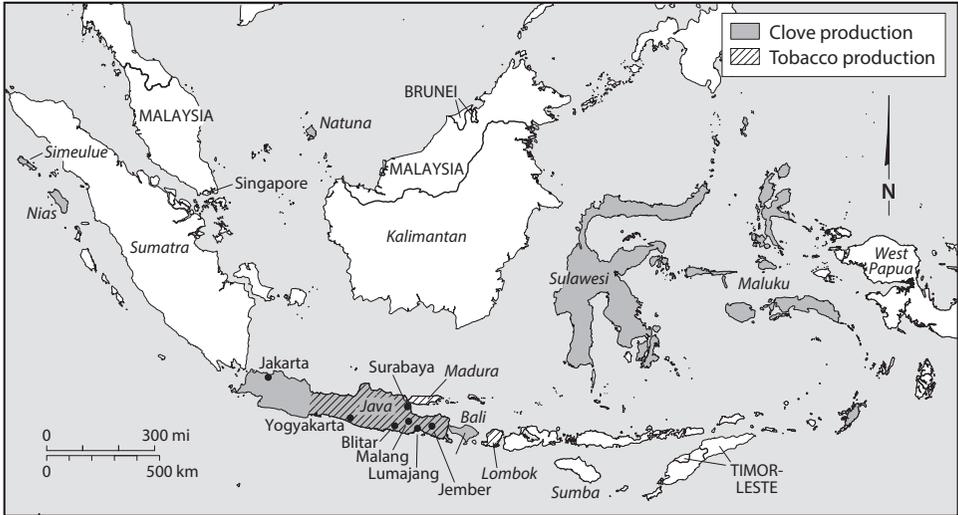
GEOGRAPHY AND PRODUCTION PROCESS

Indonesia is the world’s second largest tobacco consumer but only its sixth largest tobacco producer, netting a lower leaf volume than China, Brazil, India, the United States, and Zimbabwe. In 2017, more than half a million Indonesian farmers produced 198,296 tons of tobacco (World Bank 2017, 18). By comparison, fewer than ten thousand tobacco growers in the United States produced 322,120 tons.¹

The sheer number of Indonesian tobacco growers points to the persistent small-holder—rather than large capitalist—character of tobacco production in the country and the complexity of supply chains linking hundreds of thousands of farmers to warehouses and factories (White 2018).

Indonesia's tobacco varieties are relatively diverse and heterogeneous. Whereas white cigarette blends are made up of Virginia, burley, and oriental tobacco, with leaves graded according to global standards that render them comparable and fungible, kretek blends can contain dozens of local tobacco varieties identified by type, processing methods, and growing conditions. The oriental variety grown on Madura Island, for example, is subdivided into lowland irrigated paddy (*sawah*), dryland (*tegal*), and upland (*gunung*) varieties, with upland varieties commanding a higher price but lower yield per hectare. From a genetic perspective, the distinctions between varieties may be insignificant, but from the perspective of the tobacco blender's connoisseurship or of farmers trying to figure out their crop value at the point of sale, they loom large (Hahn 2011). Comparing a kretek to a meal, a government tobacco librarian explained that Virginia is akin to the plain white rice (*nasi*) that makes up the starch base, while other tobacco varieties serve as the meat and vegetables (*lauk*).² The cloves and sauce (*saus*), in this analogy, contribute the spices (*bumbu*). Didit, one of Sampoerna's lead blenders, clarified that high-nicotine kasturi leaves contributed a chocolate, fermented taste; Madura leaves created a delicious (*gurih*, akin to umami) aroma and nutty flavor (*rasa kacang*); and Virginia from Lombok, China, or the United States sweetened the taste. He estimated that 15–20 percent of kretek tobacco is kasturi and 15–25 percent Madura.³ Because these varieties were so critical, Sampoerna maintained stocks in East and West Java in case disaster threatened either locale.

My research could only sample the diversity, complexity, and heterogeneity of Indonesia's tobacco cultivation practices. I spent time in six different tobacco-growing regions where farmers produced eight different types of tobacco. The crop is grown in fifteen of Indonesia's thirty-four provinces, but roughly 85 percent of production is concentrated in Central and East Java and 6–8 percent in West Nusa Tenggara, mainly on Lombok Island (Human Rights Watch 2016, 26; World Bank 2017, 18). In East Java, south of the city of Malang, I observed and took part in the major cultivation phases—from seedbed germination to curing—among first-generation contract farmers who produced cut and sun-cured Virginia tobacco for Sadhana, Sampoerna's leaf buyer. We met with contract and independent farmers in the Blitar area and Sadhana field technicians and managers at the buying station there and in Lumajang, where farmers grow burley tobacco. We also met with tobacco farmers and buyers in the East Javanese district of Jember and the island of Madura, which are both established tobacco growing regions.⁴ Madura's oriental tobacco occupies a special place in kretek, enshrined in the long-standing product claim on the back of Sampoerna's *Dji Sam Soe* packs: "These cigarettes contain high quality tobacco, with sweet-smelling Madurese tobacco and fragrant American tobacco mixed with select, finely cut cloves and a special



MAP 1. Tobacco and clove producing regions. Map by Bill Nelson.

sauce.⁷ Madurese government officials told us they safeguarded local tobacco with police operations to prevent outside tobacco from being imported and passed off as local. Finally, we visited tobacco farmers and buyers on Lombok, which has gained renown for its tobacco-friendly soil, humidity, and mild night temperatures, leading to a concentration of leaf buyers and a crop boom since the 1990s.⁵

Tobacco is primarily a lowland crop, whereas cloves are grown in the uplands. As the clove tree spread far beyond its Maluku origins, it has become embedded in diverse labor, landownership, and trading arrangements. Over 70 percent of Indonesian clove production is now concentrated in the provinces of North Sulawesi and Central Java (World Bank 2017, 15). Cloves are grown on roughly five hundred thousand hectares, and over a million people engage in clove labor, but cloves constitute only a small proportion of total household economic activity and are rarely a source of fulltime employment (World Bank 2017). We met with clove farmers, pickers, traders, agronomists, and industry advocates in Java and Bali. Sampoerna sources large quantities of cloves from Sumatra, Java, Bali, and Sulawesi and has been quietly experimenting with cultivating the tree at low altitudes on the island of Sumba.

Farmers can sell clove to traders while it is still on the tree, just after it has been picked (*basah, mentah*), or after it has been dried. Under ideal sunny conditions, clove buds can dry in three days but often require five days or longer. In yards and alongside roads, farmers and traders spread cloves on bare concrete or plastic tarps, using wooden rakes to turn them every few hours so they dry evenly. Newly dried cloves lack the characteristic potent scent, which takes a year to emerge. Farmers can store cloves in hopes of better prices, but there is only a small price

advantage in selling more mature and pungent cloves (e.g., prices are 3 percent higher in Malang).

The more complex practices tobacco farmers and workers employ to wrest the commodity from the tobacco plant are a historically contingent outcome of changing legal and labor regimes, technologies, and cultural preferences that valorize and foster certain plant parts and qualities (e.g., light color, first-growth leaves, large leaf size) and suppress others (e.g., flowers, second leaf growth; see Hahn 2011).

The first stage in tobacco cultivation is preparing, planting, and maintaining the seedbeds. A week or so after paddy harvest, farmers and/or laborers create seedbed ridges using hoes or tractors, disperse and water seeds, and construct shelters with plastic sheeting and bamboo frames. Forty to fifty days after sowing, if all goes well, the farmer will have a crop of healthy seedlings, each ten to twenty centimeters in length, ready for transplanting. With tractors or hoes, farmers then prepare new fields by building ridges. One worker punches holes in the soil with a large stick and is followed by another who tucks seedlings into holes and pats the soil into place.

Workers water seedlings after transplanting; then, for the next two to three weeks, seedlings ideally enter a “stress period” during which they are denied water, which causes their roots to extend outward in search of moisture. Nicotine is manufactured in the roots, and the plants dislike “wet feet” (i.e., soggy roots). Workers water plants twice thereafter, fertilize them with nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium, and apply pesticides from plastic spray cannisters that workers wear on their backs.

The dominant ideal for commercial tobacco is a round and squat profile, with thick and bubbled leaves growing broad and horizontal rather than slender and pointing skyward. To achieve these attributes, workers “top” plants when they reach the desired number of leaves for harvest by removing flowering blooms and/or part of the stalk and topmost leaves. They generally top plants at eighteen leaves, but they may allow twenty-one leaves for a robust crop or sixteen for a weaker crop. Farmers in Madura top plants at only twelve leaves, meaning that each plant produces a lower leaf volume. Topping breaks apical dominance—the plant’s tendency to grow vertically along the main stem—and concentrates growth instead into large, heavy leaves. Topping also encourages the proliferation of unwanted side shoots or axial buds called suckers (*wiwilan* Jv, *suli* Sasak), which workers break off and prevent by applying chemical suckercides.

Roughly three months after transplanting, when the leaves begin to yellow, they are ready for harvest or priming, which is done in stages. Workers first pick bottom leaves, which have seen less sun and more humidity, are dirtier and thinner, and contain less nicotine and sugar than upper leaves. Workers pick three to four leaves from each plant, necessarily squatting or stooping as they pick the lowest leaves (Jain 2006, 60–85). In the event that leaves yellow swiftly or farmers fear that swelling supply will drive down prices, workers may pick more (e.g., six top leaves, or “from the neck up”). They may also leave the lowest leaves on the stalk if warehouses



FIGURE 4. Workers wearing masks to protect against dust sort tobacco leaves in a Jember warehouse. Photo by author.

are refusing lower-quality leaves. As they work their way down the rows, workers make bundles for transport to the farmer's home by foot, car, or motorbike.

Tobacco is cured in several distinctive ways, each of which entails different capital outlays, labor requirements, and risks. In Lombok, growers mostly flue-cure tobacco in thirty- to forty-foot-tall brick ovens that are expensive to construct and fuel and require workers to tie and hang leaves and monitor flues.⁶ Leaves must be correctly positioned and the oven appropriately ventilated, maintained, and stoked to hold optimal temperatures over five to nine days for each batch, with thicker upper leaves requiring more time (Amigó 2010, 140). Lombok farmers must grow at least one hectare to fill a barn, and they flue-cure tobacco themselves because green leaf cannot be profitably sold. Implicated in deforestation and carbon emissions, flue-curing adds to tobacco's panoply of negative environmental impacts (Proctor 2011, 513–18).⁷

Farmers in the Malang and Blitar regions shred and sun-cure their tobacco. First, they ripen and ferment the tobacco indoors for three to five days until it yellows. Workers sort leaves for quality and ripeness before cutting. Sadhana required that farmers buy expensive cutting machines and set them at 2 mm, whereas independent farmers typically employ manual cutters who use hand-operated guillotines to slice tobacco more finely, to 0.5–1.5 mm.⁸ Chasing the sun, workers cut from around 6:00 to 9:00 a.m. and spread shredded tobacco by hand on bamboo trays that they place in the sun to dry in front of their houses, on the side of the

road, and sometimes in fields. Workers rotate the tobacco at midday, a two-person job that involves laying an empty tray onto the drying tobacco and flipping it over. It takes several sunny days to dry cut leaf.

In Jember, kasturi tobacco is hung whole, air-cured, and then ripened in warehouses filled with choking airborne tobacco dust. Sadhana's sister company, Adi Sampoerna, employs six to seven hundred low-wage workers—mostly young and unmarried, and 80 percent female—for two to three months to sort the leaf and pile it in enormous cubes. Workers monitor the tobacco temperature, aiming for 40–42°C, and periodically exchange interior leaves with cooler exterior ones to prevent them from overheating and blackening. PMI exercises agency over how the entire tobacco cultivation process unfolds from a strategic distance.

PHILIP MORRIS INTERNATIONAL

Large cigarette manufacturers have increased their power and control over tobacco farmers by using each ounce of tobacco more efficiently and orchestrating a shift to contract farming. The contract farming transition represents another global tobacco technology that has gained ground alongside increasing foreign control over kretek capitalism. In the United States, the contract farming shift unfolded after 2004 legislation allowed the government to dismantle New Deal-era tobacco support programs by paying off active landowners with quotas (“the buyout”) and eliminating leaf production restrictions, price supports, and subsidies (Benson 2012; Griffith 2009; Kingsolver 2011). Contract farming was introduced in tobacco-dependent Malawi in 2012, where it replaced a noncompetitive and monopolistic auction system through which leaf-buying companies colluded to suppress prices and paid substantial bribes for tobacco contracts and legislative influence (Otañez and Graen 2014). Under PMI, Sampoerna has been converting its Indonesian tobacco leaf buying from a multilayered open market system to contract farming through its main leaf supplier, PT Sadhana Arifnusa. Sadhana is a ramified family business owned by the descendants of Liem Swie Hwa, the firstborn son of Sampoerna founder Liem Seeng Tee. In 2011, Sampoerna sourced 12 percent of its leaf from contract farmers, but by 2015, this figure reached 70 percent, and Sadhana had contracts with over twenty-seven thousand farmers. As competition to recruit and retain contract tobacco farmers increased, leaf buyers and cigarette manufacturers expanded to new areas.⁹

Sampoerna and Sadhana representatives publicly frame the contract farming shift as a win-win situation benefiting all parties. From this upbeat perspective, farmers enjoy a more secure market and produce neither too much nor too little tobacco; leaf suppliers and cigarette manufacturers ensure the “sustainability” of tobacco, which must compete with food crops that the government favors and subsidizes; more stringent “product integrity” oversight mechanisms better shield consumers from the worst pesticide residues and non-tobacco related material

(NTRM) like plastics; and agricultural laborers are better protected by safety equipment and training, labor monitoring, and the introduction of labor-saving techniques to mitigate child labor risks. Under its Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) program, introduced in 2002, and in response to rising NGO critique, PMI developed the Agricultural Labor Practices (ALP) Code in 2011 based on the International Labor Organization's (ILO) Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and related ILO conventions. The code covers child labor, income and work hours, fair treatment, forced labor and human trafficking, work environment safety, freedom of association, and terms of employment.¹⁰ Contracts are supposed to facilitate PMI's third-party monitoring of suppliers and farmers, but critics question how well the code is upheld and enforced. Although PMI (2020, 66) claims "the right to terminate contracts immediately in cases of severe violations impacting people, the crop, or the environment," its softer expectation that suppliers "continuously improve the implementation of GAP principles and standards" suggests a more tolerant approach, while the downward pressure the company exerts on tobacco prices discourages adherence to minimum wage regulations.

These specific shortcomings in PMI's labor practices come in the context of a broader set of concerns regarding the political economy of contract farming. Contract farming often exacerbates unequal relations by reducing competition among buyers, weakening farmers' bargaining position, and rendering farmers vulnerable to termination by buyers who can always claim that they have fallen short of contractual obligations (Little and Watts 1994). Contracts tend to promote land concentration and to push out small producers by favoring those who scale up and mechanize. Further, contracts deskill farmers, who relinquish substantial control over what seeds they plant, when they plant, and how they tend and process their crops.

Even as PMI sponsors tobacco farmers' protests over Indonesian government measures to increase cigarette taxes and protect public health, the company has been reducing the amount of tobacco in an average cigarette and strategically distancing itself from the tobacco plant. Innovations like "puffed" and "reconstituted" tobacco manipulate and make ever more efficient use of the plant. As noted in the introduction, Indonesia's cigarette market has seen growing sales of machine-rolled filtered cigarettes that weigh one gram or less, while the market for heavier hand-rolled kretek that contain more tobacco has declined. PMI has been publicly positioning itself as the frontrunner in an industry race to corner the market in novel nicotine technologies, in the process marginalizing the tobacco plant. PMI claims to be building a future "on smoke-free products that are a much better choice than cigarette smoking" with the vision "that these products will one day replace cigarettes."¹¹ In this future, tobacco leaves, along with conventional cigarettes, are stigmatized and marked for obsolescence. PMI markets some of its next-generation products as "tobacco-free," despite the fact that they contain nicotine

“extracted from tobacco leaves.”¹² PMI is thus growing less dependent on tobacco and stretching it further, even as it exercises tighter control over leaf suppliers and tobacco farmers through contracts. PMI’s decreased dependence and increased control both work to reduce the power and influence of leaf buyers and especially farmers, making them more precarious and more exploited.

LEAF BUYERS AND TRADERS

Sadhana is heavily dependent on Sampoerna, which has its pick of alternative domestic and international leaf suppliers. Aidan, a white Sadhana manager from South Africa, told me that the company sold 97 percent of its product to Sampoerna, understatedly adding, “Honestly, it’s not good to have Sampoerna as our almost exclusive client.” Robert, a white Sadhana agricultural operations manager from Zimbabwe, tied his more blunt and dour assessment of the relation between the companies to the global asymmetry between leaf buyers and cigarette manufacturers. Claiming that the world’s largest leaf buyers earn a small fraction in annual profits compared to the billions enjoyed by BAT and PMI, he vehemently declared, “It’s not a balanced industry. I don’t have much love for Big Tobacco, even though that sounds hypocritical. You can’t see the chain around my neck, but I can assure you it’s there. Philip Morris is a large shareholder- and profit-driven company with no feel for the farmers.” The result, he explained, was a cascade of exploitation: “Philip Morris squeezes the merchants, like Sadhana, and they squeeze farmers, and they have no choice.” PMI squeezes Sadhana not only on price but also on quality and environmental and social responsibilities, which Robert grumbled are “yet another cost of business that gets pushed onto leaf buyers.”¹³

Despite their own misgivings, leaf-buying managers nevertheless dismissed as misguided farmers’ frequent complaints about low prices. They attributed the unprofitable nature of tobacco farming to various technical deficiencies that could be corrected by closely adhering to their requirements and counsel rather than an effect of structural inequalities (Kurian 2020). Imron, a manager in Madura for leaf buyer Alliance One, claimed that farmers ought to focus on expenditures and profits rather than obsess over price. “I say profit, not price!” he drilled, explaining that he urges farmers to consider their COP (cost of production), reduce water usage, minimize tillage, rent trucks collectively, and avoid agents. “But frankly,” he admitted, “we don’t pay them a high price.” Echoing this rhetoric, financial management was the central theme of a Sadhana manager’s PowerPoint presentation to contract farmers in Malang. Fuad urged them to invest their 2015 profits as capital for 2016 and to control their labor costs by mechanizing, among other practices. Mocking their “obsession” with “price, price, price,” he counseled, “Think instead about increasing your productivity and controlling your expenditures.” Sadhana’s Lumajang regional manager instructed technicians to encourage farmers to use family labor and to be present in their fields with workers so they would not stop

to smoke and chat. He gathered farmers to agree on a worker pay ceiling, exclaiming, “You can’t pay workers 50,000 rupiah a day because you’re afraid about not getting enough workers.”¹⁴ Managers thus equivocate, sometimes blaming farmers for being insufficiently savvy in handling their capital, inputs, and labor and at other times admitting that prices are simply too low to justify tobacco production—not only for farmers but for leaf suppliers, too.

At every stage of cultivation and curing, contract farming imposes precisely specified and rigidly enforced requirements on farmers for an already demanding crop. To be contract eligible, farmers must own or rent sufficient land to meet Sadhana’s regional minimum acreage. Sadhana tells farmers which variety they must plant and when. Fuad made an example of one farmer at the Malang meeting by loudly admonishing him for planting after the cutoff date, warning that Sadhana wouldn’t buy from him next year if he didn’t adhere to the schedule. He also rebuffed farmers’ requests to use their preferred seed variety the following year, insisting that such decisions rested with company leadership. Since Indonesia placed a moratorium on seed imports, Sadhana contracted US-based Gold Leaf Seeds to carry out the labor-intensive work of developing hybrid Virginia seed with sterile males to prevent farmers from producing their own seeds, which Robert cast as “a quality control and assurance mechanism.” Imron asserted that Alliance One’s efforts to get farmers to shift from “traditional” to “standard” practices started with seedbeds. The company tried to rectify farmers’ purported deficiencies by creating demonstration seedbeds and instructing farmers to prepare similar flat, one-by-ten-meter seedbeds rather than using irregular-shaped, sloping (*miring*) plots of land.

Serving as the primary intermediaries between leaf buyer and tobacco farmers, Sadhana’s field technicians bear responsibility for imparting PMI’s requirements and ensuring that they are met. Sampoerna claimed 177 field technicians working with 27,439 contract tobacco farmers in 2019. After the COVID-19 pandemic shrank the cigarette market and Sampoerna lost market share to budget brands, these numbers fell to 112 field technicians and 21,356 contract farmers in 2021 (Sampoerna 2022, 109). Farmers identified technicians as *petugas lapangan* or PL, the same term used for government agricultural extension agents such as those who had promoted the Green Revolution several decades earlier during the Suharto administration. Technicians may present as “listeners, friends and educators” and deploy the idioms and practices of public extension, but they work to promote private industry interests rather than being “invested in the broader mission of rural transformation, community development, poverty alleviation and social justice” that ostensibly motivates state PL (Aga 2019, 10). Technicians are all men and typically get around by motorbike, making them more approachable to farmers of modest means and allowing them to drive rather than walk to fields along narrow, muddy, and slippery dike paths. Technicians recruit farmers to tobacco, visit their fields and homes, demonstrate approved techniques, troubleshoot problems, and

sometimes pitch in and help them with various stages of cultivation. One technician recounted how farmers' insistent hospitality forced him to drink as many as seven cups of coffee in a day, leaving his hands shaking. Relations between farmers and technicians may be warm and friendly, but they are rooted in a hierarchy in which technicians, along with regional managers, assert and enforce PMI and Sadhana's requirements.

Field technicians often have agricultural degrees and are positioned as more knowledgeable than farmers whom they coach and lecture. This guidance begins with the work of planting and growing tobacco. Technicians encourage farmers to make large ridges with soft, well-aerated topsoil to promote drainage and root development before transplanting. They also instruct farmers to plant seedlings of similar size together so they will be ready to harvest around the same time and to uniformly space seedlings by tying knots in a rope tethered to stakes that can be inserted at each end of a row. Technicians tell farmers which inputs they should use and which are forbidden and instruct them to use spoons rather than hands to achieve a uniform fertilizer dose and to apply fertilizer close to roots. Robert insisted that Sadhana strictly controls chemicals including pesticides, using lower quantities and safer chemicals than in the past. He professed his love for the "natural" option of neem but noted its drawbacks; neem must be applied early and often, especially if it rains, demanding more labor than durable synthetic pesticides. Because neem does not instantly kill pests, farmers often question its efficacy. One speculated that neem's vile smell drives off insects. If technicians see buds sprouting on farmers' tobacco plants, they warn them that suckers curb their potential yield by fifteen kilograms per hectare per day.

Technicians' supervision extends into curing, with Sadhana telling farmers which curing methods to use and which fuels are acceptable for flue-curing. Sadhana's contract farmers near Malang initially built expensive flue-curing barns, only to be told a few years later to switch to sun-curing, which made them more weather dependent and, some found, yielded lower quality tobacco. When a technician saw tobacco falling through one farmer's bamboo trays, which had clearly seen better days, he clucked over the "lost production." Sadhana's specifications also encompass proper baling methods and materials. In Malang, growers had to stuff tobacco into collapsible wooden boxes (*pressbal*), then sew it with cotton thread into jute burlap rather than using plastic sacks. The natural materials were meant to reduce NTRM, moisture retention, mold, and chemical contamination. Sadhana issued farmers bar-coded tags to affix to each bale so they could be traced back to farmers. This, too, increases Sadhana's ability to control farmers; when, for example, the central warehouse finds NTRM contamination—including the grisly find of a human finger that Aidan dryly remarked was "rather special"—they return the offending material to technicians so they can show it to farmers. The company schedules when farmers are allowed to deliver harvests to buying stations.

Hierarchical relations are underscored by the grading system technicians use to rate farmers by loyalty and skill. Robert explained Sadhana's detailed metrics for quantifying farmers' worth:

An A farmer is very loyal, a D farmer is seen as not so loyal. They get different packets, as determined by the PL's assessment. Some just get a seedbed packet, others are eligible for much more, including loans. Each also has a skill rating: 1, 2, 3, 4. 1 is a very skillful farmer and an early technology adopter.¹⁵ The farmers build a history with the company. We also maintain records and scores for the tobacco on each visit. A score of 9 means we anticipate 2,500 kg of tobacco for fourteen thousand plants. Farmers should plant about fourteen thousand plants per hectare. . . . These estimates are important because they determine how much the farmer is expected to sell to Sadhana. Farmers are expected to sell their entire crops. We don't want a farmer coming up with more, passing off his brother's tobacco as his own. We need to ensure the integrity of the product.

To discourage "illicit side-selling" and to reward display of skills, farmers' prior performance and grade influence their quotas and the level of inputs extended to them on credit (Cockburn and Eaton 2013, 173). In Lombok, naughty farmers who "cheated" on their PL and sold to traders for a higher price were struck from the company's list.

Field technicians and their managers are in turn evaluated and compensated based on the performance of their contract growers. Technicians produce a constant stream of data documenting their activities, mentoring, troubleshooting, and yield projections, and they enjoy bonuses when the final quality and quantity of their assigned farmers' harvests is high. There is always room for improvement. "We will never achieve our targets," one regional manager noted, "and they will always be set higher."

Even more so than technicians, tobacco graders loom large for farmers as figures of extraordinary power mediating between them and the leaf-buying company. Graders judge the quality of tobacco and sometimes reject entire bales or truckloads, but they are constrained by the need to justify their decisions in relation to criteria set by the company and have no say over prices. Interactions between farmers and graders at Adi Sampoerna's imposing warehouse complex in Jember in 2015 were tense and somber after crops were compromised by months of ashfall from Gunung Raung, a nearby volcano.¹⁶ Agus, an Adi Sampoerna grader who preferred visiting farmers in their fields outside of harvest time, likened the walled warehouse environment to a prison. Once their turn arrived to back up their trucks to the unloading entrance, farmers palmed cash or cigarettes to men who unloaded their bales onto the conveyor belt to ensure they were handled with care. Workers opened bales and pulled bundles of leaves from the bales' midsection or other random spots for the grader to inspect. The grader eyed the tobacco, ran his hands over it, and inhaled its scent. Agus claimed he could smell forbidden pesticides and non-kasturi leaf varieties. Sadhana schools farmers on the range of

reasons why their tobacco might be rejected as “off-grade”: NTRM, mold, color (e.g., green or blackish-brown as opposed to the desired yellow-brown). If the appropriate grade was unclear, the grader halted the conveyor belt, rolled a cigarette from the leaf, and smoked it by a window (workers are otherwise forbidden from smoking in the dusty, dry, tinderbox-like warehouse atmosphere). To sustain their concentration, graders evaluate tobacco in two-hour shifts. The farmer’s technician would often stand beside the grader, knowing that the farmer’s harvest volume and quality would be incorporated into his own performance evaluation. A worker thrust black flags into rejected bales and green flags into those deemed “dirty” due to volcanic ash, which suffered a 10 percent price cut. In some cases, farmers could take rejected tobacco home and clean it for reevaluation. The grader rejected an entire lot belonging to one distraught farmer who had his young bare-foot son in tow, perhaps to display poverty and elicit sympathy.¹⁷ Agus said farmers rarely disputed his grading evaluations in 2015 “because they feel they have no other choice. They are happy simply to have a buyer.” Even under ordinary circumstances, sellers might be reluctant to question graders’ judgements, fearing they might be struck from future rosters, although some had been known to threaten graders with violence.¹⁸

Leaf buyers emphasized the transparency of their grading process as an advantage of working with large contract suppliers rather than independent traders. Managers pointed to their use of digital scales with visible numbers, paper receipts, and instant cash or bank transfer payments. Imron said that farmers who sold outside their contracts for a seemingly higher price risked losing 5,000 rupiah here and there due to faulty weight measures, rounding, and estimation errors that were unlikely to favor them. Various transparency measures notwithstanding, there is a great deal of corruption talk and suspicion around the grading and buying process. Farmers complained that they had to pay to facilitate their transactions (*biar licin*). One Lombok farmer accused Alliance One graders of “treating contract farmers like stepchildren” and forcing them to “pay to get their bales in.” He cited one grader’s expanding irrigated land holdings as evidence of his ill-gotten gains. A Sadhana warehouse manager acknowledged that they had had to fire a security guard who was shaking down farmers the previous season. Various buyers’ tricks have their corollary in sellers’ tricks. Buyers complained that some farmers and traders added sugar, sand, soil, pebbles, and rocks to increase the weight of their tobacco.¹⁹

Similar tricks and dynamics obtain between clove farmers and traders, but the industry has sought to convert independent traders into company agents rather than contracting directly with farmers. Before they reach cigarette manufacturers’ warehouses, cloves are often transacted through a range of traders, beginning with upland traders who buy various forest commodities (e.g., coffee, cacao) and often run small retail shops and stalls out of their homes. Wayan, a shop owner in Bali who was also a member of the Sampoerna Retail Community program

that I analyze in greater detail in chapter 5, served as a Sampoerna clove buyer. He enjoyed a two-million-rupiah bonus if he met his monthly target of twenty-five tons and achieved Sampoerna's standards limiting rubbish and ensuring moisture content did not exceed 2 percent. Kadir (2017, 90–128) describes how traders in clove-harvesting regions of Maluku, who are often identified as ethnically and religiously distinct “outsiders” (for example, Chinese Indonesians), supply credit and goods to smallholders, entrapping them in debt bondage relations and coercing them to sell at below-market prices to their trading patrons to pay down outstanding debts. Large firms like Gudang Garam extend credit to successful traders, turning them into company agents. Smallholders believe they are routinely swindled by traders who collude to keep prices low and use doctored weights and deceitful weighing practices. Smallholders counter with their own tricks (e.g., adulterating the clove crop by inserting nails into clove buds before they dry to increase the weight) and by closely monitoring commodity prices and weighing practices (Kadir 2017, 169–214).

To the extent that tobacco and clove farmers perceive large tobacco buyers and traders as manipulating them and paying low prices, they blame those who are visible and in moral reach rather than the cigarette manufacturers, which source domestic and foreign tobacco and cloves as cheaply as possible (Scott 1985). In an attempt to reduce the company's tobacco dependency and the vulnerability it shares with farmers, Sadhana, like PMI, has therefore begun branching out beyond tobacco. Since 2009 in Lombok, Sadhana's “corporate policy has been to evolve into a mixed farming model entity, with tobacco comprising only part of an integrated farmer base” (Cockburn and Eaton 2013, 174). The role of the field technician has correspondingly changed. Whereas they used to discourage farmers from planting paddy (rice), some were now encouraging two crops of paddy followed by tobacco. And whereas technicians had previously served exclusively as agents for tobacco, now they promoted other commodities (paddy, soy, goats) that farmers could fall back on if they faced financial losses with tobacco. Sadhana is trying to diversify farmers and its own holdings to look beyond tobacco and safeguard the business for Sunarjo Sampoerna's sons, Edward and Andrew Sampoerna. Andrew Sampoerna pursued a master's degree in nutritional sciences at Cornell, writing a thesis on contract poultry farming. Sadhana's new approach, Robert explained, was “to manage smallholders for agriculture and not just for tobacco.” Sadhana could help farmers “grow seven tons of rice where they were only getting four tons . . . or they could grow maize or soy, which Sadhana could buy. Give them goats! A billy goat and four nanny goats, which could reproduce every eight months.” Sadhana rented fifteen hectares of land from the government for a training center where the company conducted agricultural trials with government and university partners. They had set up trial tobacco fields and curing barns producing cured leaf for smoking panels, but the company was also experimenting with goat breeding, vermiculture, and vermicomposting to improve the microbic status of soil,

breeding deer for forest release, growing elephant grass for goat feed and turi trees for tobacco curing, and establishing rice fields where Sadhana runs experiments on different varieties and growing techniques (e.g., direct sowing rather than bedding and transplanting). Sadhana also purchased a combine harvester and tractor that it rented out to tobacco farmers during paddy season. In its mechanization and diversification efforts, Sadhana sent consultants far afield, for example to West Papua to explore whether the region could be “the next rice bowl.” By pushing into new regions, they sought pliant farmers and geographical diversification that would secure the company’s supply chain against the threat of calamities such as Raung’s volcanic eruption.

FARMERS

Beyond the structural hierarchy in which tobacco farmers are subordinate to leaf buyers, who in turn are subordinate to cigarette manufacturers, farmers also describe a sense of subjugation to tobacco itself. They characterize the crop as fussy and demanding (*repot*), difficult (*susah*), and complex (*ribet*) due to its extravagant and burdensome claims on their time, space, labor, and capital. During tobacco harvesting and curing, the modest homes of farmers often overflow with tobacco in various stages of processing and packing, displacing furniture and people from porches and interior rooms. This spatial overflow echoes the crop’s temporal overflow; tobacco colonizes and consumes farmers’ time and thoughts as well as their domestic spaces. Farmers in Madura told us that they organize their lives around the season; if someone wants to build a house, hold some life-event celebration (*hajatan*), or even get sick, they must wait until after the tobacco harvest. Robert described it as a “touchy-feely crop,” demanding “drudgery, slavery almost,” with labor “performed precisely on time. You can’t go away for four days because a relative has died. In the meantime, your four-dollar tobacco becomes fifty-cent tobacco.”²⁰

Under the kretek nationalist narrative that shapes their participation in national protests, kretek farmers are proud producers of a national heritage commodity and vital participants in a prosperous industry whose benefits accrue to the whole nation. Yet many of the farmers I spoke to—the following pages focus in particular on Syamsul, a former tobacco farmer in Lombok—provided a dissenting account of the rural subjects produced by kretek capitalism, one that emphasized the reality of subjugation, risk, and demanding labor.

Because of tobacco, lots of farmers have gone to Saudi Arabia or Malaysia as migrant laborers or sold their paddy land. Lots of farmers have hung themselves, killed themselves, drunk poison. Some suffered strokes. They looked around and saw everyone planting tobacco and thought, “I need to plant tobacco too!” They weren’t prepared. They calculated how much they would make, but they only calculated the profits. They went straight to planting five hectares. Then it rained. They started



FIGURE 5. A farmer feeds tobacco into a cutting machine while workers prepare it for sun-curing. Photo by author.

taking flashlights with them to fish in the middle of the day, pretending they had gone crazy so their creditors wouldn't try to collect. They didn't dare go home at night because they were sixty million rupiah in debt. If you always did well with tobacco, then houses around here would be three stories high. There are cases, though, of four or five family members in one house going on the hajj.

The allure of wealth and even a pilgrimage to Mecca attracted farmers to the crop even as the debt-ridden removed themselves from their homes and communities by pretending to be mentally ill, migrating, or committing suicide. The irrational tobacco farmer has emerged as a figure of both official tobacco control discourse and popular concern and serves as a foil for former tobacco farmers like Syamsul who claim it is rational to quit growing tobacco.

The World Bank uses statistics to paint an abject portrait of the average Indonesian tobacco farmer: a poor, middle-aged male with no more than five years of schooling.²¹ Seventy percent of Indonesian tobacco farming households live in poverty. Clove farmer demographics are similar.²² Tobacco farmers like Ibrahim in Malang, who owned 7.5 hectares (large by Indonesian standards though small in comparison to US norms), were outliers. Many tobacco farmers we encountered rented land or owned very small tracts. In Madura, the so-called zero point (*noll komma*) farmer with less than a hectare to his name was so common that Sadhana contracted with groups rather than with individual farmers, since most produced insufficient tobacco alone to warrant a cutting machine. The World Bank

found that compared to former tobacco farmers, current tobacco farmers generally had lower income, worse housing conditions, higher levels of food insecurity, and higher reliance on government benefits and social assistance such as rice-for-the-poor programs (Markus 2015; World Bank 2017, 29–33). Cigarette companies appear to concur with this assessment; they promote budget brands in tobacco-growing regions except during harvest when they briefly hawk expensive (“premium”) brands to rapidly relieve farmers of their cash influx. The World Bank (2017, 17) attributes Indonesia’s import of 30 to 40 percent of the tobacco it consumes to the “fact that tobacco farming may not be a lucrative endeavor for many farmers and does not attract enough farmers willing to undertake this agro-economic endeavor to satisfy domestic demand.”

Against this backdrop of diminishing economic prospects, tobacco control efforts that target farmers often revolve around demonstrating that the crop is unprofitable and that farmers fail to fully account for its costs. A Tobacco Atlas graphic, for example, shows profits and losses before and after being adjusted for labor costs, implying that farmers overlook these costs.²³ Showing minor losses or miniscule profits before factoring in labor and large losses once adjusted for labor costs, it makes the Indonesian tobacco farmer appear irrational indeed. Tobacco control proponents chide farmers for neglecting to assign a commodity value to familial labor, which could be hired elsewhere, and land, which could be rented out, and incorporating these values into their calculations. Farmers who perform their own labor may be motivated to save money or avoid the hassle of organizing workers for less labor-intensive cultivation stages like seedbed planting and maintenance. Some top plants or stoke ovens because they mistrust workers with these skilled and high-stakes tasks. The World Bank concluded that Indonesian tobacco farmers across all regions typically spent more on cultivation than the revenue they generated, underestimated the characteristically high cost of tobacco inputs, required loans, and faced high opportunity costs because tobacco prevented them from engaging in other economic activities. “Nearly 90% of farmers miscalculated their costs by more than 25%, and the average miscalculation was more than 50%” (World Bank 2017b, 9). The World Bank similarly found that “realized profits” from clove farming are often negligible or negative (2017a, 33).

Syamsul invoked such miscalculations to distinguish himself from his peers who were “lazy about taking notes” and unable to identify their weaknesses. “We should calculate our gas, our cigarettes, our labor, our land even if we own it. We could instead be renting the land to someone else, or planting something else. Then, if we’re not profiting on paper, why bother?” Syamsul began contracting with Sadhana in 1996, and at the height of his tobacco farming, he planted eleven hectares and operated seven flue-curing barns. Syamsul grounded his tobacco exit narrative in the observation that tobacco prices were failing to keep pace with the rising cost of inputs. Renting land had become too expensive and too competitive, and laborers who used to work for 25,000 rupiah a day now cost

60,000 rupiah—70,000 once you added their meal, afternoon snack, and coffee. “Workers are the bosses now, competing with one another to purchase cows after harvest. They have to be paid right away, before their sweat has dried, rather than at the end of the season.” After he ceased planting in 2012, a Sadhana field technician, manager, and grader all showed up at his house to find out why this A1-rated (loyal and skillful) farmer was quitting. “You shouldn’t have to ask,” he reproached, then pulled out the Excel spreadsheets meticulously documenting his expenditures and income and a pattern of meager profits or actual losses. Conceding the logic of his decision, the Sadhana representatives requested that he kindly not share his calculations with neighbors, since doing so might also deter them from planting tobacco.

Farmers evoked the irrational tobacco farmer identity in ways that were shaming and self-deprecating but also humorous. “We used to just plant a lot of tobacco,” one Lombok farmer dolefully admitted, “never calculating our expenditures.” In Madura, we heard that “fanatical farmers don’t calculate,” behaving as loyal tobacco soldiers who force themselves to produce tobacco even when it is clearly unprofitable. When World Bank (2017, 27) researchers queried a farmer about falling prices, he insisted, “Farmers here must not have that thought and they keep cultivating tobacco no matter what. . . . In any situation, no matter what, whether we suffer from loss or get advantage and profit, we keep cultivating. We are motivated to cultivate. We keep our spirit.” Fauzi, a tobacco farmer in Madura, presented himself as both fanatical and calculating. He considered and measured all his life choices, whether calculating the optimal age to have kids so as to be able to play with one’s grandchildren or taking careful note of each time he or a family member visited the tobacco field to perform some task. He recounted in lavish detail his 2015 tobacco expenditures and income, when the weather was good and he produced an ample, healthy crop. His narrative culminated in a pious expression of gratitude to God before he pronounced the season a bust due to low prices (*Alhamdulillah . . . rugi!*). In other seasons, he made a slender (*tipis*) profit margin, such as 300,000 rupiah after months of work. “Who knows,” he said, “maybe next season will be highly profitable!” Although he played up his irrational attachment to tobacco, he was in fact becoming more hesitant about tobacco farming; he had reduced the land he devoted to the crop, as had other members of his farmers’ group. Yet even if he suffered a net loss from cultivating tobacco, he still profited from a tobacco-centered side gig; due to his charisma and leadership, he served as a brand ambassador for Sampoerna Hijau under a community program we will return to in chapter 4. Sampoerna awarded him a ten-million-rupiah prize for his stellar marketing work.

Compared to conservative, subsistence-oriented food crops, tobacco has long been a risky, speculative, commercial boom-and-bust crop that promises riches while threatening ruin. Madurese farmers recalled how windfalls of bygone years had prompted wildly extravagant and absurd consumption practices. Mohamed

said Javanese merchants streamed into the island with mattresses, cars, and motor-bikes for sale. “We bought the lot, without even bothering to bargain. Before we had electricity, some bought refrigerators and stored their clothes in them! Farmers were so wealthy, they used Sprite instead of water to wash their hands!” His son, Burhan, recalled that when prices were high, it seemed you could easily convert five hundred thousand rupiah into five million. “It was hard not to obsess over the fortune you’d make if you only had more land and more capital.” In Madura, a profusion of pawn shops take advantage of farmers’ need for credit, and gold shops run a brisk trade by selling jewelry to tobacco farmers after harvest and then buying it back when they require capital for planting.

The very riskiness of tobacco once made growing it a display of masculine skill and daring in tobacco growing regions, to the point that farmers’ masculinity was questioned if they did not plant it. The term *farmer* (*petani*) is predominantly applied to male figures in nuclear or extended family households who play a public and conspicuous role in interacting with field technicians and securing land, labor, contracts, and the sale of the crop, even as their wives often play a significant decision-making role and may contribute their own labor depending on the age of their children, their economic means, and competing activities. Some tended tobacco seedbeds, hoed, operated cutting machines, cured tobacco, and prepared food and beverages for workers. During harvest season, it was easy to spot the more active, hands-on farmers because their clothes and hands were soiled black with sticky tobacco residue that is hard to remove once it builds up.

Some farmers now sought to redefine tobacco growing as a sign of irrational alterity rather than normative agrarian masculinity and as an ultimately emasculating pursuit in which leaf buyers toyed with and manipulated farmers (Prentice 2020). In contrast to old-fashioned (*kuno*) tobacco farmers, Syamsul declared himself a modern, cool (*keren*), enterprising farmer who, having turned to hydroponics, organic agriculture, and aquaculture with a freshwater catfish (*ikan lele*) operation that sold to restaurants, served as an example for others. Among a relatively well-off farmers’ group we met in Madura, only one of thirty-seven farmers was planting tobacco, although all had formerly done so. This outlier looked sheepish as his peers ribbed him for *still* planting tobacco. Another member spoke passionately about following the example of Balinese farmers by planting organic rice for export to Europe and offered to give his peers a tutorial on making organic fertilizer. “Now I’m done with the crop,” Burhan concluded. “I stopped planting five years ago. I was tired of leaf buyers’ games. They conspire to lower the price of tobacco. The golden plant is now a weed. I can plant other crops like watermelon, cucumbers, corn, sesame. Or even bonsai, which was hot for a while.”

Natural and anthropogenic disasters throw tobacco farmers’ risks into sharp relief and lead to condemnation of buyers, traders, and state actors who fail to help them. In 2015, after several months of ash fall from the Gunung Raung volcano, leaf buyers completely refused or paid only pitifully low prices for tobacco in the

Jember region. Contract farmers fared somewhat better, since leaf buyers still purchased their leaf, if at a significant discount due to its purportedly compromised quality. Independent farmers like Achmad, whose wife had lost her job at a Sam-poerna hand-rolling plant that closed in 2014, were especially hard hit. He invoked the Chinese racial scapegoating stereotypes that periodically appear in times of economic turmoil and license anti-Chinese violence and spoke with naked envy of contract farming peers (Kusno 2003; Sai 2006; Siegel 1998; Strassler 2010, 2019):

They have it good because they still have their daddies [contract companies] to turn to. Farmers like me are hard up. We're suffering from a conspiracy. Those who buy are Chinese, those who plant are black.²⁴ A group of us rented fifteen trucks to take our harvest to a warehouse. We were turned away, and then had to pay for the truck rental! If we could just find a willing buyer, we wouldn't care how little we were paid, how unfair and exploitative the price. Under these economic conditions, married couples are getting separated. Motorbikes and chickens are being stolen. There's unrest and insecurity.

Farmers widely complained about being manipulated by leaf buyers, but many were also angry at politicians who they felt should have offered assistance. They protested by burning tobacco. Jember is renowned for its fine cigar leaf (*na oogst*), which is mostly destined for export, and the Jember regency government promotes and celebrates tobacco, which is incorporated into the regional government symbol, batik textiles, regional costume, and dance. Feeling that this show of cultural support proved to be a sham in farmers' time of need, some farmers demanded that the leaf be removed from the region's flag.

La Niña unleashed a wet dry season (*kemarau basah*) in 2016 that had many tobacco farmers reliving the nightmarish 2010 season. Indonesia's tobacco yield fell by over a third from 2015 to 2016 as tobacco plants had no stress period and rampant weeds sprang up in the moist soil and absorbed fertilizers intended for tobacco plants.²⁵ Farmers hired extra workers to weed and hoe even as the potential quantity and quality of their crop deteriorated. In Lombok and Java, some could hardly face fields inundated by river water that also deposited sand and trash. Haji Ramli's crop in Lombok was additionally threatened by the tobacco mosaic virus, and he was trying to grow more seedlings to replace afflicted plants.²⁶ A loyal Sadhana contract farmer for twenty years, he had experienced a personal calamity the previous year when his barn caught fire in the midst of flue-curing, incinerating forty-five million rupiah's worth of tobacco within a half hour. "My kids cried, but I didn't. Profit or loss, you have to laugh," he stoically insisted.

While farmers might withstand a calamitous season or two, many saw an unacceptable trend of increasing costs and declining prices that prompted them, like Fauzi, to reduce growing tobacco or even to cease doing so altogether. Even a regional leader of the Indonesian Tobacco Farmers Association reduced his crop to eight hundred plants in 2015 and made the fortuitous decision to not plant in

2016. He also told us delicately that he was currently not smoking, because of a strange sensation on his tongue. In Lombok, abandoned and repurposed flue-curing barns bear striking testimony to farmers' quitting the crop. Some left the structures standing after they stopped growing or rented them to neighbors, while others used them for storage (*gudang*), converted them into shops, or, in a few cases, destroyed them after incurring large debts and left the rubble in a heap to remind themselves to never again plant the crop.

Indonesia's tobacco farmers face numerous challenges: debt, climate change, limited land, a lack of political bargaining power, and an aging workforce. These challenges will not be resolved by simply planting other crops, but farmers' ability to do so is an advantage from a tobacco control perspective. Most Indonesian tobacco farmers do not need to be introduced to "alternative" crops, because they are already skilled at cultivating them. The term *tobacco farmer* (*petani tembakau*) is in fact misleading, insofar as it implies that tobacco is the sole or main crop that farmers cultivate. Those who own their own land (or rent annually rather than seasonally) typically also produce paddy, Indonesia's staple crop. The tropical climate allows farmers to double or triple crop, often planting paddy during the wet season (roughly November through March) and tobacco during the dry season (roughly April through October) on a single plot of land. In regions with higher rainfall and on irrigated land, they may grow two crops of paddy followed by tobacco in a single year, while on dryer land, farmers may grow three different crops, such as paddy, tobacco, and corn. In more arid regions, farmers plant and harvest tobacco earlier and are typically limited to producing two crops a year. In fertile (*subur*) areas such as Lumajang or Blitar, farmers have multiple crop options, and leaf buyers must compete with alternative crops (e.g., sweet potatoes, chili, beans, tomatoes), whereas in dryer regions such as Madura or Jember, farmers identify as more tobacco dependent, "living and dying" (*hidup mati*) on the crop's fortunes. Even in the latter regions, however, farmers have found alternatives and have begun to reject tobacco farming as a mainstay.

Recognizing tobacco's labor-intensive and high-risk characteristics, many farmers are abandoning the crop, while those who remain are often hesitant and ambivalent about continuing to plant it. Facing such challenging conditions, Sadhana manager Robert complained that he couldn't exploit Lombok's real potential for tobacco agriculture, which he compared favorably to North Carolina's:

Now it's getting more and more difficult to find farmers. It used to be I could go outside and ring a bell to find tobacco farmers and they would all line up. Now I could ring the bell all day and wouldn't find one. Where there's good water, they tend to grow other crops. They probably don't feel they make enough of a profit. . . . In the south and east farmers are growing it because they can't grow anything else.

Yet despite the palpable sense of despair and decline in 2016, tobacco production across Indonesia subsequently rebounded and rose to new heights, reaching

nearly 270,000 tons in 2019.²⁷ This turnaround reflects the industry's persistent ability—despite Robert's pessimism—to recruit new farmers and to recapture hesitant tobacco farmers and renouncers.

Sampoerna has also sought to extend clove farming into new regions to manage widespread hesitancy among clove farmers who regard cloves as an unreliable plant and commodity. The trees cycle through bumper, ordinary, and small harvest years (*panen raya*, *panen sedang*, *panen kecil*), and small harvest years yield only about 20 percent of larger harvests. To produce a good crop, clove trees must be healthy from their roots up, but they are susceptible to protracted dry spells, worms that bore through trunks, and a virus that causes leaves to yellow and wither from the top down. Some farmers apply pesticides against worm infestations, while Sampoerna urges farmers to coat the lower trunks with dolomite lime. Protracted rain and humid conditions can lead to mold that lays waste to harvests during the three-to-five-day period when cloves are supposed to dry in the sun. Cloves are vulnerable to theft at multiple stages of production. An absentee plantation owner in Jombang, East Java, remarked that stealing was common in the region, with thieves picking clean the lower tree branches. When cloves are drying on roadside tarps, thieves can pull over with a car, snatch up the tarp with its contents, and throw it in their vehicle. Stored cloves can also be stolen by thieves who are stealthy or adept at using magic to paralyze people in their homes and steal from right under their noses.

Cloves are also subject to dramatic price fluctuations. In the 1920s, Indonesia went from being a net clove exporter to importer, with the kretek industry making it the largest consumer of the aromatic spice. An Indonesian government clove intensification program in the 1960s encouraged uplanders across the archipelago to cultivate clove trees. Clove prices peaked in 1979 in real terms, then precipitously declined as supplies rose and the government sought to maintain a floor price (Bulbeck et al. 1998, 21). In 1991, the Indonesian government authorized the creation of the Clove Support and Marketing Agency (Badan Penyangga Pemasaran Cengkeh, BPPC) ostensibly to raise prices for smallholders and stabilize supply. In practice, the agency served as a middleman monopoly, conferring exclusive rights to buy and sell cloves on an agency chaired by the president's son, Tommy Suharto (Hutomo Mandala Putra). President Suharto forced the central bank to finance the BPPC to the tune of \$350 million, which appalled the Indonesian technocrats and international agencies attempting to set the country on a deregulatory course. The usually politically quiescent Association of Indonesian Cigarette Companies (GAPPRI, Gabungan Perserikatan Pabrik Rokok Indonesia) vociferously opposed the clove monopoly, arguing that it would result in higher cigarette prices, reduced sales, job losses, and decreased government revenues. As the BPPC indeed raised clove prices for buyers, cigarette manufacturers experimented with reducing clove content in cigarettes and used up existing stocks rather than buying

from the agency, which became notorious for high prices and low quality. As clove supplies rose and prices fell, upset farmers, unable to find willing buyers, chopped down their trees and planted alternative crops (Hanusz 2000, 54–70; Schwarz 2000, 153–57). In 1998, as Suharto's hold over power was eroding, the International Monetary Fund forced his administration to disband the BPPC as part of a suite of deregulatory reform measures (Linebaugh 1998). Today, Indonesia is the world's largest clove producer, harvesting roughly one hundred thousand tons of cloves annually, 90 percent of which go into kretek (World Bank 2017, 11). Indonesia also imports cloves from Zanzibar and Madagascar, where agricultural life is punctuated by boom-and-bust commodity cycles tied to the distant fortunes of the kretek industry (Sodikoff 2012; Tilghman 2019).

Clove farmer hesitancy manifests in decisions to gradually reduce their investment by felling trees and not replacing dead ones. Uplanders typically grow clove trees alongside other cash crops including commercial wood (e.g., sengon), bananas, coffee, cacao, palm trees, durian, and non-tree crops such as sugar cane, shallots, chilis, paddy, and sweet potatoes. Even APCI leaders, who are among the most vocal and stalwart industry supporters, do not necessarily treat cloves as a mainstay. The organization's treasurer, for example, cultivated various crops on two mountainous hectares in East Java she inherited from her father, a former APCI leader who planted 418 trees in the 1980s, of which only about a hundred remained. Many of the remaining trees were afflicted by a virus. The provincial leader of APCI in Bali admitted that his family could not live on clove trees alone. He was down to 150 trees on 1.5 hectares. His family had chopped down two hundred trees after the BPPC precipitated a clove price plummet in the early 1990s. He planned to maintain the clove trees his parents had planted but did not envision adding any more, animatedly hyping bananas as a more lucrative investment that promised quicker returns. Whereas clove trees require seven years or more to begin flowering and can remain productive for seven decades or more, banana trees fruit six months after planting, can be harvested every two weeks, and produce well for about ten years.

Tobacco and cloves only partially constitute farmer identities and livelihoods, easing their partial or wholesale exit. Tobacco farming is temporally demarcated as a primarily dry-season activity on land where rice and other crops are grown outside of the tobacco season. Farmers may decide to not plant tobacco this year or to plant less than last year. Because years elapse between clove tree planting and harvesting, decisions to plant, maintain, fell, or replace trees entail longer-term investments and consequences. At the same time, clove farming is typically partial in terms of land use since clove farmers tend to plant other tree and non-tree crops. Kretek nationalists tend to misrepresent the activities and identities of tobacco and clove farmers as totalizing attachments rather than in their actuality as temporally and spatially partial, and often ambivalent, commitments.

WAGE LABOR

A profound ambivalence also runs through the discourse of tobacco growers, manufacturers, and promoters around the agricultural labor required to produce tobacco. On the one hand, they point to the creation of rural employment opportunities as an important industry virtue in Indonesia, a “labor surplus nation” with a long-standing pattern of jobless growth and urban migration (Li 2014, 2–3). Pro-tobacco groups, one Sampoerna executive conceded, even resort to wildly exaggerating the number of farmers and laborers involved in the industry. On the other hand, boasts about tobacco’s employment-generating capacity sit in tension with the seasonal and low-paid nature of tobacco work, the unappealing working conditions and difficulty sourcing workers, and an industry drive to decrease production prices and increase the use of time- and labor-saving chemicals and machines. Tobacco, one of the plantation crops most indelibly associated with slavery, continues to garner attention for the harmful and exploitative conditions of its production. NGOs have focused their attention on child labor, motivating leaf buyers and cigarette manufacturers to implement education programs and defend themselves against accusations of child labor in their supply chains. Yet the focus on child labor conveniently obscures the unfair pay and often hazardous conditions under which the mostly feminized and aging adult workforce labors.

Child labor in commercial tobacco cultivation provides a contemporary lightning rod for global NGO critique of the industry. Human Rights Watch published a lengthy report on child labor in US tobacco agriculture in 2014 and a similarly damning report on child labor in Indonesia two years later. Many of the underaged laborers the NGO interviewed in the United States were children of immigrants, and few worked on family farms (Human Rights Watch 2014). In Indonesia, by contrast, the organization found that children typically worked on family or neighbors’ farms (Human Rights Watch 2016). While the social dynamics of child labor diverged, Human Rights Watch pronounced effects of tobacco labor on child health and development similarly harmful (see also International Labor Organization 2007a, 2007b).

The claim that children should not engage in such forms of labor turns on understandings of the child as a special biological and social category of person. Biologically, they “are uniquely vulnerable to the adverse effects of toxic exposures as their brains and bodies are still developing, and they consume more water and food, and breathe more air, pound for pound, than adults” (Human Rights Watch 2014, 49). Socially, NGOs conventionally depict children’s sovereignty and agency as still limited and developing; they fall into the category of dependents rather than autonomous subjects.

In her ethnographic study of child tobacco laborers in Lombok, Amigó argues that conventional NGO perspectives on child labor overlook local cultural perspectives and economic realities and universalize an idealized conception of

childhood as a separate stage of life devoted to education and play that originated among the middle and upper classes in industrializing Western Europe and the United States (Eberhardt 2006; Nieuwenhuys 1996; Stephens 1995; Zelizer 1985). Children, Amigó asserts, “must be researched as active economic agents and the extent to which they are autonomous must be the subject of research rather than simply assumed” (2010, 45). She found that Sasak child tobacco laborers made decisions about when, for whom, and on which tasks they worked and how they allocated their earnings (similarly, see Li 2014, 64–65). They typically contribute the bulk of their wages to the household but also reserve money for themselves for snacks and larger consumption items (e.g., bicycles, stereos, schoolbooks, and clothes). They engaged in borrowing, lending, and even formed rotating credit associations (*arisan*).

Like other sectors of the Indonesian rural economy, Amigó observes, tobacco cultivation is organized into subtasks with age and gender associations that naturalize relations of power as inherent skills. Women and children occupy subordinate positions in labor hierarchies and perform lower-paid tasks associated with patience and carefulness, while men’s work is valorized, and higher pay is justified, for involving greater strength and risk. Tying tobacco leaves to bamboo poles (*gelanting*), for example, is a dull, piece-rate task that involves hours of squatting and is performed almost exclusively by children. Unlike harvesting leaves, which workers typically start early in the morning, leaf tying is also a task that can be performed after school, in the shade, by groups of children. Syamsul told us that most farmers use child labor and that light work like tying leaves was especially appropriate for children. Consistent with Amigó’s claim about children exercising agency, he described kids appearing unbidden in his yard, commencing tasks, and attempting to trick him by tying fewer leaves onto a pole than expected and stretching them out.

PMI pledged to eliminate all child labor from the tobacco supply chain since creating its Agricultural Labor Practices (ALP) code in 2011. The code’s fine print is more complicated, disallowing “hazardous” work for anyone under the age of eighteen but allowing—in developing countries where permitted, pursuant to ILO Convention 138—those as young as fourteen, or twelve in the case of family farms, to perform light agricultural labor. In Madura, Imron showed us that Alliance One collected data and conducted random checks to ensure that children were attending school. (The warehouse was not selling to PMI at the time, but Imron explained that being attentive to the ALP code made them ready to do so.) Sadhana field staff told me that they talked to farmers about keeping children out of tobacco or at least limiting their involvement to after-school hours and activities that minimized chemical exposure. But as a leaf-buying manager put it in an exasperated outburst, “Sadhana can’t watch the farmers twenty-four hours a day!” Human Rights Watch hammered home this point in its report, insisting that

companies like PMI could not ensure that their tobacco supply chain was free of hazardous child labor. The NGO credited PMI, among the companies it examined, for appearing “to have taken the greatest number of steps to be transparent about its human rights policies and monitoring procedures, including by publishing on its website its own progress reports as well as several detailed reports by third party monitors” but went on to castigate the company for failing to impose meaningful penalties and sanctions on those who continued to use child labor (Human Rights Watch 2016, 18, 96).

Sampoerna’s corporate social responsibility education initiatives are strategically designed to discourage child labor with programs “heavily concentrated in the areas where the company sources tobacco and cloves” (Sampoerna 2015, 22). Beginning in 2013, Sampoerna has devoted space each year in its annual reports to chronicling these initiatives and enumerating the dozens of schools and thousands of teachers, headmasters, children, and parents the company’s pedagogy has touched while expanding from the tobacco-growing regions of East Java, Madura, and Lombok to the clove-growing regions of Sulawesi. Sampoerna has also altered and refined the nature and content of these programs, sponsoring capacity-building training sessions for educators and more targeted women’s “empowerment” groups, enrolling mothers and charging them with preventing child labor, and bankrolling scholarships for “financially disadvantaged” children in tobacco growing regions and after-school programs in Lombok that are “carried out during tobacco harvest season to keep children busy with fun and creative learning activities . . . aimed at discouraging them from partaking in the tobacco harvest and curing” (Sampoerna 2018, 149).

I did not witness firsthand any cases of child labor in tobacco cultivation and processing, but I did see one case in clove picking. Child labor in tobacco agriculture (and Indonesian agriculture in general) appears to be a waning rather than an expanding phenomenon and more concentrated in certain regions and tasks, such as leaf tying in Lombok, rather than being a major scourge wherever tobacco is grown. Government agriculture officials in Madura told us that in the 1980s and 1990s, schools used to empty out during the tobacco harvest but that this was no longer the case. Robert offered an initially dismissive response to “all these child labor issues,” exclaiming, “That’s how you become a farmer!” He then reflected, “My farmers’ biggest wish and deepest dream is that their kids don’t become tobacco farmers. They want them in school. Of course you [i.e., activists, NGOs, anthropologists] can always get photographs [of children working].” When I spoke to a father and son as they picked cloves in Bali, the father said he hoped his child, who was still in high school, had a brighter future ahead of him than farm labor.

NGOs showed less interest in the kinds of workers I encountered in tobacco fields, who were typically in their late twenties or older, landless or land poor, with women far outnumbering men. Most workers were married, widowed, or divorced with school-aged or older children. Many were middle aged; some were



FIGURE 6. A father and son (*above*) pick cloves in Bali. Photo by author.

elderly. Young adults, farmers told me, found agricultural work too hot, too dirty, unappealing, and embarrassing, preferring factory jobs. Sun-bleached posters and calendars affixed to walls showed that PMI's anti-child labor efforts had reached farmers in Malang, where they paid lip service to addressing a problem that appeared insignificant given the workforce's composition. Landless workers were "free" in the Marxist sense; bereft of ties to productive property, they had to sell their labor as a commodity or risk starvation. The land-poor condition of workers was in some cases connected to the relatively land-rich status of the farmers who hired them. Wati, for example, was one of forty workers hired to tend Ibrahim's 7.5 hectares, and the same history that had helped Ibrahim secure his property had made it harder for people like Wati to hold onto or attain their own land. The Sukarno administration attempted to reduce stark inequalities in landholding with the 1960 Basic Agrarian Law. Large landowners and religious institutions opposed implementation of the law and ensured that it moved at a sluggish pace, while the Communist Party (PKI) and Indonesian Peasant Front's (Barisan Tani Indonesia) efforts to accelerate land redistribution and go beyond the law's provisions provoked conflicts (Utrecht 1969). Peasants and land reform activists were among those murdered and suppressed in the wake of the alleged PKI coup attempt in 1965. In the 1970s, the Suharto administration embraced the Green Revolution's promise of increasing agricultural production through seeds, chemicals, and technologies. Along with higher taxes, this allowed wealthier rural households to grow and consolidate their landholdings while pushing marginal landholders off the

land (Hart, Turton, and White 1989; Scott 1985). While Wati spoke positively of Ibrahim, landless workers for another farmer with three hectares complained bitterly of their low wages but did not dare look for work elsewhere, fearing they would lose badly needed employment.

Women workers are routinely exposed to the tobacco risks that children are supposed to be sheltered from. While I was talking to a group of women as they brushed the suckercide Tamex onto topped plants, three described attending a training where they were informed that their children, whom they love so dearly, should not be involved in tobacco work since it could be dangerous to them. Wati pulled off her bamboo peasant hat to reveal a training souvenir: a red and black baseball cap with an image of an idealized nuclear family, mother and father embracing their two children. With no husband and five children, her own family structure bore little resemblance to this ideal. Wati wore black cotton gloves to protect her hands from the sun, but she had cut the gloves to expose her fingers and allow her to work swiftly and dexterously. The smell was fine, she said, as long as it did not become too strong in the heat. A male supervisor, whose fingers were stained yellow from the substance, had measured and mixed the chemical with five liters of water before pouring it into workers' makeshift containers, some of it sloshing over and spilling into the irrigation ditch he straddled. Tamex is considered highly toxic to fish and aquatic invertebrates. Users are supposed to wear protective eyewear, long-sleeved shirts and pants, shoes and socks, and chemical-resistant gloves. A corrosive agent capable of causing irreversible eye damage, Tamex is also harmful to skin, potentially fatal if it enters airways or is ingested, and suspected of causing cancer and genetic defects.²⁸ Wati held the Tamex solution in a used bottle in her left hand and the brush in her right hand. Other workers tied cut-open plastic bottles filled with suckercide around their waists or dangled them from their necks. While Wati's hat advocated protecting beloved and valued children, Tamex dribbled onto her bare fingers.

Farmers and workers had various idiosyncratic ideas about the hazards that inhered in tobacco cultivation and how to protect themselves (Markus 2015). Some risks to workers, such as heat stroke, dehydration, pesticide exposure, and excessive working hours, potentially pertain to any agricultural labor in Indonesia. NGOs single out tobacco for special attention due to its nicotine content and intricate, labor-intensive processing requirements. When workers interact with wet tobacco leaves, they absorb nicotine through their skin, which can lead to acute nicotine poisoning, known as green tobacco sickness (GTS). GTS symptoms include dizziness, headaches, nausea, vomiting, and insomnia. In flue-curing regions like Lombok, stokers who handle fuel and tend ovens work around the clock and risk serious burns, while workers hanging and unloading bamboo poles of tobacco leaves in curing barns risk dangerous falls (Amigó 2010, 135–37, 179). Lombok farmers told us that they had used more dangerous furnaces in the past, occasioning accidents and turning one stoker's body all white from extensive third-degree burns.

Methods of mitigating these kinds of risks can be haphazard. As a reward for turning in empty pesticide cannisters that might otherwise be discarded in irrigation ditches, Sadhana issued farmers a personal safety-gear set including protective glasses, mask, plastic gloves, and a shirt with a plastic apron sewn inside.²⁹ While farmers occasionally wore some of these items and distributed others to workers, the supply was highly limited. When, where, and how workers used protective gear was furthermore often ad hoc and arbitrary. One farmer had workers wear disposable face masks when they lay cut tobacco onto trays to dry, although their primary risk was likely absorbing nicotine through dermal contact with soaking wet tobacco. Workers never wore gloves for this task, although they said it made their hands bitter (*pahit*); I myself became dizzy after several hours of performing it.

After long stretches of picking tobacco, some workers described suffering from dizziness, nausea, and vomiting, which are symptoms of GTS. When picking tobacco, as with other forms of agricultural labor, workers generally wear multiple layers of clothing to protect their skin from the sun. They said the difference with tobacco is that it destroyed clothes, making them useless for other purposes or demanding special cleaning methods (e.g., warm water) and copious detergent. When workers began picking lower leaves early in the morning, their shirts were apt to become soaked over the course of several hours from sweat and contact with wet leaves. Some wore gloves to keep their hands from getting dirty, while others did not, because gloves slowed them down; when I tried wearing gloves while picking, I soon found that they tended to snag and to grow sticky. Some drank green coconut milk to alleviate dizziness and nausea; others drank herbal tonics (*jamu*) or sweet and sour concoctions that they felt dissipated any poisoning effect from the tobacco. Workers often attributed vomiting to pesticide residue and harsh chemicals rather than to nicotine. One told us it was specifically the first leaf picking that made her sick due to the Tamex. Workers also joked that instances of encountering an ancestor or a ghost in the field might in fact be chemically induced.

If Amigó is correct that Indonesian child workers possess a degree of autonomy and agency that NGOs presume they are lacking, adult tobacco workers' autonomy is constrained by gender ideology, land access, social norms, and knowledge. Tobacco labor furnishes workers with some income but not a livelihood. Such seasonal labor is always stitched together with additional low-wage work and small enterprise. Even when female workers performed physically demanding tasks such as hoeing, farmers consistently paid them significantly less for a day's work than their male counterparts, who are often additionally compensated with cigarettes. Women workers might have more wage labor opportunities in part because they are cheaper to hire, with men reserved for supervisory tasks and jobs like transporting picked tobacco via motorbike from the fields to the farmer's home for ripening. Wati and her fellow workers were organized into work groups with leaders. According to a third-party assessment that PMI commissioned, Sadhana staff,



FIGURE 7. Women workers hoeing tobacco in Java. Photo by author.

tobacco farmers, and workers in Lombok all had limited knowledge of legal work hours, benefits, and overtime. Workers were typically paid below minimum wage rates, and steep gender pay disparities meant women were especially underpaid. Women often earn 75 percent of men's wages, although this dipped as low as 64 percent on some farms.³⁰ The assessment also found fifteen children involved in tobacco labor, including activities considered hazardous (e.g., topping, harvesting, stringing, and loading and unloading the barn).³¹

Clove farming's contribution to rural employment is also limited. A single laborer suffices to tend a hectare of clove trees for most of the year, performing tasks such as clearing undergrowth, planting seedlings, monitoring tree health, applying water, fertilizers, and pesticide, and deterring thieves with their presence. During harvest, women and children often undertake low-skill piece-rate stemming work (1,000 rupiah per kilogram), while men and male adolescents pick cloves from trees that reach twenty-five to forty feet in height (eight to twelve meters).³² One worker can harvest up to thirty kilograms in a single day. Pickers use narrow, precarious bamboo ladders to reach the flower buds of tall clove trees, which they collect in woven plastic sacks. If a picker slips, his ladder breaks, or a branch splits off a tree, he can easily break a limb or lose his life. A trader in Java asserted that even as pickers tried to make their work safer by tying ladders to neighboring trees, "every year there's a victim." Due to the danger of the work, pickers earn higher wages than ordinary agricultural laborers, but the work is available only over two to three months during the harvest season and often

pursued intermittently.³³ Sampoerna's Leaf and Clove Department was experimenting with mechanizing picking and dwarfing the tree. Such innovations, if successful and scalable, would reduce the risks associated with picking but also diminish the scant employment cloves provide.

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“Caution Anti-Kretek Danger” (Awat Bahaya Anti-Kretek) and “Save the Kretek, Save Indonesia!” (Selamatkan Kretek, Selamatkan Indonesia) urges a poster by kretek nationalist group Komunitas Kretek, which claims that six million tobacco and one and a half million clove farmers and workers depend on the industry. As we have seen, tobacco and clove farmers and laborers derive their livelihoods from a range of activities, and the extent to which they hinge on tobacco or cloves is part and parcel of their precarity rather than a source of upward mobility and prosperity. In the supply chain's hierarchical relations of subordination and exploitation, workers are squeezed by farmers, farmers by leaf suppliers, and leaf suppliers by cigarette manufacturers, which issue contradictory demands for extremely cheap and responsibly produced tobacco.

Albert Hirschman (1970) wrote that when institutions decline, deteriorate, and decay, members are often moved to choose between options of exit, voice, and loyalty. Smallholder clove and tobacco producers mostly exercise exit and loyalty. Hesitancy—skipping a tobacco season, reducing tobacco acreage, diversifying crop production, not replacing clove trees—suggests a half-hearted response, neither exit nor loyalty. Despite the existence of numerous groups that claim to represent their interests, both smallholders and agricultural laborers lack a political voice in the form of collective, credible, and independent organizations acting to transform kretek capitalism and advocate on their behalf to the industry and government (White, Graham, and Savitri 2023). Independent voices might demand limits on tobacco imports, higher commodity prices, more just and gender-equal agricultural wages, and more support for alternative crops. Instead, in their industry-sponsored appearances on the national stage, tobacco and clove farmers contest public health policies as if their interests and cigarette manufacturers' interests were identical. Yet cigarette manufacturers routinely enjoy extraordinary profits in the same years that farmers face mediocre returns or catastrophic losses. The same hierarchy that renders those who are visible and in moral reach the problem and enemy (e.g., stingy farmers, deceitful traders, corrupt government officials) shelters cigarette manufacturers from critique and enables them to posture instead as allies combatting the common enemy of tobacco control (Kurian 2023).

The clove association APCI epitomizes such industry ventriloquism. Most clove farmers had little awareness of the existence of APCI, which purportedly lobbies on their behalf. An APCI leader in Bali who described himself as an “NGO guy”—his NGOs being APCI and the pro-tobacco AMTI—said that when President Joko Widodo consulted his ministers about signing the World Health Organization's

Framework Convention on Tobacco Control on World No Tobacco Day (May 31), their industry-sponsored NGOs quickly mobilized in opposition. They warned the ministers that Article 9 of the convention prohibits additives and would therefore make kretek illegal. They misrepresented Article 9, which provides for the creation of guidelines for regulating tobacco product contents while still allowing national government authorities to determine how to actually pursue regulation. Then they had a good laugh (*kami ketawa*), because they were successful and prevented Indonesia from blindly following (*ikut-ikutan*) other countries.

Sampoerna's efforts to enroll agricultural labor have enabled the maintenance of tobacco and clove production and ongoing rural poverty, especially among the older, female-dominated laboring workforce who bear the worst of agricultural labor's dangers and subjugation. The company's ability to mobilize rural subjects in support of the industry and in opposition to tobacco control illustrates how maintaining rigid separate hierarchies serves as a powerful tool for kretek capitalism.