

## **From Gambling to Housing: Collective Memory of Cinchona Plantation Residents in West Java, Indonesia**

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### **Abstract**

*This study examines the collective memory possessed by local residents in the area of the former Dutch colonial cinchona plantation in Cikembang Village, West Java, which manifests in the form of historical building remnants and oral narratives. Through an ethnohistorical approach, the memory narratives conveyed by residents indicate their attachment to the plantation institution as result of paternalistic relation as a way of labor control. This research demonstrates that, in addition to providing basic necessities and improving moral standards for workers, paternalistic relation were implemented to maintain a continuous supply of plantation labor.*

**Keywords:** *cinchona plantation, collective memory, paternalism, West Java*

### **Introduction**

Cinchona (*kina* in Dutch and Indonesian) was a key plantation commodity during the colonial era, particularly from the 18th to the mid-20th century<sup>1</sup>. The bark contains quinine alkaloids which served as crucial antimalarial agent through consumable medication. At the time, malaria claimed the lives of many victims, transmitted through the bites of female *Anopheles* mosquitoes prevalent in tropical regions such as Asia and Africa<sup>2</sup>. This made malaria a lethal pandemic and significant impediment to European colonial expansion into tropical territories such as Asia and Africa<sup>3</sup>. The high demand for quinine prompted European nations to compete in cultivating cinchona plantations in colonies with suitable climates, such as British-India and the Dutch East Indies<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Andrew Goss, "Building the World's Supply of Quinine: Dutch Colonialism and the Origins of a Global Pharmaceutical Industry," *Endeavour*, March 2014, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.endeavour.2013.10.002>; Lucy Veale, "An Historical Geography of the Nilgiri Cinchona Plantations, 1860-1900" (Doctoral Thesis, University of Nottingham, 2010); Townsend Middleton, "Becoming-After: The Lives and Politics of Quinine's Remains," *Cultural Anthropology* 36, no. 2 (2021): 282–311, <https://doi.org/10.14506/ca36.2.05>.

<sup>2</sup> Roy, *Malarial Subjects: Empire, Medicine and Nonhumans in British India, 1820 - 1909*; Fiammetta Rocco, *The Miraculous Fever-Tree: Malaria, Medicine and the Cure That Changed the World* (Harper Press, 2003),

<sup>3</sup> Karel Wessel Gorkom, *A Handbook of Cinchona Culture* (JH de Bussy, 1883); Goss, "Building the World's Supply of Quinine: Dutch Colonialism and the Origins of a Global Pharmaceutical Industry"; Nair, *Tree Crops: Harvesting Cash from the World's Important Cash Crops*.

<sup>4</sup> (Gorkom, 1883; Roersch van der Hoogte & Pieters, 2014; Middleton, 2024)

By the early 20th century, the supply of cinchona bark from the Dutch East Indies dominated more than 90% of the global market<sup>5</sup>. However, this dominance lasted only until 1942, when Japan occupied the territory<sup>6</sup>. To curb the potential profits Japan could derive from cinchona plantations, United States of America invested in research on synthetic quinine, eventually replacing the natural one that is extracted from cinchona bark<sup>7</sup>. This discovery led to decrease in quinine prices, marking the decline of Dutch East Indies' cinchona plantations. Nevertheless, many of these plantations continued to operate even in the post-independence era, enduring until the late 20<sup>th</sup> century<sup>8</sup>.

Studies of cinchona should be contextualized within the framework that made it a commercial crop, specifically examining plantation as one unique entity, which has been extensively studied through a combination of historical and anthropological research. Classical research on American plantation with commercial crops such as sugar and coffee has been conducted, showing that the giant institution has affected both national and local political communities<sup>9</sup>. Historical records through archival documents has been studied to examined the labor regime used in colonial plantation, while more studies combine it with ethnographical approach, examining the socioeconomic constraints imposed by plantation to the workers and often times resulting in conflict and confrontation<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> (Goss, 2014; Middleton, 2024).

<sup>6</sup> Ya-wen Ku, "The Development of Cinchona Cultivation and 'Kina Gaku' in the Japanese Empire, 1912–45," in *Environment, Modernization and Development in East Asia* (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2016), 157–81, [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-137-57231-8\\_7](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-137-57231-8_7); Goss, "Building the World's Supply of Quinine: Dutch Colonialism and the Origins of a Global Pharmaceutical Industry."

<sup>7</sup> Roersch van der Hoogte and Pieters, "Science in the Service of Colonial Agro-Industrialism: The Case of Cinchona Cultivation in the Dutch and British East Indies, 1852–1900"; Cuvi, "The Cinchona Program (1940–1945): Science and Imperialism in the Exploitation of a Medicinal Plant."

<sup>8</sup> Lia Nuralia and Iim Imadudin, "Nilai Budaya Pada Lanskap Industri Perkebunan Kina Cinyiruan Bandung Pada Masa Kolonial," no. 13 (2021), <https://doi.org/10.30959/patanjala.v13i1.848>; Lia Nuralia, "Jejak Religi Pada Makam Gerald Alfred Cup Di Perkebunan Kina Cinyiruan Masa Kolonial," *PANALUNGTIK* 4, no. 1 (November 17, 2021), <https://doi.org/10.24164/pnk.v4i1.62>.

<sup>9</sup> Sidney Mintz, *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History* (Penguin, 1986); Jeffery Paige, *Coffee and Power: Revolution and the Rise of Democracy in Central America* (Penguin, 1998).

<sup>10</sup> Ann Laura Stoler, *Capitalism and Confrontation in Sumatra's Plantation Belt, 1870–1979* (University of Michigan Press, 1985); Sarah Besky, "Fixity: On the Inheritance and Maintenance of Tea Plantation Houses in Darjeeling, India," *American Ethnologist* 44, no. 4 (November 2017): 617–31, <https://doi.org/10.1111/amet.12561>; Tania Murray Li, "Intergenerational Displacement in Indonesia's Oil Palm Plantation Zone," *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 44, no. 6 (November 2, 2017): 1158–76, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2017.1308353>; Tania Murray Li and Pujo Semedi, *Hidup Bersama Raksasa: Manusia Dan Pendudukan Perkebunan Sawit* (Marjin Kiri, 2022); Middleton, "Becoming-After: The Lives and Politics of Quinine's Remains"; Middleton, *Quinine's Remains: Empire's Medicine and the Life Thereafter*.

In the Indonesian context, studies of plantations demonstrate a shift in labor control methods during the Dutch colonial period (starting from 1870) and after nationalization in 1959. Colonial-era plantations generally implemented coercive systems that even involved physical force<sup>11</sup>, while in post-nationalization era, Indonesian government integrated paternalistic relations into the plantation system as a means of labor control, intensified during the New Order period and beyond<sup>12</sup>. Paternalism, understood as a parent-child-like relationship, can be embedded within the social relations of production, while establishing two distinct parties: the governing and the governed. The latter's choices are restricted by the former, as they are perceived to have certain limitations in making the best decisions for themselves and therefore require "guidance" from the governing authority<sup>13</sup>. The practice of paternalism is commonly observed in plantations across Africa and Southeast Asia<sup>14</sup>, as reflected in the provision of welfare facilities for laborers and guarantees of social security<sup>15</sup>. These paternalistic relations become apparent in this study, which examines a former cinchona plantation at a village of the mountainous region in southern Bandung. Due to its ceased operations, these paternalistic relations are particularly evident in the collective memory that remains in the area, crystallized through physical ruins and oral narratives conveyed by local residents.

Collective memory itself refers to the processes and outcomes of individuals' recollections of a shared object or experience within a social group, may include residents of a particular area or individuals bound by external factors, such as institutional workers<sup>16</sup>. Within a social group, while the objects or events remembered may be the same, the narratives of these memories can vary or even contradict among individuals<sup>17</sup>. This occurs due to the nature of collective memory

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<sup>11</sup> Breman, *Taming the Coolie Beast: Plantation Society and the Colonial Order in Southeast Asia*; Breman, *Mobilizing Labour for the Global Coffee Market: Profits From An Unfree Work Regime in Colonial Java*; Tania Murray Li, "The Price of Un/Freedom: Indonesia's Colonial and Contemporary Plantation Labor Regimes," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 59, no. 2 (April 18, 2017): 245–76, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0010417517000044>; Stoler, *Capitalism and Confrontation in Sumatra's Plantation Belt, 1870-1979*.

<sup>12</sup> Li, "The Price of Un/Freedom: Indonesia's Colonial and Contemporary Plantation Labor Regimes"; Tania Murray Li, "Indonesia's Plantationocene," *Annals of the American Association of Geographers* 114, no. 10 (November 25, 2024): 2194–98, <https://doi.org/10.1080/24694452.2023.2201633>; Stephanie Barral, "Labor Domination in Indonesian Plantations: How Control of Workers' Private Lives Creates Subordination," 2012; Stephanie Barral, "Paternalistic Supervision of Labour in Indonesian Plantations: Between Dependence and Autonomy," *Journal of Agrarian Change* 14, no. 2 (April 10, 2014): 240–59, <https://doi.org/10.1111/joac.12063>.

<sup>13</sup> D. Archard, "Paternalism Defined," *Analysis* 50, no. 1 (January 1, 1990): 36–42, <https://doi.org/10.1093/analys/50.1.36>; Dworkin, "Defining Paternalism"; Begon, "Paternalism."

<sup>14</sup> Gibbon, Daviron, and Barral, "Lineages of Paternalism: An Introduction."

<sup>15</sup> Begon, "Paternalism"; Kaba, "Of Old and New Business Ethics: How Fair Trade Becomes Patronage and Paternalism in a Darjeeling Tea Plantation."

<sup>16</sup> Doolan.

<sup>17</sup> Muhammad Anggie and Farizqi Prasadana, "Pseudo-Battle of Memory: Dua Memori Kolektif Pangeran Samudro Di Gunung Kemukus," *Patra Widya: Seri Penerbitan Penelitian Sejarah Dan Budaya* 19, no. 2 (2018): 197–208; Alissa Wiranova and Rina Hermawati,

itself, which encompasses both ‘remembering’ and ‘unremembering’. Remembering is manifested through the dominance of a particular narrative within the group, often simplified into symbols such as monument or ritual while ignoring more complex and dynamic elements<sup>18</sup>. Conversely, ‘unremembering’ refers to the suppression of certain details, may expressed through silence repressed by dominant narratives<sup>19</sup>. The interplay between remembering and unremembering in collective memory influences how history is perceived and transmitted through generations. As such, collective memory is dynamic and can be continuously negotiated over time, depending on present day interests.

In research on colonial plantations, collective memory often takes the form of museums as crystallization of events that occurred in the plantation landscape in the past<sup>20</sup>. For instance, Hawaii’s Waipahu Plantation Museum emphasizes the cultural heritage of migrant laborers but neglects the contributions of indigenous workers<sup>21</sup>, Antebellum South plantation museums obscure the history of slavery to evoke ‘white nostalgia’ and downplay racial inequality. However, plantation museums can serve as fluid spaces for dialogue between physical sites, guides, and tourists, offering opportunities to recover lost narratives<sup>22</sup>.

Similar to previous studies, this research also demonstrates that collective memory manifests in the form of museums that signify the plantation’s past glory, along with another physical remnants of plantation and oral memories that reveal former plantation workers’ dependency on these facilities. It shows that the paternalistic relations were an integral part of labor control once exercised by the plantation, which created dependency while ensuring a continuous supply of labor force for the institution.

## Method

This study employs ethnohistorical approach as interdisciplinary study that combines history and anthropology, utilizing oral history to reconstruct past events and uncover alternative historical sources with literature and archival documents<sup>23</sup>.

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“Representasi Ideologi Komunisme Dalam Perspektif Aktivis Mahasiswa (Studi Life History Pada Mahasiswa Universitas Di Jawa Barat),” *Anthropos* 8, no. 2 (2023).

<sup>18</sup> Machmoed Effendhie, *Arsip, Memori, Dan Warisan Budaya* (Publikasi dan Pameran Arsip, 2019).

<sup>19</sup> (Munsi, 2016)

<sup>20</sup> (Adamkiewicz, 2016; Alderman & Modlin Jr, 2016; Bastos, 2020; Battle-Baptiste, 2017; Benjamin & Alderman, 2018).

<sup>21</sup> Bastos, “Plantation Memories, Labor Identities, and the Celebration of Heritage: The Case of Hawaii’s Plantation Village.”

<sup>22</sup> Alderman and Modlin Jr, “On the Political Utterances of Plantation Tourists: Vocalizing the Memory of Slavery on River Road”; Benjamin and Alderman, “Performing a Different Narrative: Museum Theater and the Memory-Work of Producing and Managing Slavery Heritage at Southern Plantation Museums.”

<sup>23</sup> Barbara W. Sommer and Mary Kay Quinlan, *The Oral History Manual* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2018).

Interviews were conducted using the snowball sampling method, involving 29 residents from Cikembang Village, Bandung Regency. The informants were categorized into two profiles: (1) those who were directly involved in the cinchona plantation, either during the Dutch colonial period or post-nationalization era, including former workers such as laborers, foremen, drivers, nurses, and managers; and (2) those who were not directly involved but lived alongside the plantation, such as merchants, farmers, livestock breeders, and descendants of former plantation workers.

The research was conducted by employing observation techniques and semi-structured interviews to delve into informants' memories related to the cinchona plantation. Observation was made to understand Cikembang Village as plantation landscape, focusing on the physical remnants of infrastructure, whether abandoned or repurposed. The analysis was validated through data triangulation by comparing multiple sources.

## **Results and Discussions**

### **Socio-Historical Context**

By the 20th century, the Dutch East Indies was a major supplier of cinchona bark. Efforts to cultivate cinchona in the Dutch East Indies began with an expedition led by German botanist named Justus Karl Hasskarl, who brought seeds and seedlings of several cinchona species from South America to Batavia, planting them in the botanical garden at Buitenzorg in 1852. In 1855, under the direction of Franz Junghuhn, the government's experimental cinchona plantation was relocated to Malabar Highlands in central Priangan, specifically at the Cinyiruan Plantation near Pangalengan. This relocation was motivated by the area's fertile soil, higher altitude, and Junghuhn's observation in 1839 that it was an uninhabited primary forest<sup>24</sup>, which then classified as a wasteland.

The success of cinchona cultivation in Dutch East Indies was demonstrated by the discovery of new planting method in 1872, involving hybridization between the species of *Cinchona ledgeriana* and *succirubra*. This method produced cinchona bark with over 5% quinine content, surpassing the supply from British-India. Following the government's openness to liberal exploitation in Dutch East Indies<sup>25</sup>, private cinchona plantations proliferated, particularly in the surrounding area of Malabar Highlands. Supported by the 1913 Quinine Agreement, which

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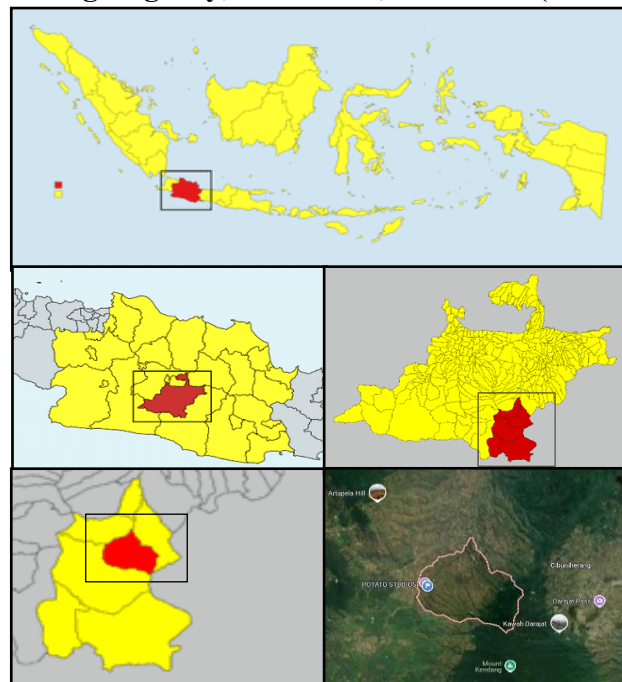
<sup>24</sup> Dede Mulyanto, "Degradasi Lahan Dan Perubahan Budidaya Lahan Kering Di Kawasan Citarum Hulu, Jawa Barat: Sebuah Studi Ekologi-Politik" (Universitas Padjadjaran, 2022).

<sup>25</sup> Mulyanto, "Degradasi Lahan Dan Perubahan Budidaya Lahan Kering Di Kawasan Citarum Hulu, Jawa Barat: Sebuah Studi Ekologi-Politik."

secured Dutch exclusivity as a global quinine supplier, cinchona became a dominant crop in private plantations across Preanger's mountainous regions<sup>26</sup>.

One of these private plantations was the Rotterdamsche Kina Maatschappij Tji Kembang, located in the Tjitjilengka District of the Midden-Preanger, in the southern mountain of West Java<sup>27</sup>. Situated southeast of Mount Malabar and north of Mount Papandayan at 1,592 meters above sea level, the plantation was established in 1882 with an initial concession area of 589 hectares<sup>28</sup>, which later expanded. By the early 20th century, the plantation produced approximately 325,000 kilograms of cinchona bark annually, with quinine content consistently exceeding 5%. Most of the bark was sent to the Bandoengsche Kininefabriek in Bandung to be processed into malaria medicine<sup>29</sup>.

**Figure 1. The map of the study area in Cikembang Village, Kertasari Sub-district, Bandung Regency, West Java, Indonesia (-7.211685,107.688709)**



<sup>26</sup> Goss, "Building the World's Supply of Quinine: Dutch Colonialism and the Origins of a Global Pharmaceutical Industry"; Gorkom, *A Handbook of Cinchona Culture*.

<sup>27</sup> No. 86. NAAMLLOOZE VENNOOTSCHAP: » Rotterdamsche Kina-Maatschappij Tji Kembang", te Rotterdam.. "Nederlandsche staatscourant". 's-Gravenhage, 20-07-1883. Geraadpleegd op Delpher op 17-11-2024, <https://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=MMKB08:000142575:mpeg21:p009>

<sup>28</sup> "Ledenlijst : tevens bevattende een ondernemingslijst van aangesloten ondernemingen". [s.n.], [1938]. Geraadpleegd op Delpher op 17-11-2024, <https://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=MMKB31:040798000:00001>

<sup>29</sup> "Java kinabast : beschouwingen en gegevens over de jaren 1900-1904, 2e jrg. . -". z.u.1905]. Geraadpleegd op Delpher op 18-02-2025, <https://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=MMUBL07:000002528:00005>

**Figure 2. Cikembang cinchona plantation in the colonial era. a) aerial view of Cikembang highlands, 1932 (KITLV 408493), b) rows of cinchona trees in the plantation, 1932 (KITLV 408459) c) plantation administrators Frits Drissen with his local subordinates, 1914 (KITLV 183112) and d) native foremen and laborers, 1932 (KITLV 408505).**



In 1959, Rotterdamsche Kina Tji Kembang cinchona plantation was nationalized by the Indonesian government with onderneming of Tjikembang Plantation under Government Regulation No. 19 of 1959. Despite the decline in cinchona prices following Japan occupation in 1942, Cikembang Plantation continued the operation under the state-owned PT. Perkebunan Nusantara (PTPN). In 1983, the plantation area was designated as a separate administrative unit, named Cikembang Village within Kertasari Subdistrict, Bandung Regency. However, the plantation's success was short-lived. By the mid-1980s, cinchona production declined, accompanied by the gradual dismantling of its processing factory facilities. The downfall peaked in 1998 when local farmers occupied the concession area, replacing cinchona with commercial vegetables such as cabbage, carrot, and potato. This land occupation mirrored broader dissatisfaction with the New Order government during its final years across Indonesia. In 2013, Cikembang Plantation officially shifted its cultivation from cinchona to coffee, employing intercropping with vegetables grown by farmers in the concession area. As of 2023, plantation concessions accounted for 72% of Cikembang Village's total area, with nearly all



being occupied by farmers<sup>30</sup>. While it legally exists, its performance is a shadow of its former glory, now employing only three staffs (a manager, clerk, and chief foreman) and fewer than 30 seasonal laborers. As such, the legacy of Cikembang as a cinchona plantation remains alive in the collective memory of its residents, as explored below.

### **Physical Remnants from Cikembang Plantation**

Collective memory is broadly defined as the shared memories of individuals within a community. However, this does not imply uniformity among individual memories; the events that commemorated in the memory may be the same, but the specific narratives itself can be vary or even conflict. This is due to the inherent characteristics of memory, which cannot fully preserve the past in objective or comprehensive manner and therefore reconstructs past events by linking them to the present<sup>31</sup>. The same applies to collective memory. Subjectivity, shaped by past and present conditions, leads to diverse individual memories within a community. Nonetheless, collective memory often manifests through “collective representation”—narratives of the past distilled into specific events deemed relevant. These representations are created by interested parties, simplifying complex experiences for parochial purposes in the present<sup>32</sup>. Collective representation manifests as symbols such as monument, ritual, or narrative that appear to dominate. This phenomenon is evident in the existence of Museum Kina in Cikembang Village.

Museum Kina serves as physical monument that deliberately records the once-thriving cinchona plantation. This monument also functions as a landmark that serves as a gateway to the village. This landmark features a stretch of vegetable gardens with raised lettering spelling out “TJIKEMBANG”, situated to the left of the road from northern part, and serves as a welcome sign. Amidst the garden, several tall, leafless trees stand prominently. These are cinchona trees, reaching over five meters in height, making this area named as Museum Kina. While the landmark with the raised lettering “TJIKEMBANG” designates the village boundary, its identification as “Museum Kina” signifies the historical presence of plantation that represents the village. According to popular accounts, Museum Kina is the site where cinchona was first planted in Cikembang. However, the monument was originally established by plantation authorities in the 1980s as public park. Following the 1998 land occupation, farmers who took over the area were asked not to completely uproot the remaining cinchona trees. The aim was to ensure that cinchona plants would not vanish entirely from Cikembang, even though the plantation no longer productive.

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<sup>30</sup> Kecamatan Kertasari Pemerintah Desa Cikembang, “Profil Desa Cikembang” (Kabupaten Bandung, 2023).

<sup>31</sup> (Effendhie, 2019; Mitchell, 2003).

<sup>32</sup> (Effendhie, 2019).



Museum Kina is a monument that, within the framework of cultural heritage, can be interpreted as historic physical artifact of monumental significance for culture and knowledge. Monuments may include archaeological relics such as buildings, statues, paintings, or inscriptions<sup>33</sup>. Nevertheless, its importance lies in the ability to establish a political standing. Monument creates semiotic of space<sup>34</sup>, serving as filters of memory by emphasizing aspects deemed necessary for public remembrance, ultimately shaping collective memory<sup>35</sup>. In this research, Museum Kina functions as a monument marking the historical presence of cinchona plantation, evidenced by its function as territorial landmark and its continued prominence in local discourse.

As a collective representation of cinchona plantation, Museum Kina reflects a broader trend among colonial plantation heritage sites. Collective memory on plantations is often crystallized into museums, which then serve as tools to select which aspects should be remembered or forgotten<sup>36</sup>. While Museum Kina comprises a simple garden rather than a grand complex like those in the South Antebellum plantations, both share a commonality in acting as memory selector and represent collective historical narratives. Here, Museum Kina symbolizes the former glory of cinchona plantation, become a defining characteristic of Cikembang Village, as signified by its placement as territorial landmark.

The perspective that glorifies the cinchona plantation as Cikembang's golden era is also evident in the terminology used by relevant parties when referring to the land occupation of 1998 that ends the plantation. The three remaining upper plantation elite refer to the event as "*penyerobotan*" or encroachment. This term carries a negative connotation and in Indonesian Dictionary means "to seize property or rights arbitrarily or without regard to law or regulation". This choice of terminology reflects the perspective of plantation officials regarding the event, believing that life for Cikembang residents was much better during the heyday of cinchona plantation, claiming that all vital facilities were freely provided for its workers.

The land occupation that occurred in Cikembang from 1998 to the early 2000s was part of national broader phenomenon, arose from public dissatisfaction

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<sup>33</sup> Effendhie, *Arsip, Memori, Dan Warisan Budaya*.

<sup>34</sup> Mitchell, "Monuments, Memorials, and the Politics of Memory."

<sup>35</sup> Brian Ladd, *The Ghosts of Berlin: Confronting German History in the Urban Landscape* (University of Chicago Press, 2018).

<sup>36</sup> Adamkiewicz, "White Nostalgia: The Absence of Slavery and the Commodification of White Plantation Nostalgia"; Alderman and Modlin Jr, "On the Political Utterances of Plantation Tourists: Vocalizing the Memory of Slavery on River Road"; Battle-Baptiste, "Cruise Ships, Community, and Collective Memory at Millars Plantation, Eleuthera, Bahamas"; Benjamin and Alderman, "Performing a Different Narrative: Museum Theater and the Memory-Work of Producing and Managing Slavery Heritage at Southern Plantation Museums"; Bastos, "Plantation Memories, Labor Identities, and the Celebration of Heritage: The Case of Hawaii's Plantation Village."

with the authoritarian practices of the New Order regime, which used the 1960 Agrarian Law as a basis to allow large manufacturers to utilize land, rather than implementing land redistribution to impoverished, landless farmers<sup>37</sup>. Groups of farmers seized and occupied lands controlled by state-owned enterprises such as Perum Perhutani and PTPN accross Java and Sumatra<sup>38</sup>. In addition to coinciding with the widespread land occupation across Indonesia, the events that took place in Cikembang were also caused by a decline in its cinchona production, marked by the merger scheme with other plantation unit and dismantling of the bark processing factory. The occupation of the Cikembang cinchona plantation concession area owned by PTPN marked a total transformation in local livelihoods, as most residents transitioned from plantation laborers to becoming tenant farmers or agricultural laborers cultivating commercial vegetable crops. The opportunity to become land-owning farmers only arose after the land occupation while previously cinchona was out of option because this plant requires 7 to 15 years to be ready for harvest.

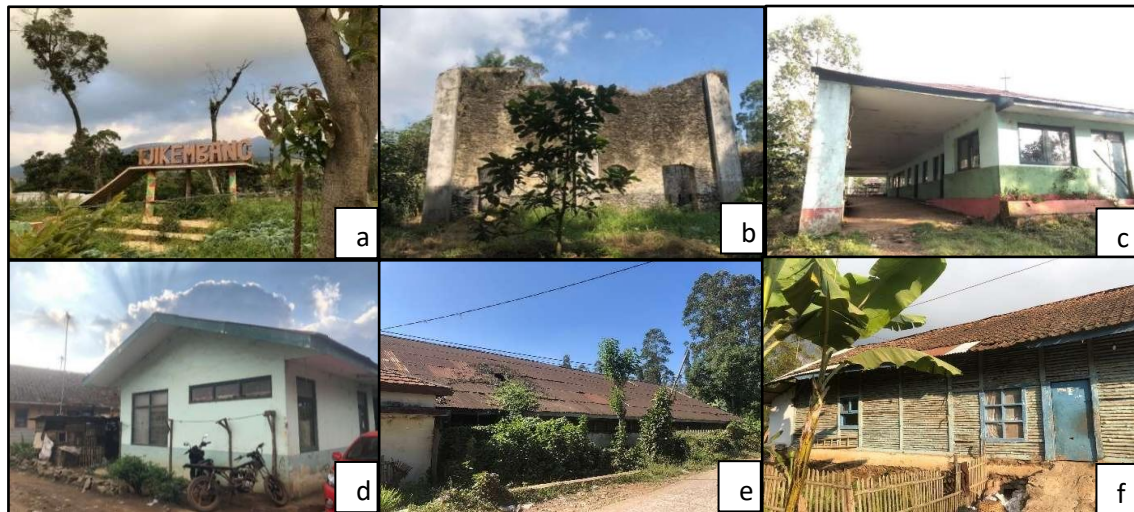
Traces of the cinchona plantation's existence are also evident in other historical physical remnants, categorized into two groups of structures. The first consists of operational facilities, including the factory building and the plantation's administrative office. The second comprises additional supporting facilities intended for laborers, such as the former clinic building, labor housing, and the night market commonly referred as Pasar Cikembang. While some of these structures have been left abandoned, they have not been demolished, preserving the memory of the existence of the Cikembang cinchona plantation. Others, however, have been repurposed. One such example is the transformation of labor housing (locally referred as *bedeng* which means temporary workers' housing), once made exclusively for plantation workers and now is occupied by local residents and has also been designated as official housing for village government apparatus. Some regulations previously imposed by the plantation management including the obligation to maintain cleanliness, uniformity, and prohibition of renovation, have since been revoked. Additionally, the former administrative office and market building were temporarily repurposed as housing for military personnel assigned to the government's "Citarum Harum" program, which aimed to restore the environment of Citarum Hulu, including Cikembang Village.

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<sup>37</sup> Bachriadi and Lucas, *Merampas Tanah Rakyat: Kasus Tapos Dan Cimacan*; John F. McCarthy and Kathryn Robinson, *Land and Development in Indonesia: Searching for the People's Sovereignty* (IEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute, 2016).

<sup>38</sup> N Rachman, "The Resurgence of Land Reform Policy and Agrarian Movements in Indonesia" (PhD dissertation, University of California, 2011).

**Figure 3. The physical remnants of Cikembang cinchona plantation.**  
a) Museum Kina, b) cinchona bark milling factory, c) plantation administrative office, d) plantation-owned health clinic, e) Cikembang night market (*Pasar Cikembang*), and f) worker's housing (*bedeng*)



Each of these historical structures is embedded in the collective memory of local residents. Nevertheless, this study will focus exclusively on the second group of historical buildings—the supporting facilities for laborers—which includes the former clinic, labor housing, and night market named Pasar Cikembang. The residents' memories of these structures reveal traces of the paternalistic relationships once implemented by the plantation, its scheme, and the resulting implications as will be elaborated upon below.

### **Paternalism in Plantation**

This section will focus on the memories of former plantation laborers, whose lives were once entirely dependent on the supporting facilities of the plantation, as evidenced by the remnants of the former clinic building, workers' housing, and night market. Plantation laborers also represent a marginalized class, subordinate to other dominant groups in social, economic, and political terms. Marginalization does not equate to being a numerical minority, as the number of laborers far exceeded the powerful plantation officials. Nonetheless, the lives of laborers were largely, if not entirely, dictated by company policies enacted by plantation elites such as administrators, managers, and their assistants<sup>39</sup>. The marginalized position of laborers within the plantation's relational structure is evident in their memories of past poverty as the lowest tier, tasked with planting,

<sup>39</sup> Li and Semedi, *Hidup Bersama Raksasa: Manusia Dan Pendudukan Perkebunan Sawit*.

maintaining, and harvesting the plant<sup>40</sup>. In Cikembang, former plantation laborers were often referred to as *harian* (daily worker) because their wages were calculated based on the number of days they worked in a month. The term “*karyawan*” (employee) was also commonly used to replace “*buruh*” (laborer), a practice frequently adopted in state-owned plantations after the 1965 genocide to weaken labor union movements.

Meanwhile, paternalism is defined as a parent-child-like relationship that justifies illiberal practices and always involving two parties: the governing and the governed. The governing act as a parent, controlling the actions of the governed, under the assumption that they are limited in making best decisions for themselves. These limitations are generally based on perceived racial inferiority<sup>41</sup> or lower socioeconomic class. This definition is also manifested in hierarchical relations which are not only authoritative but also moral and sentimental<sup>42</sup>, while create the governed’s reliance on the governing<sup>43</sup>, and project the illusion that the governing provide certain protections for the governed. Paternalistic relationships often occur in political and economic activities, such as state welfare programs for socially excluded groups<sup>44</sup>, “benevolence” from masters to slaves in the antebellum South through food provision, housing, medical assistance, and pension funds on plantations in Indonesia, particularly during the New Order era<sup>45</sup>.

The practice of paternalism often faces opposition due to its potential in generate socio-economic dependencies of the governed<sup>46</sup>. Nevertheless, Begon (2016) explains that anti-paternalistic stances are often only on surface-level. Rather than providing evidence of the adverse effects caused by paternalism, the critics only focus on its interference with individual liberty<sup>47</sup>. This study will challenge this perception by demonstrating that paternalistic patterns in Cikembang plantation were not solely aimed at restricting workers' liberty, but also at asserting control and maintaining a sustainable flow of cheap labor, a primary characteristic of colonial plantation in Asia<sup>48</sup>.

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<sup>40</sup> Sartono Kartodirdjo and Djoko Suryo, *Sejarah Perkebunan Di Indonesia: Kajian Sosial-Ekonomi*, 1991.

<sup>41</sup> Gibbon, Daviron, and Barral, “Lineages of Paternalism: An Introduction.”

<sup>42</sup> John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*, 1859.

<sup>43</sup> Newby, “Paternalism and Capitalism.”

<sup>44</sup> MacGregor, “Welfare, Neo-Liberalism and New Paternalism: Three Ways for Social Policy in Late Capitalist Societies.”

<sup>45</sup> (Barral, 2014; Gibbon et al., 2014; Li, 2017b, 2024)

<sup>46</sup> Barral, “Paternalistic Supervision of Labour in Indonesian Plantations: Between Dependence and Autonomy”; Gibbon, Daviron, and Barral, “Lineages of Paternalism: An Introduction.”

<sup>47</sup> (Saunders-Hastings, 2024).

<sup>48</sup> Alec Gordon, “Towards a Model of Asian Plantation Systems,” *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 31, no. 3 (January 14, 2001): 306–30, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00472330180000191>.

In Indonesia, paternalistic patterns dominated plantations particularly after the colonial period, precisely following the nationalization of Dutch-owned companies in 1959, and strengthening during the New Order until the present<sup>49</sup>. Combination of authoritarian and paternalistic system manifested through the establishment of absolute plantation power, while providing paternalist welfare facilities—particularly those previously absent during colonial period—such as housing, healthcare, loan, and education. This demonstrates that plantations functioned as the governing body that required their workers as the governed to conform to facilities and regulations, based on the perception that this was intended for the workers' own benefit.

Among various definitions of paternalism, Gibbon et al. (2014) assert that paternalistic relationships, particularly in plantation, can be realized through the fulfillment of several criteria: 1) manifestation through moral improvement for the governed, and 2) manifestation through practices of welfare, which both are implemented through coercion. These criterias serve as the primary benchmark in analyzing the memory of the Cikembang cinchona plantation, as explored below.

### **Moral Improvement: The Eradication of Gambling**

Moral improvement rests upon the governing body's method of aligning the governed's actions with 'enlightened norms' which can vary significantly on local contexts and often manifests in adherence to religiosity. The characteristics of paternalism displayed through moral improvement relate to the positive image that the governing body wishes to project, while also being intended to facilitate asserting control over the governed. At Cikembang cinchona plantation itself, this particular characteristic of paternalism can be observed through physical monuments and its accompanying memories of local residents.

The historical building legacy that records traces of moral improvement is the former building of *Pasar Cikembang* (Cikembang Market), which was open once a month, precisely on the 5th of each month, coinciding with plantation payday. Established during the Dutch era and continued in post-nationalization, the market offered various goods uncommon on regular days. During the colonial era, the most popular entertainment activities in it were dice gambling (locally called *koclok*), gambling through sheep fighting, and *ronggeng* dance performance. The plantation claimed this market was a facility provided for recreational purpose, while in reality gambling in monthly markets like these were a common colonial plantation strategy to bind laborers to the plantation. Workers were "persuaded" to spend their wages in gambling, ensuring the need to return to work and become settle in the remote plantation area<sup>50</sup>.

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<sup>49</sup> (Barral, 2012; Barral, 2014; Gibbon et al., 2014; Li, 2017b)

<sup>50</sup> Breman, *Mobilizing Labour for the Global Coffee Market: Profits From An Unfree Work Regime in Colonial Java*.

However, the widespread gambling activities at Pasar Cikembang ceased with the penetration of paternalistic pattern in the form of moral improvement in the 1970s. Plantation prohibited its workers from engaging in gambling that had previously dominated the area in order to reflect a positive image for the plantation and the state. In Cikembang, this moral improvement was also supported by local elites, specifically religious leaders. This is evidenced by the Islamic boarding school (*pondok pesantren*)-owning clan in Cikembang, who settled permanently in this area after their patriarch, who had initially studied Islam in Tasikmalaya, was sent to preach in Cikembang in the 1970s. Upon arrival, he participated in eradicating the widespread gambling among plantation workers through religious sermons encouraging adherence to Islamic values. The involvement of religious figures appears to have been exchanged for rewards in the form of access to agricultural land and patronage relationship, which subsequently established this clan as influential figures in the region until the present day.

The moral improvement program at Cikembang plantation can be observed not only through the physical remains of Pasar Cikembang, but also through local sentiments in conveying their memories. The majority of them deny that gambling events were ever held, stating that such activities were incompatible with the Islamic values embraced by the majority of residents. This is a sense of shame in acknowledging that gambling was once an openly organized activity in the village, even delegated through plantation facilities, as it conflicts with the religious values that now dominate the village. Stories about gambling are instead narrated by descendants of the aforementioned religious clan, portrayed the former plantation workers as non-religious group while highlighting the religious clan's heroism and patronage.

Paternalistic relationships concerning moral improvement that emerged post-nationalization represent a common characteristic found in Southeast Asian plantations. This occurred because colonialism (particularly Dutch) generally utilized gambling as central means of binding workers to continue their labor contracts with plantation, through debt bondage that was needed to engage in gambling<sup>51</sup>. Meanwhile, changes in attitudes toward widespread gambling in Indonesia had occurred since the 1970s, when Islamic religious social movements opposed this practice, especially after the government openly facilitated gambling through casino development and public lottery provisions<sup>52</sup>. Based on historical timeline, the eradication of gambling at Cikembang plantation indeed occurred alongside the rise of national Islamic religious movements against gambling, which in the context of this research was disseminated through preacher figures dispatched

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<sup>51</sup> Breman.

<sup>52</sup> Mawardi Purbo Sanjoyo, "From Resolution until Social Religious Movement: Effort Eradication of Gambling Activity in Indonesia 1960s-1993," *Journal of Islamic History and Manuscript* 2, no. 1 (May 9, 2023): 35–54, <https://doi.org/10.24090/jihm.v2i1.7812>; Kenneth Yeung, "Uneasy Money," 2011, <https://indonesiaexpat.id/travel/history-culture/uneasy-money/>.

from *pondok pesantren*, which at that time was closely involved in community life<sup>53</sup>.

Beyond the strengthening Islamic movement during this period, the elimination of gambling also signified one of the paternalistic patterns implemented in plantation area. The colonial characteristic of binding workers through gambling debt was incompatible with Islamic values that grew stronger in the post-independence period and was ultimately eliminated. Nevertheless, the elimination of gambling at Cikembang plantation as a legacy from the colonial period, did not mean that the primary purpose of gambling—as means of binding workers—was also eliminated. The same objective was instead achieved through different means, namely through the subsequent paternalistic relation in the form of welfare practices, as explained below.

### **Practice of Welfare: Medical Clinic, Housing, and Livestock Rearing**

Labor retention mechanisms in plantations became evident through the next category of paternalistic relationships, namely the practice of welfare. Initiated by the governing body (in this case, the plantation) and targeted at the governed (the laborers)<sup>54</sup>, welfare facilities could include medical assistance, housing, and land allowances for workers<sup>55</sup>. Generally, the subjects of paternalistic relations established through these facilities provided 'compensation' in the form of labor<sup>56</sup>. Although often unrecognized, the practice of welfare was implemented with coercion, had to be mandatorily followed by their recipients, which were the workers. Welfare facilities also became a mandatory requirement for plantations since the New Order era, which also began with labor union protests to fulfill basic facility requirements for workers<sup>57</sup>. In other words, the welfare facilities that will be discussed next were only initiated in the post-nationalization period.

In Cikembang, welfare as part of the paternalistic pattern was first evident from the testimonies and nostalgia of current plantation elites, who often mentioned that the life of residents were far more prosperous when they worked as plantation laborers compared to the present, when they become smallholder farmers after occupying concession land. This also demonstrates that plantations in Indonesia were often portrayed as vehicles for bringing prosperity and progress to society<sup>58</sup>.

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<sup>53</sup> Ading Kusdiana, "Pesantren Persatuan Islam Dan Kontribusinya Bagi Perkembangan Pemikiran Di Indonesia," *Historia Madania* 7, no. 2 (2023).

<sup>54</sup> MacGregor, "Welfare, Neo-Liberalism and New Paternalism: Three Ways for Social Policy in Late Capitalist Societies"; Newby, "Paternalism and Capitalism."

<sup>55</sup> (Barral, 2012, 2014; Gibbon et al., 2014; Li, 2017)

<sup>56</sup> Kaba, "Of Old and New Business Ethics: How Fair Trade Becomes Patronage and Paternalism in a Darjeeling Tea Plantation."

<sup>57</sup> Gibbon, Daviron, and Barral; Barral, "Paternalistic Supervision of Labour in Indonesian Plantations: Between Dependence and Autonomy."

<sup>58</sup> Li and Semedi, *Hidup Bersama Raksasa: Manusia Dan Pendudukan Perkebunan Sawit*.



*"Back when the cinchona plantation was still operating, everyone was more prosperous and well-off, because all facilities, from housing, food, to clinics, everything was provided by PTPN,"*

Furthermore, welfare facilities can also be observed through the remaining physical ruins, such as the remnants of the plantation clinic and worker housing, which also carry the oral memories associated with them. The former clinic building was once a healthcare facility owned by the plantation, offering free medical services and medication to plantation workers. If a patient's condition could not be treated within the clinic's capacity, they would be referred to Pasir Junghuhn Hospital, a PTPN-owned facility in Pangalengan. It is important to note that only plantation workers were entitled to free access to this healthcare facility, while other residents had to pay a certain fee.

Welfare facilities were also prominently reflected in the worker housing provided by the company. This housing system was a common pattern found in plantations, particularly in isolated areas with low population density, necessitating the recruitment of laborers from outside the region<sup>59</sup>, which happened in Cikembang as most of laborers came from Garut. The housing facilities represent a space where private and public spheres intermingle, since this area was also inhabited by their superiors, such as foremen, who often exercised control over the private lives of workers. This included mediating internal disputes between family workers and monitoring the cleanliness of each housing unit<sup>60</sup>. Plantation also enforced a specific standard of living<sup>61</sup> by implementing coercive regulations on "uniformity", "organized", and "hygienic"<sup>62</sup>. In Cikembang, the housing facilities is locally referred as "*bedeng*".

*Bedeng* were semi-permanent structures made from plywood and cinchona bark, which were also locally known as *kontrakan*, since the occupant is laborer that was contracted to work in the plantation. Uniform in design, *bedeng* were arranged in rows, with each unit measuring approximately 7 x 5 meters and housing 2–3 household. The floors were originally dirt, and all residents had to queue at communal sanitation facilities. The rows of *bedeng* were separated by pathways paved with large stones, known as "*Jalan Belanda*" (Dutch Road), as they dated back to the colonial era and were used by horse carts. Each *bedeng* resident was required to adhere to established regulations, such as maintaining uniformity in the structure of the barracks—thereby prohibiting the addition of extra features—and

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<sup>59</sup> (Barral, 2012; Nuralia et al., 2021; Stoler, 1985)

<sup>60</sup> Barral, "Paternalistic Supervision of Labour in Indonesian Plantations: Between Dependence and Autonomy."

<sup>61</sup> Mintz, *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History*; Stoler, *Capitalism and Confrontation in Sumatra's Plantation Belt, 1870-1979*.

<sup>62</sup> Barral, "Labor Domination in Indonesian Plantations: How Control of Workers' Private Lives Creates Subordination"; Li and Semedi, *Hidup Bersama Raksasa: Manusia Dan Pendudukan Perkebunan Sawit*.

ensuring harmony and cleanliness among fellow occupants. These free *bedeng* facilities were available only as long as the laborer was under contract with the plantation. This meant that if a laborer resigned or retired, they had to leave the *bedeng* and find alternative housing.

Other than workers' housing, Gibbon et al. (2014) describe how the paternalistic relations was also evident in the allocation of plantation land for workers. A similar practice was observed in Cikembang cinchona plantation, where a small plot of land was provided for the landless laborers to use as a dairy cattle pen. Many workers engaged in livestock rearing as part of a contract farming scheme with the Bandung Selatan Dairy Cooperative (*Koperasi Peternakan Bandung Selatan*, or KPBS). Workers participated in this scheme to supplement their income, as their wages from the plantation were insufficient to meet daily needs. This arrangement allowed workers to "rent" cattle owned by KPBS, which they were responsible for raising and milking. Additionally, other necessary resources such as medication and vaccines were made available through credit provided by KPBS. The harvested milk would then be sold to KPBS, with deductions applied to cover the workers' outstanding loans. The provision of land for cattle pens by plantation encouraged workers to participate in this scheme as laborers were prohibited from placing cow pens in the *bedeng* yard to maintain cleanliness, uniformity, and orderliness.

This arrangement dictated the laborers' daily routines: they moved between the *bedeng* where they lived, the plantation area where they worked, and the livestock pens they visited in the morning and evening to milk the cows. Workers began their day at 4 in the morning, feeding the cows, cleaning the pens, and milking them. By 7 a.m., they started their daily plantation work, which ended at 1 p.m. During breaks or after completing plantation tasks, laborers spent time gathering grass to feed the cow. This grass was usually collected from the plantation area, which required regular weeding to maintain the fertility of the cinchona trees. Weeding was not officially mandated by the plantation because it was considered a "voluntary" activity for laborers needing food for their cows.

The plantation's policy of allowing workers to pursue secondary sources of income was a common phenomenon in Indonesia, particularly during the New Order era. This practice was linked to the 1979 regulation on workers' pension funds (mediated through *Jaminan Sosial Ketenagakerjaan*), which required laborers to allocate a portion of their monthly wages to savings managed by an agency and the plantation. These "savings" were later returned to workers as pension fund, augmented with interest, once they reached the retirement age<sup>63</sup>. This plantation's pension fund scheme was effectively "exchanged" for the obligation that workers vacate their company-provided housing upon retirement. Consequently, plantations

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<sup>63</sup> (Barral, 2014)

permitted workers to seek additional income so they could save money to purchase a home after leaving company housing. According to <sup>64</sup> this practice slightly relaxed the paternalistic relationship between plantations and workers, as it granted laborers greater autonomy. However, this was not the case in Cikembang. Rather than fostering autonomy or loosening paternalistic ties, the secondary livelihoods of workers as livestock rearers were actively encouraged by the plantation. These activities, both in their routines and necessities, remained heavily dependent on plantation-provided resources, such as grass feed and land, as previously discussed.

While may superficially appear generous, plantation was allowing workers to live as semi-proletarians and semi-small farmers to avoid responsibility for providing more decent wages rationalized a certain standard of living by assuming that workers could meet their needs through their additional income<sup>65</sup>. At Cikembang, the plantation's endorsement of KPBS contract farming scheme serves as a justification for the inadequate wages, maintaining the assumption that workers' needs can be met through dairy farming. If a laborer decide to leave the plantation and focus solely on livestock farming, they would lose their privilege of obtaining free grass from the plantation to feed their cattle, thereby increasing their production costs. The detrimental impact of the plantation's absence in the KPBS contract farming scheme—or livestock farming in general—was evident in the drastic decline in the number of cattle farmers following the land occupation movement that led to the end of cinchona plantation. This occurred as plantation area was transformed into vegetable garden, altering production mechanisms. In the cinchona plantation, grass were manually removed using free labor, as this overlapped with its workers' livestock needs. In contrast, small-scale farms minimized production cost by using herbicides to eliminate weeds, eliminating the need for additional manpower. Consequently, no grass remained for cattle feed, forcing farmers to search farther afield, thereby increasing production costs.

All the aforementioned facilities—including clinic, workers' housing, and dairy farming support—were provided free of charge but only under the condition of an active employment contract with the plantation. For instance, non-plantation workers had to pay a fee to access the clinic. Similarly, dairy farming—one of the few viable occupations in a region dominated by plantation concessions—required non-plantation workers to bear additional production costs for land and fodder, rather than benefiting from the free grass available exclusively to plantation workers. Most notably, *bedeng* was reserved solely for plantation laborers. Upon resignation or retirement, workers lost access to the *bedeng* and had to find alternative housing.

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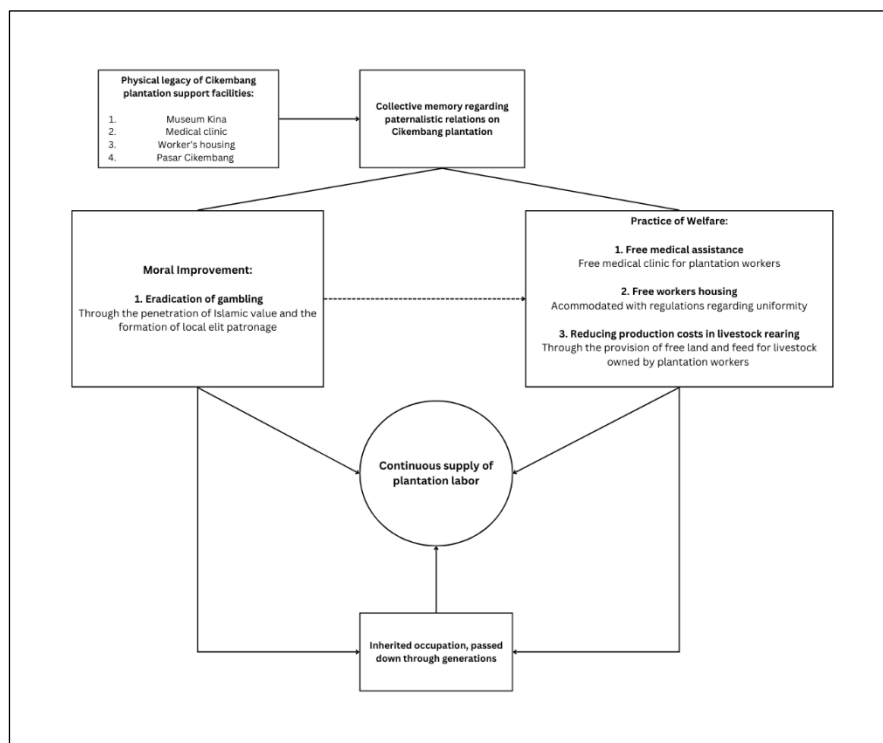
<sup>64</sup> (Barral, 2014)

<sup>65</sup> (Stoler, 1985).

## From Gambling to Housing: Paternalistic Acts in Local Collective Memory

In Cikembang, the limitations on access to paternalistic plantation facilities were mitigated by an intergenerational labor recruitment system. Plantation labor was often passed down through generations, allowing children to take over their parents' positions as laborers. The cinchona plantation typically recruited workers as young as 12 to 15 years old without requiring higher education. This arrangement disincentivized workers from prioritizing their children's education, as the plantation provided guaranteed employment. In other words, workers who resigned or retired could remain in the *bedeng* if their children were also employed by the plantation. This system also enabled the restoration of privileges, such as reduced production costs in dairy farming through access to free land and grass, as well as free medical treatment from the clinic. Here is the visualization of how all components discussed in this paper are interconnected.

**Figure 4. Flowchart of physical remnants, collective memory, and paternalistic relationships in Cikembang cinchona plantation**



Starting from the upper left, physical remnants in Cikembang—such as Museum Kina, the former clinic, workers' housing, and Pasar Cikembang—embody the collective memory of local residents, reflect the paternalistic patterns embedded in the plantation's labor control system. The stories and nostalgia of former laborers regarding the plantation's supporting facilities show that their lives were closely tied—indeed, fully dependent—on these facilities. Former laborers recall that the facilities provided by the plantation, including medical clinic, housing, and land

allocation helped to reduce their living expenses. However, they also note that these provisions kept them perpetually tied to the plantation because all of these facilities would disappear once the employer-employee relationship was severed. It becomes clear that the Cikembang cinchona plantation applied paternalistic relations as a method of labor control.

These paternalistic relations meets two criteria outlined by Gibbon et al. (2014): moral improvement efforts and the practice of welfare, both enforced through coercion. Moral improvement effort started in the post-nationalization period, which eradicated gambling among plantation workers at Pasar Cikembang. The plantation then provided welfare measures through free medical assistance, housing, and reduced production costs for cattle farming (often via contract farming with KPBS), which were exclusively available to plantation workers, meaning that upon resignation or retirement, these benefits would disappear. However, this loss was mitigated by the hereditary recruitment of workers. Essentially, laborers would give birth to future laborers, ensuring that former plantation workers (such as retirees) still retained access to the paternalistic facilities.

Paternalistic relationships may appear noble, but a more critical analysis is necessary. Beyond imposing specific moral standards on workers, the eradication of gambling in the Cikembang plantation represent a transition from the Dutch colonial to Indonesian government paternalistic labor control system, particularly during the New Order era. Rather than eliminating the purpose of gambling itself which constrained workers' autonomy, the eradication of gambling in Cikembang marked a shift toward another labor control system: the facilities of welfare. The objective remained the same: securing a continuous labor supply and fostering total worker dependence on the plantation institution. The only difference lay in the methods employed.

The need for continuous supply of plantation labor was sustained through hereditary employment to maintain access to paternalistic facilities. Within households, at least one member had to be employed by the plantation to retain access to housing and subsistence farming land<sup>66</sup>. This arrangement functioned as a form of non-wage compensation, allowing plantation to maintain low cash wages<sup>67</sup>. Similarly, hereditary labor in the Cikembang plantation exemplifies how labor was continuously reproduced through its dependence on paternalistic plantation facilities. The intertwining of paternalistic plantation facilities and hereditary employment offered stability and security to workers while simultaneously binding them to the plantation as a total social institution, one that

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<sup>66</sup> Besky, "Fixity: On the Inheritance and Maintenance of Tea Plantation Houses in Darjeeling, India"; Stoler, *Capitalism and Confrontation in Sumatra's Plantation Belt, 1870-1979*; Middleton, *Quinine's Remains: Empire's Medicine and the Life Thereafter*.

<sup>67</sup> Besky, "Fixity: On the Inheritance and Maintenance of Tea Plantation Houses in Darjeeling, India."

blurred the boundaries between professional life and vital personal needs<sup>68</sup>. Laborers and their descendants remained in a state of social immobility, as their environment offered limited opportunities beyond plantation work. The likelihood of a worker's descendant escaping this social immobility was minimal, as it required additional resources, such as access to non-plantation-controlled land<sup>69</sup>. This was particularly challenging in Cikembang, where 72% of the area was under plantation concession, and even village establishment was predicated on the existence of plantation society.

On the other hand, the hereditary labor system allowed plantation workers to form their own distinct society, bound by kinship ties<sup>70</sup> fostering a sense of belonging<sup>71</sup>, and creating an exclusive, socially distinct identity separate from local residents who lacked access to plantation facilities<sup>72</sup>. A similar phenomenon occurred in Cikembang, where plantation workers' families were once remembered as possessing a sense of pride that discouraged socializing with outsiders. The necessity of paternalistic facilities to maintain labor supply through hereditary employment underscores the plantation's primary interest: ensuring a steady supply of cheap labor—characterized by wages insufficient to cover the labor power reproduction cost—along with foreign ownership of conquered land<sup>73</sup>. In Cikembang, this was evident in former plantation workers' accounts of struggling to survive on plantation wages, necessitating side jobs such as dairy farming.

## Conclusion

Plantation has been an integral part of Indonesia's colonial history, serving as one of the primary sources of state revenue through commodity exports. Following the independence, these plantation companies were nationalized and continued to operate as sites of exploitative labor extraction. This study demonstrates this phenomenon through the collective memory that preserve traces of paternalism in the former cinchona plantation area in Cikembang Village, Bandung Regency as a way of labor control.

Collective memory can be reflected not only in historical physical sites but also in the oral narratives that surrounds it. It is not binary; former plantation workers do not necessarily perceive the paternalistic facilities they once received as entirely negative. Their recollections are dynamic—expressed with gratitude for

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<sup>68</sup> T. Marimuthu, "The Plantation School As an Agent of Social Reproduction," in *Indian Communities in Southeast Asia*. (Pacific Affairs, 1995), 465–83, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2761397>.

<sup>69</sup> Li, "Intergenerational Displacement in Indonesia's Oil Palm Plantation Zone."

<sup>70</sup> (Raj, 2023),

<sup>71</sup> Middleton, *Quinine's Remains: Empire's Medicine and the Life Thereafter*; Middleton, "Becoming-After: The Lives and Politics of Quinine's Remains."

<sup>72</sup> Li and Semedi, *Hidup Bersama Raksasa: Manusia Dan Pendudukan Perkebunan Sawit*.

<sup>73</sup> Gordon, "Towards a Model of Asian Plantation Systems."

the facilities that once made life easier while simultaneously acknowledging the constraints imposed by those same structures. Nostalgia for the perceived generosity of the plantation also often articulated, particularly by plantation managers who remain employed today. On the other sides, criticism of paternalistic relations which sometimes dismissed as being only superficial in nature—arguing that such relationships only interfere with individual liberty—needs to be reconsidered. In this study, the paternalistic relationship in plantations is shown to provide workers with basic necessities while simultaneously creating forms of patronage and reinforcing workers' social immobility. In other words, paternalistic relations also generate deep dependence, ultimately serving as a mechanism for the provision of cheap labor.

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