
Hand-Rolling Kretek

Class and Gender Paternalism

Hand-rolling kretek workers and the commodities they produce occupy a prominent position in kretek nationalist discourse; they are iconic and charismatic as well as threatened and endangered. The charisma of the hand-rolled kretek derives from its handmade heft and association with culture, tradition, and masculine sociality. It requires far more tobacco, cloves, and factory labor to manufacture than its machine-rolled counterpart and an anti-modern half hour for proper relaxed consumption. The worker who produces these commodities for the leisurely privilege of masculine consumption conversely toils under extraordinary time pressure. Her charisma derives from her marginal class and gender status in a capitalist patriarchy. This feminization of kretek production and masculinization of kretek consumption challenges gender stereotypes that assign men the valorized role of (rational) breadwinners and women the devalorized role of (potentially irrational and excessive) shoppers and consumers.

Sampoerna's marketing for its hand-rolled kretek plays up slow smoking as a core commodity feature associated with culture, tradition, and hypermasculinity. Sampoerna's first print ads for its "premium" Dji Sam Soe brand in 1992 featured "customer testimonials," such as a smoker recollecting how his father congratulated him on achieving manhood after he shot his first wild boar and rewarded him with a kretek (Reynolds 1999, 86). Television ads that followed in 1996 and 2000 used the tagline "history of good taste" (*sejarah cita rasa tinggi*) and showed men rhythmically repeating Sampoerna's auspicious and powerful (*sakti*) number Dji Sam Soe (Hokkien Chinese for two, three, four) while engaged in boat building, traditional dances, and the martial art *pencak silat* (Kartajaya 2005, 358). Ads released in 2003 celebrated ninety years of great pleasure (*kenikmatan tinggi sejak 1913*) with bucolic imagery of tobacco and cloves, blending, and slow-smoking rituals like slicing open the paper pack along its belly with a fingernail,

inhaling along the cigarette's seam, and massaging a dense cigarette between the fingers to release some tobacco (344–45, 349–50).

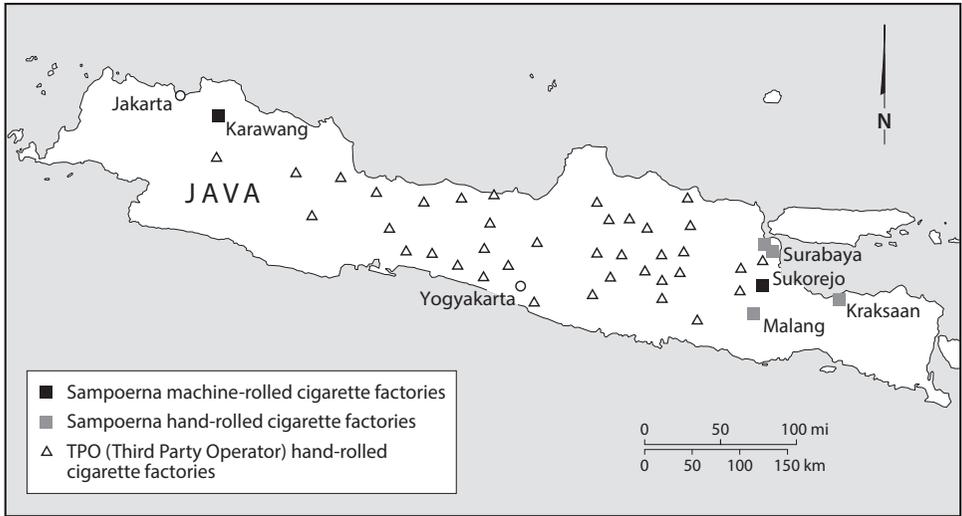
Dji Sam Soe's "younger sibling" brand, Sampoerna Hijau, which targets "class C" customers—farmers, fishermen, blue-collar workers, clerical staff, and petty entrepreneurs—treats similar themes of slow smoking and masculinity via slapstick humor (Kartajaya 2005, 376–430). Javanese clichés tying class to taste hierarchies figure the Dji Sam Soe smoker as refined (*halus*) compared to the coarse (*kasar*) Sampoerna Hijau smoker. Marketing language endows the latter with positive characteristics such as humbleness, simplicity, and companionability (Bourdieu 1984; Priyatna 2017). This core brand message—that cigarettes facilitate masculine fun, conviviality, and camaraderie—accordingly implies that not smoking (or smoking the wrong brand) leads to unhappiness, boredom, and social exclusion (Sebayang et al. 2012, 370). A 2016 television ad provides an especially clear example of this message and its logic. The commercial shows five men at a counter; the one on the right orders red bean milk, the one on the left chocolate milk, and then the three in the middle request sweet mung bean drinks, joyfully calling out "green"—Sampoerna Hijau's signature color—in unison (*es kacang ijo*). The two at each end soon polish off their drinks, which match their shirt colors and represent competitor brands Djarum and Gudang Garam, before gazing in envious bewilderment at the three buddies who keep contentedly and noisily sucking on their seemingly bottomless green drinks. Night has fallen by the time the trio finishes with a joint exhalation of "pleasure" (*nikmat*). In a final scene, their angry wives appear, one muscularly grinding a mortar and pestle and another demanding, "Where've you been all day?" as she threateningly cracks her knuckles. The cigarettes, and the homosocial fraternity they facilitate, offer a sanctioned form of escape and release from conjugal and broader familial obligations. The tagline—"Sampoerna, Dense Filling, Long-Lasting Taste"—underscores the hedonistic pleasure afforded by hand-rolled kretek.¹

This kind of pleasure is not confined to the idealized world of commercials. Whenever Dedo, an artist who smoked Dji Sam Soe, came across an especially dense kretek, he found himself wondering what the woman who made it was like. Such fantasies on the part of heterosexual male smokers draw on a long imaginative history, embodied in the popular Javanese folktale Roro (or Rara) Mendut. During the seventeenth-century reign of Sultan Agung, a Mataram nobleman named Wiraguna who helped quell a coastal rebellion against the central court is rewarded with the beautiful villager Roro Mendut. The rebellious Mendut, however, has no interest in becoming the old and unattractive nobleman's concubine or wife and spurns his advances. Wiraguna imposes a daily fine on her, which she pays by selling klobot (tobacco rolled in corn husks) that command a high price because they are sealed by her tongue and lit between her lips. She falls in love with a handsome commoner, Pranacitra, but the pair are caught when they try to run away together. After Wiraguna fatally stabs Pranacitra, Mendut seizes his dagger (*keris*) and kills herself with it, securing her afterlife with Pranacitra

and forever thwarting Wiraguna's lecherous carnal desire. The tale was adapted into popular Javanese theatre (*kethoprak*) in the twentieth century and reached a national audience when it was serialized in Indonesian by Y. B. Mangunwijaya (2008), a renowned literary figure, social activist, and Roman Catholic priest. Mangunwijaya also wrote a screenplay for a film version that was directed by Ami Priyono and released in 1982. In an early scene, Mendut (played by Meriam Bellina, an actor of Indonesian and European descent) inspires masculine lust and feminine envy as she dances, shimmying and swiveling her hips with a beautiful teasing smile and bare shoulders. In later scenes, she languorously tongues a conical klobot, inserting the larger and smaller ends into her mouth before lighting it and slowly inhaling and blowing out smoke. Cockfights held near her stall echo male jockeying for her klobot and attention. Whereas folktale and *kethoprak* versions of the story emphasized class conflict and lower-class resistance, the more eroticized film version—made in an era when class talk was politically dangerous—emphasizes female autonomy and resistance to patriarchy (Hatley 1988). Both class and gender resistance themes appeal to kretek nationalism, as does the hallowed place of Roro Mendut in Javanese folk tales and the Indonesian film and literary canon, with its resemblance to romantic tragedies such as Bizet's *Carmen* and Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*.

Sampoerna's living factory museum exhibit tended to shatter Roro Mendut-inspired masculine fantasies. A hand-rolling worker making three hundred to six hundred cigarettes an hour may be slow relative to machines that produce ten thousand a minute, but her movements are still fast enough to blur and difficult to track with the naked eye, giving the impression that she inhabits a cruelly sped-up version of reality. "Horrible" was how Kadir, a part-time grindcore musician and A-Mild influencer, described the sight of "so many women working so hard and so fast." Visitors who react negatively are often especially struck by workers whose tremulous head movements look like symptoms of a neurological disorder. Other visitors saw in the exhibit a reassuring display of essential blue-collar work in an era of declining manufacturing employment. A Balinese entrepreneur remarked to his buddies, "Without cigarettes, Indonesia would be destroyed [*hancur*]." Whether viewers classified Sampoerna's factory as an exploitative sweatshop or a vital bastion of working-class jobs, hand-rolled kretek production was clearly industrial in scale and subject to unrelenting and unerotic time pressure.

Hand-rollers' doubly marginal status as workers and women makes them especially sympathetic as everyday unsung kretek heroes when employed or as suffering subjects when faced with job loss. Reducing workers to noble kretek heroes or tobacco control victims, however, tells us little about the pleasures and pains of their actual work, how they relate to their work environment, tools, peers, and supervisors, how work and home life intertwine, and how their labor is subject to capitalist and patriarchal norms. Chapter 2 argues that in hand-rolled factories staffed by a female-dominated workforce, labor is shaped by a gendered paternalism that allows Sampoerna both to benefit from the public image of noble (and



MAP 2. Sampoerna's cigarette factories and third-party operators. Map by Bill Nelson.

often suffering) female kretek heroes and to mask the high-pressure and tightly controlled work in the rhetoric of protective care.

Exploring these themes, this chapter draws heavily on a month I spent working in Sampoerna's hand-rolling cigarette plant in Malang.² Sampoerna executives' willingness to grant me factory access should be seen in light of their conviction that workers were intensely loyal to Sampoerna despite the difficult nature of their work, the company's public exposure of the conventionally "hidden abode of production" through the living factory exhibit, and the privilege that academic researchers associated with prestigious institutions can enjoy in Indonesia (see also Saptari 1995, 15; Weix 1990). When a factory administrator first escorted me, a white woman dressed in a roller's uniform, to my place behind a rolling machine, a loud wave of noise spread across the shop floor as workers' curiosity was aroused.³ Over the course of the month, I interacted most closely with my immediate neighbors, but I had frequent exchanges with other workers before 6:00 a.m. when they would stop by to chat or take a selfie, over meal breaks in the canteen, and at the trough sinks where we crowded at the end of the day to rinse glue out of our tools.

FEMINIZED PIECEWORKERS AND THE AGE FACTOR

While female labor has historically predominated in the kretek industry, it was characterized by a more flexible gender division of labor until the mid-1960s. As discussed in the introduction, army general Suharto used the alleged communist coup attempt of 1965 to rationalize the massacre of trade union leaders and, after gaining presidential powers, the abolition of communist party-affiliated unions

and the creation of conservative government-controlled unions. Managers justified workforce feminization in this period by claiming that male pieceworkers protested too much and consumed too many cigarettes (Saptari 1995, 95–96; Weix 1990, 21–22, 126).

After facing labor militancy in the 1950s, Sampoerna sought to depoliticize its workforce as workers and as women in ways that aligned with New Order gender dogma. Although factory workers might spend more time with their rolling machines than with their husbands, through its radio show, the company still espouses the primacy of a conservative “state *ibuism*” (motherhood) housewife (*ibu rumah tangga*) identity that ideally defines women “as appendages and companions to their husbands, as procreators of the nation, as mothers and educators of children, as housekeepers, and as members of Indonesian society—in that order” (Suryakusuma 1996, 101). The good housewife props up her husband’s heteronormative masculinity and is the antithesis of the evil and emasculating Gerwani (women’s and workers’) activists whom the New Order depicted in fabricated and sensationalized accounts as killing and mutilating the genitalia of senior army officials (Larasati 2013). Whereas kretek consumption legitimizes masculine escape from familial obligations, then, kretek production is yoked to feminine fulfillment of familial obligations.

In contrast to more short-term patterns of youthful female labor recruitment for export commodity production (Lindquist 2009; Mills 2003; Ong 1987; Wolf 1992), the sector’s workforce has historically been grayer in addition to feminized, populated by older married women who often hold only an elementary-school education, commute from home, and remain in the same factory for long periods that often extend to lifetime employment (Saptari 1995, 87, 97–102, 224–25). The average worker age at the Malang plant was forty-four in 2016. At Sampoerna’s newest plant in Kraksaan, it was thirty-five—more youthful, but still a far cry from Meriam Bellina, who was a seventeen-year-old high school student when her sexualized performance as Roro Mendut appeared in Indonesian cinemas. I experienced an increasingly common ritual one day when a supervisor who had reached the retirement age of fifty-five walked down our line of rollers, shaking hands, saying farewell (*pamitan*), and blinking back tears. Another supervisor delicately confided that the “A factor” (*Faktor U, usia* or *umur*)—that is, age—presented the biggest challenge on the shop floor; workers inevitably slow down over time.

Retirements enabled the Malang plant to reduce its staff from 5,400 in 2010 to 3,922 in 2016. The workforce consisted of an all-female cohort of 3,631 pieceworkers (*borongan*, subdivided into 2,271 rollers, 765 cutters, 499 packers, and 96 labelers); 259 mixed but predominantly female daily wage workers (*harian*), including supervisors, tool maintenance workers, and box packers; and 32 managers and administrative staff on monthly salaries (*bulanan*), among whom were more men. Sampoerna contracted out to vendors support functions such as health care, janitorial services, and maintenance and construction.

Quotas subject pieceworkers to intense time pressure. “We’re not chasing time, time chases us” (*Kami tidak mengejar waktu, waktu yang mengejar kami*), a former roller who was laid off when Sampoerna closed its Jember factory in 2014 told me. Only some apprentices succeed in meeting quotas and achieve permanent worker status. Some quick workers in their prime get higher quotas, which means more pay but also more pressure. As pieceworkers age and slow, they once again experience difficulty meeting minimal hourly quotas, as they did as apprentices. I found quota pressure to be most intense among packers. My neighbor Bu Arti uttered a quick prayer at the start of each day of packing cigarettes, asking that she should be swift (*supaya lancar*). And whereas rollers often asked me how many cigarettes I had made (“*Dapat berapa?*”), packers frequently asked one another about their lack, how far short of their quotas they were currently falling (“*Kurang berapa? Kurang pira?*” Jv). Packers taught me the concept of *kepor* (not to be confused with *kempor*, exhausted), a state of falling behind in a task accompanied by a sense of urgency and anxiety. Toward the end of her menstrual cycle, Bu Rukmini was prone to fainting and falling off her stool. When this occurred, polyclinic staff instructed her not to think about anything, including her unfinished work and *kepor* state. Although packers occasionally paused to get a drink of water, they eschewed meal breaks. A shortage of tobacco tubs for rollers at the start of one day precipitated a subsequent shortage of cigarettes that left packers extraordinarily agitated and impatient, the possibility of achieving their quotas slipping away with each second of forced idleness.

The tremulous head movements that House of Sampoerna visitors find so disturbing are part of the quota speed complex. Workers claim that these movements help them work and that they are not involuntary. Bu Fitri, a speedy roller, deliberately engaged her head bob whenever she realized she was moving only her hand and arms and needed to pick up the pace. Supervisors sought to suppress workers’ bobs, which Sampoerna’s time-motion studies of workers classified as extraneous movements that could create a sensation of speed at odds with workers’ actual productivity. Cognizant of such disapproval, Arti said she wasn’t allowed to shake (*gak boleh goyang*) and should instead sit erect and move only her hands and arms as I did (*seharusnya seperti Mbak Marina*). She briefly imitated me, pronounced it uncomfortable (*tidak enak*), and resumed her bob. These bobs may be a byproduct of harmful, repetitive, high-speed labor, but workers experience them as an assertion of agency and idiosyncrasy over managerial efforts to keep their movements minimal, uniform, and efficient.

Pieceworkers’ bodies accumulate deleterious effects from factory labor. My short-term experience included finger cuts, aching arms at night, and pain when I sat on a regular chair at home after eight hours perched on a red plastic stool (supervisors called this *pantat panas* or hot bottom).⁴ Over time, the hands of cutters who trim cigarettes permanently reshape and bend around their scissors. Their right index fingers become crooked and warped (*bengkok*), and some develop

great blisters and calluses on the base of their right thumbs. They frequently slice open and split their left index finger, thumb, and nails, which are often bandaged because of a recent wound. After many years of accidentally shaving off their own flesh, the left thumbs of some are visibly shorter than their right. Workers complained of sore hands and arms (*pegel, linu*) in the morning, and one packer frequently shook out her hands, seeking elusive relief from the pins-and-needles sensation (*kesemutan*, literally a sensation of ants crawling, or paresthesia in medical parlance) that was likely a symptom of nerve damage due to repetitive strain. I heard a small commotion behind me one day and turned to see an older roller collapsed on the floor in the throes of intense muscle spasms. She resumed work after a neighbor massaged her back with her feet. Long sedentary days, minimal hydration, and delayed bathroom breaks also lead to potential kidney damage and severe hemorrhoids for some workers; I met one who had had hemorrhoid surgery three weeks earlier and was still unable to resume her regular duties.

Dr. Yasin, who had served in the factory's polyclinic for six years, characterized workers as unhealthy and initially blamed their own bad consumption habits. Observing that four had suffered strokes in the previous week, Yasin condemned their long-term use of hormonal contraceptives and their consumption of fried food. (I raised the role of smoke exposure in strokes with multiple Sampoerna factory doctors, but it always proved a nonstarter, and one even expressed uncertainty about whether kretek helped or harmed health, citing kretek nationalist misinformation.) He attributed workers' sleepiness and difficulty concentrating to their carbohydrate-rich, high-glycemic-index breakfasts. He worked with the plant manager to encourage canteen vendors to offer healthier options but generally despaired of having much impact on workers' dietary practices, saying that they relied on Sampoerna's health plan and were not motivated to change their lifestyles. Yasin estimated that 60 to 70 percent of workers were obese, a condition he linked to diabetes, hypertension, stroke, cardiovascular disease risk, and low-back pain. He claimed that workers would also "dope," taking supplements and steroids sold in front of the plant when they are tired or sick.

As we conversed, Yasin slowly shifted from blaming workers' poor health on their negligent and ignorant behavior as consumers to acknowledging them as producers whose working conditions played some role in their health. The sedentary nature of their jobs, he conceded, leads to obesity and hemorrhoids, while putting off drinking and urinating to chase quotas contributes to kidney stones. Yasin confessed that his ability to elicit a complete picture of workers' health was limited by their reluctance to disclose conditions that might lead to job loss. He always inspected workers' hands and frequently found that the pads at the base of their thumbs, which should be a little plump, were thin and worn from nerve damage, suggesting carpal tunnel syndrome. He wanted to detect and treat such conditions early, but workers lied when he asked if they suffered from pain. Were they more candid, Yasin believed, he could collect better data for management.

But it was not clear what management would do with such data beyond the ineffectual morning exercise routines it instituted. As long as Sampoerna maintained piecework quotas and fired workers who could not meet them, workers would continue to suffer to work as fast as they could.

Yasin also saw evidence of workers' contracting sexually transmitted infections, which he attributed to their husbands, who relied on their wives for cash and, with lots of time on their hands, had affairs. Some workers expressed concerns that reflected the doctor's clinical view. Although some were widowed and others had husbands employed in fields like construction or agriculture, workers were often the household's primary earners or "spine" (*tulang punggung*). One roller complained that her husband was engaged in many enterprises, all of which lost money. Some workers found gendered expectations that they attend to their husbands' sexual desires after their draining work oppressive. A plant manager in Kraksaan joked that workers' already long shifts do not account for the "overtime" (*lembur*) they must pull with their husbands. A supervisor told me that their work is so exhausting that husbands must understand that sex can be scheduled only for Saturday or Sunday, since on other nights, they are simply too tired. My neighbor, teasing a roller about supposedly having sex three times a night, scoffed at the supervisor's "old" perspective. On a more serious note, she expressed concern that her husband would get angry if she did not have sex with him (*marah kalau nggak dikasih*) and that he would buy it elsewhere. A packer, siding with the supervisor, said that her husband can just look at her and tell she's exhausted (*kecapaian*) and that he's not allowed to touch her (*gak boleh dipegang*). In this way, she added, sex twice a week turns to just once. Saptari (1995, 172) found that female factory workers' economic contributions won them household authority, enabling them to confront unfaithful husbands. At the same time, some husbands find opportunities—and justifications—for cheating during their wives' long work hours.

If kretek hand-rolling jobs are exhausting, grueling, and injurious and some workers described themselves as always suffering (*buruh yang selalu sengsara*), what makes these jobs desirable in the first place, and what keeps workers attached to them for decades? Even when they started work very young before child labor laws were enforced, workers tended to frame their entry into cigarette factories as their own decision, in some cases citing straitened family circumstances, such as having many siblings or their father's death (similarly, see Saptari 1995). A driver insisted that Sampoerna was the first place a woman (including his wife) seeking a factory job in Surabaya would apply and that among working-class circles in his youth, a Sampoerna uniform made a woman more appealing as a potential girlfriend or wife. When women applied for Sampoerna jobs or sought to reach quotas and pass their probationary period, they used various tricks to achieve dry hands that would allow them to work more rapidly. One who began as a roller in 1989 ate raw tofu each morning before work to make her hands less sweaty, while others poured gasoline on their hands to dry them out. Positive dimensions of Sampoerna

factory jobs include perks like scholarships for children, comprehensive and well-maintained amenities (canteen, toilets, drinking fountains, motorbike parking, lockers, prayer room [*mushollah*], lactation room, polyclinic, library, consumer cooperatives, and banks that provide low-interest loans), close friendships and social ties, and, until the 2014 factory closures, job stability. These factors make piecework jobs more tolerable and appealing, but overtime is the real key.

Sampoerna's hand-rolled kretek workers were historically accustomed to copious overtime, which entailed its own habit-forming dynamics; more work meant better pay but also less time spent at home and more exhaustion. Piecework rates are tied to regional minimum wages, and paychecks are larded with small bonuses rewarding strong team performance, consistent attendance, and forgoing menstrual leave.⁵ A normal workweek is Monday through Saturday, with shorter hours on Friday and Saturday. Workers receive 1.5 times their normal pay for their first hour of overtime and double for subsequent hours. On Sundays and vacation days, they earn double pay for the first seven hours, triple pay for an eighth hour, and quadruple pay for additional hours, meaning that nine hours of work on a Sunday would be compensated as twenty-one regular hours. Sampoerna adjusted to fluctuating market demand by increasing overtime. Managers found that workers welcomed fifty-hour workweeks but began complaining when they hit sixty hours. Before it closed for the New Year vacation in December 2015, the Malang factory ramped up production and operated nine-hour days, seven days a week, to manufacture kretek before the higher 2016 excise tax rate kicked in. Some workers who normally earned less than one million rupiah a week saw two-million-rupiah paychecks. They were grateful after having had barely any overtime in the three years since the hand-rolled market downturn began in 2013. The long-standing normalization of overtime made its absence feel like withdrawal, leading to sudden financial hardship and frugality (*ngirit*).

Prpto, the hand-rolled manufacturing director, deployed the charismatic potential of hand-rolling workers' class and gender identity—and their need for overtime and financial precarity in its absence—to craft a paternalistic appeal to masculinized marketing representatives and senior executives to invest in the flagging sector. To fulfill his job of “taking care of the ladies,” he commissioned multiple internal videos for Sampoerna's sales and marketing representatives and senior leadership team in which workers tearfully describe the profound hardship of working “only” seven-hour days. Having already lost her overtime, one cutter sold off a cherished necklace—a gift from her husband—after the auto repair shop where he worked closed. The videos conclude on a cheerful note as workers celebrate the return of overtime and thank the men (*bapak-bapak*) working to increase sales. Heru, a senior marketing executive, spoke impassioned about this:

The rollers [*ibu-ibu pelinting*] are our family. It's heartbreaking to know they don't get overtime. When you hear them say, “I want overtime.” There was a strong push

internally: don't think about brand or profit, think about the rollers. Talking to Paul [Janelle, Sampoerna president], he has been very clear. He does not want to close another factory. It was the worst thing he has done. Maybe very few people take it personally, maybe they think more about volume, but I do, I take it personally. Paul has said over and over that he doesn't want to close another factory, not an MPS [contractor].

Prpto mobilized “the ladies” to write letters to Sampoerna’s board of directors and board of commissioners begging them to invest in and maintain hand-rolled brands. After they regained overtime, he solicited workers’ thank-you letters, although he confessed that the overtime resulted more from factory closures and contractor cuts than from market rejuvenation. Such letters maintain the narrative that board members deserve credit for the positive aspects of hand-rolling work even when they do not but are not responsible for the negative aspects of their work (such as high quotas or low base pay) even when they are. “Don’t give up!” Prpto implored management. “If they [senior executives] believe it’s over, it’s over. It’s okay if SKT [hand-rolled kretek] are finished in another ten years. Just give workers enough time so that their children can graduate. At least do this for those who have given their lives to Sampoerna.” Managers also used workers’ charisma to dissuade the government from imposing excise tax hikes on the hand-rolled sector by recruiting workers to write letters supplicating government officials to protect worker livelihoods. Executives’ paternalistic sentiment reassured them of their own humanity and investment in tobacco industry benefits for class- and gender-marginalized workers. Yet it did little to protect workers from exploitation or job loss amid the changing landscape of kretek capitalism.

THE PRODUCTION PROCESS

The hand-rolling factory work that is masked under the rhetoric of paternalistic care is high pressure, physically demanding, and draining. Workers often rise for the dawn call to prayer a little after 4:00 a.m. and cook for their families before departing for work on minibuses or motorbikes, arriving around 5:30 a.m. to a chaos of other workers, vehicles, and vendors who set up a makeshift market around workers’ arrival and departure times. To access the production units, persons of all ranks must submit to a pat-down by a same-sex security guard. One told me that the motion of thousands of workers passing by her eyes and through her hands initially made her dizzy and nauseous.

Tools

Although hand-rolled kretek embody the “traditional” side of the Indonesian cigarette industry, the tools and process used to make them are hardly static. Production today is a far cry from the old black-and-white photos reproduced in cigarette museums and coffee-table books of kebaya-and-sarong-clad workers rolling while seated on the ground. Sampoerna tasks engineers in its Hand-Rolled

Research Center with producing tool and process innovations to “continuously improve” hand-rolling quality and efficiency.⁶ Sampoerna is ambivalent about implementing the center’s innovations, rolling out new technologies unevenly across its company- and contractor-run plants when they are deemed likely to provoke resistance, displace workers, or lead to overproduction. For example, after the Research Center created a modified rolling machine that eliminated certain steps and substituted stainless steel for wood, the company limited its rollout to new factories, although it could have substantially increased productivity to 410 cigarettes an hour on the new machines rather than 325 (in Sampoerna factories) or 370 (in contractor factories) on the old machines.

For workers, even seemingly minor changes demand workflow adjustments. Whereas they used to draw their tobacco out of red plastic buckets adjacent to their stools, over the prior decade Sampoerna replaced buckets with rectangular stainless-steel bins that stand on their workstations. My neighbor Bu Nia told me that after these tobacco dispensers or “mini silos” were introduced, she had raked her knuckles against the opening until they bled. In some factories, workers apply glue by holding a stack of papers between their fingers and twisting them to and fro until a thin and even line across the tip of each was revealed, allowing rollers to apply glue to dozens of papers simultaneously with a single spatula swipe. In the Malang factory, rollers used glue applicators, which proved to be the bane of my own rolling efforts. Witnessing my travails, Nia absorbed some of the burden of my errors, using papers that were slightly torn or to which I had applied too much or too little glue and ironing out ruffled papers by placing them under her cigarette tub for later reuse. Nia’s help reflected the general ethos of mutual concern and assistance among workers, as well as an ingrained sense that all supplies were rationed, doled out in limited quantities, and used with care. Although the applicator sped up their work once they grew accustomed to it, Nia claimed that when they were first introduced, rollers cried over how they tore the papers, and some found the change so demoralizing that they quit their jobs.

Rolling machines have metal identification numbers and are rollers’ most important tool. Workers typically use the same machine for their entire career and liken them to a second husband (*suami kedua*) to which they grow attached (similarly, see Cross 2012). When their machines require maintenance, rollers always feel awkward and wrong (*kurang pas*) on the substitute. Elaborating on the husband analogy, a manager observed that workers spend a lot of time with their machines, often more than with their human husbands, and that workers and machines are obliged to take care of one another. Each morning, workers adjust their machines’ canvas belts using a plastic rod contoured to ideal cigarette dimensions. Bu Nurul helped me adjust mine at the start of the day (a supervisor rolled cigarettes on hers as she did so so that she would not fall too far behind quota), and at the end of the day, Nurul swiftly massaged conditioning oil on my canvas belt so it would operate smoothly and not get sticky and dirty. Sampoerna often retires machines alongside workers, preserving some used by famously productive

workers at its Surabaya headquarters. Deep grooves have been worn into their wooden handles where workers' hands grasped them over multiple decades while they made millions of cigarettes.

Much as workers are sensitive to tools, they are also attuned to changes in their supplies and environment. In the rainy season, tobacco is more pliable and easier to work with than in the dry season when it becomes friable. The downside of humid conditions is heavier cigarettes that are vulnerable to supervisors' rejection for falling outside of tolerable weight parameters due to using too much tobacco filler; the Malang plant temporarily raised the maximum weight for fifty cigarettes from 105 to 107 grams during the rainy month when I worked there. Glue, made daily in an air-conditioned room with cassava powder sourced from Thailand, also varies in viscosity and consistency from day to day. Supervisors complained that "yesterday the glue was nice, but today it's not" or that "watery glue has been causing problems all day." Workers and supervisors also note variations in the cigarette paper, observing that some batches are thin and hard to work with, making it difficult to produce a flawless (*mulus*) cigarette. I learned from a research and development manager in Surabaya that the differences workers perceived in papers were not accidental. Because hand-rolled cigarettes lack synthetic filters, Sampoerna relies on changing burn additives and paper thickness and porosity to help maintain consistent machine nicotine and tar readings in response to tobacco blend variability.

Rolling

Supervisors, begging my pardon as they wrapped their arms around me to demonstrate how to roll cigarettes, instructed me to pick up the tobacco as if I were gathering rice in my fingers to eat. They reprimanded me when I shook off loose tobacco since this motion was unnecessary and would leave me with tobacco too fine to roll into cigarettes at the end of the day. I learned to periodically massage my tobacco to distribute fine (*halus*) or broken (*rusak*) tobacco. If I spotted larger stems or NTRM (non-tobacco related material) such as a piece of plastic in the tobacco, I placed the offending substance in a small plastic receptacle attached to the tobacco dispenser. I learned to press finer tobacco into the middle of each cigarette while stuffing a pinch of the longer strands into both ends with my index fingers. I pressed the tobacco in sideways with my right hand, then with both hands pulled the machine down, up, and down again, halting at the pen lines supervisors or workers inked onto my canvas belt when they set it that morning. I then brushed off loose tobacco with my left hand, plucked a paper out of the glue applicator with my right-hand fingers, transferred the paper to my left hand while rotating it so that the glue end faced downward, then rolled the tobacco into the paper with my right hand, moving my left thumb to the top of the roller and catching it against my left index finger. I rotated the cigarette around with my right thumb and index finger while moving my left fingers to the bottom of the cigarette. After tracing my

right thumb down and back up the seam where the glue holds the paper together, I tossed the finished cigarette into a white plastic tub.

At first, I struggled to achieve the correct conical shape and dimensions (eight millimeters in diameter at the inhalation end, ten at the burn end). Workers can check cigarette proportions by inserting them in sample holders attached to the tobacco dispenser; too small and they fall through, too stout and they sit high. When I stuffed a good amount of longer tobacco into the cigarette ends, they would be packed and sturdy enough that the shaggy ends could be cut nicely; with too little tobacco, the ends had holes and felt loose when trimmed. Initially, I also struggled with wrapping the paper such that the seam met precisely at each end and around the yellow band; in quality control parlance, many of my early cigarettes were rejects because they were “out of alignment” (*mencelek* Jv, *miring*). Cigarettes with insufficient glue embarrassingly sprang open.

Supervisors corrected my posture and movements and tucked stray hair into my cap. When I forgot to tuck my apron into my workstation, a supervisor chided me that tobacco would fall to the floor and become “waste” (she used the English word). When my shoulders tensed and I leaned inward while angling my left hand to catch the cigarette as I rolled it off the machine, supervisors reminded me to keep my body loose and relaxed (*lemas*) rather than closely following my hands’ motions. Supervisors also identified and eliminated superfluous hand movements.

My sense of touch improved alongside my rolling ability, and I soon appreciated how relying on haptic rather than visual cues freed me to raise my head upright, relieving neck tension. With time and experience, my ability to pinch the correct quantity of tobacco and distribute finer and longer pieces improved. I could gauge the proper level of resistance when I rolled tobacco—too much made it tough to pull; too little and it would fly along too fast and freely. I gradually stopped making crooked-seamed rejects and enjoyed a sense of satisfaction when rolling went well—when the glue applicator produced a thin and even shadow of glue along the entire strip of each paper, when my cigarettes emerged firm and well formed—seams meeting perfectly, free of tobacco, and not sticky or wet with glue when I ran my thumb up and down them, ends shaggy with longer tobacco. By the end of my second week of rolling, I was making ninety-five cigarettes an hour.

While I was taught to follow a conventional sequence of “correct” steps, workers typically evolved their own styles and incorporated shortcuts. For example, Nurul minimized her movements by taking extra time to scoop the correct amount of tobacco, whereas Dina used a swift initial scoop then rapidly added or subtracted tobacco. Dina could roll as many as five hundred cigarettes an hour. Nurul, who could roll six hundred an hour, rolled the tobacco down just once, not multiple times. Rather than brushing stray tobacco off the canvas belt with her left hand, she blew it away with an exhalation, intertwining her breathing and rolling rhythms. Like other rollers, she also omitted the step of holding the cigarette in a standing position and running her thumb up and down the seam.

Cutting

I found cutting cigarettes the most brutal of the four main production tasks. As a roller, I trimmed my own cigarettes for an hour or two each day since no cutter was responsible for my output. My first time cutting, dull pain spread from my neck up into my head within twenty minutes. Whereas rollers can use their sense of touch to intermittently free their eyes and raise their heads upright, vision is imperative to cutting, and cutters bend their heads into their task for hours on end. This posture leads to an aching back, neck, and head. Scissors, meanwhile, gradually mutilate cutters' hands as described above. After cutting for a while, the second knuckle on my right index finger turned an angry red, and indentations formed on my thumb and index finger. I also nipped and nicked my left index finger and thumb multiple times, controlling my reaction so I would not elicit the concern of neighbors. Cutters attributed accidents to sleepiness, miming nodding off and snipping a finger or thumb.

Cutting is the least varied of the four main production tasks and most closely resembles assembly line-style deskilling of workers. Both cutters and tax labelers receive lower pay, commensurate with the lower skills imputed to the work. Cutters trim one thousand cigarettes an hour (I managed two hundred and fifty). They periodically pause to rapidly form bundles of fifty cigarettes that they stack in rows of three, four, five, six, seven, seven, seven, six, and five (a skill I practiced but never mastered) and encircle with a glued paper wrap. One cutter told me that as a novice, she constantly practiced rotating one of her father's cigarettes in her left hand at home and on her way to work. The cutters' left thumb and index finger should land precisely on the end she will cut. I often missed at first, falling short and then walking my fingers up to the correct spot. The cut, too, must be precise, ideally a single shearing movement that trims the tobacco as close to the paper as possible without pinching or tearing it, which could lead to rejection. One cutter works with four rollers. Nurul suggested that this relationship ideally lasts a lifetime, but her previous cutter was fired because she was quick to anger and brought problems from home to work. Cutters know the feel and flaws of their rollers' cigarettes; in the day I trimmed other rollers' cigarettes, I felt how some were characteristically firm while others were lighter and looser. Cutters are supposed to perform quality control checks on the cigarettes they trim, removing foreign matter and catching quality issues such as the presence of tobacco in the seam.

The cutter's tools, too, are subject to maintenance, study, and innovation. The scissors are catalogued, sharpened daily, and color coded, with the heavier, more effective pairs reserved for cutters rather than rollers (workers commonly complained that scissors were stuck [*nyekat*], hard [*atos*], broken [*njebul*], shaky [*kocak*], or clogged [*nyendat*]). A manager told me that Sampoerna had developed protective items for cutters' fingers and thumbs, but workers refused to use them since they diminished their speed and dexterity. In 2011, the Research Center invented a new technology, the push cutter, that would eliminate the self-cutting

and finger warping associated with scissors—although it required different repetitive actions that could induce upper arm and shoulder problems, and workers risked injury when changing the blades. A single right-handed pulling motion with the device trims both ends of a cigarette. When I tried using a push cutter, it was harder than I expected to line the cigarette up perfectly such that the blades did not fall short at one end and pinch the other. Sampoerna introduced push cutters in contractor-run factories and the newer Probolinggo company-run factory but not in its older company-operated factories. When I asked a Surabaya factory supervisor why workers weren't using the device, her puzzled expression betrayed her ignorance of its existence. When I put the same query to the plant manager, he took me aside and in a low voice begged me to keep its existence secret since it could create anxiety and unrest among workers who fear being displaced by faster technologies. Other managers assured me it was no secret, explaining that to preserve jobs, Sampoerna had decided not to roll it out in older factories, even though that also meant perpetuating the slow mutilation of cutters' hands by scissors. With push cutters, Sampoerna raised cutter quotas to 1,470 per hour (10,300 per seven-hour day; contract factories raised their quotas even higher, to 1,550 per hour). The Research Center boasted that this meant a 47 percent productivity increase and \$3.7 million annual savings.

Packing

After two weeks in rolling and cutting, I moved to packing, where workers recruited me to occupy the workstation of a neighbor who had taken the week off to mourn the loss of her four-year-old grandchild to dengue fever. My supervisor, Bu Titin, taught me how to set up my workstation, which consisted of a stainless steel surface with a packing box attached, a glue ring and wooden stand, a small bamboo spatula for spreading glue, a glue tube, a vertically propped box segregating cigarettes on each side (cigarettes with the inhalation end facing out were on the right, burn end facing out on the left), a plastic rejects container, and wooden receptacles that hugged twenty finished packs with removable stainless steel plates that allowed packs to dry without sticking. Titin wrapped her heavy arms around me as she taught me the complex sequence of steps, which begin with pulling a paper wrapper (pre-folded first thing in the morning) into a stainless-steel packing box that gives the pack its shape. She emphasized the importance of using a sense of feel to swiftly grasp the correct number of cigarettes in each hand before fanning six out into the pack with the right hand, slapping six atop these with the left hand, then moving every other bottom cigarette to a top position while simultaneously coaxing three top cigarettes to roll into a bottom position. The resulting configuration, with burn and exhalation ends alternately facing outward, fits the conical cigarettes together nicely. Next, the packer glues the pack's spine into place, slides a metal spatula in to press the cigarettes into the correct shape, and then turns the pack upright and folds the paper using a smaller metal slide, tucking



FIGURE 8. Packing kretek. Photo by author.

and gluing corners before placing the finished pack in a wooden container. As she taught me these actions, Titin repeatedly compared the work of packing cigarettes to wrapping a present (*kado*), a comparison made strange by the gift wrap's graphic warnings that smoking kills smokers, harms children, and leads to cancered lips, throats, and lungs.⁷ As my skill improved, I learned to engage my left pinky and ring finger to tap cigarettes into place and to work quickly and cleanly with glue so that it would not coat my fingers or stray parts of the pack, leading to sticky, dirty surfaces. My neighbors made as many as 150 packs an hour, while I managed 43 an hour after a week. Once they have five *slof* (one hundred packs, or one *pasok*), packers walk these over to a storage rack for excise tax labeling. They otherwise have little relief from their seated positions on the stools. Quotas, and pay, are adjusted to match worker capacity. My neighbors produced 1,150 to 1,200 packs over an eight-hour day, or 900 to 1,000 packs over a seven-hour day.

The packers' central struggle lay in meeting quantity rather than quality expectations. Whereas various flaws on cigarettes are tolerated within a certain range, to pass visual and tactile inspection packs should be uniform and flawless. With some training, I could reliably achieve an approximation of perfection. Titin initially reprimanded me for not turning out the bottom corner sufficiently to show a small margin of red beyond the packs' decorative white lines. This struck me as an absurdly minor flaw, but I learned to see and correct it. Packers told me rolling was less appealing work due to the unceasing threat of rejection and attributed rollers' higher pay to their burden of responsibility. In the interest of achieving tough quotas, they passed swift and unforgiving judgement on cigarette quality.

When they saw me halt to extract a piece of tobacco from a cigarette seam with my fingernail, an ordinary act among rollers and cutters to salvage a potential reject, they scolded me and insisted that I instead toss the cigarette in the reject bin and move on, singing “just reject it” (*direjek, direjek, direjek saja*).

Despite the intense quota pressure, my neighbors prided themselves on being more youthful and fun than other workers. They called one another “darling” (*sayang*), engaged in bawdy conversation, sang loudly when Radio Sampoerna played a popular song, and encouraged me to copy their dance moves.

Labeling

Labelers receive the same lower pay as cutters, but their work is more relaxed and less physically punishing. They apply excise stamps (*banderol*) to packs, carton packs, and box cartons. All this cardboard and paper handling can lead to nasty paper cuts, but these pale in comparison to cutters’ injuries. Labelers arrive later than other workers, close to 6:00 a.m., knowing they will not have finished packs to work with until later in the morning. Their routines involve intermittent relief from sitting on their stools since they stand when applying date and location tracking stamps to carton cardboard and pre-fold it (my height forced me to sit) and intermittently walk to retrieve more packs or give finished cartons to box packers. Labelers occasionally gathered around my workstation to chat while I worked at my slower tempo, sometimes occupying my neighbor’s stool. One who had tried advancing to higher-paid rolling and packing positions returned to labeling, concluding that she appreciated the intermittent rest it offered (*ada istirahat*). To be sure, labelers still work speedily, but their quotas seemed achievable even for older workers and were uniform rather than tiered based on capacity. Their quota was fifty-five *pasok* (of one hundred packs each) Monday through Thursday, forty-seven on Friday, and thirty-three on Saturday (my output started at eight and rose to fourteen).

I required, and received, far less training and supervision in labeling than in rolling and packing. Bu Narti, the supervisor, gave me limited instructions, and my neighbors rarely felt compelled to correct my work. Narti set me up with glue in a stainless-steel tray and a wooden block on which to array the *banderol*, which she fanned out and glued down at one end so they would stick in place but could still be picked up. She taught me to turn the packs toward me and apply the glue using my sticky right index finger to lift a label, then hold it with left thumb and index finger while running my right index finger and thumb along the length of it to get glue along the whole thing. Labelers had their own methods of applying *banderol*, which often involve applying glue to multiple labels at once rather than following the “correct” one-at-a-time technique that Narti taught me. Bu Delia warned me not to copy her improper technique.

Glue work involves a tension between sliding and sticking. To work at speed, one’s fingers should glide swiftly over the labels, but even when done well, the work and initial results while the glue was drying were messy. As glue built up on my



FIGURE 9. Applying excise tax stamps. Photo by author.

fingers, they lost sensation and dexterity. I was inclined to rub my fingers together to peel off the glue, but Bu Wahyu discouraged this, insisting that I wipe my hands on a rag instead. After labeling a couple hundred packs, labelers tuck them into cartons, grabbing five with each hand and placing them at the ends of the carton at the same time, then fitting five more with each hand into the middle. While filling cartons, I learned to keep my glue-coated index fingers poised aloft while my drier fingers performed the work.

Being blamed for missing excise tax stamps, which have monetary value akin to currency, is the greatest source of stress for most labeling workers and supervisors. After a labeler told Narti she was short one, Narti inspected her packs to ensure that she hadn't accidentally stuck two on a single pack. She then started hunting through all the labelers' trash cups in an intense but fruitless search. When I, too, later came up short one label, Narti happily concluded that what should have been sets of one hundred excise labels only contained ninety-nine, so we were not at fault. Once I started a set of labels, she insisted that I remain at my workstation until they were finished, since unattended labels could be stolen. Narti previously supervised rolling and only reluctantly agreed to switch to labeling to fill a vacancy. She feared the responsibility and trouble supervisors and workers face if *banderol* go missing. Anyone caught trying to leave the factory with tax labels would be fired. Workers recounted that after a labeler incorrectly labeled packs, she was forced to take an unpaid leave, and the supervisor lost her annual bonus. On one occasion at the Jember factory, stamps were missing, and no one

was allowed to leave until they were located (a worker had inexplicably tossed them in a trash can).

THIRD-PARTY OPERATORS

Outsourcing hand-rolled kretek production to “third-party operators” (TPOs) was one of Putera Sampoerna’s innovations and an ostensible example of Sampoerna’s commitment to corporate responsibility. Aligned with East Javanese Governor Sudirman’s 1990s “Return to the Village” initiative (Gerakan Kembali ke Desa, GKD), the TPOs were supposed to create rural employment, reduce urban migration, ease development inequalities (*pemerataan pembangunan*), and employ workers from the poorest (*prasejahtera* or “pre-prosperous”) families who could only afford to eat two meals a day. Putera Sampoerna initially envisioned working exclusively with cooperatives (Koperasi Unit Desa, KUD), but today, only a few of Sampoerna’s thirty-eight TPOs are organized in this fashion.⁸ A TPO manager in Ploso insisted that residents were proud to host a factory in their otherwise neglected, deficient region (*daerah tertinggal, daerah minus*) that lacked water and relied on hit-or-miss tobacco harvests in the dry season. TPOs have created new rural jobs, but they have also served Sampoerna’s interest in ensuring a cheap, geographically dispersed, and insecure labor force and using third parties to lobby the government on the industry’s behalf to oppose tobacco control and keep minimum wages low. If Sampoerna managers paternalistically treat workers in Sampoerna-operated factories like children, TPO workers—along with TPO owners and managers—are like stepchildren, always trying to do more work for less money to earn high ratings, rewards, and larger contracts.

We met with unfailing and practiced displays of hospitality during our Sampoerna-arranged visits to a dozen TPOs. TPO managers and owners, Sampoerna supervisors, and occasionally union representatives assembled with us in meeting rooms for welcome speeches, safety briefings, and operation overviews before tours commenced. TPO hosts expressed their loyalty and gratitude to Sampoerna and their zeal for producing the quality and innovation the company valued. Their eager-to-please demeanors and resolutely upbeat performances verged, at times, on servile and desperate and reflected their subordination to Sampoerna.

Prapto conceded that one of the primary advantages of TPOs over Sampoerna-run factories is that they pay much lower wages, easily offsetting the additional costs of transporting raw materials and finished products. TPO pieceworkers’ base pay is set to exactly 10,000 rupiah above the regional minimum wage (Upah Minimum Kota/Kabupaten, UMK), which ranged from roughly 1.3 million to 2.2 million rupiah per month in factories we visited in 2016. The gender profile of TPO workforces resembles that of Sampoerna-operated hand-rolling factories. Factories with higher minimum wages have lower turnover and older worker age profiles, whereas in regions with low minimum wages such as Yogyakarta, monthly

turnover rates reach 5–7 percent, as workers frequently quit to care for children or try other factories. Turnover typically peaks after workers collect their holiday bonus at the end of Ramadhan. Factories with high turnover may have dozens of non-uniformed, closely supervised apprentice workers (*magang*) who earn a pocket-money (*uang saku*) pittance and can remain in apprentice status for up to one year.⁹ Sampoerna managers are supposed to ensure that TPO managers aren't "naughty" (*nakal*) in taking advantage of this extremely low-wage class of workers.

TPO workers face tougher quotas than Sampoerna's factory workers. Rollers, for example, must produce at least 370 as opposed to 325 cigarettes an hour. Although a Sampoerna executive framed these higher targets as autonomously set by admirably ambitious and high-achieving TPOs, extracting more from workers who are paid less could instead be interpreted as a result of TPO subordination to Sampoerna that produces greater worker exploitation.

In response to changing corporate strategies and fluctuating consumer demand, Sampoerna also demanded more production-line flexibility from TPOs than Sampoerna-operated factories. Whereas Sampoerna-operated factories exclusively produce *Dji Sam Soe* twelve-packs, TPOs produce *Dji Sam Soe* twelve- and sixteen-packs, *Dji Sam Soe Premium*, *Panamas Kuning*, *Sampoerna Hijau*, and "Marlboro Crafted," a hand-rolled white cigarette twelve-pack that Sampoerna launched in November 2020 in Sumatra. Sampoerna's president claimed that Sampoerna-run factories produce only *Dji Sam Soe* twelve-packs because they represent the company's core product and historical pride, leaving TPOs to cover the company's hand-rolled brand spectrum and experiments. Prapto offered a competing rationale: "It's easy to introduce changes in TPOs because their unions aren't very strong." A quality assurance manager similarly observed with an indulgent smile that Sampoerna workers would yell in protest if asked to switch product lines, whereas vulnerable and less entitled TPO workers were in no position to resist. TPOs found it could take six months for workers to achieve target rates when brand changeovers required different skills and tools. *Dji Sam Soe premium* also requires a devoted air-conditioned "conditioning room" where cigarettes are dried, which alters the taste and drops their average weight from 2 to 1.97 grams. A TPO manager assured me that they were proud to be entrusted with this premium product but then admitted that it was mandatory for TPOs to show that they are loyal Sampoerna partners who stand ready to serve, whatever task they are given (*sebagai mitra harus sikapnya siap, setiap tugas diberi oleh Sampoerna*).

The language of partnership that frames the relationship between Sampoerna and its TPOs, which are known as *mitra produksi sigaret* (MPS, cigarette production partners) in Indonesian, obscures the hierarchical relationship between the two in which Sampoerna surveils, ranks, and disciplines TPOs. A Sampoerna supervisor and four or more additional Sampoerna employees conduct administrative and quality control work on TPO shopfloors and undertake special projects. Disclosing a crack in the façade of benign mutualism, one Sampoerna supervisor

confided in a low voice that overseeing a TPO was immensely burdensome (*paling berat*) and had earned him enemies.

Sampoerna rates TPOs as bronze, silver, gold, or platinum and distributes rewards and punishments accordingly. Ratings reflect product quality, cost, safety, lost-time injury, security, industrial relations, and other “observable factors” such as corporate social responsibility (CSR) and worker satisfaction. Platinum winners should be outstanding in all parameters. Sampoerna issues performance scores at an annual meeting. Platinum and gold awardees are celebrated, while silver and bronze awardees go unmentioned; a TPO manager observed that the six bronzed-rated TPOs were probably ashamed. Gold and platinum winners were eligible for various awards that were supposed to motivate workers such as a drinking water tap system, a fifty-two-inch TV, LCD projector, laptop, uniforms, and panaboard (electronic whiteboard). More importantly, Sampoerna favored platinum and gold winners for larger contracts. Observing that they had enjoyed some overtime that week, one TPO director turned to his Sampoerna supervisor and obsequiously thanked him for the favor. He coldly responded, “Achieve gold status, and you’ll get even more.” In Yogyakarta, a manager preened that his TPO was Sampoerna’s favorite because they liked to be relaxed but also pursue their targets (*santai tapi mengejar target*). TPOs feed Sampoerna data on their production and quality indicators on a daily, weekly, and monthly basis.

In competing for most-favored factory status, TPOs often reproduce or mimic the programs and amenities of Sampoerna factories, replicating the lean managerial ideology, hiring professional DJs or music programming complete with jingles, and hosting special celebrations and events for workers (Kartini Day and Earth Day, traditional dress competitions and aerobics competitions), and sponsoring CSR activities.¹⁰ Accompanied by cheerful music, TPO videos showcase these activities and awards and incorporate images of food stalls and of signs labeling rental units as full to illustrate the local economic stimulus or multiplier effect created by their factories. TPO managers have also developed programs tied to “key performance indicators”; some workers are rewarded with basic household goods (e.g., rice, cooking oil) for weeding out non-conforming cigarettes or foreign matter from tobacco, for example, while others receive safe-driving lessons to reduce accident rates. TPOs compete for Sampoerna recognition of their videos, hygiene, quality, and productivity and for recognition of their industrial and environment, health, and safety innovations, which are showcased at Sampoerna’s annual convention. They even incorporate Sampoerna’s auspicious number via acts like scheduling a factory opening for the ninth day of the month.

However elaborate their social responsibility programs or outstanding their quality indicators, TPOs in areas with higher minimum wage rates complained that they were uncompetitive because production costs factored so heavily into performance evaluation. “Labor made up 80 percent of our factory’s production costs,” a Jombang manager complained. “Yogyakarta factories can produce

2.5 packs for the same cost as a single pack in Mojokerto!” Sampoerna pressured TPOs to keep minimum wages low by, for example, joining the Indonesian Business Association (Asosiasi Pengusaha Indonesia or APINDO) and exercising their influence as members. The Jombang TPO vigorously pursued this avenue of influence, while a Ngantang manager admitted that they belonged to the organization but exercised no meaningful influence over it. Pitting the TPOs against each other not only emphasizes their subordination to Sampoerna but also adds downward pressure on workers’ wages.

Besides helping suppress regional minimum wage levels, Sampoerna mobilizes TPOs to lobby the government against tobacco control policies such as raising excise taxes, protecting nonsmokers, and restricting advertising. Prpto explained that cooperatives, which are supposed to distribute their earnings, made for particularly appealing lobbyists: “If Sampoerna complains about the excise tax, the government can dismiss us, saying ‘You’re just a big company.’ But if you get a bunch of cooperatives that go to the government and talk about the impact that a rise in excise tax will have on them, the government must listen.” Some TPOs derived appeal from their religious or aristocratic associations. One of the Jombang and Ploso factory owners served as a teacher (*kyai*) at a local religious school from which the plant recruited fresh graduates as workers, and he projected the authority of a pious and successful Muslim businessman (Hoesterey 2015; Rudnyckj 2010). The last TPO that Sampoerna established in 2012 was tied to Yogyakarta’s popular Sultan Hamengkubuwono. His first daughter, Gusti Kanjeng Ratu Condokirono, became a director, and two of her sisters held senior positions in the company.¹¹

Despite the advantages they offer, from low labor costs and production-line flexibility to political capital in lobbying efforts, Sampoerna turned to its contractors to absorb the ongoing reduction in market demand after initially closing two company-operated factories in 2014. Rather than closing any TPOs, Sampoerna shrank their “packets” or order sizes by 27.5 percent. The Ploso factory, which used to manufacture over fifteen million cigarettes a week and sometimes subjected workers to brutal sixty-one-hour workweeks, was reduced to nine million sticks a week. My assumption that massive layoffs must have ensued was confounded by large signs in front of Yogyakarta factories announcing hundreds of open positions. Managers explained that high turnover could take care of shrinking their workforce when order reductions hit. Managers and union representatives in factories with high wages and low turnover offered divergent accounts of how they reduced their workforce. In Ngantang, union representatives claimed that the early retirement offer (*pensiun dini sukarela*) was so appealing that workers clamored to take it, so the union determined which workers economically needed to keep their jobs.¹² In other higher-wage TPOs, union representatives admitted that as they pursued a 10 percent workforce reduction they sought to oust workers who produced below quotas and attracted peer resentment.

In some TPOs, workers responded to the loss of overtime by displaying their attachment to the commodity. At the Jombang TPO, workers took home a pack of Sampoerna Hijau kretek each week for their spouses, sons, or brothers, with the cost automatically deducted from their weekly wage. A union representative in Ngantang told us that her husband, a middle school physical education teacher, smoked Sampoerna Hijau at her request. Some TPO consumer cooperatives also sold cheap cartons of Sampoerna cigarettes and ran programs that allowed workers to earn points on purchases of the brand they manufactured (with product coded from other factories to avoid accusations of factory theft) that they could redeem for branded T-shirts, thermoses, ashtrays, and lighters. Amid the hand-rolled market decline and the increasing precarity of TPO jobs, Sampoerna continues to extract value from rollers and their families, as both producers and consumers.

SUPERVISING QUALITY, QUANTITY, AND SOLIDARITY

As those immediately above workers in the factory hierarchy, supervisors constitute the human frontline of speed and quality control and can inspire fondness and loyalty or apprehension and dislike. Most workers interact minimally with the unit coordinator and factory manager, by whom they would prefer to go unnoticed. Workers pointed out a camera affixed to the unit wall that afforded the factory manager a 360-degree view of the shop floor and surveillance powers akin to those depicted in Charlie Chaplin's *Modern Times*. Quality control lab technicians have a distanced relationship with workers since they primarily judge their anonymized products based on company standards. Sampoerna assesses everyone in this chain, from workers to team leaders, lab technicians, radio DJs, and factory managers, whom Sampoerna evaluates by comparing the quality, speed, and unit cost across factories. Ideally, no one should escape the dragnet of performance evaluation and continuous improvement.

Historically, Sampoerna recruited supervisors (*mandor*) from the ranks of ordinary workers, so many had low levels of formal education. One supervisor began working full time in a cigarette factory when she was ten, joined Sampoerna at thirteen, and was already promoted to supervisor at the age of sixteen. Another began at kretek manufacturer Grëndèl when she was twelve, later moved on to Bentoel, and joined Sampoerna at the age of twenty. In the past, she acknowledged, supervisors were selected by their friends in a "family system" (*sistem keluarga*). Classified as daily workers, supervisors use badges to check in and out of each workday and track their one-hour breaks with punch cards, often splitting the allotted hour into two shorter breaks: one to eat a meal and one to perform midday prayers that quota-chasing pieceworkers forgo.

After acquiring Sampoerna, PMI sought to dismantle the informal system for supervisor selection, which was vulnerable to charges of nepotism, by introducing new criteria (including a high school degree), openly advertising positions,

allowing anyone who met the criteria to apply, and subjecting applicants to standard testing procedures. PMI also instituted annual or biannual rotations of supervisors to different units and teams, whereas previously supervisors had remained with the same workers for five years or longer. A rolling supervisor told me the rotations gave them a fresh perspective, although it was always sad to leave behind workers whom they knew down to their strengths and weaknesses.

Workers are organized into teams—with supervisors acting as team leaders—in a structure that facilitates oversight, assignment of praise and blame, and a sense of collective rather than solely individual responsibility and competition. This would sometimes motivate individuals to work hard on days when they otherwise felt sluggish, although it could also make those who fell short an undesirable drag on team performance. In my unit, sets of forty-eight rollers and sixteen cutters formed teams with two supervisors assigned to each, while thirty-three packers formed a team with one supervisor, as did twelve labelers. Team leaders halted work to hold short pep (*semangat*) sessions every Thursday morning before Radio Sampoerna began broadcasting. Encircled by workers, the supervisor discussed their performance goals, achievements, and challenges and led cheers on themes having to do with product quality. One week, Bu Mainu praised her rolling and cutting team for achieving the second-best quality index, adding that if they reached number one, they would receive an extra 20,000 rupiah in their weekly pay. I later asked if her team often performed so well. Mainu shrugged, responding that workers were humans, not machines, so their work was sometimes good, sometimes bad.

Workers judged supervisors on how they used their position and authority. Some earned appreciation by contributing to workers' output. When a labeler left her workstation, Narti often occupied the vacant stool and labeled packs until she returned, and labelers praised her as kind (*baik*) and familial (*seperti saudara*). When Titin observed a packer struggling to make her quota, she sometimes stood beside her for a while and prepared sets of twelve cigarettes, correctly arranged. Packers contrasted Titin with an earlier, evil (*jahat*) supervisor who had sapped their enthusiasm and desire to work. Rollers contrasted a modest, hard-working, and diligent (*sregep* Jv) supervisor who was approaching retirement with another whom they accused of being engrossed in her phone and ignoring workers. If she had nothing better to do, they said, she should help cutters by bundling cigarettes and performing quality control. Workers speculated that supervisors who wore makeup and youthful, tight-fitting attire were morally suspect, enjoyed karaoke, and might be unfaithful to their husbands. The relationship between workers and team leaders—often familiar and friendly but fundamentally unequal—manifested memorably in an interaction between a cutter and a supervisor who were playfully smacking each other's bottoms until the cutter jokingly yelled "Assault!" (*Pelecehan!*).

Workers also judged supervisors on their approach to tracking and rationing material supplies like tobacco, glue, cigarette papers, packing paper and cardboard,



FIGURE 10. A supervisor inspects a roller's kretek. Photo by author.

and particularly excise stamps. Workers disliked it when supervisors were stingy (*pelit*), forcing them to scrounge around for supplies. Fearing a shortage, Nurul told me she used to hoard cigarette papers and hide them in her tobacco, which landed her in trouble. As Titin was stocking our glue at the start of one day, Arti loudly observed that everything is targeted and rationed, including glue, and that she would never be allowed to use glue in the wasteful and extravagant (*boros*) fashion that I did. Hearing Arti's words, Titin gave her a generous second squirt of glue.

Sampoerna urges pieceworkers to internalize responsibility for quality with red aprons emblazoned with "my best quality" (*kwalitasku terbaik*), but it also institutes multiple layers of external oversight and control. Some supervisors made examples of workers' shortcomings with loud comments. During my day as a cutter, a supervisor materialized at my side while I was working through a batch that included one cigarette with a visible chunk of plastic and another with a tobacco stem so large it stuck out at both ends. Appalled, she marched over to the responsible roller, offending cigarettes held aloft for all to see, and roared at her, ensuring that her remarks would be widely heard. On another occasion, she loudly, albeit less sharply, reprimanded my neighbor for producing tiny cigarettes (*rokok sampean cilik-cilik! Jv*).

Quality supervisors performed initial inspections on finished tubs containing six hundred cigarettes that cutters brought to their inspection station. They claimed that rollers used to make cigarettes however they liked, with minimal attention

given to matters like weight. After PMI acquired Sampoerna, the company forced rollers to produce more standard cigarettes. From each tub, supervisors inspected two bundles of fifty, weighing them to ensure that they fell within the acceptable range (98–105 grams), examining burn ends for loose or insufficient tobacco (*tipis*), pulling off the wrapper and fanning out the cigarettes, and yanking those with oil spots, tobacco in seams, too little filling (*gembos*), tobacco sticking out (*njebul, muncul*), too little glue, or wrinkles (*berkerut, lungset*). They also checked individual cigarette circumferences. A supervisor showed me how a worker had accidentally wrapped a cigarette with two papers. If they found twenty rejects in a single bundle, they rejected the entire batch of six hundred. “We had one of those today,” a supervisor informed me, casually adding that it was no big deal for a fast roller, although even the fastest would face an hour setback. To track problems, supervisors tossed rejects in boxes labeled with rejection rationales. After tabulating them, supervisors ripped rejects open to recycle the tobacco. Workers feared being reprimanded (*dipanggil*, “called”) by a quality supervisor or, worse yet, the unit supervisor.

Quality control also had a backstage lab dimension. Bu Sari intermittently appeared to pick up cigarette samples, which she placed in a plastic tub with a pink lid. Sari, along with five other *jilbab*-clad women, worked in an air-conditioned quality-control room. Their male supervisor occasionally ran shop-floor quiz competitions on quality-control themes, presenting winners with rewards like umbrellas and tote bags. I spent a morning observing inspections in the lab where technicians weighed and visually examined the burn and inhalation ends of the cigarette (*ujung bakar, ujung hisap*), rotated the cigarette in their fingers to check for wrinkles (guidelines illustrate low, acceptable, and high levels), and checked the seam for tears, insufficient glue, tobacco particles (guidelines specify the acceptable number and size of tobacco particles) and tobacco and clove oil spots (guidelines specify acceptable size and darkness of such spots). They enter numbers for all these variables into tables, generating a final cigarette score. Finally, they measure moisture content in a machine manufactured by German company TEWS. Sari insisted that quality-control ranking is directed at units rather than individuals, but critical scrutiny nevertheless fell on the latter. After Sari returned inspected cigarettes to the unit, the supervisor instantly called a packer to show her problems with the cigarettes she had packed, asking her to exercise more caution in the future. I felt that the worker was being upbraided, but Sari commented that the supervisor was providing motivation (*memberi motivasi*).

Social interactions among workers help make repetitive high-speed factory work tolerable, and mutual help and reciprocity buoy those struggling to meet daily quotas. Rollers, for example, might make an extra fifty or one hundred cigarettes for a peer who falls behind. Similarly, while we were washing our tools, Ana, who typically achieved her quota with ease, told me she had labeled an extra hundred packs for her neighbors that day. On an occasion when speedy Arti had

been assigned a reduced packing target because she had attended an environmental, health, and safety meeting as a worker representative (where she also won a prize glassware set), she gave multiple packs to her neighbors, dispelling potential envy. Because I was not subject to quotas, the modest quantity of cigarettes, packs, and cartons I produced were also subject to redistribution. Supervisors replaced rejected cigarettes with my output when it was fit for sale (*layak dijual*) and occasionally slipped some to workers who were behind. In packing and labeling, my supervisors distributed my finished packs and cartons among workers in their group or had me hand them out directly.

Workers also showed generosity toward one another in the canteen, where I typically joined rollers' 9:00 a.m. "lunch" breaks. Workers often bought tea and coffee for one another and stretched drinks by pouring a little for themselves into the saucer and handing the cup to a friend. (Although coffee is often seen as stronger and more appropriate for men, pieceworkers drank it to stay alert and chase quotas.) Workers spooned tasty food onto friends' plates or dipped their spoons into a neighbor's plate to sample meat, tofu, or vegetables. I was often on the receiving end of insistent hospitality, and Nia discouraged me from buying the cheap, tasty canteen food, bringing a full extra ration of her home-cooked food for me, especially the local tempeh specialty *mendol* that I was fond of. The polyclinic doctor cautioned workers, to no apparent avail, that such food sharing was unsanitary and transmitted contagious diseases.

Workers' lives intertwined beyond the factory walls. Some lived close to one another and commuted to work together, while those who lived further apart also entered one another's home lives, particularly around family weddings, births, illnesses, and deaths. Group excursions and home visits (*main ke rumah*) were common after the shorter Saturday work shift. I joined one of these excursions, cramming into the rear of a battered SUV to go to Batu along with rollers and cutters in a small caravan of cars and motorbikes. We caught only brief glimpses of the ostensible object of our journey, a roller's three-week-old granddaughter, who was nestled on her mother's chest in a sarong sling. While workers' husbands, who chauffeured us, sat on sofas and smoked in the front room, we sat on mats on the floor of the modest home, chatting and joking as workers took turns praying, ate a generous meal prepared by our hosts, and left with additional food packed into boxes.

Managers looked to the workers' union to ensure that solidarity among workers would not boil over into organized resistance. Workers in Sampoerna's hand-rolled factories and their TPO counterparts belong to the Cigarette, Tobacco, Food, and Drink (Rokok, Tembakau, Makanan dan Minuman) sector of the umbrella All Indonesia Workers' Union (Serikat Pekerja Seluruh Indonesia, or SPSI), which is a legacy of Suharto's rule (1967–98).¹³ After violently suppressing more radical and militant unions in the wake of the Communist Party's alleged 1965 coup attempt, the Suharto administration created the state-backed union that became SPSI to

depoliticize and demobilize labor. Throughout the Suharto era, the government invoked the specter of communism to discredit labor disputes and unrest and threatened labor organizers by branding them as communist (Hadiz 1998). SPSI union representatives in Sampoerna factories largely embraced managerial goals, negotiated modest changes in a professional and unthreatening fashion, shared information with managers, and opposed both labor radicalism and tobacco control as existential threats to factory livelihoods.

The union leadership is dominated by daily-wage workers who often have different interests from, and supervisory authority over, the pieceworkers that constitute the majority the union is meant to represent. Union representatives insisted that pieceworkers are reluctant to assume leadership positions because the interruptions that accompany union service would make it hard to meet quotas. For daily workers, SPSI union positions can serve as a stepping stone to further promotion in the factory hierarchy.

Projecting the union's hallmark conservative, conciliatory, and nonconfrontational approach toward management, hand-rolled SPSI leaders in Kraksaan assured me that industry was safe there (*kondisi industri aman*) because workers never demonstrated (*nggak pernah aksi*) and knew to think twice before causing any trouble. They characterized their union as quiet (*nggak terlalu ramai-ramai*) and adherent to the religious precept of discussing matters thrice before taking action. They invoked the state ideology of Pancasila to legitimate discussing and conferring (*berunding*) with managers rather than making demands (*bukan tuntutan*). Similarly, Malang leaders depicted the union as a bridge between workers and managers and explained that they adhered to the SPSI path, emphasizing mediation and consensus (*musyawarah*) and avoiding street demonstrations (*tidak pakai cara turun jalan*).

SPSI leaders framed more independent and radical unions and approaches as existential threats, pointing to cases of "failed demonstrations" in which workers lost their jobs, suffered injuries, and had no one to cover their health care. "If Sampoerna were destroyed," one asked, "where would we work? Our livelihoods [*sawah ladang*] are at Sampoerna, and we need to look after the company." Based on surveys of other hand-rolling factories, Malang's SPSI representatives were confident that they enjoyed pay and benefit packages that compared favorably to other factory workers. An SPSI representative at the Jombang contract factory even asserted that they had it too good, with a high regional minimum wage that was deterring other companies from setting up shop in industrial parks.

SPSI trained union leaders in approved verbal communication techniques. At their annual wage and benefit negotiations with managers, which were held in moderately upscale hotels with Sampoerna covering food and lodging, union leaders showcased their research and professional skills with PowerPoint slide-shows. The union gave management feedback (e.g., when new uniforms were too hot or uncomfortable) and requested improvements and greater recognition (e.g., for annual medical checkups, health benefits for spouses and children, cooperative

shopping vouchers marking each five-year anniversary of a worker's tenure, and batik uniforms for workers to wear once a week).

In the Malang hand-rolling plant, I attended an inauguration ceremony for the new SPSI leadership that framed the kretek as a national commodity and positioned workers and managers in a mutually supporting rather than oppositional relationship. The seating arrangements, order of food distribution, speeches, and entertainment reflected the factory hierarchy by prioritizing managers over supervisors and supervisors over workers. Drawing on nationalist aesthetics in her speech, the new SPSI head underscored that the union leaders' uniforms were made of batik, which, like kretek, is part of Indonesia's cultural heritage. Another representative urged everyone's participation in safeguarding quality to ensure that Sampoerna survived for their grandchildren. Clutching a bag emblazoned with "SAVE TOBACCO," the elderly head of the Indonesian Tobacco Alliance AMTI gave a rousing speech. "Kretek have been smoked for hundreds of years," he falsely proclaimed, "so if [the mandatory warning that] 'smoking kills' [*rokok membunuhmu*] were true, then Indonesia would have been finished off long ago." Before managers, workers sang songs and performed traditional Javanese dances in elaborate makeup and dress. The event concluded with a lengthy photo session during which union representatives and managers pressed close for poses that reflected their harmonious and cozy relationship.

With the hand-rolled commodity in decline, Sampoerna managers invoke the importance of labor-management solidarity against common external threats like public health regulations. SPSI leaders considered government lobbying as one of the union's functions, and they had created banners, written letters to oppose excise tax hikes and tobacco import limits, and demonstrated against the health minister. A Kraksaan union leader said they also opposed regional laws requiring smoke-free areas and advertising restrictions, citing Bandung's and Surabaya's restrictions as examples to be avoided. A male union representative reminisced about the time when anyone could freely smoke anywhere and when people suffering a cough or sniffles smoked *Dji Sam Soe* to regain their health.

Managers also enrolled unions to remind workers of rules against "gossip." Managers regarded workers as emotionally volatile but also manipulable, credulous, and highly susceptible to gossip. The unit supervisor told me that agitators could easily lead on (*memancing*) workers. When the industrial relations director from Jakarta visited, he occupied my neighbor's stool and told me that as someone in charge of many workers, he had seen how trivial issues could balloon into huge problems. In 2008, he claimed, workers and supervisors went on strike over the rumor that Putera Sampoerna was going to pay them each thirty-five million rupiah.

Sampoerna found a worker-whisperer in Pak Salim who had a background in economics, worked for Sampoerna for thirty-two years, and continued to consult after retirement at the request of senior executives. He boasted about his knack for quelling demonstrations, which he had deployed in both Sampoerna- and contractor-run factories:

When TPO [contractor] leaders can't figure out how to deal with workers, they call me in. For example, there was a large demonstration in Lamongan organized by college students. The workers wanted to know why they weren't paid as much as those in Surabaya. I explained to them, "You are not a Sampoerna worker. You are paid according to the regional minimum wage." When you look around the factories, everything looks calm and fine, but there's a lot going on under the surface. That's people for you.

I asked if he could think of cases where workers had made reasonable demands. No, he responded dismissively, as if management were always right and protesting workers always wrong. If workers were easily misled, in his view they were also easy to distract and manipulate in management's favor. "If a fifty-three-year-old worker asks, 'Am I going to retire in rolling?,' do you tell her the truth? Do you say, 'Yes'? No! Instead you ask, 'How is your child? Wow, they graduated!' [*Wah, sudah lulus!*] You direct their attention elsewhere [*dialihkan*] so that they forget about the question they asked in the first place."

Salim routinely gave motivational speeches on his management philosophy called the Power of Bisa. *Bisa* (can, to be able) was an acronym for gratitude (*bersyukur*), sincerity (*ikhlas*), and patience (*sabar*). The three core concepts, which he planned to monetize with a book, are religiously inflected and have Arabic roots. Elaborating on gratitude, Salim explained that people should be happy with what God has given them. If a cutter complains that rollers earn more, she won't be happy. If her husband doesn't work, she should be happy that he isn't stealing. She shouldn't complain that her children are naughty, because she could instead have none. As for sincerity (*ikhlas*), people should be genuinely grateful for what God has given. A worker showed me a slip of paper detailing their official monthly wages for the coming year that also reminded workers about the Power of Bisa. My neighbors also referred to the concept in discussing their husbands' and children's shortcomings and the accepting (*menerima*) attitude and "positive thinking" that they should adopt. Sampoerna's emphasis on women's positive domestic role suggests an anxiety that their capacity to generate collective anger around domestic issues (cheating spouses) could be a disruptive source of political agency and labor solidarity against the company.

RADIO SAMPOERNA: THE VOICE OF PRODUCTIVITY AND QUALITY

Managers relied heavily on Radio Sampoerna to modulate workers' emotional states, increase the quality and speed of their output, foster attachment to the company, and impart religious, moral, domestic, and health-related teachings. After a company survey found support for an industrial radio show that would fulfill three company goals—to inform, entertain, and motivate—Sampoerna called for tenders (Pradana 2012). Media consultancy firm Idego Tatakarsa submitted

the winning bid, and Radio Sampoerna went live in 2007 in Surabaya's Rungkut 1 factory (Pradana 2012, 5). As it was rolled out to other plants, Radio Sampoerna replaced the ordinary radios with which workers previously enlivened their work environment (Weix 1990).¹⁴ Radio Sampoerna imposes sonic structure on workers' days, weeks, and years with special thematic content tied to the Muslim calendar, national holidays, and company anniversaries. It commences at 7:00 a.m., an hour after production officially starts, halts from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. for the DJs' lunch break, and then concludes around the time workers are supposed to wrap up (about 2:00 p.m. when I worked in the Malang plant). It mingles with and dominates human voices and other factory sounds such as the clatter of metal and wooden tools.

Radio Sampoerna reinforces conservative gender norms by urging female factory workers to diligently fulfill their duties as housewives. The station ran programming on maintaining a well-run and peaceful household; notes from the kitchen, bathroom, and bedroom (*catatan dari dapur, sumur* [literally, the well, signaling bathing and toilet], *kasur* [mattress]); and tips on personal health, beauty, and physical fitness upkeep to encourage women to maintain themselves even after having achieved the life goals of marriage and children (Pradana 2012, 74–75).

The Radio Sampoerna infrastructure in each plant includes a soundproof, air-conditioned DJ office, a cable system, and numerous speakers. April, the Radio Sampoerna manager, admitted that “radio” was a misnomer because rather than being broadcast wirelessly as AM or FM, it was transmitted via cable, a system that entailed unexpected challenges; April had had to remind plants to maintain the quality and integrity of their sound systems after mice chewed through Rungkut 2's cables. In my unit, twelve large speakers affixed to the walls piped Radio Sampoerna's signature blend of music, edutainment, company jingles, and performance assessments.

Radio Sampoerna DJs draw on their professional, cultural, and linguistic knowledge to cultivate intimate and approachable on-air personae, appealing playlists, and accessible speech styles that were distinct from their off-air social identities, musical interests, and ways of speaking. Two or three worked at each plant, with two typically on air at a time. A female and male DJ often paired up to create a pleasing banter they called “duetting.” On air, DJs adopted pseudonyms combining syllables from the kretek brand name (Dji Sam Soe) with familiar Javanese honorifics that positioned them relationally as Sampoerna siblings (*dulur-dulur Sampoerna Jv*), such as “Ning Soe” and “Cak Dji” (Pradana 2012, 64). The DJs deliberately smile while speaking, knowing their sunny facial expressions are audible in their alternately happy, enthusiastic, soothing, and sympathetic voices and patter. To maintain these upbeat performances, they usually limited themselves to three-hour stretches on air. Just as there are photogenic faces, Cak Sam informed me, there are microphonogenic voices. Ning Dji explained that DJs try

to adopt a personal mindset on air, as if they are just interacting with one person. She drew on her Madurese background, while her colleague frequently used low and middle Javanese registers (*ngoko*, *kromo inggil*), speaking in short, simple Javanese sentences and limiting himself to single insertions of English terms such as “waste.” Cak Dji always translated acronyms like VQI (visual quality index) using accessible language (*bahasa yang membumi*). As he saw it, the DJ’s role is to find a language that connects (*nyambung*) to workers and their everyday speech, to bridge the massive inequalities between managers and workers with only an elementary school education. He avoided the formal speech characteristic of religion and print media (*Bahasa baku dibuang*, *bahasa Koran*, *bahasa cetak*) and formal words (e.g., *sehingga*, *walaupun*), embracing everyday speech and striving to produce a voice consistent with the spirit of the program (*satu jiwa dengan satu program*). DJs joked in workers’ language (*guyonan-guyonan bahasa mereka*) and socialized ideas in language that was clear (*bahasa gamblang* Jr) and accessible but not insulting (*dengan bahasa enak tapi tidak menyinggung mereka*).

DJs bore responsibility for, but held only partial control over, “The Voice of Productivity and Quality,” as one poster on their office wall called Radio Sampoerna. In general broadcast radio, where Ning Soe previously worked, she developed her own content such as talk shows on current issues, whereas at Radio Sampoerna the company provided content such as quizzes and information. DJs were nevertheless expected to perform multiple functions as radio operators, script writers, music directors, administrators, and call receivers (Pradana 2012, 65). They enhanced Radio Sampoerna’s professional quality by regularly inserting jingles and canned audience applause and laughter. DJs also had to fill out regular reports for April, who collected recordings of all DJ speech aired and randomly sampled recordings on a weekly basis to check for crude (*kasar*) or unclear language. She reprimanded DJs whose performance she found subpar.

Radio Sampoerna sculpted its “edutainment” offerings around company profits and worker well-being, with themes including adaptations from Japanese clean and lean workplace management ideology (discussed in further detail in chapter 3), environmental health and safety, mental and physical health and well-being, and religion (Pradana 2012, 73–75). April found that if Radio Sampoerna overemphasized “education,” workers complained about the “advertising” (*mereka bilang “iklan”*). With recorded sketches (*sandiwara*) voiced by plant managers, DJ adlibbing, and interviews, workers were reminded about locker cleanliness, urged to donate blood, forbidden from selling one another products or lending money, and tutored by the polyclinic doctor on themes such as dengue fever symptoms and prevention.¹⁵ Personal hygiene and quality-control goals overlapped in a handwashing segment, since Sampoerna does not want cigarettes rolled in greasy hands. Around 8:40 a.m. from Mondays through Friday, Radio Sampoerna called everyone on the shop floor (including supervisors and managers if present) to stand and follow a mandatory and rather dull and sedate short stretching routine

(*senam*) that polyclinic doctors had designed to exercise workers' hands, arms, and backs and prevent their fingers from shortening.¹⁶ To build pride in the company and understanding of its values, April noted that they also ran announcements on Sampoerna's approach to positive stakeholder relations—its so-called three-hands philosophy (*falsafah tiga tangan*)—and the company's brands so that workers could "share their knowledge with their neighbors."¹⁷ On Fridays, DJs play recorded sermons by popular religious figures, who often incorporated informal speech and Javanese, showcased voice mimicry skills, and included pro-Sampoerna messages such as "We need Sampoerna, and Sampoerna needs us" (*Kita membutuhkan Sampoerna, dan Sampoerna membutuhkan kita*).

DJs also do their part for quality control. Each hour, they remind rollers to insert sample cigarettes into holders to check that the conical dimensions are correct. They announce the daily and weekly best- and worst-performing units and groups in tones of gentle amusement that evoke loud responses of excitement or displeasure among those singled out for praise or rebuke. When our unit had the worst score (a high of 377 in a week with lots of oil spots), workers yelled their collective disappointment with great gusto. DJs also announce the performance quality index and attendance rates of other Sampoerna plants on a weekly basis.

Music occupies most of Radio Sampoerna's airtime. The music schedule is meant to be attuned to, and to modulate, workers' emotional states and production rhythms, which alter as the day progresses. Cak Soe explained that he strives to free workers of their burdens (*beban*) without their explicit awareness, to neutralize everything (*menetralisir itu semua*) such that their hardships from home will not lead to shoddy work (*garapan ikut jelek*) and flawed cigarettes (like most male DJs, Cak Soe smoked). Workers especially need their spirits lifted from noon onward so their work will not fall off, he claimed. April explained that Radio Sampoerna generally plays slow and older songs (*lagu nostalgia*) in the early morning, when workers are supposed to be calm and engrossed in their work. The occasional song is in English, such as Toni Braxton's ballad "Un-Break My Heart" or "The Actor" by Danish soft rock group Michael Learns to Rock (Rihanna's "Diamonds" was a popular request at Rungkut 1, but managers instructed DJs to play the song infrequently, perhaps because they classified it—either Rihanna, the song, or the video—as *risqué*). The tempo picks up with more lively, fast, and happy rhythms (*irama yang detar, yang lebih lancar, gem-bira*) around 10:00 a.m., then louder music (*sedikit keras*) and the Indonesian popular genre *dangdut* around 11:00 a.m., when workers begin to tire. They play songs workers especially enjoy (*yang menyenangkan*) toward the end of the day in popular Indonesian genres that show the influence of Indian, Middle Eastern, and American music (e.g., *pop Melayu, lagu Jawa, campursari, and dangdut*; see Weintraub 2010). DJs observed that workers' preferences for local or older or more contemporary content varied across factories in ways that reflected the location and age of plants and workers.

Managers policed the music to ensure that it kept workers awake and stimulated but not overly aroused and distracted. In December, when the union negotiated the next year's wages and workers were "easily provoked," managers instructed DJs to play calmer music (*lagu yang tenang*) and to avoid triggering (*terpicu*) workers. The Malang plant manager kept a window cracked in his air-conditioned office to monitor shop-floor sounds. When workers responded raucously to a song, he would sprint upstairs to tell DJs to avoid it in the future. DJs are supposed to steer clear of songs that "invite problems" (*mengundang masalah*) or are too vulgar or sexually suggestive (*dangdut yang anunya*). Cak Dji recalled that DJs had been forbidden under a previous manager from playing songs referencing the perennially hot topic of cheating (*yang berbau selingkuh-selingkuh*). A roller told me that if workers knew that a coworker's husband had cheated on her, they were obliged to yell loudly in solidarity when songs dealing with adultery played.

A distant intimacy characterizes DJ-worker relations. When I visited the DJ office, Ning Soe pulled me over to the window to show me how she could see workers' bodies moving in the production unit below. The DJs scrolled through countless requests from workers on their mobile phones and showed me a stack of handwritten requests on media ranging from dessert packaging (*kertas kue*) to feedback cards (*kartu stat*) and lined paper. They likened long messages to love letters (*surat cinta*). Workers and supervisors sent greetings (*titip salam*) to neighbors and friends in other units. DJs observed that workers often adopt pseudonyms (*nama samaran*) and initials when they submitted requests, especially if they made repeated requests. Ning Dji complained that some workers request beloved singalongs over and over, to the point that DJs tired of them (*kita juga bosan*). When regular radio programming was disrupted for some reason, workers sent DJs urgent text flurries alerting them to their sleepy state (*Ngantuk! Ngantuk!*). Managers sometimes intervene to regulate DJ-worker relations. When Radio Sampoerna at Rungkut 1 was swamped by hundreds of daily requests, managers limited the number accepted and demanded that they be written on special paper slips, noting that preventing workers from sending texts also meant fewer workflow disruptions. April recounted that Rungkut workers became especially attached to one DJ and threatened to cease work without him, but Sampoerna insisted that workers had to learn to handle DJ rotation schedules.

As these interactions suggest, workers were generally enthusiastic about Radio Sampoerna and its DJs. For my part, I enjoyed Radio Sampoerna immensely while working at the Malang factory, and after returning to the United States, I felt transported back to this time whenever I listened to the week of recordings Sampoerna supplied me with. If workers generally praised the broadcasts for keeping them alert and engaged, there were exceptions, like my neighbor in rolling who found it too noisy and relished the relative peace when it was turned off. As an interactive and engaging form of soft supervision, Radio Sampoerna exemplifies Sampoerna's

detail- and affect-oriented, paternalistic approach to labor management in its hand-rolled factories.

SHRINKING PRODUCTION, MARKETING,
CONSUMPTION

During their Thursday morning pep rally, cigarette packers in Sampoerna's Malang factory gathered around their supervisor, who conducted them as they belted out the song she had penned.

Sampoerna siapa yang punya (3x) Yang punya kita semua	Sampoerna, to whom do you belong? You belong to all of us
Tidak kemana mana Sampoerna dimana dimana Mari kita jaga agar Sampoerna semakin jaya	Don't go anywhere, Sampoerna be everywhere Let us ensure that Sampoerna grows greater
Hai kawan kawan semua kualitas paling utama Hai kawan kawan semua marilah kita jaga	Hai friends, one and all, the very top quality Hai friends, let us all guard it together
Sampoerna didadaku Sampoerna kebanggaanku Ku yakin hari ini yang terbaik	Sampoerna in my heart, Sampoerna my pride I believe today will be the best
Sampoerna Sampoerna kami disini Sampoerna (2x)	Sampoerna, Sampoerna, we're here, Sampoerna

Marking my presence that week, Titin added lines calling on me to never forget Sampoerna and Indonesia (*Mbak Marina (3x) / jangan lupakan Sampoerna / Mbak Marina (3x) jangan lupa Indonesia*). It was hard to dispute packers' boasts that their team was the loudest and most enthusiastic. I found Titin's maudlin paean to the close and mutualistic relationship between Sampoerna and workers both troubling and poignant. It figured workers as capable of and responsible for ensuring a durable, lovingly enmeshed future with the company through the production of quality kretek. This vision of shared future prosperity, however, was

patently at odds with Sampoerna's hand-rolled factory closures and reduced production amid hand-rolled market declines that could not be attributed to, or forestalled by improvements in, cigarette quality. The end of Titin's own relationship with Sampoerna loomed, too, as she neared the retirement age of fifty-five.

Although managers professed to me their deep and abiding concern for the welfare of hand-rolling ladies and tended to grow somber and even tear up when recalling the 2014 plant closures, the Sampoerna ads that festooned the streets and buildings outside the factory exclusively and unabashedly promoted the company's machine-rolled brands. When I asked a marketing manager if he thought Sampoerna was doing enough to support the hand-rolled brands, he gave me a hard look and asked, "Pardon me, but when was the last time you saw a young person smoke a hand-rolled kretek?" Marketing experts insisted that any attempt to turn the venerable *Dji Sam Soe* into a youthful brand (*diremajakan*) would be folly. When I asked union leaders about diminishing marketing of their brands, they explained that managers told them Sampoerna must protect all its segments and cannot jeopardize one to promote another. The union left it to managers to determine what was best (*kita serahkan*), since they knew better (*mereka yang lebih tahu, berkompeten*). From managers' perspective, it was best if hand-rolled workers attributed job threats to a common external enemy (public health policies like higher taxes and smoke free areas) rather than to company decisions to invest in the profitable machine-rolling sector. Managers might slow the rollout of labor-displacing technologies like the new rolling machines or push cutters in some of its factories, but the rule of brand marketing budgets proportional to market volume would not be violated for the hand-rolled brands.¹⁸ This created a self-reinforcing cycle of increasing marketing and sales for machine-rolled cigarettes.

As it scaled back hand-rolled marketing budgets, Sampoerna broke off prior relationships. Stall and restaurant owners complained that Sampoerna Hijau had reduced or terminated sponsorship fees.¹⁹ Mask makers, dancers, and traditional snack makers stopped getting *Dji Sam Soe* contracts. I asked Tina, a marketing manager in Jakarta, what kinds of *Dji Sam Soe* marketing events remained. In Jakarta, she explained, Sampoerna had installed lounges in rest areas around bus terminals, train stations, and busy roadsides during *Lebaran*, the festive period at the end of *Ramadhan* when four to five million residents exited the city to visit relatives (*mudik*). Taking advantage of massive traffic jams that could turn an eight-hour journey into a two-day odyssey, Sampoerna provided free coffee, massage chairs, mobile phone charging, tents for resting, and "engagement" (approaches and offers from sales promotion girls). Rather than pursuing market growth, Tina explained, Sampoerna was focusing on consumer retention and loyalty with programs like *Maha Karya* (masterpiece), which invited smokers to describe their smoking experience and recalled the testimonials used in Sampoerna's initial print ads. Such competitions extract information for customer databases and potential brand promotion ideas. Around one hundred winning smokers toured the

House of Sampoerna in Surabaya and went to Borobudur one year and Mount Bromo another to celebrate “the greatness of Indonesia.” By embracing nostalgic themes of tradition and the past, Sampoerna quietly acknowledges Dji Sam Soe’s limited future.

Most pieceworkers’ husbands smoked, but given its expense, they rarely used the Dji Sam Soe brand their wives made. Many smoked machine-rolled brands with synthetic filters that impart the false impression of being safer. When I visited Bu Nurul’s home, she surprised me by pulling a pack of Dji Sam Soe off the top of her refrigerator. She had bought them to try to get rid of her husband’s stubborn cough, reflecting the specious claim that once appeared on the back of packs: Dji Sam Soe contain an “anti-cough sauce” that clears air passages and are a good alternative if other cigarettes lead to coughing (Kartajaya 2005, 354–55). Workers were also influenced by the graphic warnings about diseases, death, and bystander harm on cigarette “wrapping paper.” When I responded “no” to queries about whether my husband smoked, workers remarked that this was smart because smoking was a waste of money and bad for your health. The Sampoerna Hijau mung bean drink advertisement discussed at the outset of this chapter ends with a scene in which the male smokers are accosted by their wives who are furious with their absentee, nonproductive husbands. Beneath its humor, the commercial reflects an uncomfortable truth about the lives of female pieceworkers like Bu Nurul and her colleagues: while ongoing masculine kretek addiction provides—at least for now—the source of their employment, it also poses an economic and existential threat in their homes.