

## Selling Kretek

### *Co-opting Independent Retail*

On the Indonesian island of Lombok, I spent a day in the company of Pak Arif, a cigarette marketing contractor. At one of our stops, the rather taciturn woman running a small general store pointed out that during a recent storm, the shop's Marlboro Lights advertising banner (or "sunscreen") had blown on top of the awning to which it was attached and was no longer performing its function of hailing potential smokers. Arif's stepladder was too short for the job of restoring it to its proper position. Improvising, he maneuvered his vehicle to the edge of the roof, using the stepladder to clamber onto the van. While pulling down the advertisement, he released an inevitable—and, from his precarious position, inescapable—cascade of stagnant storm water that drenched his upper body.

Similar scenes of the physical side of marketing labor—erecting, repairing, and dismantling cigarette advertising—unfold incessantly across the Indonesian archipelago. Wherever they are not subject to local bans, cigarette advertisements command a dominant position among the "forest of signs" enveloping Indonesians (Applbaum 2004, 226; Nichter et al. 2009). During their ten-minute walk to school along narrow streets in the East Javanese city of Malang, my children passed fifty-eight cigarette advertisements attached to small shops and food stalls. Indonesian NGOs have documented how tobacco companies target schools and concentrate marketing efforts around them (Yayasan Pengembangan Media Anak, Lentera Anak Indonesia, and Smoke Free Agents 2015).

Indonesia boasts around 2.4 million cigarette retailers, the majority of which are "traditional shops" (*toko tradisional*, Lian and Dorotheo 2021, 5). The company works to dominate and extract value from this retail network, which stretches across the archipelago and puts cigarettes and advertising in close proximity to Indonesians of all ages, from crowded urban neighborhoods to remote villages. Retail outlets serve as marketing infrastructure: matter that enables the movement of other

matter, an “architecture of circulation” or built network facilitating movement of cigarettes, people, and ideas (Larkin 2013, 328, 329). As the semiotic scaffolding for advertising meant to “address and constitute subjects” in their vicinity by arousing affect, yearning, and fantasy, retail outlets both incite and satisfy desires (329, 333). Chapter 5 describes how Sampoerna extracts value from a network of small-scale independent retailers via the labor of marketing staff and contractors who travel to these shops and via the Sampoerna Retail Community program, both of which involve the ongoing labor of maintaining relationships and retail infrastructure. These shops bring Indonesians into the kretek market, which is not self-standing but requires the labor of marketers to create and maintain it.

Sampoerna’s salespeople perform quotidian labor on “traditional” independent retail outlets to orient them toward company interests. This involves building relationships with shopkeepers; installing, maintaining, and removing objects from shops; and gathering knowledge from, and imparting it to, shopkeepers. The Sampoerna Retail Community program scales up this labor and the contractual obligations and entitlements of retailer members who agree to Sampoerna branding, cigarette promotional work, and makeovers that style independent outlets to resemble modern chain minimarts. These retailers remain independent insofar as they own their own space and inventory and assume responsibility for their own risks but become subject to Sampoerna’s aesthetic and behavioral criteria for achieving retail modernity.

#### FASHIONING INFRASTRUCTURES, FORGING MARKETS

By extending the infrastructure rubric to retail, I depart from a conventional infrastructure studies focus on large state- or corporate-managed technical systems such as capital-intensive deep-water oil drilling rigs or iconic public utilities like water and sewage systems, electric grids, and canal, rail, and road networks (Allan 2014; Anand 2017; Appel 2012; Björkman 2015; Carse 2014; Chu 2014; Gupta 2015; Harvey and Knox 2015; Schwenkel 2015; Von Schnitzler 2016). Such infrastructures readily appear as “systematic assemblages” or “governed material systems” organized by a central authority (Wilson 2016, 274). The world of Indonesian retail is, by contrast, vernacular, ad hoc, and self-built, a bricolage authored by millions of individuals through which branded and unbranded commodities of various shapes and sizes flow. But marketing professionals do perform systematic, if competing, work on this retail terrain.

Markets are neither pure abstractions nor the natural product of the human propensity to truck, barter, and exchange as Adam Smith would have it (Carrier 1997). They are fashioned, designed, and grown rather than found. Applbaum (2004, 117) ably demonstrates this point in his far-reaching account of the

understudied marketing profession, taking on “a fundamental contradiction in liberal economic thought, namely, the inclusion of prominent and powerful, if not always visible, agents inside what is supposed to be a self-regulating system.” Marketers participate in the fiction of the self-regulating market and deny their own power to create new desires and subjective dispositions insofar as they frame their work as merely awakening latent, unconscious needs and wants that were already present within subjects (194–95). While marketing extends its grasp over the entire “provisioning system,” my focus here falls primarily on what Applbaum identifies as the “infrastructural level” of marketing work: supply and sale settings (224).

These settings have assumed increased importance for cigarette companies since the 1990s, when tighter regulations in the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand curtailed their marketing practices. While one response to this restriction has been the outsourcing of marketing work to the brand producers documented in the previous chapter, tobacco control scholars have also documented another side of the global industry’s rejoinder: shifting promotional budgets from billboards, transit advertising, sponsorships, and media to the retail environment (Rooke et al. 2010). By 1996, Philip Morris, which was at the forefront of this trend, had declared the retail outlet’s interior “the primary point of communication between ourselves and our consumers” (Harper 2006, 271). The 1998 Master Settlement Agreement between state attorneys general and tobacco firms in the United States left retail outlets relatively unregulated, generating fierce industry competition with “each player scrapping harder for sacred shelf space and point-of-sale signage in store—where the vast majority of tobacco marketing dollars are spent” (trade publication quoted in Feighery et al. 2003, 187). As public health campaigns have globalized tobacco restrictions, the industry has countered by globalizing its “concentrated focus on the point-of-purchase environment” (Lavack and Toth 2006, 383). Critics note that pro-smoking messages in stores normalize tobacco consumption and recruit “all shoppers regardless of age or smoking status,” prompting children to try smoking, increasing consumption among smokers, and undermining the efforts of those attempting to quit smoking (Feighery et al. 2003, 188; Reimold, Lee, and Ribisl 2022; Rooke et al. 2010, 279).

To illuminate the labor such cigarette marketing requires, I draw on insights and approaches from infrastructure studies. This scholarship’s broad concern with materiality—how the properties of asphalt, water, or metal pipes, for example, shape sensory experiences and social and political potential and vulnerabilities—invites a corollary commitment to examining infrastructure labor. Whereas infrastructure’s design and invention tends to garner the most public prestige and scholarly attention, the power and efficacy of infrastructure systems is only secured through complex, omnipresent, and skilled maintenance, restoration, and repair work (Jackson 2014, 2017; Russell and Vinsel 2016). Similarly, advertisements, however well designed, are effective only when they are visible, and visibility demands ongoing maintenance, as the opening vignette illustrates.<sup>1</sup> By

exploring the street life of advertisements as signs with material properties (Keane 1997), this chapter also complements ethnographies of the advertising agencies that create representations and counters the tendency to render brands metaphysical and dematerialized (Dávila 2001; Foster 2008; Manning 2010, 35; Mazzarella 2003; Shankar 2015).

Insights drawn from feminist theory are particularly germane for analyzing such marketing labor. Star and her colleagues ask *when*, not *what*, infrastructure is, insisting on its relationality and calling for attention to the organized practices and invisible forms of labor that bring it into being, as well as to the differential social effects infrastructure produces (Star and Ruhleder 1996, 113; Star and Strauss 1999). Whereas hydraulic or rail engineers may claim (at times contested) authority over pipes and tracks that “belong” to the state, marketers must daily charm their way into kiosks to emplace commodities and advertisements. They must turn attention and care practices on both persons and things, addressing their mutual vulnerability and fragility (Denis and Pontille 2015, 355). Hence, although infrastructure labor for cigarette marketers undoubtedly involves the kind of material maintenance work that Pak Arif was engaged in on the sunscreen, such work is premised on a range of less material forms of labor. Involving bodily commitment and waged emotional labor, such care practices may be everywhere while remaining functionally invisible as low-status, devalued work performed by “nonpersons” (Hochschild 2012; Star and Strauss 1999, 20). Given the prominence of care work in sales, it may be unsurprising that this profession was historically associated with feminized skills “such as courtesy and politeness, verbal dexterity, and a familiarity with decorative and stylistic aspects of objects” (Friedman 2004, 17). Care work often serves to produce positive affects—attachment, connection, happiness, or affection—but in and beyond the cigarette industry, these affects frequently serve hegemonic and violent political projects that generate value for capitalism (Murphy 2015). Care is a selective mode of attention that cherishes some objects and lives and excludes others, and in the context of kretek capitalism, choices about what to care for wreak violent consequences (see also Martin, Myers, and Viseu 2015, 627).

These feminist insights into how violence and care may be intertwined rather than opposing phenomena shape this chapter’s treatment of tobacco retail infrastructure’s harmful consequences. The infrastructure labor I chronicle here, in creating and maintaining an environment saturated with tobacco advertising, is itself a consequential form of infrastructural violence that perpetuates a lethal and addictive commodity (Rodgers and O’Neill 2012). The intimate proximity of cigarettes and cigarette advertising is a form of social and environmental injustice corresponding to an uneven distribution of life chances that is not accidental but a product of the capitalist pursuit of markets for harmful commodities in areas where consumers are least protected (Benson and Kirsch 2010; Kohrman and Benson 2011; Wilson 2016, 251). Like socially marginalized groups in the United States,

Indonesians are subject to “predatory inclusion,” targeted and overserved rather than underserved by the cigarette industry’s marketing apparatus (Apollonio and Malone 2005; Jain 2003; Taylor 2019; Wailoo 2021). In this regard, whereas infrastructural violence often takes place via malfunctioning and exclusion (Rodgers and O’Neill 2012), the retail infrastructure analyzed here functions all too well to interpellate, enlist, and include—to connect Indonesians to cigarettes.<sup>2</sup> I turn next to how these connections are forged on the “traditional” side of the architecture of cigarette circulation.

### TOKO TRADISIONAL

In Indonesia, “traditional grocery retail” remains the “most important distribution channel for tobacco” according to market research firms (Euromonitor International 2017, 1; Nielsen Company 2015; Razdan, Das, and Sohoni 2013). Independent cigarette retailers range in scale from mobile street peddlers (*pedagang asongan*) and cart vendors (*pedagang kaki lima*), who are particularly vulnerable to state shakedowns and gentrification efforts, to more fixed kiosks, stalls (*warung*), shops, and well-established wholesale and retail general stores, often owned by Chinese Indonesians (Gibbings 2013; Jellinek 1976).

The term *toko tradisional* does not indicate the age of these ventures, most of which were established in response to increasing population density, disposable cash, and commodity availability since the 1970s. It exists instead in contrast to “modern” retail and can be used either pejoratively, to dismiss or shame independent shops, shopkeepers, and their clients, or positively, to mark the economic endeavors of middle- and lower-class families as something to be valued and preserved and to project the image of being a virtuous place to shop. Various features mark independent outlets as “traditional,” including their names, domestic settings, interior organization, lighting, hours, and the compartment, age, dress, and gender of those who mind them.

Independent shop names, typically in Indonesian or a regional language, index particular locations (e.g., an intersection, such as *Simpang Tiga*), shopkeeper identities (e.g., *Bu Indra*), or aspirations (e.g., *Sumber Urip* [source of life Jv], *Sejahtera* [prosperity], or *Mandiri* [independence]). *Bu Yayuk* would periodically change her shop’s name, alternating between the names of her two children so neither would be jealous. *Bu Sri* called hers *Sumber Baru*, marking it as a “new source” for her family after she gave birth to a second child and her husband landed a civil service job, allowing her to quit a pittance-paying honorary teaching position and work at home. Cigarette marketers often usher these names into formal existence by printing them on cigarette advertisements that they hang on or adjacent to shops (like the sunscreen that soaked *Arif*).

On busy roads and in more urban spaces, *toko tradisional* are sometimes purpose-built shophouses called *ruko* (a portmanteau of *rumah* [house] and *toko*

[shop]), where the bottom floor is devoted to commerce and an upper story or two are reserved for domestic life.<sup>3</sup> More frequently, Indonesians convert porches and living rooms into shops by partially demolishing exterior walls. In rural areas where land is less constrained, they may be added on to or erected adjacent to homes.<sup>4</sup> Toko tradisional alternate between open-air and sealed states, depending on whether their wooden shutters or rolling metal doors are open or shut. At night, they are often dimly and unevenly lit by a few naked bulbs.

Hours are uncertain, and cigarette sellers routinely backtrack on their routes to catch a shop that was closed on their first pass. Shops may open soon after dawn, close for slow hot afternoons or prayer, and reopen late in the day when traffic picks up. They may shut for days or weeks for religious or life-cycle events (e.g., Lebaran or family illness, death, marriage, or births). Yayuk complained that when her shop was closed, would-be customers would freely pound on her back door when they wanted something.

Inside toko tradisional, wares (especially more expensive goods, and always cigarettes) are often arranged in glass cases that are only accessible from behind the counter. Shopkeepers invest significant capital in these cases, arranging them in ways that configure interior space, segregate customers and products, enforce customer dependence on shopkeepers, and create a barrier limiting access to domestic interiors (Geertz 1963, 52, 53, 58). Some shops also sell eggs by the piece and bulk commodities such as rice and mung beans, which the shopkeeper measures with her scales and weights. Chains of coffee powder, shampoo, dishwashing liquid, and snack sachets typically dangle from ceiling joists.

Toko tradisional interactions range from expansive, gossipy conversations to mute transactions. Shopkeepers may greet customers warmly or with a wordless, expectant gaze or pointed question: “What are you looking for? What do you want to buy?” (Cari apa? Mau beli apa?). Shopkeepers are predominantly women, not infrequently attired in comfortable housedresses (*daster*) and doing without the *jilbabs* (fitted headscarves) that many don outside the home. The female-run shop fits stereotypical gender associations between petty trade and married women or widows of various social classes, although male shop proprietors and married couples running shops as a joint enterprise are not uncommon (Alexander 1987, 31). Frequently, in the shopkeeper’s absence, shops are attended by less knowledgeable family members, neighbors, or friends. Gendered associations between women and trade in the marketplace are strengthened by a venture’s physical location in or adjacent to the home, literally domesticating and rendering socially appropriate and unthreatening income-generating activity that can be combined with home cleaning, cooking, and child supervision (Brenner 1995; Leshkovich 2014). Women involved in commerce are often significant or principal household providers (Alexander 1987, 5). While their contributions may be rhetorically diminished as “on the side” (*sampingan*), Yayuk proudly informed me that her retail income funded her children’s university degrees (Robinson 2009, 91).

Shopkeepers regard cigarettes as a significant part of their business, with reliably high turnover (*putar terus*) making up for their slender profit margins (under 10 percent of retail prices, or around five to ten cents [550 to 1,400 rupiah] per Sampoerna pack). They observe that cigarettes support overall retail traffic; customers come to buy smokes and add a snack or drink, and vice versa. Toko tradisional sell cigarettes in cartons, packs, or as single sticks (*eceran*) drawn from open packs or branded metal canisters and displays. Single-stick sales help initiate and perpetuate consumption by enabling consumers to buy cigarettes even if they are short on cash or reluctant to commit to an entire pack. Although packs are labeled with language forbidding their sale or provision to pregnant women or children under the age of eighteen, shopkeepers readily sell them to children, admitting that they serve astonishingly young customers. In a social economy where cigarettes are often given as tokens of gratitude, small retailers also allow smokers to trade in a gifted pack for a preferred brand.

#### RELATIONSHIP WORK

For the foot soldiers of Sampoerna's mass persuasion campaigns, a grasp of this retail context is critical to the success of the care work they perform in retail settings (Friedman 2004). Well-executed care work is a gentle mode of exploitation and coercion that is difficult to confront or reject insofar as it conforms to popular virtues such as "confidence, obligation, personal loyalty, hospitality, gifts, gratitude, piety" (Bourdieu 1977, 192). Sellers are both agents of exploitation and exploited subjects. They attempt to exercise control over retailers' time, space, behavior, and knowledge but do so from a supplicant position, dressed in uniforms that broadcast their position in the company hierarchy and wielding iPads they use for retrieving and recording information for Sampoerna and for documenting their own performance for supervisors.

Sampoerna coordinates marketing and distribution across a complex social and natural topography, deploying more in-house staff in densely populated, fiercely competitive markets like Java, while relying heavily on contractors in sparsely populated eastern islands, where the company enjoys a market share as high as 80 percent.<sup>5</sup> In and around the university town of Malang, Sampoerna's marketing team regularly visits 9,236 retail outlets out of a retail universe exceeding 37,300.<sup>6</sup> Fifty-seven Sampoerna sellers and their assistants start each weekday in the warehouse behind the Malang marketing office, loading plain white or branded vans with marketing materials and cigarettes packed in laundry-basket-sized plastic tubs. The modest quantity of cigarettes that sellers carry reflects their assignment: to create a retail environment maximizing Sampoerna sales rather than to directly sell cigarettes. Because Malang levies hefty taxes on vehicle advertising, plain vans are cheaper for Sampoerna and safer for sellers, who risk being robbed in outlying regions when they drive vehicles that call attention to the cash and commodities

they contain. Sellers adhere to fixed routes over a two-week cycle, visiting approximately twenty-five to thirty retailers per day. Clutching imaginary motorbike handlebars and recalling that he had visited fifty outlets a day as a seller in his early career, a manager explained that Sampoerna has reduced routes to privilege the quality rather than quantity of each seller's retailer relations. Managers routinely switch sellers' routes to encourage them to see opportunities embedded in the retail environment with fresh eyes. In 2016, only three of Sampoerna's Malang sellers were women, and these were recent hires.

On the day I accompanied seller Pak Markus and his assistant Pak Bambang in Malang, supervisor Pak Jamal came along to chaperone me and assess Markus's performance for potential promotion. Jamal and Markus were attired in black trousers and beige twill buttoned-front shirts with the company logo embroidered on the front and "SAMPOERNA" in black lettering across the back. Markus held an iPad and wore a portable device attached to a shoulder strap for calculating accounts and printing paper receipts. He had already logged fourteen years as a seller, but his promotion prospects dimmed when Jamal pointed out two problems that he appeared to have overlooked in a minimart; the lighting for an ad was out, and the cigarette shelving required repair. Tense under Jamal's scrutiny, Markus hastened to diagnose the lighting issue and sent Bambang to the van to fetch replacement plastic shelving.

Promoted from a previous "office boy" position, Bambang had been a seller's assistant for three years. Jamal loudly informed me that Bambang might rise to seller status if he completed a college degree. Bambang grinned, abashed by Jamal's dig at his stalled progress. PMI instituted the requirement that entry-level sellers possess a college degree, and the company conducts job interviews at least partly in English; while neither college degree nor English skills are necessary for the job itself, they are prerequisites for further career advancement. As a contractor, Bambang wore a more colorful black and red polo shirt and black pants and carried a small feather duster and washrag. Bambang drove the van, cleaned display cases, retrieved cigarettes, conducted minor repair work, and affixed advertisement stickers. He also put his social skills to effective use in one shop, picking up the shopkeeper's chubby toddler and encouraging his brother to chase them so Markus could administer a marketing questionnaire to the boy's mother in peace. In another, he rewarded the shopkeeper, who appeared to be in her sixties, with a warm pat on the back after she flirtatiously told Markus she missed seeing his handsome face. Such relationship work is critical for sellers whose own success and promotion prospects hinge on their ability to impart a "will to market" to shopkeepers (Applbaum 2004, 160). They often enhance the informality of interactions by using regional languages rather than Indonesian.

While driving between retail outlets in rural Lombok, marketing contractor Pak Arif, who had logged five years on the job, reflected on his humorous approach to this kind of relationship work. His boss taught him not to go straight to cigarettes

but instead to discover what was important to the shopkeeper before steering the conversation toward company interests. Elaborating, he explained that shopkeepers enjoy attention and consistent visits (*mau diperhatikan, dikunjungi, selalu silaturahmi*). Arif called “*Assalamualaikum*” as we approached each kiosk, uttering the polite greeting that Muslims in Indonesia normally use when entering someone’s home. He ribbed one woman over the state of her kiosk, exclaiming, “Why the mess?” (Kok berantakan?). She pleaded that she had been busy making snacks for Ramadan. Another shopkeeper jokingly wheedled Arif and his supervisor, Pak Bahar, about bringing her some gifts to mark Lebaran. Arif was reluctant to promise anything, but Bahar said maybe they could find her a T-shirt. She pounced, laughingly demanding, “What else?” (Apa lagi?).

Strikingly few independent retail outlets are untouched by cigarette advertisements, suggesting a “shortage of resistance” in response to sellers’ rewards and blandishments (Mrázek 2010, 58). An exception on a busy corner near my rental in Malang aroused my curiosity. Pak Tomo, the young owner, explained that after he completed college and took over his parents’ enterprise, he terminated their cigarette company contracts. He sold cigarettes aplenty, visiting a wholesaler as often as daily to restock his supply of cartons and three glass display cases. But he did not want companies telling him what to do, and he found their advertisements untidy. When the morning sun was at a low angle, he hung lengths of black fabric for shade instead of relying on sunscreen advertisements.

If Tomo refused cigarette marketers on political and aesthetic grounds, other shopkeepers resisted for religious and ethical reasons. Jamal recalled that after Muslim organization Muhammadiyah issued its 2010 fatwa declaring smoking haram, one retailer apologetically refused to sell or advertise cigarettes. In league with schoolchildren, anti-tobacco activists have also sought to “clean up” (*membersihkan*) and “liberate” (*membebaskan*) Indonesia’s stalls and streets from cigarette advertising. On social media, activists circulate before-and-after images of liberated shops with fresh banners, bearing the hashtag #tolakjaditarget (refuse to be a target) and declaring “Stall free of smoking ads” (Warung bebas iklan rokok), “Child-friendly stall without smoking ads” (Warung ramah anak tanpa iklan rokok), or “It’s forbidden to sell cigarettes to children” (Dilarang menjual rokok kepada anak). Given the limited resources of anti-tobacco organizations compared to the cigarette industry, however, the best hope for such actions is that they will serve to encourage legal bans.

While such classic expressions of intentional and principled resistance are rare, shopkeeper enthusiasm for marketers’ advertisements and interventions is also limited. Marketing interactions I observed were generally polite and amicable, but some contained ambivalent undercurrents. At a kiosk near Brawijaya University in Malang, an elderly shopkeeper obediently answered Markus’s questions but muttered that all she wanted was sufficient income and that she had no interest in pulling long hours to earn more. Markus cajoled her into buying a couple

packs of Marlboro Black Menthol, inserting one in a small display. At one stop in rural Lombok, a woman claimed she was just minding her husband's stall and that she knew nothing about it. We quickly departed, Arif explaining that he need not waste his time if she was unwilling to cooperate. Another kiosk visit was positively painful. As we approached, it was apparent that Sampoerna's display case was promoting A-Motion rather than Marlboro Reds, the current promotion. The man overseeing the kiosk grimly explained that his wife and new baby had both died shortly after childbirth; this was the first day since their deaths that he was opening the kiosk, which had been his wife's venture. Arif expressed his condolences and updated the display case. Seeing an old A-Mild advertisement covering a table outside of the store, Bahar and his driver ripped off the makeshift tablecloth and tossed it in the back of the van. Bahar explained that Sampoerna wants to prevent misappropriation of old advertisements, like people sitting on them. As we drove away, Arif remarked that the newly widowed man was in trouble. What did he know about running a kiosk?

To strengthen relations and build retailer loyalty, Sampoerna rewards higher-volume vendors with gifts and experiences such as short vacations and catered dinners with entertainment. Jamal contrasted this approach with competitors' tendency to hastily offer straightforward cash rewards. Sampoerna invited a hundred small retailers to Bali, booking upscale hotels and restaurants to give them a more lavish travel experience than that to which they would typically treat themselves. Jamal chuckled recalling the confusion of retailers who had never encountered a toilet that flushed without a water scoop and did not know how to bathe with a showerhead. Sampoerna gave the retailers temporary and controlled access to a travel experience coded as highly desirable but beyond their normal means, simultaneously underscoring their lower-class position and the limits of their class-based knowledge. To the extent that Sampoerna's group-travel program succeeded in building shopkeeper loyalty, it proved Bourdieu's (1977, 192–93) claim that the most effective symbolic violence rewards labor, time, care, attention, and *savoir faire* with durable bonds and personal memories that won't be forgotten.

#### KNOWLEDGE WORK

To effectively understand and shape the retail infrastructure and cigarette market, sellers produce and transmit knowledge. They identify popular gathering spots and retail outlets near malls, government offices, markets, busy intersections, and schools. Marketing managers in Malang focus special attention on an area between multiple universities they christened the "golden triangle." For sellers, strategically located retailers are attention-worthy no matter how small, humble, or shabby (Errington, Fujikura, and Gewertz 2012). A manager showing me a very disorderly shop Sampoerna was cultivating in Malang grinned proudly and pointed to the new mall across the street that would bring in traffic.



FIGURE 18. A cigarette seller enters data in his iPad while visiting a roadside vendor. Photo by author.

Sellers incessantly administer questionnaires to retailers and feed harvested information into centralized knowledge systems via data tracking software loaded on their iPads. From retailers, Sampoerna learns about company and competitor brand performance, customer identities (age, gender, occupation, class), shopping patterns, retailer hours, busy and slack times of day and night, and so on. The goal is to achieve an exquisite attunement to the market, which includes a wealth of informal and contested spaces and sidewalk activities that are nevertheless amenable to being tracked and rendered legible (Anjaria 2016; Harms 2016). At the same time, the sellers do not presume that retailers are fully trustworthy sources of information. Jamal told me retailers routinely try to curry favor with sellers by exaggerating Sampoerna's product performance. Sampoerna always crosschecks its data against intelligence purchased from marketing firm Nielsen. Sellers also use iPads to self-report, proving that they have visited sites on their routes with time-stamped photographs of barcoded company cards affixed to display cases.

Managers use market data and ethnographic observations on social practices, identities, rhythms, and calendars to fine-tune the nature, timing, geography, and duration of brand promotions. For example, Sampoerna promotes "premium" brands during Ramadan when smokers consume fewer but more expensive cigarettes. Campaigns ramp up on Madura Island during salt or tobacco harvests, when workers and their wages are easily parted. In seaside villages, Sampoerna promotes its budget hand-rolled product Sampoerna Hijau, catering to fishermen's

belief that a slow smoke will warm them during a cold night at sea. Managers note that college students can better afford A-Milds at the start of the month when their parents send pocket money and they frequent restaurants and cafés. By month's end, cash-strapped students are often limited to street food and sustain smoking habits by buying single sticks and sharing, making budget brands like Magnum more appealing.

Besides gathering knowledge from retailers and feeding it upward to managers, sellers disseminate information downward to retailers. In stark contrast to pharmaceutical drug representatives or "detail men" whose art lies in imparting (mis) information to doctors in order to generate prescriptions, cigarette sellers deploy limited product knowledge (Greene 2004; Oldani 2004). They may have opinions stemming from their own experience as smokers, but as sellers, their actionable product knowledge revolves around which competitor and Sampoerna brands are compatible. Brand-differentiating criteria are limited: "white" or clove, premium or budget, machine-rolled or hand-rolled, "low-tar, low-nicotine," or "full flavor." Evidencing the close entanglement of knowledge work and relationship work, sellers work to impart understanding of rewards programs and new product launches to shopkeepers, even as the latter may be drowsy after being roused from naps or distracted by an engrossing television program, demanding children, customers, incoming deliveries, or household work in progress.

#### OBJECT WORK

Relationship work is also fundamentally enmeshed with the object work carried out in shops; marketers access things through persons and persons through things. The company countertop display case exemplifies this mutually constituting relationship. Sampoerna uses cigarette packs as currency to "rent" counter space from shopkeepers (retailers receive one to three packs per month depending on display size). Upon visiting a shop, marketers cleanse cases, removing dust and grime that accumulates quickly in roadside settings and expelling any competitors' cigarettes or other products and debris before arranging Sampoerna's product. Sometimes Sampoerna's own products damage the cases; Arif labored in vain to remove the iodine-colored stains that had bled from *Dji Sam Soe* soft packs into a plastic display case, making products behind the stains appear old and discolored. Wrapping the packs in clear plastic would solve the problem but detract from *Dji Sam Soe*'s image as a brand whose formula and packaging have been little altered since Sampoerna first made them. Marketers are not at liberty to arrange stock as they see fit, adhering instead to company-issued "planogram" arrangements positioning popular or heavily promoted brands at the top and relegating less popular brands to lower shelving. They replace older packs with fresh stock to ensure that customers do not buy yellowed, spotted, or stale cigarettes, and they entreat shopkeepers to allow them to position Sampoerna's display cases

more prominently, with shopkeepers often agreeing to rearrangements even when they block their view of the street. Marketers have the authority to enter shops, go behind counters, and fiddle with display cases regarded as company assets, but their broader ambition is to annex territory in adjacent display cases. Arif solicited shopkeepers' permission to affix colorful tape borders in their display cases on which he could write in marker. Sellers also hung elaborate handmade props with slogans written in Sasak, the local language on Lombok, to entice customers to sample promoted brands.

Sampoerna programs induce retailers to invest their own labor in marketing cigarettes. Working on the article of faith that consumers perceive the most prominently displayed brands as the most popular and hence desirable, Sampoerna awards points to retailers for "creative pack displays," which typically consist of large (mostly uncreative) block displays of empty packs (Lavack and Toth 2006, 379). In another promotion, retailers near Malang's major universities were awarded points and a free pack for every eight pieces of silver foil from Magnum packs they accumulated. (To accrue additional points, some retailers began giving free packs directly to customers in exchange for eight foils.) Retailers earn points for displaying Sampoerna's cigarettes in a highly visible, vertical, erect, "standing" position (*berdiri*), while laying competitor products on their side in a dormant horizontal "sleeping" position (*tidur*) or, better yet, hiding them from view. They can redeem points for shop and household goods including washing machines, televisions, and mobile phones.

Cigarette companies indirectly engage their competitors in kiosks and on empty walls, seeking to undermine their retailer ties and sometimes engaging in petty acts of sabotage. In Malang, for example, someone slashed Sampoerna banners flanking a busy road near Brawijaya University. Marketers may rip competitors' stickers off walls and replace them with their own. While stripping one wall, Arif explained to me that the competitor had seized his space, so now he would take theirs. He wanted this wall bare rather than claimed as anyone's commercial territory (*biar sama-sama kosong*). At a shop where a Djarum sunscreen had been attached such that it covered a portion of a Sampoerna sunscreen, Bahar's driver reversed the situation, mounting the stepladder to rip off the sunscreens before restapling them with Sampoerna's on top. Wearily surveying these efforts, Bahar told me that such turf battles could be circumvented by investing in more expensive advertising technologies that are harder to tamper with, such as out-of-reach advertisements on poles set perpendicular to, and thus highly visible from, the road.

Sampoerna's marketing team is under pressure to develop or copy new technologies that render advertisements highly visible (through illumination or sheer novelty), stable (safe from sabotage and natural elements), and mutable (easily rotated; Denis and Pontille 2015). The flashy branded metal public bus shelter Sampoerna constructed next to Brawijaya University exemplifies these features.



FIGURE 19. A rural shop owner's dedicated participation in Gudang Garam's Surya display competition won her a Yamaha Mio motorbike. She decorated her shop with over a thousand cigarette packs and fashioned a model of her anticipated motorbike prize out of packs. Photo by author.



FIGURE 20. Stapling a Sampoerna ad on top of competitor Djarum's ad. Photo by author.

Other new technologies appeared on Malang streets: stubby, thickly encased “totems” that illuminated cigarette advertising and shop names at night and vertical “gates” flanking busy road stretches (a Malang marketing office innovation). Cheaper, more vulnerable technologies such as sunscreens can also be shored up against wind by attaching plastic bottles filled with liquid, rocks, or sand to corner grommets.

The materials and activities required to maintain the architecture of cigarette circulation are individually trivial and cheap but collectively expensive. For example, Sampoerna pays Malang shopkeepers only 500,000 rupiah annually for pole-attached street advertisements with the shop’s name, a negligible sum compared to advertising tax expenditures (hanging a four-meter banner for just a week costs the company nearly as much in taxes).<sup>7</sup> Sampoerna supervisors were sanctimonious about their adherence to the law, insisting that the company paid requisite taxes even on sticker advertisements, whereas many of their “neighbors” (*tetangga*)—a euphemism for competitors—were less scrupulous. In aggregate, the traditional architecture of cigarette circulation demands a significant and steady stream of labor, planning, training, and material resources (vehicles, gas, advertisements, display cases, and so forth) that testifies to its value for cigarette companies. Tobacco control and a changing retail environment, however, pose threats to independent retail’s capacity to accumulate value for the cigarette industry.

#### THE DARK MARKET AND THE MINIMART REVOLUTION

Tobacco executives in Indonesia believe they can only delay, rather than prevent, the advent of a so-called dark market for cigarettes characterized by comprehensive bans on tobacco advertising, promotion, and sponsorship, as required by the World Health Organization’s Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. Signs of this emerging dark market are already visible. In 2015, then Governor Ahok (Basuki Tjahaja Purnama) signed gubernatorial decrees (Pergub 1/2015 and 244/2015) prohibiting indoor and outdoor cigarette advertising in the capital city of Jakarta. There are also regency-level (*kabupaten*) movements to limit or ban advertising, as well as neighborhood declarations of smoke-free zones (*kawasan tanpa rokok*). Such restrictions have characteristically intensified the industry’s focus on independent retail. “We know that once the dark market is totally deployed in Indonesia,” Tina, a Sampoerna marketing manager in Jakarta, told me, “the retailer is the key person who can deliver our brand message to the consumer.” But the independent retailer’s future has also grown uncertain.

Large market players are leading a minimart revolution that threatens to displace independent shops. To access IMF aid in the wake of the 1997 Asian financial crisis, Indonesia began loosening retail sector restrictions, gradually admitting foreign firms and allowing hypermarkets, supermarkets, malls, and department

stores to sprout across the country. While more Indonesians are buying goods from large stores, this does not signal a wholesale transition in shopping patterns. Weekly or monthly excursions to stores like Giant, Carrefour, and Hypermart often supplement rather than replace shopping in neighborhood markets and roadside stalls, and many islands have insufficient population density to even support hypermarkets. Chain minimarket and convenience stores, whose claim over the general retail market rose from 4 percent in 2000 to 22 percent in 2010, present a more significant challenge (Sirait and Ford 2014). Two companies dominate: Alfamart and Indomaret, each with over fifteen thousand owner-operated and franchised stores.<sup>8</sup>

Putera Sampoerna appreciated the potential of this retail distribution market, and Alfamart was 70 percent Sampoerna-owned when PMI acquired the manufacturer in 2005. However, assessing Alfamart as an unprofitable asset that fell outside the company's core business focus, PMI sold it off the following year in a bitter and emotional breakup. A decade later, Sampoerna was still trying to repair relations with Alfamart's leader, Djoko Susanto, arranging golf excursions and a visit to a hand-rolling factory that resuscitated fond, tearful memories of Susanto's time as a "blackshirt" (board members wear all-black uniforms and company pins).<sup>9</sup>

In 2015, 53 percent of cigarettes purchased in Indomaret and 47 percent in Alfamart were Sampoerna products, far exceeding Sampoerna's then national market share of 35 percent and demonstrating that minimart shoppers were favorably inclined toward Sampoerna-branded products.<sup>10</sup> The striking 6 percent difference in Sampoerna's performance between the two chains is attributable to Sampoerna's command of "backwall" (behind checkout counter) space in 70 percent of Indomaret stores; it had no Alfamart backwall contract, a result of lingering ill will. Chain minimarts often feature these coveted eye-catching illuminated displays, and cigarette sales tend to be brisk. Unlike independent retailers, though, they neither advertise cigarettes outdoors nor sell them as single sticks. (Underaged smokers may also prefer to buy cigarettes in independent shops rather than minimarts, although identification checking is lacking in both.)<sup>11</sup>

Minimarts are a growing piece of the retail infrastructure that serves the kretek market, and an array of features mark them as "modern," in contrast to toko tradisional. Names like Circle K, Indomaret, and Alfamart are derived from Indonesian and English and take the national and global market as their reference points. Whereas toko tradisional are open-air, minimart interiors are glass encased and air-conditioned. Toko tradisional are often poorly lit, but minimarts are dazzlingly—almost aggressively—well lit, day and night. Minimarts also adhere closely to the daily hours posted on their front doors, remaining open through important holidays.

Besides cigarettes, most minimart products are arranged by category on open shelving that enables customers to subject commodities to visual, olfactory, and tactile inspection (sniffing, squeezing, and label-reading for expiration

and nutrition information). Basic commodities like rice are sold in sealed, factory-packaged standard sizes and weights. Whereas toko tradisional patrons must request display-case items from shopkeepers, minimart patrons are expected to behave as sovereign consumers and decision-makers. Their open shelving, more anonymous proprietorship, and extended hours render minimarts more vulnerable to shoplifting and robbery than toko tradisional. Minimarts address this risk with closed-circuit television units (CCTV), alerting potential thieves to their surveillance with front-door warnings.

Minimart workers are typically in their early twenties and unmarried, and they usually lack any ownership stake in workplaces severed from their home environments. Clad in vibrant fitted uniforms, they are required to utter standard greetings when customers enter (“Welcome to Indomaret. Enjoy your shopping!” [Selamat datang ke Indomaret. Selamat belanja!]) and exit (“Thank you, until you shop again!” [Terima kasih, sampai belanja kembali!]). Delivered with rapid-fire cheer or in a rote mumble, these greetings are often unintelligible. At the cash register, clerks urge customers to purchase additional products. Their exhortations are sometimes gender specific, with women encouraged to add phone credit or cooking oil (*Ibu mau beli pulsa? Sekalian beli minyak?*) and men coaxed to add cigarettes or a lighter, particularly if a pack is peeking out from a shirt pocket (*Bapak mau beli rokok? Beli korek sekalian?*). Chains often run promotions, such as rewards for spending over 100,000 rupiah. (Over various excursions, I earned bottled Fanta and sweetened tea, chocolate sprinkles, and flavored wafers.)

Jamal told me that some Indonesians initially felt embarrassed and out of place (*sungkan*) in minimarts, recoiling from clerks’ artificial (*kurang alami*) scripted greetings. Some were not sure how to behave, removing their shoes at the door before stepping onto interior tiles. But they adjusted swiftly enough, leaving independent shopkeepers complaining about their shrinking consumer base and Sampoerna fearing that toko tradisional would roll up their rugs (*nggulung tikar*). Discussing the death (*kematian*) of independent shops, one Malang shopkeeper told me that he wished neighborhood shops had banded together to enact local rules to prevent minimart encroachment. In response to such negative perceptions, Alfamart’s website depicts the company as “essentially a community store,” detailing a program for nurturing small and medium enterprises and entrepreneurs in areas where Alfamart stores operate with trainings and support for improving small vendors’ stalls and revitalizing home-based shops.<sup>12</sup> Minimarts often blur the dichotomy between traditional and modern, fostering a hybrid Indonesian-modern atmosphere by providing tables and seating, free Wi-Fi, and “traditional” food stalls on front patios to encourage customers to hang out (*nongkrong*) and consume more snacks and beverages.

Shopkeepers decry minimart customers for being so image-conscious (*gengsi*) that they are willing to fork over extra cash for the privilege of shopping in a minimart. (Prices are often but not always lower in independent retail.) My

Javanese teacher insisted instead that she frequented minimarts because she appreciated their quality control, including attention to expiration dates and an air-conditioned environment where products are not exposed to sunlight and high humidity. I learned firsthand that minimarts sometimes fall short of these ideals after buying spoiled eggs from an Alfamart and looking in vain for chocolate bars that had not liquefied among Madura minimarts experiencing air-conditioning troubles. A 2011 *Forbes* article on Alfamart's billionaire owner nevertheless trafficked in this quality-control imagery by depicting Alfamart as "leading the transition from roadside wooden shacks selling dubious goods to modern minimarts with reliable items" (Lestari 2011).

Sampoerna may no longer own a controlling share in Alfamart, but it can encourage independent shopkeepers to make their shops look and feel more like Alfamarts. Sampoerna's retail community program challenges traditional retail aesthetics and customer service norms, embracing material and behavioral changes touted as modern, superior, desirable, and progressive. The SRC program not only requires new forms of marketing labor and knowledge from cigarette sellers; it induces retailers to perform labor and commit material resources, space, and time to marketing and selling cigarettes as they modernize.

#### MAKING THE MODERN SRC SHOP

Sampoerna piloted the Sampoerna Retail Community (SRC) program in the Sumatran city of Medan in 2008 with fifty-seven "traditional retail partners." By 2017, Sampoerna had enrolled over ten thousand shops (Sampoerna 2018, 143). Across Indonesia's thirty-four provinces, Sampoerna now counts over 225,000 retail outlets as SRC members (Sampoerna 2023), meaning it has over 5 percent of the independent retail market under SRC contract.<sup>13</sup> In 2018, Sampoerna launched the AYO application, which digitally linked SRC shops to SRC partners, wholesalers, consumers, and financing. The AYO SRC app would prove especially useful during the pandemic, allowing Sampoerna (2022, 35) to claim Indonesia's "leading retail-focused ecosystem," with 160,000 traditional outlets and over 1.2 million end consumers in 2021. The SRC program's goals are twofold: to convert SRC shops into loyal Sampoerna product advocates and to modernize them along the lines of chain convenience stores to facilitate their survival. Sampoerna paints SRC shop exteriors and interiors white with red and dark gray horizontal-stripe accents, wrapping them in sunscreens in the same color scheme emblazoned with the shop name and "SRC—Sampoerna Retail Community."<sup>14</sup> Framed certificates mounted on the wall proclaim their sales-correlated SRC tier—silver, gold, or platinum—and exhort retailers to "Always improve your performance!" (Tingkatkan terus prestasi anda!).

Because new retail ventures are easy to open but hard to sustain, Sampoerna's teams seek new candidates for SRC membership among shops located in high-traffic areas with enterprising, committed shopkeepers. SRC shopkeepers often

run multiple side businesses including selling Muslim dress (*busana Muslim*) or services like photocopying, entertainment, catering, laundry, or dry cleaning. Near universities, renting rooms to students and youth is a popular way to earn extra income; landlords who rent exclusively to men guarantee themselves a built-in cigarette consumer base. In rural uplands, some SRC shopkeepers buy and sell forest products including cloves for the cigarette industry. Sampoerna deploys its own staff and hires consultants to work with shops to develop their business plans, which often entails expanding product offerings and annexing additional domestic space for retail purposes.

The SRC program places new demands on sellers. Over lunch at a popular university canteen, Jamal explained that Sampoerna is breaking down conventional barriers between selling and marketing, combining the two disciplines in an approach labeled “commercial” that the company piloted in Jakarta in 2012 and rolled out across Java two years later. Broadening sellers’ expertise from a conventional focus on product distribution, volume, and visibility, the program aims to convert sellers into “store consultants” or “retail ambassadors” who bring general retail and marketing knowledge to bear on outlets. Tina acknowledged that the transition was difficult, particularly for “senior sellers” who “have had their job for a long time so it’s hard to change their mindset.” Jamal estimated that sellers spend only a quarter of their time on Sampoerna products in SRC shops, using the balance to address broader challenges and opportunities. Markus and Jamal convinced a shopkeeper to switch out a mixed-item glass display for a “very premium” Snickers display that had been relegated to the floor, then sympathetically and therapeutically listened to the man’s complaints about his neighbor, a relative who had established a rival shop. Sellers’ manifold informal duties, which are not strictly related to Sampoerna products, testify to the long-term value Sampoerna places on SRC shops.

Sampoerna uses group activities, magazines, and incentive schemes to encourage SRC shopkeepers to commit labor and resources into becoming “modern” retail outlets and adopting implicit theories of modern consumer behavior and desire. Key features include easily visible price labels, attention to expiration dates, flashy running-text electronic signs, and open shelving painted bright red. Because open shelving invites not only the sovereign consumer but also the shoplifter, Sampoerna recommends installing surveillance cameras or strategically placed mirrors if shopkeepers cannot afford CCTV. Sampoerna encourages shopkeepers to progress to barcodes, computerized sales and accounting, and the modern Indonesian feature of food stalls out front. The AYO SRC app fosters shopkeeper digital literacy and product flow knowledge, and also likely yields a data trove for Sampoerna. One of the ultimate signs of having achieved retail modernity is the installation of an ATM (common in minimarts). Ideally, SRCs should function as one-stop shops where customers can access bank accounts, pay bills (electricity, internet, and cable), purchase phone credit and drinking water and cooking gas, and so on.

*Buletin Sampoerna*, a magazine designed for and distributed to SRC shops, is one vehicle for Sampoerna's modernization efforts. It features articles on exemplary shops with headlines like "Don't Be Afraid to Change" (Jangan Ragu untuk Berubah), shopkeeper recipes, regional philanthropic programs, and reports of activities such as a Retail Education and Development Academy (SRC Ready) held for shopkeepers in Bali. Didactic cartoons offer detailed instructions and tips on topics such as routine cleaning (create a weekly schedule, deploy wet and dry techniques), increasing profits (group items together suggestively, such as instant noodles and eggs, run special promotions, and offer customers related products, such as soap alongside shampoo, as they check out), knowing your customer (tailor product offerings to location, for example by selling stationery near campus, packaged meals near offices, or souvenirs near tourist destinations), and bookkeeping (track stock and sales with separate color-coded books; record all sales and segregate business from personal finances). In the heyday of modernization theory, Geertz (1963, 53) homed in on similar shop features (regular hours, fixed prices, inventory adjustments, systematic bookkeeping, searching aggressively for customers) as indicators of Indonesia's progress toward a commercial revolution that would launch a proper firm economy and leave behind the credit-enmeshed traditional market economy. More than half a century later, the magazine seeks to bring about a similar transition.

Sampoerna also fosters peer guidance and interactions among SRC members, investing in the community side of the program so SRC members will exhort one another to work harder and innovate more. By 2022, Sampoerna had established seven thousand community associations (*paguyuban Jv*) for its 225,000 SRC shops. I attended the bimonthly gathering of the Malang chapter's SRC association on a Sunday morning in early 2016 in the home of an SRC shopkeeper. Sampoerna's managers and supervisors stayed until early afternoon, then traveled further to go pay their respects to an SRC shopkeeper who had lost a close family member, spending most of their Sunday nurturing the Sampoerna retail family and forging time with their own wives and children. Founded in late 2012, the Malang association has an elected leadership and formal vision and mission statements. Association documents promote a working culture (*budaya kerja*) that centers hospitality, tidiness, cleanliness, and care (*ramah, rapi, resik [Jv], rawat*; these valued traits partially overlap with the five *Rs* discussed in chapter 3). Specific suggestions for achieving this culture include admonitions to smile and greet customers, ask what they are looking for, and prioritize those who arrived first, to place heavier products lower on display racks and dangerous products out of reach of children, and to integrate routine cleaning into shop care from the time the shop opens until it closes in ways that do not disturb customers. The group also spearheaded specific Sampoerna-related initiatives such as, in the first quarter of 2014, not selling single sticks of competitor products, creating eye-catching single-stick displays, and using computerized methods for tracking sales and inventory.

The meeting I attended opened and closed with earsplitting entertainment furnished by our host's for-hire band, which took requests and allowed other shopkeepers to showcase their vocal prowess. At a previous meeting in the popular tourist destination of Batu, members had had the opportunity to enjoy the host's side business of paragliding. After the meeting assembled, with mostly women seated on the floor of an interior room and men occupying the tiled porch outside, the association's leadership said a blessing, led cheers ("SRC! Ya, ya, ya!"), and invited participants to sample snacks brought by a shopkeeper seeking new distributors. The association's head then addressed the shopkeepers, many of whom wore SRC-logo polo shirts, T-shirts, and jackets for the occasion. He spoke of their collective struggle to modernize, observing that minimarts are always bright (*terang*), lights blazing day and night (*lampu nyala terus*). Customers, he continued, have the right to choose the kind of store in which they want to shop. Sampoerna managers took the floor next with a PowerPoint presentation to introduce (*sosialisasi*) a new product: A-Motion, the younger sibling (*adik*) of A-Mild, the brand claiming the largest Indonesian market share. Another manager then announced that Sampoerna would raise the SRC contract fee. As applause broke out, he raised his hand, cautioning that increases would be contingent on store performance. Sampoerna would show greater appreciation for those willing to progress ("lebih berapresiasi teman-teman yang mau berubah"). Members contributed cash donations to a collection box for medical patients who could not afford health care, noting that they would also contribute prayers and expressing hopes that they might reap good fortune (*rejeki*) for their generosity.

Even with the raises, Sampoerna's 2016 annual contract fees for SRCs were paltry compared to the five- to fifty-million-rupiah offers some shopkeepers entertained from competitor firms seeking to make over their shop signage and paint. Sampoerna's annual base rate for silver SRCs was only 750,000 rupiah, with 1 million for gold stores and 1.5 million for platinum stores. In addition to contract fees, however, Sampoerna provided health insurance to one, two, or three family members depending on store status. When one shopkeeper plaintively requested capital (*modal*) rather than insurance, the manager reminded him that in the event of illness or accident (*kecelakaan drrrrr*—imitating the sound of crunching vehicles) he might suddenly require fifteen or twenty million rupiah. Spouses and children are the most valuable (*paling berharga*) thing, he insisted, so it is better to insure their health than to have an extra couple of million rupiah in your pocket. Next, it was time for door prizes and rewards for those who could correctly answer quiz questions like "Who are A-Motion's target consumers?" and "How does an SRC advance to platinum status?" Prizes included Casio calculators, Philips blenders (proffered with the remark that the recipient could sell fresh fruit drinks), a Sharp water dispenser, a Philips DVD player, and a double gas burner.

Sampoerna distributes similar goods through point programs that regulate its "gift cycle" of rewards to shopkeepers that modernize and sell high volumes

of Sampoerna's product (Oldani 2004). Shopkeepers who follow SRC guidelines can accumulate and redeem points for various home goods and shop improvement items, with platinum shops enjoying a 50 percent point discount. During an interview, Pak Agus, a gold SRC shopkeeper who had redeemed past points for a vacuum cleaner and smartphone, leafed through the rewards catalogue that included CCTV cameras, SRC-motif patio furniture, a thermos, a dinnerware set, appliances, a store renovation valued at two million rupiah, and Alfamart or Indomaret vouchers. He fondly recalled a recent two-night SRC trip to a luxury hotel in nearby Batu. Other companies offered higher sponsorship fees, but Sampoerna's commitment to long-term relationship work had its own value: Agus noted that with the higher-paying companies, you never see them again. He claimed that he was learning a lot from Sampoerna, citing how he now rotates his stock, placing newer items behind older ones on his shelves. Agus had experienced a 40 percent drop in revenue after an Indomaret opened right next door, which he claimed was a violation of rules protecting toko tradisional. He felt that Sampoerna was his best ally in his effort to stay in business. Sampoerna's paternalistic drip-feed, in-kind methods for compensating shopkeepers are time consuming, labor intensive, and fussy compared to paying a cash windfall. They serve, however, to maintain relations, develop business assets, and extract shopkeeper labor and capital investment that promotes Sampoerna and modernizes shops.

Some shopkeepers displayed extreme devotion to Sampoerna and the SRC program. Bu Endang stopped selling competitor products altogether in her platinum SRC shop near Muhammadiyah University's Malang campus. She was determined to compensate for the subsequent 40 percent decline in cigarette sales by increasing other product sales. As I approached a purpose-built cabinet filled with Sampoerna memorabilia in an alcove by the cash register, Endang flicked a switch, illuminating the cabinet's recessed lighting. She had recently opened a café, and she had nineteen rooms upstairs rented to young men and was in the process of adding seven more, ensuring a growing stream of on-site consumers. On a later visit, I found the shop walls freshly adorned with photo collages dedicated to Sampoerna. Complete with health warnings, the collages documented Endang's SRC trip to Thailand, including a photo in which Sampoerna's president, wearing a grin and a tuxedo, has an arm wrapped around her shoulders.

Sampoerna prizes shopkeepers of Endang's caliber and commitment because they are rare. A Jakarta marketing manager complained that some SRC shopkeepers were becoming more dependent than enterprising, demanding help with trivial maintenance such as broken lights or leaks. Reflecting on the mixed success of their efforts to recruit stellar SRCs, Sampoerna's president complained that he found some shopkeepers to be lacking in "gray matter." While Sampoerna seeks shopkeepers "in full throttle" life-building and project mode, it often gets people who are multiply committed, exhausted, and acquiescing to a temporality of "ongoingness, getting by, and living on" (Berlant 2007, 758–59). Consider Bu Irma,

a beleaguered-looking shopkeeper with a four-year-old son capering about madly when I met her at her silver SRC shop behind the Muhammadiyah campus. Since joining SRC, she had installed a tiled patio with chairs and a table where three young men with cigarettes, mobile phones, and messenger bags were hanging out. Sampoerna paraphernalia—large and small displays, a calendar, posters, competition brochures—colonized vertical and horizontal shop surfaces. But Irma was quick to confess to her inadequacies, saying she was not the most active or knowledgeable SRC member and pointing down the road to Agus’s more mature shop. Traveling around Java, I saw a number of shops with SRC paintjobs but no sunscreen, or sunscreens with SRC lettering blocked out. Such residual evidence of broken-off relations testifies to the ongoing labor and routine attrition involved for cigarette companies in maintaining a retail infrastructure that serves their ends. The ethical, affective, and economic bonds that Sampoerna weaves with shopkeepers are, despite the company’s copious efforts and expenditures, never entirely trustworthy (Bourdieu 1977, 190).

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In the opening scene of this chapter, Arif was doused with stagnant water while repositioning a Marlboro advertisement. Sellers and marketers must maintain pleasant dispositions despite such petty humiliations and discomforts, swallowing their frustration when weather, shopkeepers, or competitors undo their work, smiling apologetically when superiors remark on their shortcomings. Their modest labor—comprising at once both object work and relationship work—and the modest retail settings in which it unfolds have an immodest scale and impact. Ethnographies of independent shops have analyzed significant local dynamics of community building, racial and ethnic identity, and moral surveillance but said less about how large companies may monitor and intervene in such environments (Mankekar 2002; Pine 2015; Reese 2019, 91–110; exceptions include Errington, Fujikura, and Gewertz 2012; Foster 2008; Müller 2021). Tobacco control scholars, by contrast, have closely tracked how British American Tobacco, Philip Morris, and other tobacco companies incentivize and discipline shopkeepers and emplace products and marketing materials in retail spaces in Western contexts. This chapter functions to expand the geographical scope of this research while also serving a broader anthropological project: denaturalizing the market by exposing how marketing makes markets in profound and only partially visible ways (Applbaum 2004).

Small retailers threatened by the minimart revolution have found a concerned and attentive, but also demanding, ally in their struggle to remain in business. The cigarette industry has much to offer these retailers, from a product that keeps customers coming back for more to general retail knowledge and a stream of prizes and rewards for compliant behavior. Submitting to the industry’s demands for space, time, and material resources, however, significantly subjugates shopkeepers in a retail sector labeled as “independent.”