

WALKING DOWN MEMORY LANE: PATERNALISTIC ACTS OF COLONIAL CINCHONA PLANTATION IN BANDUNG

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Abstract *This study examines how local residents living near the former Dutch colonial cinchona plantation in Cikembang Village, West Java maintain collective memories of this history through both physical structures and oral traditions. Through ethnohistorical research method, the investigation reveals that local residents' narratives demonstrate a strong connection to the plantation system, largely resulting from the paternalistic labor control practices in the past. The research concludes that these paternalistic relationships served more complex purposes than simply providing basic needs and imposing moral codes—they were deliberately implemented as a strategic mechanism to secure a consistent and dependable plantation workforce over time.*

Keyword:

Cinchona plantation, collective memory, paternalism, labor control, West Java

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1. Introduction

Cinchona ("kina" in both Dutch and Indonesian languages) represented an essential plantation commodity throughout the colonial period, especially from the 18th century until the middle of the 20th century (Goss, 2014; Middleton, 2021, 2024; Veale, 2010). The bark contains valuable quinine alkaloids that functioned as a critical antimalarial medication when processed for consumption. During this historical period, malaria caused numerous fatalities, with the disease being transmitted through bites from female *Anopheles* mosquitoes that flourished in tropical environments across Asia and Africa (Cuvi, 2011; Nair, 2021; Roy, 2017). The widespread presence of malaria created both a deadly pandemic and a formidable obstacle to European powers attempting to expand their colonial territories into tropical regions of Asia and Africa (Rocco, 2003; Roy, 2017). The resulting high market demand for quinine sparked competition among European nations to establish and develop cinchona plantations in colonies possessing suitable growing conditions, particularly in British-India and the Dutch East Indies (Gorkom, 1883; Middleton, 2024; Roersch van der Hoogte & Pieters, 2014).

By the beginning of the 20th century, cinchona bark production from the Dutch East Indies had achieved market dominance, controlling more than 90% of global supply (Goss, 2014;

Middleton, 2024). This monopolistic position continued only until 1942, when Japanese forces occupied these territories (Goss, 2014; Ku, 2016). To prevent Japan from benefiting economically from the cinchona plantations, the United States government invested significantly in scientific research to develop synthetic quinine alternatives, which eventually succeeded in replacing naturally extracted quinine from cinchona bark (Cuvil, 2011; Roersch van der Hoogte & Pieters, 2014). This scientific breakthrough resulted in declining quinine prices, signaling the beginning of the end for the Dutch East Indies' cinchona plantation industry. Despite this economic shift, many of these plantations remained operational through the post-colonial period after independence, with some continuing to function until the late 20th century (Nuralia, 2021; Nuralia & Imadudin, 2021).

Research on cinchona must be understood within the commercial agricultural framework that made it a plantation crop, examining plantations as distinct entities through both historical and anthropological methodologies. Traditional studies of American commercial crop plantations such as sugar and coffee have revealed how these massive institutions influenced both national politics and local communities (Bremner, 1989, 2015; Veale, 2010). Researchers have analyzed colonial plantation labor systems through historical archives, while more recent scholarship incorporates ethnographic approaches to investigate the socioeconomic pressures plantations placed on workers, often leading to tensions and resistance (Besky, 2017, 2024; Li, 2017a; Li & Semedi, 2022; Middleton, 2021, 2024; Stoler, 1985).

In Indonesia specifically, plantation studies reveal an evolution in labor control strategies from the Dutch colonial era through nationalization in 1959. Colonial plantations typically employed harsh control mechanisms, sometimes including physical punishment (Bremner, 1989; Li, 2017b; Stoler, 1985), whereas following nationalization, Indonesian authorities incorporated paternalistic relationships into plantation management as a labor control strategy, a practice that intensified during and after the New Order period (Barral, 2012, 2014; P. Gibbon et al., 2014; Li, 2017b). Paternalism, characterized by parent-child-like relationships, becomes embedded in production-related social structures, creating a clear division between those who govern and those who are governed. The governed group faces restricted choices because the governing authority perceives them as limited in their decision-making abilities and therefore requiring guidance (Begon, 2016; Dworkin, 2015; P. Gibbon et al., 2014; Kaba, 2016). This paternalistic approach appears commonly across plantations throughout Africa and Southeast Asia (Barral, 2012, 2014; Li, 2017b), manifested through worker welfare provisions and social security guarantees (P. Gibbon et al., 2014). These paternalistic dynamics become particularly visible in this research examining a former cinchona plantation in a mountainous village near southern Bandung. Because operations have ceased, these paternalistic relationships are especially evident in the collective memory preserved in the area, embodied in physical remnants and oral histories shared by local inhabitants.

Collective memory encompasses both the processes and results of how individuals within a social group recall shared experiences or objects. These social groups may include local residents or people connected through institutional ties, such as workplace colleagues (Doolan, 2021). Within any social group, while members may remember the same events or objects, their narratives about these memories often vary and sometimes directly contradict one another (Doolan, 2021; Olick, 1999). The complexity of memory can be illustrated through narrative anthropology, which describes either parts or the entirety of a culture—commonly referred to as "thick description" by Geertz (1973b)—as a means of representing the complex and multilayered nature of social life (Feldman & Almquist, 2021; Polletta, 2021; Reck, 1983). The researcher adds 'context' to this complex narrative of lived experiences, referring to the mental

associations related to the narrative text, with the aim of shaping and giving meaning—an endeavor often materialized through ethnographic work (Cashman, 2021).

In the case of collective memory, variations in the narratives presented may emerge because collective memory inherently involves two complementary processes: 'remembering' and 'unremembering' (Doolan, 2021). The process of remembering manifests when certain narratives become dominant within the group, often being simplified into tangible symbols like monuments or ritualistic practices, while more nuanced and complex aspects are overlooked (Effendhie, 2019; Olick, 1999). In contrast, 'unremembering' involves the active suppression of specific details, frequently expressed through silences that are overshadowed by the prevailing narratives (Munsi, 2016). The continuous interaction between these remembering and unremembering processes shapes how history is understood and transmitted across generations. Consequently, collective memory remains dynamic and subject to ongoing negotiation, largely influenced by contemporary interests and needs.

In studies focusing on colonial plantations, collective memory typically crystallizes in the form of museums that commemorate past events within the plantation landscape (Adamkiewicz, 2016; Alderman & Arnold Modlin, 2016; Bastos, 2020; Benjamin & Alderman, 2018). For example, Hawaii's Waipahu Plantation Museum highlights the cultural heritage of migrant workers while largely overlooking the contributions of indigenous laborers (Bastos, 2020). Similarly, plantation museums in the Antebellum South often minimize slavery's history to evoke 'white nostalgia' and downplay historical racial inequalities. Nevertheless, these plantation museums can function as dynamic spaces that facilitate dialogue among physical locations, guides, and visitors, potentially creating opportunities to recover forgotten narratives (Adamkiewicz, 2016).

Previous studies align with the present research by illustrating how collective memory manifests not only through museums commemorating the plantation's former prestige, but also through physical remnants of plantation infrastructure and oral histories conveyed by local residents—including former laborers and their descendants—who serve as carriers of generational memory (Kidron, 2003). These narratives reveal the workers' dependency on the plantation's paternalistic facilities, sustained through an intergenerational labor system functioning as a mechanism of labor control.

Ethnographic study on intergenerationality has emerged as a significant topic within biosocial sciences, rooted in both biologically-determined kinship relations and the cultural and social meanings that surround them (S. Gibbon & Lamoreaux, 2021). In specific contexts such as plantation labor, Li (2017a) research of oil palm plantations in West Kalimantan demonstrates how intergenerationality is deliberately engineered by plantations to ensure that surrounding communities remain aligned with the plantation pathway. In such cases, residual land not dedicated to plantation use is extremely limited relative to the growing local population, particularly among migrant settlers seeking work as plantation laborers. As the descendants of these settlers increase in number, the already scarce residual land becomes insufficient to support livelihoods outside the plantation economy. This creates a surplus labor population that is ultimately absorbed into the local plantation workforce, aligning with the plantation's demand for a continuous supply of young laborers capable of replacing aging workers. Furthermore, this model of intergenerationality is reinforced by tightly knit kinship relations, which are deepened and managed by plantation institutions as a means to naturalize precarity among laborers (Raj, 2023).

In this study, intergenerationality in the plantation labor context is made possible through a system of hereditary employment, emerging from strong kinship bonds between parents and

children and intensified by dependency on the plantation's paternalistic facilities. Here, both kinship and dependency serve as crucial components of labor control within the plantation system—cultivating reliance while maintaining a steady and replaceable labor force. Consequently, this structure leaves little room for local inhabitants to detach from the plantation's grip, a condition that is retraceable through the collective memory of the local residents.

2. Method

This research utilizes an ethnohistorical methodology, an interdisciplinary approach that integrates historical and anthropological techniques. This method employs oral history to reconstruct historical events and discover alternative historical narratives that complement traditional literature and archival documents (Sommer & Quinlan, 2018; Strong, 2015). The researchers conducted interviews using snowball sampling, engaging with 29 residents of Cikembang Village in Bandung Regency.

The study participants were divided into two distinct categories. The first group consisted of individuals who had direct involvement with the cinchona plantation, either during Dutch colonial control or after nationalization. This included various former employees such as field laborers, foremen, drivers, medical staff, and management personnel. The second group comprised people who, while not directly employed by the plantation, lived alongside it and interacted with its operations—including local merchants, independent farmers, livestock keepers, and descendants of plantation workers.

We gathered data through systematic observation and semi-structured interviews designed to explore participants' memories connected to the cinchona plantation. The observation component focused on understanding Cikembang Village as a plantation landscape, with more attention paid to the physical infrastructure remnants that have been either abandoned or repurposed over time. To ensure the reliability of their findings, the researchers implemented data triangulation techniques by comparing information across multiple sources, strengthening the validity of their analysis.

3. Result and Discussion

3.1 Socio-Historical Context

By the early 1900s, the Dutch East Indies had emerged as a principal global source of cinchona bark. The cultivation journey began with an expedition led by German botanist Justus Karl Hasskarl, who transported cinchona seeds and seedlings from their native South America to Batavia (now Jakarta) in 1852, establishing the first plantings in the Buitenzorg (now Bogor) botanical garden. In 1855, under Franz Junghuhn's leadership, the government's experimental cinchona plantation was transferred to the Malabar Highlands in central Priangan, specifically to Cinyiruan Plantation near Pangalengan. This relocation was strategically chosen due to the region's fertile volcanic soil, higher elevation, and Junghuhn's earlier documentation from 1839 describing it as uninhabited primary forest, an area that colonial authorities conveniently classified as wasteland (Gorkom, 1883; Mulyanto, 2022).

The Dutch East Indies' cinchona industry achieved a breakthrough in 1872 with the development of an innovative hybridization technique combining the species of *Cinchona ledgeriana* and *Cinchona succirubra*. This agricultural advancement yielded bark with exceptional quinine content exceeding 5%, surpassing competing British-India production. Following the implementation of liberal economic policies in the Dutch East Indies (Gorkom, 1883), private cinchona plantations flourished throughout the Malabar Highlands region. The

industry received further support through the 1913 Quinine Agreement, which established Dutch monopolistic control over global quinine supply, making cinchona the predominant crop across private plantations throughout the mountainous Preanger territories (Gorkom, 1883; Goss, 2014).

Among these commercial operations was the *Rotterdamsche Kina Maatschappij Tji Kembang*, established in the Tjitjilengka District of *Midden-Preanger*, nestled in the southern mountains of West Java (Nederlandsche Staatscourant, 1883). Positioned strategically between Mount Malabar to the northwest and Mount Papandayan to the south at an elevation of 1,592 meters above sea level, this plantation was founded in 1882 with an initial land concession of 589 hectares (Ledenlijst, 1938), which subsequently expanded. By the early twentieth century, the plantation achieved production levels of approximately 325,000 kilograms of cinchona bark annually, consistently maintaining quinine content above 5%. The majority of this harvest was transported to the *Bandoengsche Kininefabriek* in Bandung for processing into antimalarial medications (Java Kinabast, 1904).

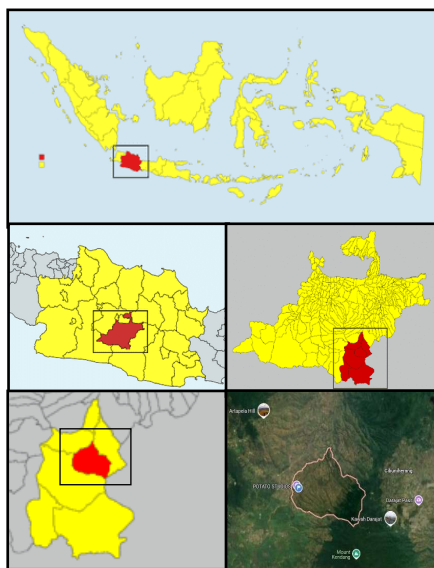


Figure 1. The map of the study area in Cikembang Village, Kertasari Sub-district, Bandung Regency, West Java, Indonesia (-7.211685, 107.688709)



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

In 1959, the Indonesian government nationalized the *Rotterdamsche Kina Maatschappij Tji Kembang* cinchona plantation through Government Regulation No. 19, transforming it into the state-managed Tjikembang Plantation. Despite the significant decline in global cinchona prices that followed the Japanese occupation in 1942, the plantation continued its operations under the management of the state-owned enterprise PT. Perkebunan Nusantara (PTPN). The plantation's significance in the local context was formally recognized in 1983 when its area was designated as an independent administrative entity called Cikembang Village within Kertasari Subdistrict of Bandung Regency.

However, this period of relative stability proved temporary. By the mid-1980s, cinchona production began declining substantially, accompanied by the gradual decommissioning of the plantation's processing facilities. The plantation's difficulties culminated in 1998 when local farmers began occupying portions of the concession area, replacing cinchona trees with commercial vegetable crops including cabbage, carrots, and potatoes. This land occupation wasn't an isolated incident but rather reflected the broader social unrest and dissatisfaction with Indonesia's New Order regime during its final years (Bachriadi & Lucas, 2001; McCarthy & Robinson, 2016).

By 2013, Cikembang Plantation officially abandoned cinchona cultivation, transitioning instead to coffee production. The new strategy incorporated an intercropping arrangement that allowed farmers to grow vegetables within the plantation's concession areas. As of 2023, plantation concessions comprise approximately 72% of Cikembang Village's total land area, with nearly all this territory now being cultivated by independent farmers rather than plantation management (Pemerintah Desa Cikembang, 2023). While the plantation continues to exist as a legal entity, its current operations bear little resemblance to its former scale and importance. The workforce has been dramatically reduced to just three administrative staff (consisting of a manager, a clerk, and a chief foreman) supported by fewer than 30 seasonal laborers. Consequently, Cikembang's legacy as a once-thriving cinchona plantation primarily survives today in the collective memory of the village residents, a phenomenon that forms the central focus of this study.

3.2 Physical Ruins from Cikembang Plantation

In the development of anthropology, particularly during the first half of the 20th century, a significant shift in scholarly focus emerged. Early British anthropology, which initially emphasized the collection of artifacts or physical objects—such as technologies and art from so-called "primitive" tribes—gradually reinterpreted these items as mere symbols of human culture. This transformation was driven by the rise of structural-functionalism in anthropology, realized through fieldwork and the method of participant observation, which produced ethnographic accounts. Key figures in this shift included Bronislaw Malinowski and Alfred Radcliffe-Brown, whose work spanned the 1920s to 1940s. Accompanying this paradigm shift was a terminological change: the concept of "technology" gave way to "material culture." This signaled that object-based anthropological research became increasingly subordinated to cultural sociology. In other words, research focused on physical objects came to be understood primarily as supporting evidence of the broader interaction between humans and their cultures (Hicks, 2010).

Material objects, therefore, are interpreted as evidence of human social relations, which can also manifest in the form of collective memory—most notably through "collective representation." Collective memory represents the shared recollections held by individuals

within a community. However, this shared quality doesn't mean these memories are identical across community members; while the commemorated events may be the same, the specific narratives can vary significantly or even contradict one another. This variation stems from memory's fundamental nature—it cannot capture past events with complete objectivity or comprehensiveness, instead reconstructing historical moments by connecting them to present circumstances. This reconstructive characteristic applies equally to collective memory. Individual subjectivity, influenced by both historical and contemporary conditions, creates diverse recollections even within a single community (Doolan, 2021; Effendhie, 2019; Mitchell, 2003).

Despite this diversity, collective memory typically manifests through "collective representation", curated narratives of the past that focus on specific events considered particularly relevant or significant. These representations are deliberately crafted by stakeholders with specific interests, simplifying complex historical experiences to serve particular present-day purposes (Effendhie, 2019). These collective representations commonly take symbolic forms or material culture such as monuments, ritualistic practices, or dominant narratives. We can observe this phenomenon clearly in the establishment of *Museum Kina* in Cikembang Village.

Museum Kina functions as a physical monument that intentionally documents the once-prosperous cinchona plantation industry. It simultaneously serves as a landmark that marks the entrance to the village. This distinctive landmark features vegetable gardens with raised lettering spelling "TJIKEMBANG," positioned along the left side of the road when approaching from the north, welcoming visitors to the area. Distributed throughout this garden stand several tall and leafless cinchona trees exceeding five meters in height, which give the area its name "Museum Kina". While the raised "TJIKEMBANG" lettering technically marks the village boundary, its designation as "*Museum Kina*" emphasizes the historical significance of the plantation that defines the village's identity.

According to popular local accounts, Museum Kina occupies the original site where cinchona was first cultivated in Cikembang. However, historical records reveal that this monument was actually established by plantation authorities in the 1980s as a recreational park open for public. Following the 1998 land occupation movement, farmers who took control of the area were specifically requested not to completely remove the remaining cinchona trees. This preservation effort aimed to ensure that cinchona plants—though no longer commercially cultivated—would maintain a physical presence in Cikembang, preserving this tangible connection to the village's defining historical industry.

Museum Kina stands as a culturally significant monument that, within the discourse of heritage studies, may be understood as a tangible historical artifact imbued with symbolic value for both cultural identity and knowledge production. Monuments such as this can encompass a range of archaeological remnants—including architecture, sculpture, visual art, and epigraphy (Effendhie, 2019). Crucially, their significance extends beyond materiality, serving as instruments for articulating political ideologies. Monuments operate as spatial semiotics, mediating collective memory by privileging specific narratives for public remembrance, thus actively shaping how history is collectively recalled (Ladd, 2018; Mitchell, 2003). Within this study, Museum Kina functions as a commemorative marker of the cinchona plantation's historical footprint, underscored by its role as a territorial landmark and its continued relevance in local narratives.

As a symbolic embodiment of the cinchona plantation, Museum Kina exemplifies a broader phenomenon observed in the heritage management of colonial plantations, where

memory is often institutionalized through museums. These sites become curatorial agents, determining which aspects of plantation history are preserved and which are marginalized. Although Museum Kina comprises a modest garden rather than an elaborate estate akin to the grand plantation complexes of the Antebellum South (Adamkiewicz, 2016; Alderman & Arnold Modlin, 2016; Bastos, 2020; Benjamin & Alderman, 2018), it shares with them the function of curating historical memory and representing collective identity. In this context, Museum Kina not only commemorates the cinchona plantation's past grandeur but also serves as a defining cultural feature of Cikembang Village, evident in its symbolic role as a spatial and historical reference point.

The idealization of the cinchona plantation era as Cikembang's "golden age" is further reinforced through linguistic framing by former plantation elites in reference to the land reclamation event of 1998, which marked the end of plantation operations. This group consistently employs the term *penyerobotan*—translated as "encroachment"—to describe the event. In the Indonesian lexicon, the term implies unlawful seizure or appropriation of property, reflecting a particular ideological stance. This terminology underscores the plantation officials' belief that the community's welfare peaked during the plantation era, as they assert that essential services and facilities were provided freely to workers under the plantation regime.

The land occupation that unfolded in Cikembang between 1998 and the early 2000s can be understood within the broader national context of agrarian unrest, which emerged in response to widespread dissatisfaction with the authoritarian land management policies of Indonesia's New Order regime. Rooted in the implementation of the 1960 Agrarian Law, these policies allowed large-scale industrial actors to exploit land, rather than facilitating equitable redistribution to impoverished and landless rural populations. Across Java and Sumatra, various groups of farmers reclaimed and occupied land controlled by state-owned enterprises such as Perum Perhutani and PTPN (Bachriadi & Lucas, 2001; McCarthy & Robinson, 2016). The occupation in Cikembang not only reflected this broader movement but was also precipitated by local conditions, particularly the decline of cinchona cultivation. This downturn was underscored by a merger with other plantation units and the decommissioning of the local bark processing facility.

The reclamation of the Cikembang concession area, previously owned and managed by PTPN, marked a critical transformation in the socioeconomic fabric of the village. Former plantation workers transitioned into new roles as tenant farmers or agricultural laborers, engaging primarily in the cultivation of commercial vegetable crops. The land occupation offered a previously unavailable opportunity for these individuals to attain land ownership. Under the former cinchona plantation system, this was impractical, as cinchona requires a prolonged growth period—between seven to fifteen years—before it becomes harvestable.

Material traces of the cinchona plantation's historical presence remain embedded in the village landscape, manifesting in two distinct categories of physical structures. The first comprises core operational infrastructure, including the former factory and administrative offices. The second includes support facilities that once served laborers, such as the former medical clinic, residential quarters (commonly referred to locally as *bedeng*, or temporary labor housing), and the night market known as *Pasar Cikembang* or Cikembang Market. While some of these buildings remain in a state of disuse and have not been demolished—preserving the memory of the plantation era—others have been adapted to meet contemporary needs. For example, the *bedeng* housing, initially designated exclusively for plantation laborers, is now inhabited by local residents and has been officially repurposed to accommodate village administrative staff. Former regulatory norms imposed by plantation management—such as

strict requirements for cleanliness, architectural uniformity, and restrictions on modifications—have since been abandoned. Furthermore, structures like the old administrative building and *Pasar Cikembang* were temporarily reallocated for use by military personnel involved in the government's "*Citarum Harum*" environmental restoration program, which includes the revitalization of the Citarum Hulu watershed area encompassing Cikembang Village in 2017.

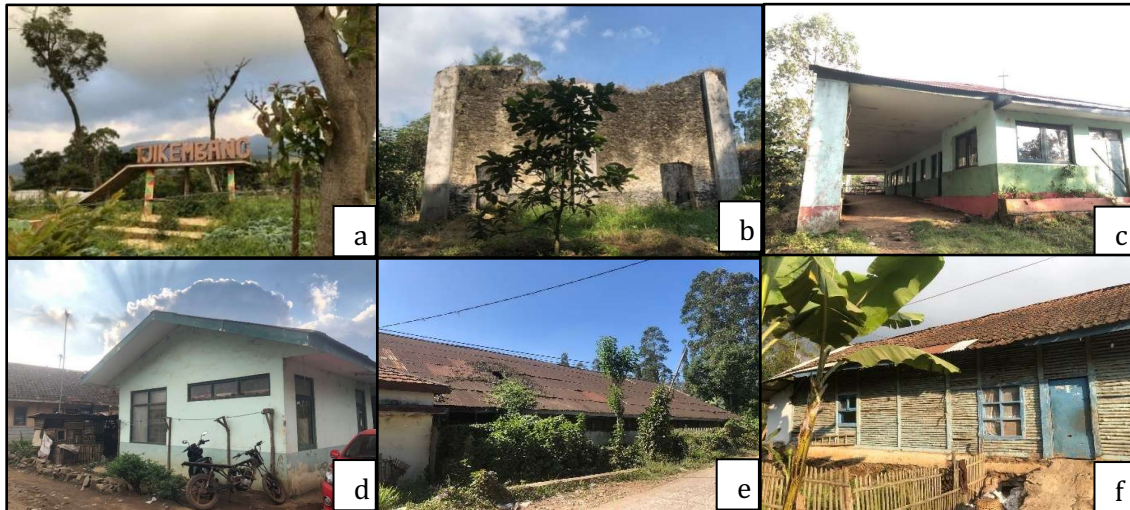


Figure 3. The physical remnants of Cikembang cinchona plantation. a) Museum Kina, b) cinchona bark milling factory, c) plantation administrative office, d) plantation-owned health clinic, e) Cikembang night market (*Pasar Cikembang*), and f) worker's housing (*bedeng*)

Each of these historical structures is inscribed within the collective memory of the local community. However, the present study will concentrate specifically on the second category of these architectural remnants—namely, the ancillary facilities originally designed for plantation laborers. This includes the former clinic, workers' housing, and the night market known as *Pasar Cikembang*. The memories associated with these spaces, as recalled by residents, provide critical insight into the paternalistic framework that once characterized the plantation system, along with its institutional mechanisms and social ramifications, which will be further examined in the following sections.

3.3 Paternalism in Plantation

This section centers on the recollections of former plantation laborers, whose daily lives were once inextricably linked to the plantation's ancillary infrastructure—most notably the former clinic, workers' housing, and the night market known as *Pasar Cikembang*. These individuals occupied a structurally marginalized position within the plantation's social hierarchy, subordinated to more powerful groups across economic, political, and institutional domains. Importantly, marginalization in this context does not correspond to numerical inferiority; indeed, laborers far outnumbered the plantation elite. However, their lives were extensively regulated by policies formulated and enforced by administrators, managers, and their subordinates (Li & Semedi, 2022). The workers' marginalized status is made visible through their memories of systemic poverty and their function at the base of the plantation hierarchy, tasked with the manual labor of planting, tending, and harvesting (Kartodirdjo & Suryo, 1991). In Cikembang, former laborers were often identified as *harian* (daily workers), a

designation reflecting a wage system based on days worked each month. Following the anti-communist purges of 1965, the term *karyawan* (employee) increasingly replaced *buruh* (laborer), a lexical shift promoted within state-owned plantations to depoliticize labor and undermine union activity (Li & Semedi, 2022).

The concept of paternalism, central to this study, refers to a hierarchical dynamic akin to a parent-child relationship in which the governing party asserts control over the governed under the pretense that the latter lacks the capacity to make decisions in their own best interest. Such perceived incapacity is typically rooted in assumptions of racial or socioeconomic inferiority (MacGregor, 1999; Mill, 1859; Newby, 2015). Paternalistic relationships are characterized by a blend of authority, moral obligation, and sentimentality, which together foster dependency and perpetuate the illusion that the governing party provides benevolent protection. These dynamics are particularly prevalent in political and economic spheres, manifesting in welfare programs directed toward socially marginalized populations or in plantation systems where employers provided food, housing, medical care, and pensions as forms of "benevolence." This pattern was especially pronounced in Indonesian plantations during the New Order period (Barral, 2014; P. Gibbon et al., 2014; Li, 2017b, 2024).

Although paternalistic practices are often criticized for fostering socioeconomic dependency, opposition to them frequently remains superficial. As Begon (2016) argues, anti-paternalistic critiques often emphasize infringements on personal autonomy without substantiating claims of tangible harm (Saunders-Hastings, 2024). This study seeks to move beyond such critiques by illustrating how paternalism in the Cikembang plantation was not merely a curtailment of individual freedom, but a calculated mechanism for maintaining control and ensuring the continued availability of low-cost labor—an essential characteristic of colonial plantation economies in Asia (Gordon, 1999).

In the Indonesian context, paternalistic structures became especially pronounced on plantations in the post-colonial era, particularly following the nationalization of Dutch-owned enterprises in 1959. This trend intensified during the New Order regime and continues to exert influence today (Barral, 2012, 2014; P. Gibbon et al., 2014; Li, 2017b). The convergence of authoritarian governance and paternalistic practices led to the consolidation of absolute power within plantation institutions, accompanied by the provision of welfare-oriented services—such as housing, healthcare, loans, and education—that had been largely absent under colonial rule. These developments illustrate how plantations operated as quasi-governing bodies, compelling workers to conform to institutional regulations and avail themselves of company-provided amenities, all under the guise of serving their best interests (Li, 2017b).

Among various interpretations of paternalism, Gibbon et al. (2014) propose that paternalistic relations within plantation system are characterized by two key dimensions: (1) the pursuit of moral betterment of the governed, and (2) the implementation of welfare practices, both of which are inherently coercive in nature. These criteria offer a critical framework for analyzing the lived experiences and collective memory of laborers in the Cikembang cinchona plantation, as will be examined in the subsequent discussion.

3.3.1 The Pursuit of Moral Betterment of the Governed: The Eradication of Gambling

The notion of moral improvement in paternalistic systems is grounded in the governing body's efforts to align the actions of the governed with perceived "enlightened norms." These norms are contextually specific and often manifest through religious adherence. Within paternalistic frameworks, such efforts are dual-purpose: they project a positive public image of the authority while simultaneously functioning as mechanisms of control (P. Gibbon et al.,

2014). At the Cikembang cinchona plantation, this aspect of paternalism is reflected in both physical monuments and the accompanying recollections of local residents.

One of the key historical structures associated with this dynamic is the former *Pasar Cikembang* (Cikembang Market), which operated monthly—on the fifth day of each month, coinciding with payday. Initially established during the Dutch colonial period and maintained post-nationalization, the market featured goods rarely available on ordinary days. During the colonial era, it also served as a site for popular entertainment such as dice gambling (*koclok*), sheep fighting, and *ronggeng* dance performances. While the plantation administration promoted the market as a recreational facility, in practice, these events were part of a deliberate strategy to economically bind laborers. Through the encouragement of gambling, workers were enticed to expend their wages, fostering dependency and incentivizing continued employment within the remote plantation environment (Breman, 2015; Li & Semedi, 2022).

Gambling has long been a subject of anthropological inquiry. Broadly defined, gambling is a game involving two or more participants who wager something of perceived value, often in the form of money (Pickles, 2016). It combines two elements: *play* and *threat*. On one hand, gambling involves the enjoyable nature of play; on the other, it introduces a thrilling sense of risk through the potential loss of valuable assets. This fusion renders gambling an exciting activity, providing an escape from the monotony of daily life and the potential for financial gain (Bateson, 1973).

Anthropological studies of gambling include Geertz (1973a) work on Balinese cockfighting, which reveals rigid social hierarchies by highlighting how economically disadvantaged individuals are excluded from the core gambling circles. Similarly, research on gambling in the Mediterranean and East Asia interprets it as a form of resistance to dominant economic systems (Pickles, 2016). In contrast, this study presents gambling as a distinctive mechanism of labor control within the context of colonial plantations.

However, this gambling culture in Cikembang began to decline in the 1970s, coinciding with the intensification of paternalistic moral regulation. The plantation management formally banned gambling to project a more respectable image aligned with state narratives. This moral transformation was reinforced by local elites, particularly Islamic religious figures. Central to this effort was a religious family from a *pondok pesantren* (Islamic boarding school), whose patriarch—originally trained in Tasikmalaya—was dispatched to Cikembang as a preacher in the 1970s. His arrival marked the beginning of concerted efforts to eradicate gambling through religious outreach that emphasized Islamic moral values. This clan's involvement appears to have been reciprocated through privileged access to agricultural land and patronage networks, which helped consolidate their lasting influence in the region.

The impact of this moral campaign is observable not only in the physical remnants of *Pasar Cikembang* but also in the collective memory of local residents. Present-day residents frequently deny that gambling ever occurred there, citing its incompatibility with the Islamic values now widely held in the community. This denial reflects a sense of moral discomfort or shame, as acknowledging past gambling practices would conflict with prevailing religious norms. Interestingly, narratives about gambling are primarily preserved by descendants of the aforementioned religious elite, who portray former plantation laborers as morally wayward and celebrate their own ancestors as moral reformers and community patrons.

The paternalistic drive toward moral improvement in Cikembang aligns with broader patterns across Southeast Asian plantations. Historically, colonial regimes—particularly the Dutch—relied on gambling to bind workers to their labor contracts through mechanisms of debt and dependency (Breman, 2015). However, starting in the 1970s, Islamic social

movements in Indonesia began to strongly oppose such practices, especially after state-sponsored gambling initiatives, including casinos and public lotteries, gained prominence (Sanjoyo, 2023; Yeung, 2011). The suppression of gambling at Cikembang coincided with this nationwide religious awakening, mediated through *pondok pesantren* figures who were deeply embedded in local social life (Kusdiana, 2023).

While the eradication of gambling marked a departure from colonial strategies of labor control, it did not eliminate the underlying objective of sustaining labor dependency. Instead, this objective was rearticulated through new paternalistic mechanisms, particularly in the form of welfare provision, which addressed in the following section.

3.3.2 The Implementation of Welfare Practices: Medical Clinic, Housing, and Livestock Rearing

Mechanisms for labor retention within plantations are further exemplified through a second dimension of paternalistic relationships, the provision of welfare. These welfare practices, initiated by the governing body (the plantation management) and directed toward the governed (the laborers) (MacGregor, 1999; Newby, 2015), typically included services such as healthcare, housing, and access to land (Barral, 2012, 2014; P. Gibbon et al., 2014; Li, 2017a, 2024). In practice, these facilities operated as an exchange system, wherein recipients were expected to provide labor as a form of compensation (Kaba, 2016). Despite often being framed as benevolent support, such welfare practices were coercive in nature, with participation effectively mandatory for workers.

The institutionalization of welfare provisions gained particular momentum during the New Order period, catalyzed in part by labor union activism demanding the fulfillment of workers' basic needs (Barral, 2014; P. Gibbon et al., 2014). Consequently, the implementation of such facilities only became widespread in the post-nationalization era. In the context of Cikembang, this pattern of paternalistic welfare is notably reflected in the narratives of current plantation elites, who frequently express nostalgia for a period they describe as more prosperous—when residents were employed as plantation laborers rather than, as in the present, working as smallholder farmers on occupied concession land. These recollections reinforce a broader discourse within Indonesia that positions plantations as agents of societal progress and prosperity (Li & Semedi, 2022).

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

Welfare provisions were also materially expressed through physical infrastructures such as the remnants of the former plantation clinic and workers' housing, both of which are embedded in the oral histories of the community. The clinic once served as a medical facility operated by the plantation, offering free healthcare and medication exclusively to plantation laborers. In cases where a patient's condition exceeded the clinic's capacity, referrals were made to Pasir Junghuhn Hospital, a larger healthcare facility owned by PTPN and located in Pangalengan. Crucially, the entitlement to free healthcare was reserved solely for plantation workers; non-laborer residents were required to pay for medical services, illustrating a hierarchical distribution of welfare resources.

The paternalistic welfare model was further evident in the company-provided worker housing, a common feature in plantations located in remote or sparsely populated areas that

required the recruitment of laborers from other regions (Barral, 2012; Nuralia & Imadudin, 2021; Stoler, 1985). In Cikembang, for instance, many workers migrated from Garut. These housing units not only functioned as physical shelters but also served as sites where the private and public spheres converged. Supervisors, such as foremen, often lived alongside laborers and exerted control over their daily lives—mediating familial disputes and monitoring sanitation and order within the housing compound.

The plantation imposed coercive standards aimed at cultivating a specific lifestyle among residents, emphasizing ideals of uniformity, orderliness, and hygiene (Barral, 2014). Locally referred to as *bedeng*, these semi-permanent barracks were typically constructed from plywood and cinchona bark. Known colloquially as *kontrakan*—reflecting the contract-based nature of the laborers' employment—these dwellings were built uniformly in rows. Each unit, measuring approximately 7 x 5 meters, typically accommodated two to three households. Floors were earthen, and sanitation facilities were shared among multiple units. Pathways paved with large colonial-era stones, referred to locally as *Jalan Belanda* (Dutch Road), separated the rows of *bedeng*, and were historically used for horse cart traffic in colonial era.

Occupants were required to comply with regulations governing structural uniformity and communal harmony. Modifications to the barracks were prohibited, and residents were expected to maintain a clean and orderly environment. Access to these housing units was contingent upon active employment; once a laborer resigned or retired, they were obliged to vacate the premises and seek alternative accommodation, further reinforcing the dependency of workers on the plantation's welfare infrastructure (Barral, 2012; P. Gibbon et al., 2014; Li, 2017b).

In addition to company-provided housing, Gibbon et al. (2014) highlight that paternalistic relations in plantations also manifest in the allocation of land for laborers. A similar pattern is observable in the Cikembang cinchona plantation, where landless workers were granted limited access to plantation land for the construction of dairy cattle pens. This initiative was closely tied to a contract farming arrangement with the Bandung Selatan Dairy Cooperative (*Koperasi Peternakan Bandung Selatan, KPBS*), which allowed laborers to supplement their meager plantation wages. Under this scheme, workers were permitted to rent cows owned by KPBS and were responsible for their maintenance and milk production. KPBS provided essential resources, including medications and vaccinations, through credit, while purchasing the milk produced. Payments were then adjusted based on the workers' outstanding debts, effectively binding them to the cooperative through a cycle of dependency.

The plantation's allocation of separate land plots for cattle pens was motivated by its strict enforcement of housing hygiene and uniformity regulations, which prohibited livestock rearing in the immediate vicinity of the *bedeng* housing units. This spatial management reinforced paternalistic standards of orderliness while encouraging participation in the cooperative scheme. Consequently, laborers' daily routines became highly regimented, revolving around three primary locations: the *bedeng* (residence), the plantation (primary workplace), and the livestock pens (secondary livelihood site). Workers typically began their day around 4 a.m., tending to cattle by feeding, cleaning, and milking them. By 7 a.m., they commenced plantation work, which concluded by 1 p.m. Following this, laborers often foraged for grass—usually from the plantation's cinchona fields—to feed the cattle. Although the plantation did not officially require workers to perform weeding, this task was commonly undertaken by laborers as a necessary activity for livestock care, indirectly contributing to plantation maintenance.

This encouragement of secondary income generation was part of a broader trend during Indonesia's New Order era, particularly following the 1979 implementation of labor pension

fund regulations under the *Jaminan Sosial Ketenagakerjaan* program. These regulations mandated monthly wage deductions to be managed by a government agency and the plantation, eventually returned as a pension with interest upon retirement. In exchange for this scheme, workers were obliged to vacate company housing after retirement, thus creating a financial impetus for them to secure alternative housing (Barral, 2014). While such policies ostensibly introduced a degree of labor autonomy by encouraging savings and additional income, the case of Cikembang illustrates a more complex reality. Instead of loosening paternalistic structures, the plantation-maintained control by channeling secondary livelihoods—like dairy farming—through systems still dependent on plantation resources. Access to land, feed, and even labor time remained mediated by the plantation, underscoring the continued dominance of paternalistic governance over workers' economic lives.

Although seemingly generous, the plantation's support of workers through semi-proletarian and semi-small farming arrangements served to absolve it of the responsibility to provide fair wages (Bernstein, 2010; Stoler, 1985). By endorsing practices like contract farming with KPBS, the plantation justified its low wages, presuming that workers could meet their basic needs through supplementary activities such as dairy farming. However, this setup entailed significant compromises: if a worker chose to leave the plantation and focus solely on livestock farming, they would lose access to free resources like grass, which the plantation provided to support their cattle. Without this support, production costs would increase, placing further strain on workers.

The inherent flaws of this system became evident when the plantation ceased to function after the land occupation movement, which marked the end of cinchona cultivation. The former plantation area, once used for cinchona production, was converted into vegetable farms, disrupting the previously established mechanisms of support. Under the plantation system, grass was provided at no cost, and workers contributed free labor to maintain the cinchona fields, which also served as a primary feed source for livestock. In contrast, small-scale farmers—following the land reform—were forced to use herbicides to control weeds, eliminating the need for additional labor but simultaneously reducing the grass available for cattle feed. This shift significantly increased production costs, as farmers had to search further afield to find fodder, a cost not borne under the plantation system.

The free provision of housing, healthcare, and support for dairy farming was contingent on an active employment contract with the plantation. For instance, non-plantation workers had to pay fees to access the healthcare services once available for free to laborers. Similarly, those not employed by the plantation faced additional costs for land and fodder when pursuing dairy farming, as they were no longer eligible for the free grass that plantation workers received. Most significantly, housing—provided through the *bedeng* system—was reserved exclusively for plantation workers. Once workers resigned or retired, they lost access to these housing units and were required to find alternative accommodation, highlighting the temporary nature of the plantation's paternalistic provisions.

3.4 From Gambling to Housing: Paternalistic Acts of Labor Control in Local Collective Memory

In Cikembang, the restricted access to plantation amenities was offset by a multi-generational employment system. Plantation work typically passed from parents to children, with the cinchona plantation recruiting workers as young as 12-15 years old without educational requirements. This practice discouraged families from emphasizing education for their children since the plantation offered guaranteed jobs. Essentially, workers who left their

positions could continue living in the worker housing (*bedeng*) if their children became plantation employees. This arrangement also allowed families to regain benefits like access to free land and grass for dairy farming at reduced costs, and complimentary medical services from the plantation clinic.

The physical landmarks in Cikembang, including Museum Kina, the old clinic, workers' quarters, and the local market (Pasar Cikembang), serve as physical manifestations of collective memory and illustrate the paternalistic control system that governed plantation labor relations. Former workers' reminiscences about plantation amenities reveal their complete dependency on these services. While they acknowledge that plantation-provided benefits such as healthcare, housing, and land access reduced their living costs, they also recognize these benefits created an inescapable bond to the plantation since all support would vanish upon termination of employment. This clearly demonstrates how the Cikembang cinchona plantation wielded paternalism as a labor control mechanism.

This paternalistic system fulfilled two key criteria described by Gibbon et al. (2014): enforced moral improvement and the provision of welfare facilities. Moral improvement initiatives began after nationalization, when gambling was eliminated among workers at Pasar Cikembang. The plantation simultaneously offered welfare benefits through complimentary medical services, housing, and subsidized cattle farming costs (often through KPBS contract arrangements). These benefits were exclusively for current employees—they would cease upon resignation or retirement. However, the intergenerational recruitment system mitigated this loss. Workers effectively produced the next generation of laborers, enabling retired plantation employees to maintain access to these paternalistic benefits through their working children.

Though paternalistic relationships might appear benevolent on the surface, they warrant deeper scrutiny. Beyond merely imposing specific moral codes on workers, the elimination of gambling at Cikembang represented a transition from Dutch colonial control methods to Indonesian governmental paternalistic labor management, particularly during the New Order period. Rather than addressing the underlying reasons for gambling that limited workers' freedom, this anti-gambling initiative simply marked a shift toward a different control mechanism: welfare provision. The fundamental goal remained unchanged: ensuring a steady labor supply and fostering complete worker dependence on the plantation system. Only the methods of achieving this control were different.

The plantation's need for a consistent workforce was maintained through a generational employment system that preserved access to paternalistic benefits. Families needed to keep at least one member employed by the plantation to continue receiving housing and land for subsistence farming (Besky, 2017; Middleton, 2024; Stoler, 1985). This system effectively served as compensation beyond wages, enabling the plantation to keep low cash wages (Besky, 2017, 2024). The Cikembang plantation demonstrates how the workforce perpetually renewed itself through its reliance on the plantation's paternalistic provisions.

This interconnection between paternalistic amenities and generational employment created a paradoxical situation—providing workers stability and protection while simultaneously tethering them to the plantation as an all-encompassing institution that erased the boundaries between work life and essential personal requirements (Barral, 2012; Marimuthu, 1995). Workers and their children remained socially immobile, with few opportunities available outside plantation employment. Breaking free from this cycle was exceptionally difficult as it required resources like access to land not controlled by the plantation, particularly challenging in Cikembang where the plantation controlled 72% of the area, and where even the existence of villages depended on the plantation community.

However, this hereditary labor arrangement did enable plantation workers to develop their own community united by family connections, creating a sense of community belonging and establishing a distinctive social identity separate from local residents who couldn't access plantation facilities (Li, 2017b; Middleton, 2021, 2024; Raj, 2023). This was evident in Cikembang, where plantation workers' families were remembered for their pride and tendency to avoid mixing with outsiders. The essential role of paternalistic provisions in maintaining labor supply through generational employment highlights the plantation's fundamental goal: securing an ongoing supply of inexpensive labor—characterized by wages too low to cover workers' basic reproduction costs—alongside foreign control of appropriated land (Gordon, 2001). In Cikembang, this was reflected in former plantation workers' stories about struggling to survive on plantation wages, forcing them to take side jobs like dairy farming.

4. Conclusion

Plantations have been deeply embedded in Indonesia's colonial legacy, generating substantial government income through export commodities. After Indonesia gained independence, these plantation enterprises were nationalized but continued operating as sites of labor exploitation. This research illustrates this pattern by examining collective memories that preserve evidence of paternalistic practices in the former cinchona plantation region of Cikembang Village in Bandung Regency, demonstrating how these practices functioned as labor control mechanisms.

Collective memory manifests not only in physical historical locations but also through oral histories associated with these places. Former plantation workers often express complex, nuanced recollections—showing appreciation for facilities that eased their lives while recognizing the limitations these same structures imposed. This memory has been passed down across generations in the form of dependence on the plantation's paternalistic facilities, sustained through an intergenerational labor force. Nostalgia for the plantation's perceived generosity is also frequently expressed, particularly among plantation managers who remain employed today. Meanwhile, criticisms that dismiss paternalistic relationships as merely superficial intrusions on individual freedom deserve reconsideration. This study reveals that plantation paternalism provided workers with essential necessities while simultaneously establishing patronage structures and reinforcing social immobility. Essentially, these paternalistic relationships created profound dependency, ultimately serving as a mechanism to secure inexpensive and intergenerational labor force.

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