

Welfare Capitalism?: Perkembangan Perusahaan Perkebunan Karet Amerika Serikat di Sumatra Timur (1920-1929) = Welfare Capitalism?: The Development of the United States Rubber Company in East Sumatra (1920-1929)

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengulas investasi Amerika Serikat di Hindia Belanda, khususnya dalam industri karet di Sumatra Timur, melalui United States Rubber Company (USRC) dan anak perusahaannya, Hollandsch-Amerikaansche Plantage Maatschappij. USRC memperkenalkan konsep welfare capitalism dalam operasinya di perkebunan karet, menyediakan fasilitas seperti perumahan, perawatan kesehatan, dan rekreasi bagi pekerjanya. Penelitian sebelumnya mengenai USRC kurang menekankan operasinya di Hindia Belanda dan tidak menyoroti sisi lain dari penggunaan etos manajemen tersebut. Dengan metode penelitian sejarah yang melibatkan heuristik, kritik sumber, interpretasi, dan historiografi, serta mempertimbangkan tiga sudut pandang—Amerika Serikat, Pemerintah Kolonial Hindia Belanda, dan masyarakat lokal—penelitian ini menganalisis dasar penerapan welfare capitalism dan awal investasi USRC, implementasi konsep, dan dampaknya pada berbagai aspek sosial, ekonomi, dan lingkungan. Kedatangan dan inovasi bisnis karet di wilayah ini, bersama perkembangan menarik pada periode kemakmuran 1920-an, memberikan dampak signifikan pada berbagai aspek kehidupan masyarakat Sumatra Timur. Meskipun investasinya sukses, program welfare capitalism yang diterapkan tidak berhasil karena USRC lebih berfokus pada pencapaian keuntungan, ketidakcocokan antara konsep dengan budaya lokal, juga diwarnai kekurangan seperti kasus-kasus kekerasan dan kelalaian terhadap kebutuhan dasar pekerja sebagai manusia seutuhnya. Diharapkan penelitian ini memberikan kontribusi penting untuk pemahaman sejarah investasi dan kondisi buruh di Indonesia.

.....This research examines United States investments in the Dutch East Indies, particularly in the rubber industry in East Sumatra, through the United States Rubber Company (USRC) and its subsidiary, Hollandsch-Amerikaansche Plantage Maatschappij. USRC introduced the concept of welfare capitalism in its rubber plantations, providing facilities such as housing, healthcare, and recreational amenities for its workers. Previous research on USRC did not emphasize its operations in the Dutch East Indies and neglected other aspects of the application of this management ethos. Using a historical research method involving heuristics, source criticism, interpretation, and historiography, and considering three perspectives—United States, Dutch Colonial Government, and local communities—this study analyzes the basis for implementing welfare capitalism and the initial investments of USRC, the implementation of the concept, and its impact on various social, economic, and environmental aspects. The arrival and innovations in the rubber business in this region, along with its intriguing development during the prosperity of the 1920s, have significantly affected various aspects of life in East Sumatra. Despite its successful investments, the welfare capitalism program applied by USRC failed due to the company's focus on profit achievement, cultural mismatch, and shortcomings such as cases of violence and neglect of the basic needs of workers as human beings. It is hoped that this research will make a significant contribution to understanding the history of investments and labor conditions in Indonesia.