



# Tiger Dance: Transformation and Cultural Property Rights Discourse in Kerinci, Indonesia

Febby Febriyandi YS<sup>1✉</sup>, Anastasia Wiwik Swastiwi<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Badan Riset dan Inovasi Nasional, Indonesia

<sup>2</sup>Universitas Maritim Raja Ali Haji, Indonesia

Submitted: 2023-02-01. Revised: 2024-01-20. Accepted: 2024-02-27

---

## Abstract

This article aims to answer why the tiger dance in Kerinci Regency, Jambi Province, has not developed widely despite being preserved for more than 30 years and becoming a popular dance in Jambi Province. Qualitative research methods were used to carry out this study. In-depth interviews and uninvolved observation of the artists' activities were used to collect the data. The analysis focused on the development of the tiger dance and the preservation discourse created by the artists and residents of Pulau Tengah Village. This study discovered that the extinct *Ngagoah Imo* ritual was transformed into the tiger dance. The "tiger man" myth, which the Kerinci people still hold dear, forms the basis of the tiger ritual and dance. Initially, the tiger dance was not sacred but was made sacred due to encouragement from various parties. Because of its uniqueness, the tiger dance soon became popular in Jambi and became a cure for the longing of the Kerinci people for the *Ngagoah Imo* ritual. Realizing the potential of tiger dance as an economic resource and as Kerinci's regional identity, the artists then created a discourse of property rights over tiger dance. They prohibited other villagers from learning or imitating it. This discourse is slowly making tiger dance endangered because it is only controlled by a small group of artists. Such a discourse on cultural property rights needs to be straightened out. Apart from being contrary to the dynamic character of Malay culture, it is also contrary to various principles of cultural preservation.

**Keywords:** tiger; dance; kerinci; property rights; endangered

**How to Cite:** YS, F. F., & Swastiwi, A. W. (2024). Tiger Dance: Transformation and Cultural Property Rights Discourse in Kerinci, Indonesia. *Harmonia: Journal of Arts Research and Education*, 24(1), 122-133

---

## INTRODUCTION

The *Ngagoah Imo* ceremony is held by the locals of Pulau Tengah Village in Kerinci Regency, Jambi Province, in honor of tigers. This ceremony honors tigers who were either discovered dead in the forest or had to be killed for invading the village. Tiger deaths are now extremely uncommon due to the declining wild tiger population in Kerinci. This has resulted in the

disappearance of the *Ngagoah Imo* ritual since the 1960s. To preserve this ritual, a dance known as *Ngagoah Imo* (tiger dance) was developed around 1980. Since then, tiger dance has gained popularity in Jambi Province and is frequently performed at local government-organized cultural festivals.

The issuance of Indonesian Presidential Regulation No. 78/2007 on the Ratification of the Convention on the Protection

---

✉ Corresponding author:  
E-mail: [febriyanditpi@gmail.com](mailto:febriyanditpi@gmail.com)

of Intangible Cultural Heritage has encouraged communities and local governments in Indonesia to protect their cultural heritage and make it a regional identity. This awareness is also fueled by the economic potential and cases of disputes over claims to Indonesian cultural works with other countries (Djulaeka & Zulkifli, 2018). To preserve Ngagah Imo, the Kerinci Regency government registered the tiger dance as an Indonesian intangible cultural heritage and designated it in 2018. Despite its growing popularity and designation as an intangible cultural heritage, tiger dance has not spread throughout Kerinci. By 2022, only one art studio can perform tiger dance. This condition has led to tiger dance becoming endangered. Why is this happening following the popularity of the tiger dance? What discourses emerged in Kerinci alongside the preservation of the tiger dance?

The answers to these questions are crucial because local customs and perceptions of tigers influence their ability to survive in the wild. Tigers have vanished from Java and Bali due to long-standing hunting customs and attractions like *Rampogan Macan* and *Rampogan Sima* (Forum, 2019; Boomgaard, 1994; 2001). Tigers only persist as symbols in various traditions, including the *Popokan* ritual in Semarang, the *Babarit* in Ciamis, and the *Macanan* dance in Blora (Slamet & Budy, 2017; Hafidz, 2017). These symbolic tigers are more enduring because they embody human interaction with the environment and themselves (Wessing, 1994). We are fortunate that the Sumatran tiger still survives. Kerinci people's traditions and concepts about tigers have protected their existence in the forest (Bakels, 2000). Therefore, various traditions related to the existence of tigers must continue to be preserved.

Numerous studies on the topic of tigers and cultural aspects of society have been done, including those by Swettenham (1895), Ahmad (1922, 1925), Daryusti (2005), Putri (2014), Utari (2015), Rahmah (2016), Hafidz (2017), Ramadani (2018), Anggraeni (2018), Sunarti (2020), Boom-

gaard (2001), Yosseprizal (2015), Adu, Salampeppy, Iskandar (2019), Heryanto and Eriyanti (2019). These articles discuss human-tiger conflicts, opinions on tiger conservation, tiger-man stories, tiger tales, tiger martial arts, and rituals and dances that draw inspiration from tigers. Numerous studies have been done on *Ngagoah Imo* and the tiger dance in Kerinci, including those by Bakels (2000), Adriani (2001), Nurlidya (2007), Haryanto (2013), Usman, Azmi, Ahmad, Hasbullah (2014), Usman and Hasbullah (2014), Oktarini (2014), Zahdianto (2019); Tomi, Hadiyanto, Prata-ma, Alfat, Utami (2019), and Utami (2020). These writings describe the steps involved in the *Ngagoah Imo* ceremony, how tiger myths serve a social purpose, Telaga Biru art studio's history, and the music played during the ceremony. Oktarini attempted to explain the history of the tiger dance's invention (2014), but she fell short. In spite of all of these writings, it is still being determined how *Ngagoah Imo* came to be transformed into the tiger dance and why it did not catch on more widely.

## METHOD

A qualitative research methodology was used for this project. Traditional leaders, tiger dance creators, handlers, dancers, musicians, local government officials, and residents of Pulau Tengah, Keliling Danau District, Kerinci Regency served as the research's informants. Non-involved observations and in-depth interviews were done to collect primary data. The tiger dance training process at Telaga Biru Art Studio was observed objectively. Select informants and a number of Pulau Tengah Village residents who were encountered during the research fieldwork in April to May 2020 and June 2022 were interviewed in-depth. Structured interviews were conducted in focus group discussions with dance creators, dancers, and musicians. The data analysis was completed in five stages. Begin with data logging, which is collecting raw data from interviews, focus group discussions, and observations. This

was done to comprehend descriptions, emotions, insights, assumptions, and ideas about tiger dance. The second stage is Anecdotes, which involves creating short narratives based on the collected data. This stage facilitates an understanding of the essence of the data. Short narratives are then expanded with more detailed and in-depth narratives. This stage seeks to comprehend the data's complexity. The fourth step is categorising based on emerging themes, patterns, and concepts. The fifth stage involves analysing the relationship between themes, patterns, and concepts to understand the data fully. The results of the data analysis are then systematically organised into a scientific paper (Akinyode and Khan, 2018).

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Tiger Concept and Myth in Kerinci

In the Malay world, tigers are frequently mentioned in customs and beliefs. The Malays view tigers not just as animals but also as brothers, friends, and even ancestors (Wessing, 1994). According to the Sumatran people, there are three different kinds of tigers. The first is the ancestral tiger, which is an ancestor or messenger of the gods who is kind. The second is the supernatural tiger, which behaves badly and can kill humans. Third, the tiger as a wild animal (Bakels, 2000). The residents of Pulau Tengah Village see the tiger as a representation of the '*nenek*' (ancestors) who need to be revered. Its presence is regarded as a sign of wisdom and involvement in the community's interpersonal relationships (Usman et al., 2014). The most significant spiritual entities for the Kerinci people are their ancestors. In rituals and everyday activities, ancestors are crucial (Bakels, 2000). Ancestral tigers are mythical tigers with the ability to change into both tigers and humans. According to Usman and Hasbullah (2014), this type of tiger is also called the *Cindaku* tiger.

Tigers are regarded as both friends and village guardians by the Pulau Tengah people. Tigers that are kept for a variety of

reasons are known as friendly tigers. Although they have a physical appearance, these tigers are thought to be supernatural. How humans interact with tigers is similar to how they interact with dogs or other animals fed and frequently asked to guard fields from pests and criminal activity. The *pematang* tiger, also known as the village guard tiger, is an animal that resides in the forest in the Pulau Tengah area and is tasked with protecting the area from other tigers. According to Bakels (2000), the *pematang* tiger is more than just a typical animal; it also has mystical abilities. A mix between an animal and a forest spirit.

The idea of tigers is inextricably linked to tiger myths and legends. Ancestors named Bujang Nunggal, Serintik Hujan Panas, Hulu Balang Tigo, and Mangku Gunung Rayo are mentioned in the tiger myth of Pulau Tengah Village. There are several tiger myths that the residents of Pulau Tengah Village hold dear, but they all revolve around the same idea: that they are related to tigers. The tigers-related stories in Malay culture are similar and originate in the same region—Kerinci-Rejang-Basemah, which is centered on Mount Dempo (Boomgaard, 2001). In the community of Pulau Tengah Village, the myth of the tiger man is still alive and always refers to an area called Pasemah. Based on archaeological research, Pasemah is an area that once had a fairly old civilization. One of the megalithic remains in the Pasemah region is a statue of a mating tiger (Suryanegara, Damayanti, Yudoseputro, 2007).

### From the *Ngagah Imo* Rite to The Tiger Dance

#### *Obligations Owed to Bayar Bangun*

The villagers of Pulau Tengah hold the mythical belief that their ancestors made a pact with the tiger that must be abided by. The tiger must not enter human territory, cross borders, or disturb residents (*melompat pagar, menembus lawang, berbuat sio-sio*). Contrarily, people shouldn't go into the area and bother the tigers (e.g., by hunting tigers, cutting wood for sale, or killing wild animals, not for food). Ac-

According to the agreement, the presence of tigers in human territory is thought to be a form of warning or punishment for people who disobey the agreement or go against their culture and religion (*incok-incok*).

Those who tigers harass are required to perform '*tebus diri*', which entails confessing their error and holding a ceremony at the ancestral home. The tiger may be killed if the ceremony has been completed, but it still bothers people. They think that if the tiger is not killed by people, another tiger will. The people of Pulau Tengah Village must then perform a *Bayar Bangun* ceremony. This is the procedure for paying a fine for the death of a tiger, regardless of whether it was intentionally killed or only discovered to be dead. According to Pulau Tengah Village tradition, missing stripes, fangs, tails, eyes, and voices are all replaced by matching ones (*hilang belang diganti belang, hilang taring diganti taring, hilang ekor diganti ekor, hilang mata diganti mata hilang suara diganti suara*).

The *Bayar Bangun* ceremony begins with the tiger carcass being picked up where the elders found it. It is brought into the village using a stretcher and covered with a white cloth. The cloth is only opened during the *tepuk tarai* procession in the *bayar bangun* ceremony. In the evening, the *hulubalang* (village guardian) will sound the *canang* to signal that no work is to be done in the river, lake, or fields the next day. All residents must stay inside the village because a ceremony will be held.

The *Bayar Bangun* ceremony takes place in a field inside the village, usually close to the Pulau Tengah Village's traditional home. The tiger carcass is raised with wood or bamboo before the ceremony to give the illusion that it is a living animal. The ceremony begins with the burning of incense and the reading of a mantra called *perno adat*. The recitation of the mantra begins by calling the ancestors of the tiger man named Serintik Hujan Panas, Mangku Gunung Rayo, Hulu Balang Tigo, Jelangka Tinggi, and Lang Kalaut. The purpose of calling the ancestors is to inform them that their grandchildren have

violated the contract (*menembus lawang*). The mantra contains four different call types: *terawoi*, *terawai*, *huu*, and *hoi*. The "*hoi*" call is for everyone present, while the other three calls are meant to call the ancestor's spirits. The *tarawak* and *tarawoi*, musical instruments made from coconut shells and areca nut fronds, are also called the ancestors. These musical instruments are used during the ceremony (Tomi et al., 2019).

The elders place the pay-up offerings—a three-colored cloth to replace the stripes, a dagger to replace the fangs, a sword to replace the nails, a spear to replace the tail, a coconut shell used as a gong to replace the voice, and a mirror to replace the eyes—next to the tiger carcass while reciting the mantra. Tiger martial arts are then performed for the tiger carcass. Many onlookers will enter a trance at this point. The *Bayar Bangun* ceremony is then over when the tiger carcass is taken to the forest to be buried.

### The Invention of The Tiger Dance

Dance is a timeless and dynamic expression rooted in the human drive to find meaning through movement (Thomson, 2011). According to Beaman (2017), the creation of dance is motivated by several factors, namely the transformative experience of dancers, the delivery of political and spiritual messages, the expression of cultural identity, and the preservation of sacred and esoteric traditions, likewise, with the creation of the tiger dance in Kerinci. This dance was created to preserve sacred and esoteric traditions and express the identity of the people of Pulau Tengah village. Before the existence of the tiger dance, the people of Pulau Tengah Village performed the *Ngagoah Imo* ceremony by presenting the tiger carcass directly. The reduction of the tiger population causes the discovery of tiger carcasses to be rare. This condition has led to the extinction of the *Ngagoah Imo* ceremony since the 1960s. Harun Pasir is concerned about this extinction. He is a Pulau Tengah Village traditional elder and dancer. Then, Harun Pasir created a tiger dance as a way to protect *Ngagoah Imo*.

This dance was created to make it simpler to perform *Ngagoah Imo*, which does not require the use of tiger carcasses so that it can be preserved on Pulau Tengah. The elders at first rejected Harun Pasir's proposal to create a tiger dance because they believed it would diminish the sacredness of the ritual. With the support of the youth of Pulau Tengah Village, Harun Pasir succeeded in creating the tiger dance.

The creation of tiger dance goes through several stages, from exploration, improvisation, evaluation, practice, and performance. According to Soemaryatmi and Yulianti (2022), this method of dance creation allows for the development of movement, form, technique, and the thematic content of the dance. Before creating the tiger dance, Harun Pasir went to the traditional elders to learn the detailed process of the *Ngagoah Imo*. After understanding the details of the ritual, Harun Pasir created a socio-drama performance with the Telaga Seni group. This group was founded by Harun Pasir and Supratman in 1960. The socio-dramatic performance consisted of acting, comedy, *silat*, and tiger dances danced by men. In addition, a man plays the role of a tiger. The socio-drama show was always featured in folk performing arts activities organized by the Kerinci Regional Government from 1985 to the mid-1990s. Around 1987, Harun Pasir made changes to the tiger dance performance. He composed the tiger dance so that it could be danced by women and accompanied by drums and gongs, and the movement patterns imitated the tiger's martial arts movements. The tiger dance performance in 1987 did not yet use properties and mantaras as it does today.

The tiger dance created in 1987 was the initial form of the current tiger dance. This dance was often performed at various events at that time. In the early 1990s, Koto Dian Hamlet held a *Kenduri-Sko* and performed the tiger dance created by Harun Pasir. When the performance was in progress, a resident named Oktora was suddenly possessed. He jumped onto the stage and called Harun Pasir. Oktora cri-

ticized Harun Pasir's tiger dance as being incorrect because it was too gentle and slow. Oktora then performed the right dance, which was faster and more agile. Oktora fainted after doing the tiger dance and didn't realize what had happened. Oktora's story is nonsensical to the general public. However, according to Gao (2020), it is not unusual for the subconscious to be involved in the creation of dance. When it comes to creating dance, the subconscious part of the brain is crucial since it provides the idea for the choreography and aesthetics.

Following the arrival of two foreign researchers in Pulau Tengah Village in around 1993, the tiger dance underwent a significant change. They were known to Harun Pasir as Mr. Heru and Ms. Linda. Both of them were intrigued by Harun Pasir's tiger dance. They asked Harun Pasir to create a tiger dance with magical components so that the dancers could feel possessed. Harun Pasir was initially hesitant but was intrigued to create a tiger dance with mystical components. Harun Pasir received funding for training expenses from Mr. Heru and Ms. Linda. To realize Heru and Linda's request, Harun Pasir created a tiger dance concept with a performance structure similar to the *Bayar Bangun* ceremony. Harun Pasir enlisted the help of Nazaruddin, who is believed to be friendly with tigers and is the grandson of a tiger man, to add mystical elements. Harun Pasir enlisted the help of female dancers from the Puti Masurai art studio. The musicians came from the Telaga Biru art studio. They rehearsed at the high school field in Pulau Tengah Village.

After several practices, Nazaruddin was unable to possess the dancers. Then, Harun Pasir recalled what had happened in Koto Dian Hamlet and requested Oktora's assistance in causing the dancers to become possessed. Oktora was successful in making the dancers feel possessed after several rehearsals. Oktora claimed that her ability to conjure the tiger spirit was innate. He simply asks God for protection before speaking to the tiger spirit. Un-

expectedly, the ancestral spirits came and possessed the dancers. This success made creating a tiger dance similar to the Bayar Bangun ceremony easier. To add to the sacred atmosphere, the principal of Pulau Tengah High School made costumes resembling the color of tiger fur using spray paint (Figure 1). On the day agreed with Heru and Linda, Harun Pasir, along with the dancers, musicians, and Oktora, performed the sacred tiger dance for the first time in the field of Keluru Village. Due to the possessed and difficult-to-control dancers and audience, the dance performance, which was only supposed to last seven minutes, ended up lasting two hours. Since then, the tiger dance has been known as a sacred dance involving ancestral spirits. The use of tiger puppets, incense, mantras, and possession were constant features of later tiger dance performances. The tiger dance cast consists of eight dancers, six musicians, two singers, two handlers, six protectors, one person who receives offerings, and one person who reads spells. This number is not standardized and can be adjusted according to performance conditions. The tiger dance performance begins with the recitation of a mantra by a man who usually also serves as a protector. Both the tiger dance and the *Bayar Bangun* ceremony employ the same mantras. The following is a fragment of tiger dance mantras:

*U..... u... Ninak panunggung pamoto di alam kincai, dingang tujuh buki, tujuh luhoh, tujuh guguk, tujuh pamato. Malantak mudek ninek lang kalaut, malantak ile ninik jalangkang tinggi, di tango-tangoh ninek hulu balang tigea, dengan kembang rekan-nyo pamangku gunung ayo dan sirintak hujan panah.*

*Mining inih, kok matai lah kamai bangiu, tapaso lambeng tacacok lamat, utang lapah sandoa babalek, silang sakato salso lah sudoah, kito idoak boleh saling mengganggu agih.*

The handler walks around the performance area while incense is burning to create a magical fence while reciting the mantra. During the mantra's third stanza,

the dancers lay out offerings, including a three-colored cloth (red, black, and white), a kris, a sword, a spear, a coconut shell, and a mirror. The dancers also added *sirih sekapur* (betel leaves rolled in betel lime) and *sirih seperantang* (consisting of betel leaves, betel lime, areca nut, and cigarettes made from palm leaves). All of these things are positioned in front of the statue of the tiger.



**Figure 1.** Dancers in tiger costumes carried the offerings. (Source: Telaga Biru art studio)

The tiger statue's cover is opened after the mantra has been read, and the dance starts. According to Harun Pasir (Interview, March 1, 2020), dance movements like pouncing, calling, walking, and stalking are derived from tiger martial arts movements that evolved in Pulau Tengah Village. The dance steps that were created were adapted to the tiger movements that were imitated but never given a specific name. According to Utami (2020), the movements in the tiger dance are welcome, greeting, oath, attack, prey, and falling face down. According to Haryanto (2013), there are ten different tiger dance motions, including *pemukoak* (opening), *matai ateh* (pecking above), *kedadea* (claws on the chest), *kamukea* (claws forward), *ngko marawo* (claws against), *ngko nak npow* (claws want to pounce), *nko matai aweng* (pecking below), *ngko silang* (crossing claws), *nanjoak kateh* (spearing up) *nanjoak kaweng* (spearing down).



**Figure 2.** Tiger dance performance in Pulau Tengah village (Source: Telaga Biru art studio)

Music and a song titled “*lagu tari imo*” (tiger dance song) accompany these motions. The drum, *ketak* (wooden clunk), large tambourine, *kompang*, malay drum, and gong are the musical instruments used. The tiger dance song’s lyrics are as follows :

*u.....nek..muyang tingkaih  
nga bugle...mangku gunung ayo..  
u.....nek...rintek ujan paneh..  
uhang gagoah dipunglimo tingkah  
u.....nek ulu balang tigea  
badan sibatoa ujud lanyo tigea*

*nga..... di....serau lkah lah tibea  
ngak di pangge lkah lah datao  
ngak sahi kilak ngak sahi gunteu  
ngak sahi tpok taringok angai  
u.....muyang butigea*

The Harun Pasir-organized tiger dance only lasts for about 10 minutes. However, tiger dance performances always go on longer because the dancers and audience always fall into a trance. Music and songs must still be played to prevent the trance audience from leaving the performance space. The trance causes the dancers to faint, and the tiger dance performance is never completed by its structure.

Tiger dance performances are still evolving to meet the needs of the community. In 1993, only two tiny tambourines were playing along with the tiger dance, and no incense was used. The use of incense was improved in the subsequent performance. At the Kerinci Lake Party in 2001, musical instrument changes first took place. At that time, four tambourines, a gong, and a *tingting* (a round piece of iron) were employed. To enhance the music’s sound,

additional instruments were added. The *ketak* (a wooden clunk) and drum, which were added in 2018, are the newest additions. *Ketak* has replaced *tingting*, which has been absent previously. Currently, a Malay drum, a drum, a *ketak*, two small tambourines, two large tambourines, and a gong are used as musical instruments.

### Who Owns the Tiger Dance?

Tiger dance is currently one of the Kerinci community’s symbols of identity. Tiger dance is a well-known identity that is frequently displayed at cultural events in Kerinci and other parts of Jambi. The Jambi Provincial Language Office issued a performance invitation in 2016. Tiger dance was also performed in Bengkulu that year. Tiger dance was also presented at the anniversary celebration of the Muko-Muko Regency in 2017. Tiger dance was also featured in the Batang Hari Festival that year. In 2018, the tiger dance was featured in the Cultural Arts festival at the Language Office in Jambi and also in Muko-Muko District. The tiger dance was also performed consecutively in 2018 and 2019 at the Kerinci Lake Festival.

Despite its popularity, tiger dance did not flourish in many villages or artist communities. The reason is that the Telaga Biru Art Studio has claimed ownership of the tiger dance and the *Bayar Bangun* ritual. For them, the *Bayar Bangun* belongs to the people of Pulau Tengah, and the tiger dance belongs to the Telaga Biru Art Studio. With such a discourse, Telaga Biru Art Studio limits the acceptance of new members. Prospective members are only allowed to register if they live in Pulau Tengah. (the area of Pulau Tengah Village before the division of the region). No applications from other villagers are accepted. According to Harun Pasir (Interview, March 1, 2020), only the Telaga Biru art studio is authorized to perform the tiger dance, and no other studio in Kerinci is able to do so. He once protested to Iskandar Zakaria who was making his own version of the tiger dance. Harun Pasir argued that *Ngagoah Imo* belongs to Pulau Tengah and cannot

be copied carelessly.

According to Harun Pasir, there are several justifications for the claim of property rights for *Ngagoah Imo* and tiger dance: First, only the Pulau Tengah community's ancestors practice *Ngagoah Imo*. Nevertheless, with various regional variations, the *Bayar Bangun* ceremony is carried out throughout Kerinci, according to Bakels (2000). Second, the tiger dance is a ritual that unites the Pulau Tengah villagers with their ancestors (as demonstrated by the mention of ancestors' names in the opening mantra), so it is inappropriate if performed by anyone else. The ancestors also personally selected the handlers of the tiger dance. Since 1993, Oktora has handled the tiger dance and has not been replaced. Third, the Minister of Education and Culture recognized *Ngagoah Imo* as an intangible cultural heritage in 2018. *Ngagoah Imo* had already taken on significance for the Pulau Tengah's identity long before this decision was made. Fourth, Harun Pasir and members of Sanggar Telaga Biru invented the tiger dance. Based on these four arguments, Harun Pasir and other Telaga Biru Art Studio members created a discourse asserting that Telaga Biru Art Studio and Pulau Tengah Village are the rightful owners of the tiger dance.

Whatever the case, Tiger Dance is essential to the continued existence of Telaga Biru Art Studio. Though there are numerous other dance performances, tiger dance is Telaga Biru Art Studio's most crucial identity. Tiger dance has made it possible for Telaga Biru Art Studio to receive praise from a variety of sources. The Kerinci Regency Culture and Tourism Office and Telaga Biru Art Studio once had a tense working relationship. The relationship kept deteriorating because of a number of miscommunications. According to Harun Pasir (Interview, March 1, 2020), in 1982, members of the Kerinci Regency Culture and Tourism Office "sabotaged" the Telaga Biru Art Studio so that it could not take part in the Jambi Arts Festival. Contrarily, Harun Pasir persisted in performing the *satai* dance and eventually won the com-

petition.

This misunderstanding continued until 2017. According to Jores (Interview, March 5, 2020), the management of the Telaga Biru studio had a dispute with an employee of the Kerinci Regency Culture and Tourism Office during the reception of the Pesona Indonesia Award. The tiger dance was named the second most popular cultural attraction of 2017 by the Ministry of Tourism of the Republic of Indonesia. At the time of selection, the local government did not provide support, but after winning the trophy, it was taken by the Kerinci Culture and Tourism Office and not handed over to Sanggar Telaga Biru. This led to a commotion and feelings of disappointment and rage at the Telaga Biru art studio. The Kerinci Regent (Dr. Adirozal, M.Si.) created an award trophy to recognize Telaga Biru art studio's national accomplishments to resolve the issue. Another dispute involving grants for the 2017 Batang Hari Festival occurred in the same year. According to Jores (Interview, March 5, 2020), there was a dispute when the funds were received because some people wanted to lower the aid fund's amount.

Since the tiger dance from Jambi Province was recognized as an Indonesian intangible cultural heritage, the relationship between Telaga Biru art studio and the Kerinci Regency Culture and Tourism Office has improved. Telaga Biru art studio has been better received since that designation. They also felt that they received attention from the central government by providing coaching funds (FKBM) of Rp. 100,000,000 in 2019. The funds were used to buy various musical instruments such as drums, *bendang sike*, Malay drums, *djembe*, and also to make tiger statues as tiger dance equipment. Concerning these various situations, the desire for appreciation instigated the development of tiger dance property claims and prevented others from learning and performing it. As long as Telaga Biru Art Studio is able to establish a claim of ownership and forbid others from learning tiger dance, it will draw a variety of interest from different parties.



This is due to the global significance of the preservation of Sumatran tigers.

The conversation about cultural property rights does not naturally arise when considered in a broader context. At least two factors are responsible for strengthening cultural property rights claims. First, there is a dispute over property rights between Malaysia and Indonesia. The Pendet dance from Bali was featured in a Discovery Channel advertisement for Malaysia's cultural heritage in August 2009. This was perceived as Malaysia's attempt to "steal" Indonesian culture. Following the incident, Malaysia was the target of weeks of rage and insults (Chong, 2012). The spirit of ownership of cultural heritage in Indonesian society has become stronger, even encouraging the emergence of mutual claims to cultural property at the local level.

The second is the rhetoric in favor of cultural protection that both local and national governments spread. The Indonesian government developed a discourse emphasizing the importance of cultural protection in preserving the country's identity and ensuring that other countries do not appropriate it, using the example of cultural disputes with Malaysia. The discourse of cultural preservation is then outlined in the Law on the Promotion of Culture Number 5 of 2017 as well as the Minister of Education and Culture Regulation Number 106 of 2013 concerning Indonesian intangible cultural heritage and Number 10 of 2014 regarding guidelines for the preservation of traditions. Cultural preservation has long been discussed as a form of local and societal identity. The Indonesian government has implemented a number of laws to safeguard the country's cultural heritage since the early 1990s. This action represents Indonesia's involvement in the global discussion on how to safeguard cultural assets from being abused and privatized by others (Kreps, 2012).

Although the regulations do not explicitly state that they are intended to defend against claims from other nations, the discussion about cultural property rights and defending them against claims from

other nations keeps coming up. This motivation is reflected in the target quantity of recordings of Indonesia's intangible cultural heritage, which is anticipated to be recognized by UNESCO as a world cultural heritage. This discourse promoted the designation of *Ngagoah Imo* as an Indonesian intangible cultural heritage, which was perceived by tiger dance performers and residents of Pulau Tengah Village as legitimate for their ownership interests in *Ngagoah Imo*.

The assertion of *Ngagah Imo's* property rights violates several laws. One of them is Law No. 28/2014 on Copyright's Article 38, Paragraph 1, which states that the state owns the copyright to traditional cultural expressions. This essay emphasizes that traditional cultural expressions are not personal to any one person. The assertion of cultural property rights also conflicts with Article 11, paragraph 1 of Minister of Education and Culture Regulation Number 10 of 2014, which mandates that the provincial government make use of the culture that emerges in the community. Paragraph 2, letter a, states that cultural utilization is carried out through the dissemination of cultural information and national character values. Then, in letter d, it is stated that culture utilization is carried out through packaging as teaching materials at the local level. Article 11 requires schools to disseminate culture and teach it to students. *Ngagoah Imo's* claim of property rights contradicts the Telaga Biru art studio's short-term program, namely disseminating regional arts through competitions and festivals and preserving almost extinct cultures (Utami, 2020).

The protection of communally owned cultural heritage should not take the form of patents or copyrights, as granting such rights to a particular group goes against the basic idea of freedom of expression and the development and dissemination of culture in general. Furthermore, granting such copyrights is both practically and theoretically impossible (Karjala & Paterson, 2017). Moreover, claims of cultural property rights go against the loose identity

of Malay culture. As Chong (2012) argues, it is impossible to attach (unequivocally) certain cultural elements to certain groups within the Malay world, given the region's cultural exchange level. It is impossible to delineate who owns a particular cultural element as it goes against the dynamic and evolving concept of Malay identity.

As long as these claims regarding cultural property are upheld, Kerinci's practice of tiger dance, which is only owned by a small group of people, will be increasingly in danger of disappearing. On the other hand, tiger dance will be more sustainable if it is shared and owned by many people. The values it teaches people to respect the existence of endangered Sumatran tigers are another reason why spreading knowledge about *Ngagah Imo* is crucial.

## CONCLUSION

The transformation of the *Ngagoah Imo* ritual into a tiger dance has been driven by Harun Pasir, who the people of Pulau Tengah assist. This transformation was also encouraged by the Jambi regional government, which routinely organizes traditional art competitions in stages from sub-district to provincial levels. Extraordinary encouragement came from foreign researchers who visited Kerinci to conduct research. These foreign researchers have encouraged the emergence of the sacred and mystical tiger dance, which became popular in Kerinci society and became their cultural identity.

In later developments, tiger dance continued to be preserved as the identity of the people of Pulau Tengah, with Harun Pasir and Telaga Biru art studio as the main actors. Harun Pasir, Telaga Biru art studio, and the people of Pulau Tengah then built a discourse that the tiger dance belonged to Pulau Tengah Village so that other people could not learn or imitate it. This property rights claim arises from a misunderstanding of the discourse on cultural preservation developed by the central and local governments. Telaga Biru art studio has misunderstood the concept of

cultural protection. This claim causes tiger dance preservation efforts to be very limited because knowledge of tiger dance is only owned by a few people. The evidence is that, despite having been preserved for over 30 years and growing in popularity, tiger dance is only mastered by one art studio.

The tiger dance will ultimately be driven to the brink of extinction by this erroneous assertion of property rights. Along with that, traditional beliefs that safeguard Sumatran tigers' survival will also vanish, making efforts to preserve them more hopeless. Therefore, in order to better support the principles of cultural preservation, people's perceptions of the rights attached to cultural property need to be clarified. In order to preserve the tiger dance, artists must alter the conversation about its property rights to make it clear that it belongs to all communities while still honoring Harun Pasir as its creator.

## REFERENCES

- Adriani. (2001). *Bentuk Penyajian Tari Mengagah Harimau di Desa Pulau Tengah Kabupaten Kerinci*. Thesis. Padang: Universitas Negeri Padang.
- Adu, S. J. et al. (2019). Persepsi Masyarakat Terhadap Konservasi Harimau Sumatera (*Panthera Tigris Sumatrae*) Di Taman Nasional Kerinci Seblat (Studi Kasus Desa Pungut Mudik dan Desa Pungut Hilir). *Jurnal Nusa Sylva*, 19(1), 22-29.
- Ahmad, Z. A. (1922). The Ahuan or Spirit - Friends. *Journal of the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 86, 378-384.
- Ahmad, Z. A. (1922). (1925). Dato' Paroi, Were-Tiger. *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 3(1), 74-78.
- Akinyode, B. F., & Khan, T. H. (2018). Step by step approach for qualitative data analysis. *International Journal of Built Environment and Sustainability*, 5(3), 163-174.
- Anggraeni, R. (2018). Tradisi Babarit Sebagai Model Bahan Ajar Kearifan Lo-

- kal di SMA (Kajian Semiotik dan Etnopedagogik). *Lokabasa*, 9(1), 73-86.
- Bakels, J. (2000). *Het verbond met de tijger: visies op mensenetende dieren in Kerinci, Sumatra* (No. 93). Research School of Asian, African, and Amerindian Studies, Universiteit Leiden.
- Beaman, P. L. (2017). *World dance cultures: From ritual to spectacle*. Routledge.
- Boomgaard, P. (1994). Death to the tiger! The development of tiger and leopard rituals in Java, 1605-1906. *Sout East Asia Research*, 2(2), 141-175.
- Boomgaard, P. (2001). *Frontiers of Fear : Tigers and People in the Malay World, 1600-1950*. London: Yale University.
- Chong J. W. (2012). "Mine, Yours or Ours?": The Indonesia-Malaysia Disputes Over Shared Cultural Heritage. *Journal of Social Issue in South-east Asia*, 27(1), 1-53.
- Daryusti. (2005). Telaah Karakterisasi Tari Randai Ilau di Nagari Saniangbakar Sumatera Barat. *Harmoni : Jurnal Pengetahuan Dan Pemikiran Seni*, VI(3), 1-10.
- Djulaeka & Zulkifli, M. (2018). Local Government and Traditional Cultural Expression Protection. *1<sup>st</sup> International Conference on Social Science (ICSS 2018)*, <https://doi.org/10.2991/icss-18.2018.266>.
- Forum HarimauKita. (2019). *Aum! Atlas Harimau Nusantara*. Direktorat Konservasi Keanekaragaman Hayati, Direktorat Jenderal Konservasi Sumber Daya Alam, Kementerian Lingkungan Hidup dan Kehutanan, GEF UNDP. Jakarta.
- Gao, S. (2020). Inspiration mechanism of dance creation based on brain subconsciousness theory. *Revista Argentina de Clínica Psicológica*, 29(1), 453-460.
- Hafidz, M. (2017). Popokan: Tradisi Perang Lumpur Di Tradisi Desa Sendang, Kecamatan Bringin, Kabupaten Semarang. *Sabda*. 12(2), 188-197.
- Haryanto, D. (2013). *Gerak Tari Tradisional Mengagah Harimau di Desa Pulau Tengah Kabupaten Kerinci Dalam Karya Lukis*. Thesis. Padang: Universitas Negeri Padang.
- Heryanto, R. & Eriyanti. F. (2019). Transmission of Local Wisdom Value about Tiger Wildlife Conservation in Pulau Tengah Society, Keliling Danau Sub-District, Kerinci Regency, Jambi Province. *International Journal of Progressive Science and Technologies (IJPSAT)*, 14(1), 30-33.
- Karjala, D. S. & Paterson, R. K. (2017). The Case Against Property Rights in Old Intangible Indigenous Cultural Property. *Northwestern Journal of Technology and Intellectual Property*. Vol. 15(2), 1-33.
- Kreps, C. (2012). Intangible Threads: Curating the Living Heritage of Dayak Ikat Weaving. in Stefano M. L. et al (ed). *Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage*. Woodbridge: Boydell Press.
- Nurlidya, L. 2007. *Tari Mengagah Harimau Dalam Upacara Kenduri SKO Di Pulau Tengah Kecamatan Keliling Danau Kabupaten Kerinci*. Thesis. Padang: Universitas Negeri Padang.
- Oktarini, R. (2014). *Tari Mengagah Harimau Dalam Masyarakat Pulau Tengah Kabupaten Kerinci Masa Kini: Tinjauan Perubahan*. Thesis. Padang: Universitas Negeri Padang.
- Putri, C. K. (2014). *Tari Sarama Babiati Tinjauan Terhadap Bentuk*. Thesis. Medan: Universitas Negeri Medan.
- Rahmah, N. E. (2016). Keberadaan Tari Randai Ilau Di Sanggar Singo Barantai Saniangbaka Sebagai Upaya Pelestarian Kebudayaan. Thesis. Jakarta: Universitas Negeri Jakarta.
- Ramadani, L. (2018). *Makna Simbol Landok Begu Pada Suku Kluet Di Desa Lawe Sawah Kabupaten Aceh Selatan*. Thesis. Medan: Universitas Negeri Medan.
- Sardjono, A. (2019). HKI dan UU Pemajuan Kebudayaan. *Journal of Intellectual Property*, 2(2), 45-61.
- Slamet & Budy, E. 2017. Kedudukan Tari Macanan Dalam Masyarakat Blora. *Jurnal Pendidikan dan Kajian Seni*, 2(2), 149-164.
- Sunarti, S. (2020). *Dengan Ba-ilau Memang-*

- gil Harimau: Tradisi Lisan Pesisir Selatan Sumatera Barat*. Jakarta: LIPI Press.
- Suryanegara, E. et al. (2007). Artifak Purba Pasemah: Analisis Ungkap Rupa Patung Megalitik di Pasemah. *ITB J. Vis. Art.* 1(1), 128-151.
- Swettenham, F. (1895). *Malay Sketches*. London: Ballantyne Hanson & Co.
- Thomson, P. (2011). Dance and Creativity. In M. A. Runco & S. R. Pritzker (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of Creativity (Second Edition)* (pp. 343-350). Academic Press.
- Tomi, M. et al. (2019). Musik Tarawak Tarawoi Dalam Ritual Ngagah Harimau di Masyarakat Pulau Tengah Kabupaten Kerinci. *Titian : Jurnal Ilmu Humaniora*, 3(2), 210-221.
- Usman, H. et al. (2014). Mitos Harimau Dalam Tradisi Lisan Masyarakat Kerinci Jambi, Sumatera. *Jurnal Pengajian Melayu*, 25, 24-44.
- Usman, H. & Hasbullah. (2014). Mitos Harimau dalam Pengaturan Adat Masyarakat Kerinci Desa Pulau Tengah, Jambi, Sumatera. *International Journal of the Malay and Civilisation*, 2(3), 99-109.
- Utami, P. A. (2020). *Harun Pasir Pencipta Tari Ngagah Harimau Sebagai Tari Daerah Kerinci : Studi Koreografi*. Thesis. Jambi: Universitas Jambi.
- Utari, R. (2015). *Tradisi Neurajah Rimueng pada Suku Aneuk Jamee di Tapaktuan-Aceh Selatan*. Thesis. Medan: Universitas Sumatera Utara.
- Wessing, R. (1994). Bangatowa, Patogu and Gaddhungan: Perception of the Tiger among the Madurese. *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 25(2), 368-380.
- Yosseprizal. (2015). *Tinjauan Tentang Perkembangan Silat Langkah Tigo Harimau Di Desa Tanjung Pauh Mudik Kecamatan Keliling Danau Kabupaten Kerinci*. Thesis. Padang: Universitas Negeri Padang.
- Yulianti, N. P., & Soemaryatmi, S. (2022). Creative Process Of Halang Dance. *ARTISTIC : International Journal of Creation and Innovation*, 3(1), 46-65.
- Zahdianto. (2019). *Sanggar Seni Telaga Biru Di Negeri Pulau Tengah, Kecamatan Keliling Danau, Kabupaten Kerinci Tahun 1988-2014*. Thesis. Padang: Universitas Andalas.