

**TRACKING JAVANESE TRADITIONAL ARTS IN NORTH SUMATRA 1900-1930s****Ririn Darini, Nanang Setiawan, Muhammad Yuanda Zara, Agus Murdiyastomo**

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**Abstract**

Until now, several traditional Javanese arts such as ketoprak, horse braids, and wayang orang can be found in North Sumatra. This research aims to find out why and how Javanese traditional art can develop in this region. The method used in this research is a historical method which includes 4 research stages, namely heuristics, criticism, interpretation and historiography. The research results show that traditional Javanese art has been present in North Sumatra since the colonial era because of Javanese migrants who were employed on foreign plantations. They brought with them Javanese cultural heritage in the form of performing arts, such as gamelan, ketoprak, wayang orang, and dances. This traditional art was deliberately given a place by plantation entrepreneurs to make their workers feel at home. In its development, this traditional art not only functions as a form of entertainment and expression of cultural identity, but also as a tool to maintain collective spirit and solidarity amidst harsh and often unfair working conditions.

Keywords: Java; Colonial; Traditional arts.

**INTRODUCTION**

Traditional Javanese performing arts are still found in several regions in North Sumatra. According to (Sedyawati, 2002), performing arts are "a cultural expression, a vehicle for conveying cultural values, and the embodiment of aesthetic-artistic norms that develop in accordance with the times". Art is one of the elements of culture, as a result of community creativity. Meanwhile, traditional art is the work of a human group in an area that arises from what it feels. These feelings are local so that they are only favored by certain groups or communities. Performing arts have a very complex function in human life. There are at least 3 functions of performing arts based on who the audience is (Soedarsono, 2002). First, the ritual function if the audience is invisible forces such as gods or spirits of ancestors. Second, the function of personal entertainment if the audience is the performer himself. Third, the function of aesthetic presentation if the audience of the performing arts is the audience, most of whom have to pay.

Javanese traditional performing arts are still preserved especially by Javanese descendants in North Sumatra. When traced far back, Javanese traditional arts have begun to exist and develop in North Sumatra or called East Sumatra in the colonial period since the entry of migrant workers from Java to various plantation companies in East Sumatra. The East Sumatra region includes the current North Sumatra region without Tapanuli, plus Bengkalis (currently part of Riau Province) and Tamiang (until 1908). The presence of migrant workers from Java also brought with them traditional arts from their home regions such as gamelan, kuda kepang, ketoprak, and others. Javanese traditional arts activities are performed during holidays for plantation workers along with various other crowds. The granting of permission to organize traditional Javanese performing arts is to treat their longing for their hometown. They can only watch these performances outside of working hours, usually held on holidays or the coolies' payday. Although the current situation of performing arts is starting to fade, this theme is still interesting to study (Sugiarti, 1989, Suroso, 2012).

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Further explained by (Sugiarti, 1989) at that time, art groups emerged, one of which was ketoprak in the plantations of East Sumatra which is estimated to have developed around the 1920s. Since then, this art has been passed down from generation to generation with some changes to adapt to the local community and cultural developments. This happens because performing arts activities such as ketoprak dor are not based on written scripts, but rather on memory alone. According to (Suroso, 2012) in its current existence improvisation in performances has become very commonplace. Dialogs and monologues use mixed Javanese. The character of the character played is expressed with the support of dance movements and music that have been mixed with local culture.

The study of traditional arts in North Sumatra is very interesting to do. So far, the historiography of East Sumatra has been dominated by studies on plantations and contract coolies, such as studies conducted by (Pelzer, 1985), (Pelzer, 1982), (Breman, 1997), (Stoler, 2005), and (Darini & Anggraeni, 2021). Meanwhile, studies on traditional Javanese performing arts in North Sumatra are still very minimal and focus on their current existence. Some of them are studies conducted by (Dewi, 2016). She studied the sustainability of kuda kepang art in Sei Bamban at this time. Her findings show that the interest in becoming a kuda kepang dancer has greatly diminished. Initially, this art lived in Javanese society and developed outside its original culture. However, the author did not pay attention to the beginning of the art of kuda kepang. In line with Dewi's research, Naiborhu & Karina's study (Naiborhu & Karina, 2018) on Javanese traditional performing arts, namely ketoprak, shows that enthusiasts for this Javanese traditional art are also starting to be abandoned by the community. Thus it appears that the limited information on the development of Javanese traditional arts is still very minimal and the studies mentioned do not explain in-depth historical perspectives. Therefore, research on traditional Javanese performing arts in East Sumatra during the colonial period is very important to see the changes that occurred in the performing arts. The research question in this study is how did the expansion of plantations in East Sumatra influence the emergence and development of Javanese traditional arts in North Sumatra?

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

This research uses a critical historical research method. The historical research method is a set of rules and principles that have been systematically arranged with steps to collect historical sources or data, assess them critically, and submit a synthesis in written form. The historical method includes 4 stages of research, namely heuristics, criticism, verification, and historiography (Gottschalk, 1975). One of the important sources in this research is contemporary newspapers including *Soeara Djawa*, *Pewarta Deli*, and *Soematra Post*. Hamka's novel *Merantau ke Deli* (Hamka, 1977) also provided important information, as it was written based on his own direct testimony.

In addition, contemporary photographs were also used to strengthen the argument. Interesting photographs were obtained from Volker's (Volker, 1928) book *van oerbosch tot cultuurgebied: een schets van de beteekenis van den Tabak, de andere cultures en de industrie ter oostkust van sumatra*, but unfortunately there is no information at all about the photographs. Nonetheless, the photographs illustrate the Javanese art tradition in the plantations of Sumatra.

These sources were obtained from a number of libraries as well as sources available on the web. Secondary sources from the internet, such as published journal articles, are also used in this research. Source criticism, both external (to test the authenticity of the sources) and internal (to test the credibility of the sources) will be conducted to ensure that the facts contained in the sources are reliable and used as material to reconstruct history.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **Plantation Expansion and Migration of Javanese to East Sumatra**

Since the opening of East Sumatra as a plantation area, especially after the issuance of the 1870 Agrarian Law, the need for labor in the region has increased very rapidly. Starting with the success of Jacobus Nienhuys in developing the Deli tobacco plantation business, it triggered many

plantation businesses to open there. The opening of various plantations in East Sumatra certainly greatly affected the need for labor. However, given the low population in East Sumatra plus the reluctance of local people to work on plantations, plantation companies must bring in labor from outside the region. Even at the beginning of the tobacco plantation business pioneered by Nienhuys, the workforce was also brought in from outside. This was the attraction of migration to East Sumatra.

The earliest plantation labor migration began when Jacobus Nienhuys opened a tobacco plantation business. At first it was people of Chinese origin who were employed as labor in tobacco plantations. Nienhuys met his labor needs by bringing in Chinese and Indian coolies from Penang (Malay Peninsula). These coolies were obtained through the services of a labor broker. In general, coolies were willing to work because of deception by middlemen, such as being promised employment in Johor or being promised high wages by middlemen (Said, 1977). At first in 1869 there were 800 to 900 coolies. The fulfillment of labor obtained through fraud by middlemen resulted in the British government taking action to provide protection to the Chinese people from fraud to Deli by establishing a Chinese protection bureau. With the protection bureau, good Chinese labor was difficult to obtain, especially with the explanation from the protection bureau that the work to be done was heavy and the salary given was small. Even if there were Chinese workers from Penang, they were people with bad behavior, such as former robbers, former prisoners and so on, who were considered by the protection bureau to be better employed in Deli (Said, 1977).

Therefore, since the end of the 19th century there have been changes related to the fulfillment of labor. The entrepreneurs then brought in a lot of labor from Java. Javanese people were brought to East Sumatra since 1880. They were brought in to fill the need for labor in the plantation which was previously fulfilled by the Chinese from Penang. Since 1880, Chinese labor in East Sumatra began to be replaced by Javanese labor as contract coolies. The first wave of Javanese arrivals to East Sumatra recorded 150 people from Bagelen. Javanese coolies continued to arrive in East Sumatra until the Javanese population outnumbered the Chinese and Indian (Tamil) laborers. The colonial government also encouraged the arrival of women from Java and made them full-time workers. In 1905 it was recorded that out of a total of 33,961 indentured coolies from Java, 6,290 were women. The following table shows the increase in the number of laborers from Java to the East Sumatran plantations.

Year	Chinese	Javanese
1883	21.136	1.711
1884	21.136	1.771
1887	33.526	6.168
1890	53.806	14.847
1893	41.700	18.000
1898	50.846	22.256
1900	58.516	25.224
1906	53.105	33.802
1907	49.663	51.665
1913	53.617	118.517
1916	43.689	150.392
1920	27.715	209.459
1926	27.733	194.189
1930	26.037	234.554
1932	13.824	150.925
1934	12.550	143.613
1936	11.5201	177.717
1938	9.604	206.483

Table 1. Total Labor in East Sumatra (people)

Source: 1883-1930 Processed from (Thee, 1976) and 1930 – 1938 processed from (Ong, 1943)

The table above shows the shift in the number of Chinese and Javanese workers. From year to year, the labor force that was previously dominated by Chinese coolies was gradually replaced by coolies from Java, especially since the beginning of the 20th century. In addition to the establishment of a Chinese protection bureau by the British government, there were several other factors that caused Deli plantation entrepreneurs to recruit labor from Java. First, the uncertainty of the destination country of Chinese labor due to the negative image spread by the Chinese press. Second, Javanese workers were considered more obedient than Chinese workers who tended to rebel and conspire. Third, the Chinese government urged an increase in workers' wages so that they could set aside part of their salary to send to their families in China (Breman 1997; Darini and Anggraeni 2021). The mobilization of labor from Java received support from the colonial government because, especially in the early 20th century, poverty on the island of Java continued to increase due to population growth, land constriction, and the increasing needs of life ((Darini & Anggraeni, 2021). Javanese migrants came from various regions in Java, for example from Central Java such as from Purworejo or Boyan people from East Java, and Sundanese people from West Java.

Demand for plantation workers in East Sumatra is increasing rapidly. This was mainly due to the development of new crops such as coffee, sugar, oil palm and rubber. However, the high cost of bringing in large numbers of laborers from both China and Java meant that plantation owners struggled to tie up workers and ensure that contract workers kept to all signed agreements. Moreover, there are many cases of workers running away from the plantation after receiving the payment.

### **The Presence of Javanese Art Traditions**

The difficulty of obtaining labor caused plantation owners to take various measures to maintain the existence of their coolies. Moreover, the inadequate supervision system on the plantation led to many cases of coolies running away after receiving the payment. For this reason, at the insistence of the plantation entrepreneurs, the Dutch East Indies government in 1880 issued a regulation for plantation laborers called Koelie Ordonantie. This Ordinance, which came into effect on October 28, 1880, basically regulated the duties and obligations of coolies. The coolies were bound by a contract with the employer so it was difficult to escape from work on the plantation. Coolies who violated the rules could be sentenced to imprisonment, fined, or forced to work for a period exceeding the contract time. Apart from the ordinance, there were many other ways in which plantation owners bound their laborers. For example, by granting permits for gambling activities on the plantation and the implementation of various other entertainment facilities (Susandro, 2023).

The colonial authorities permitted various types of entertainment so that the laborers would feel at home on the plantations and could be continuously employed as plantation workers. Through the entertainment available, the plantation owners tried to attract the sympathy of the coolies from Java who often wanted to escape from the plantation due to the pressure of the very heavy workload. This is as mentioned in the newspaper Soeara Djawa regarding the existence of contract coolies as follows: "Maksoed onderneming gentlemen hold gambling is nothing but to please the coolies, but apart from gambling games there are many more tricks that can please the coolies such as: gamelan, wayang kulit, ronggeng, topeng, wayang orang, and so on, and that is more than perfect for pleasing the coolies" (Soeara Djawa dated June 1, 1916 Lembar Pertjontohan Year I).

Dutch historian J. Thomas Lindblad, after collecting a wealth of information from various colonial reports on indentured coolies in Deli especially in the late colonial period, developed a concept he called 'the average coolie in late colonial Indonesia', which refers to a general description of the social, economic and cultural life of coolies in colonial Indonesia, including in Deli. This description can serve as a guide to what life was like for coolies in East Sumatra in general. He mentions that the average Indonesian coolie was a single male, most likely from Java, aged

between 20-35, contracted for 3 years on Western plantations, working on average 8-10 hours per day, and receiving a daily wage of 42 cents and rice for daily meals.

What about their socio-cultural life? Socially, these coolies lived together with other coolies in workers' barracks called huts. Living in a pondok environment, they had the possibility, albeit small, of being severely punished by their overseers, of engaging in violence against the cruel plantation overseers, and of running away from the plantations. Culturally, Lindblad mentions, these coolies on average 'spent most of their free time playing gambling or attending organized activities, such as wayang, ronggeng and film shows' (Houben, Vincent J.H. and Lindblad, J. Thomas, 1999). The presence of traditional entertainment for workers from distant places was a feature of Western companies in Sumatra that employed coolies of different ethnicities or nationalities, especially in plantations and mines. The historian of Chinese history, (Benton, 2022), underlines that entertainment was a crucial variable in the world of coolies in foreign companies in the colonial period, given that it would provide relaxation to the workers, who faced various pressures on a daily basis, while at the same time forcing them to go into debt to obtain certain entertainment, which in turn bound them to continue to be there.

Benton points out that in the case of Belitung mining in the colonial period, Chinese coolies (known as huagong), used their free time to find entertainment. This was not easy, given that the mines were located in remote areas. However, the Chinese foremen took this opportunity to provide a variety of entertainment such as gambling and opium, although these activities were opposed by local officials and companies, mainly because of their destructive effects. As for the Javanese coolies, it was the companies that provided various kinds of entertainment, especially those closer to Javanese arts. Examples are gamelan and shadow puppet shows. Modern entertainment is also provided, such as movie screenings and soccer matches. For female coolies from Java, the companies organized more specialized art events, such as dances (Benton, 2022).

### **Varieties of Javanese Traditional Arts**

There is no definitive information on how the Javanese traditional arts first began to emerge and develop in East Sumatra. Gamelan, wayang kulit, ronggeng, topeng, wayang orang, ketoprak, and even the art of making batik from Java can live and thrive there. However, it can be assumed that the presence of Javanese migrants as contract coolies in East Sumatra also brought with them the culture of their homeland. In the plantations, various types of entertainment usually took place on the coolies' payday. The plantation has succeeded in forming the habit of the indentured coolies to spend payday money in entertainment venues by building a kind of night market that offers a variety of entertainment. This illicit entertainment was managed by the Chinese. But even so, the big days were still the days that the plantation coolies were waiting for (Istiyana, 2020). With the plantation license, Javanese traditional arts began to develop in East Sumatra starting from the plantation areas.

One type of art that is quite popular in the plantation is ronggeng. This traditional art is performed on the big day or payday of the laborers. From 10pm onwards, the gamelan is played by the old coolies who have been brought from Java with the permission of the foreman. Along with the sound of the simple gamelan instruments in the form of drums, the ronggeng dancers who have dressed up beautifully begin to perform their dances with expressive movements. The coolies were engrossed in watching the ronggeng and sometimes they danced with a shawl with the ronggeng dancer (Hamka, 1977). The ronggeng are female coolies who have dancing skills in Java. As long as it does not interfere with her work as a coolie during the day, then at night she can become a ronggeng woman. In this context, the figure of the ronggeng became a prima donna and solace for the audience. In the plantation environment, the practice of ronggeng was often misused as prostitution. The male coolies who watch sometimes give money, which can be a sign of a prostitution transaction. Usually, after receiving the money, prostitution is practiced in the barracks or in quiet places around the plantation (Stoler, 2005). The art of ronggeng was so popular that it also developed outside the plantation environment.



Figure 1: Wayang Orang Performing Arts Crew in a Plantation

Source: (Volker, 1928)

For wayang performances, the company hired a troupe that sometimes came specially from Malacca at the expense of the company head or the chief superintendent (Breman, 1997). For them, the expense of bringing in a performing arts group was not a big deal, especially with the arrival of the new planting season in the plantations. This was a strategy of the entrepreneurs, to show goodwill when the contract was about to be renewed. In addition to wayang orang, wayang kulit is also present in the plantation environment. This Javanese art tradition has also become part of the artistic tradition in North Sumatra. Shadow puppetry is one of the identities attached to the Javanese people and at the same time a guide to noble values for the Javanese community. Many moral values are conveyed through this art performance. The shadow puppet show is one type of traditional art performance that is favored by the Javanese community



Figure 2 and 3. Performing the art of Kuda Kepang

Source: (Volker, 1928)

Kuda Kepang performance art is one of the most popular types of performance art in plantations as seen from the picture above. The performing art of kuda kepang or jaran kepang is a type of traditional Javanese dance that depicts warriors riding horses. The horses are made of woven bamboo and decorated with colored paint. kuda kepang dances usually only feature scenes of soldiers riding accompanied by the sound of gamelan, but sometimes there are also attractions of trance, immunity, magical powers, such as the attraction of eating broken glass and the attraction of immunity to the whip. Of course, this kind of performance is a very interesting means of entertainment for workers who are very tired of their work routine.

If you look at the photos, there are quite a number of Javanese traditional arts that are performed with all the trimmings. The picture above shows that kuda kepang and wayang kulit performances are equipped with various gamelan instruments and musicians. They wear costumes complete with beautiful makeup. Some of the gamelan used in the performing arts as shown in the picture include: kendhang, gong, saron, bonang, demung, kenong, and xylophone. Kendhang or drum is one of the gamelan instruments that has a basic function to regulate the rhythm of the

gamelan. In the performing arts, the sound of the drum directs the movements of the performers and its flow also determines the speed of movement of the dancer or player.

The various traditional arts that have grown up with the Javanese population are also documented in the De Sumatra Post newspaper. It reported that a fair celebration would be held in Binjai on Sunday and Monday, in honor of Her Majesty the Queen. At six o'clock in the afternoon on September 15, 1912, the celebration would begin with the opening of the famous restaurant "Hof van Holland". The night market will be open to the public. The next day, the party starts with a shooting match at Tandjong Djati complete with music. After the shooting match there will be the popular games at the Esplanade which will last until noon. The event also features a football match between the Deli and Langkat teams, illuminations, a night market and an open-air cinema. This festive event also mentioned that there would be music, rutschbaan, carousels, wayang, ronggeng and many other entertainments throughout the day (De Sumatera Post, September 14, 1912).

News of the ketoprak performance was also reported in the Deli Courant newspaper. The lively show was so well prepared and executed that it can be said that the event was very well received. On a nice stage, the show started with a movie of the life of military troops in the field of action. A movie about the welcoming of Army planes, the Delian Four-Day Festival, a wajang-wong episode of the story of Ratoe Minakjinggo of Blambangan and his younger brother who tried to crown him, as well as a humorous military sketch that ended with a song of loyalty to Orange were also screened. After a very successful short film was screened, a performance of Acehnese dance, debus or strongman show, and ketoprak was staged complete with a Javanese dance with singing. During the breaks and after the performances, cold drinks and snacks were also served. It was a very pleasant party and the guests enjoyed the show very much (Deli Courant, September 1, 1937).

In addition to performing arts, there are other traditions that are also carried out in the plantation, namely batik activities. Batik is an activity that is very closely related to Javanese society, which has a long tradition as a craft that has been going on since the days of the Majapahit Kingdom. The art of batik then spread in Indonesia after the end of the 18th century or around the beginning of the 19th century. The batik tradition was also present in the plantation environment, introduced by the Javanese. Batik cloth, in this case jarik, is a completeness of Javanese clothing which at that time was still widely used by Javanese women in their daily lives. The need for labor in completing this outfit then made batik craftsmen still exist even though they were overseas. Apart from being used by Javanese women in their daily lives, batik works appear in various visual photos (Volker, 1928), used in various traditional art performances including ketoprak. This batik tradition gradually also developed among the local community after gaining batik knowledge from Javanese craftsmen.



Women batik makers in a plantation  
Source: (Volker, 1928)

### The Development of Javanese Art Traditions in North Sumatra

One of the most popular Javanese arts in East Sumatra is ketoprak, which was brought there by migrants from Java. A report mentions that four ketoprak groups performed in East Sumatra's largest city, Medan, four times between January and March 1931. The ketoprak performances were

enthusiastically received by the audience. However, cultural historians (Cohen, 2016) emphasize that in the context of the birth of Indonesia's national consciousness, 'ketoprak games', the name of these performances in Malay, were perceived as synonymous with anti-colonial attitudes.

This identification of ketoprak with resistance to the Dutch was revealed in the unfolding of a secret plot to resist and overthrow Dutch rule in the plantation areas of East Sumatra. In late 1929, authorities in Kotari (East Sumatra) uncovered such a plot. The planners of the uprising used a number of means to gather masses and support, one of which was through the ketoprak troupe, an arts association that easily attracted coolies from Java, especially those who felt they were suffering on the Western plantations there. If successful, the leader of the rebellion promised his followers that the plantation lands would be reallocated from foreign ownership to theirs, as they were the ones who had essentially opened up the region to profitable plantations (Stoler, 2005).

The newspaper *De Locomotief* in October 1929 reported on the arrest of coolies and foremen at the Tjinta Radja tobacco company. No mention was made of the offenses committed, but around twenty ketoprak members were being considered for criminal charges. In December 1929 *De Locomotief* again reported on an event with the title "Preparations for Rebellion by Deli Coolies" which contained information suspicious of the activities of members of the ketoprak association (*De Locomotief* October 25, 1929 & December 9, 1929).

While in the cultural core of Java, Yogyakarta, during the colonial period ketoprak was considered an entertainment for the lower classes and not for the noble class, outside Yogyakarta ketoprak developed into a performance that crossed social class boundaries. One interesting example is the rise of ketoprak in East Sumatra. Chambert-Loir (Chambert-Loir & Ambary, 2011) argues that local folk theater such as ketoprak shows development outside Yogyakarta, with one example being when the nobles were invited by the Sultan of Deli in East Sumatra to perform ketoprak performances at his palace.

Given that sociologically the Javanese community still existed in various regions in East Sumatra (which later became North Sumatra Province during the independent Indonesian era) after Dutch colonialism collapsed, ketoprak performances continued to have supporters and audiences in later eras. Kethoprak not only developed among the Javanese community, but also experienced acculturation with other cultures that also existed in North Sumatra. In the contemporary era, ketoprak in North Sumatra is divided into two types, namely ketoprak blangkon (also known as kethoprak neng-nong) which still retains the original elements of Javanese culture, especially the use of gamelan as a musical accompaniment to the show, and ketoprak dor, in addition to using Javanese drums and kentrun, using instruments from outside Javanese culture, such as jidor and harmonium (a type of keyboard instrument) (Cohen, 2016). The performance uses dialog, drama, dance and music. Ketoprak is performed on stage by taking stories of history, kingdoms, fairy tales, daily life, and others interspersed with comedy complete with makeup.

Today, it is known that there are several ketoprak dor groups that still exist, including those that have been identified, namely the Cipto Rukun Rahayu Ketoprak Group, the Tunas Muda Dor Ketoprak Group in Central Aceh. In addition, there is one Langen JeDe Rahayu Ketoprak Group located in Deli, North Sumatra (Susandro, 2023). These groups of Javanese art activists have been active for decades to preserve Javanese culture in Sumatra. For example, the Ketoprak Rahayu Cipto Rukun Group in Central Aceh confirmed that they have been running for four generations starting with the first generation from 1960-1972, the second generation from 1972-1976, the third generation from 1976-1980, and the fourth generation from 1980-1986. Each generation has its own performance characteristics, such as the first and second generations of the Rahayu Cipto Ketoprak Group when performing they will use subtle Javanese. Unlike the succeeding generations who began to experience cultural acculturation with local culture, so that in their performances they used Javanese-Gayo language as part of cultural mixing (Susandro & Harun, 2024).

In addition to these groups, the existence of Javanese art in Sumatra is also inseparable from the existence of a paguyuban of Javanese people in Sumatra known as PKB PUJAKESUMA. PKB PUJAKESUMA is an acronym for Paguyuban Keluarga Besar Jawa yang Berkedudukan di Sumatera

or Putra Jawa Kelahiran Sumatera. PKB PUJAKESUMA was first established at the initiative of the late H. Mas Sukardi on July 10, 1980. This association was originally known as Putera Jawa Kelahiran Sumatera, but was changed to Putera Jawa Yang Berkedudukan di Sumatera through regional deliberations in 1994. One of the main objectives of PUJAKESUMA is to preserve the culture of Javanese people living in Sumatra, such as the art of kuda kepang or kuda lumping, ketoprak, ludruk, wayang kulit, wayang golek, and others (Sitanggang, Hildera, 1994). In addition, art preservation activities are also carried out by the Javanese Arts Coordinating Board.

## CONCLUSION

Javanese traditional art developed in North Sumatra because it was brought by people who migrated to East Sumatra at that time as plantation laborers. This was then accommodated by the plantation entrepreneurs. The presence of Javanese traditional arts in East Sumatra is one of the ways used by plantation entrepreneurs to make the contract coolies who work feel at home. The expenses that the coolies have to pay for entertainment are actually for the benefit of the company itself. Apart from having a function as entertainment for plantation workers, it turns out that the ketoprak group also utilizes this activity as a means of resistance to the plantation masters. Various types of Javanese performing arts continue to live in North Sumatra experiencing changes from their original land because the Javanese people in East Sumatra come from various regions in Java, giving rise to new subcultures in the land of Sumatra. An example is Ketoprak Dor which later became a performing art that continues to live today. There are still many Javanese traditional arts that live in North Sumatra that need to be studied further. This can provide benefits for cultural preservation and the development of traditional arts themselves.

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