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## The State's Responsibility in Preserving Local Culture: A Constitutional Law Perspective on the Practice of Akapalumba Jarangk

Article	Abstract
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## INTRODUCTION

Indonesia boasts a diverse array of local traditions and cultures that embody the wisdom and identity of its various communities. One enduring tradition is Akapalumba Jarangk (AJ), a horse racing practice originating from the Jeneponto community in South Sulawesi.<sup>1</sup> Akapalumba Jarangk is not merely a sporting event; it serves as a vital avenue for social and cultural interaction closely tied to the values of the local populace.<sup>2</sup> This multigenerational tradition exemplifies the unique

<sup>1</sup> Ilham Junaid and Anne-Marie D'hauteserre, "The A'jarang Festival: An Innovative Effort for Regional Tourism Development in Jeneponto Regency (Indonesia)," *Turizam* 21, no. 4 (2017): 139–50, <https://doi.org/10.5937/turizam21-16113>.

<sup>2</sup> Amiruddin Amiruddin et al., "Strengthening Religious Moderation in Local Culture Through Community Leaders Perspective in Jeneponto District," in *Proceedings of the 9th Asbam International Conference (Archeology, History, & Culture In The Nature of Malay) (ASBAM 2021)*, 2022, <https://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.220408.087>.

bond between humans and horses and encapsulates the cultural identity of the Jeneponto people. It represents an ongoing effort to preserve cultural heritage while revitalizing local wisdom.<sup>3</sup>

The relationship between humans and horses within this tradition is profoundly significant.<sup>4</sup> In many cultures, horses—particularly racehorses—are viewed as symbols of strength, nobility, and social prestige. In Jeneponto, horses are highly regarded, serving not only as a mark of social status but also playing essential roles in everyday life, including transportation and participation in ceremonial and ritual events. Historically, horses have held critical importance across various civilizations, from Ancient Egypt to Greco-Roman societies, India, and China.<sup>5</sup> Similarly, in Jeneponto, horse racing has been passed down through generations as cherished local traditions.

Beyond their cultural significance, horses also contribute substantially to economy and ecology.<sup>6</sup> They possess emotional intelligence,<sup>7</sup> social capabilities, and notable strength and speed, making them integral to community life.<sup>8</sup> The presence of horses in events like AJ bolsters the local economy, particularly within the tourism and entertainment sectors, drawing visitors both from local and international backgrounds eager to experience this unique cultural heritage. Moreover, horses associated with AJ symbolize the ecological connection between the community and its environment. However, as society modernizes, traditions such as AJ are facing numerous challenges, particularly regarding regulation and evolving perceptions of longstanding practices.<sup>9</sup> Increasing awareness of animal welfare brings attention to the treatment of horses,<sup>10</sup> both in their preparation for races and during the events themselves. This has introduced significant questions about the sustainability of traditions like Akapalumba Jarangk, which cannot be overlooked.

The intrinsic qualities and symbolic significance of horses are primary reasons for the ongoing preservation of TAJ. This connection is closely tied to the anthropomorphization of horses in Jeneponto, which has long reflected human nature, even if the local population is not fully conscious of it.<sup>11</sup> Over time, the people of Jeneponto have fostered a deep bond with horses, particularly through their participation

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- <sup>3</sup> Kartono Kartono et al., “Cultural Heritage Protection and Revitalization of Its Local Wisdom: A Case Study,” *Volksgeist: Jurnal Ilmu Hukum Dan Konstitusi*, September 2024, 245–61, <https://doi.org/10.24090/volksgeist.v7i2.11281>.
- <sup>4</sup> Dona Lee Davis and Anita Maurstad, “Meaning of Horses,” in *The Meaning of Horses Biosocial Encounters*, ed. Dona Davis and Anita Maurstad (London: Routledge, 2016), 19, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315690728>.
- <sup>5</sup> Petra Maurer, “Humanizing Horses: Transitions in Perception and Perspective,” *Religions* 10, no. 6 (June 2019): 375, <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel10060375>.
- <sup>6</sup> Nathalia M. Castillo-Huitrón et al., “The Importance of Human Emotions for Wildlife Conservation,” *Frontiers in Psychology* 11, no. June (2020): 1–11, <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.01277>.
- <sup>7</sup> Kristin Andrews, *The Animal Mind: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Animal Cognition*, *Choice Reviews Online*, Second (Routledge, 2015), <https://doi.org/10.5860/choice.190486>; Gabriella Airenti, “The Development of Anthropomorphism in Interaction: Intersubjectivity, Imagination, and Theory of Mind,” *Frontiers in Psychology* 9, no. NOV (2018): 1–13, <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2018.02136>.
- <sup>8</sup> Hilary M. Clayton and Sarah Jane Hobbs, “The Role of Biomechanical Analysis of Horse and Rider in Equitation Science,” *Applied Animal Behaviour Science* 190 (2017): 123–32, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.applanim.2017.02.011>; Hilary M. Clayton, “HORSE SPECIES SYMPOSIUM: Biomechanics of the Exercising Horse1,” *Journal of Animal Science* 94, no. 10 (October 2016): 4076–86, <https://doi.org/10.2527/jas.2015-9990>.
- <sup>9</sup> Nicholas Gane, “Book Review: Zygmunt Bauman Culture in a Liquid Modern World,” *Sociology* 46, no. 6 (December 2012): 1233–35, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0038038512458377>.
- <sup>10</sup> Phil McManus, Glenn Albrecht, and Raewyn Graham, *The Global Horseracing Industry* (Routledge, 2012), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203132432>.
- <sup>11</sup> Dan Yue et al., “Anthropomorphic Strategies Promote Wildlife Conservation through Empathy: The Moderation Role of the Public Epidemic Situation,” *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 18, no. 7 (2021): 1–14, <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18073565>.

in TAJ. This relationship is evident in the community's collective memory, interpreted in various forms, similar to other cultures.<sup>12</sup> In Jenepono, this collective memory is expressed through local wisdom and social narratives, akin to folklore, which embraces anthropomorphic principles.<sup>13</sup> These expressions, known in the community as "*hikmah*," serve as vessels of wisdom.<sup>14</sup> Different cultures may use different terms to describe similar expressions.<sup>15</sup>

In this context, the role of the state in preserving local culture becomes vital.<sup>16</sup> The state's obligation to protect and promote local culture is enshrined in the Indonesian constitution, specifically in Article 32 of the 1945 Constitution, which mandates respect for and promotion of Indonesia's national culture, including local traditions.<sup>17</sup> This article underscores the state's duty to safeguard the cultural richness, customs, and local wisdom that are integral to the nation's identity. Regarding AJ, the state has a responsibility to ensure that this tradition endures and is preserved while aligning its implementation with cultural values and applicable laws.

In addition to the 1945 Constitution, various regulations govern the preservation of local culture and traditions. A significant regulations is Law No. 11 of 2010 concerning Cultural Heritage, which establishes framework for the state to protect and maintain cultural artifacts, both tangible and intangible. Traditions like Akapulumba Jarangk fall under the category of intangible cultural heritage and require state protection. This law mandates that the state inventory, manage, and preserve traditions such as AJ, ensuring their transmission to future generations.

However, preserving local cultures like AJ must also take into account another crucial aspect: animal welfare. As a tradition centered around horses, AJ must adhere to the principles of animal welfare as outlined in Law No. 41 of 2014 concerning Animal Husbandry and Health. This law mandates that animals, including horses, must be treated humanely and receive appropriate care. This includes proper maintenance, ethical handling, and protection from cruelty or inhumane treatment. In the context of AJ, it is the state's responsibility to ensure that the horses participating in races are well cared for and not subjected to cruelty or excessive exploitation.

Additionally, sustainable development is a critical concern in preserving local traditions. The state strike a balance between maintaining these traditions and protecting the environment through various regulations. If not managed properly, horse racing events like AJ can negatively impact the environment, particularly regarding land use and horse care. Therefore, the state needs to implement policies that promote the preservation of this tradition while ensuring environmental sustainability.

<sup>12</sup> Abigail V Aldis, "Collective Memory: History, Memory, and Community," 2020; Murat Akar and Demet Kara, "The Formation of Collective, Political and Cultural Memory in the Middle Bronze Age: Foundation and Termination Rituals at Toprakhisar Höyük," *Anatolian Studies* 70 (February 2020): 77–103, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0066154619000139>.

<sup>13</sup> Grażyna Gajewska, "Polymorphic Perversion of Human and Other-than-Human Bodies," *Porownania* 31, no. 1 (2022): 277–93, <https://doi.org/10.14746/por.2022.1.16>.

<sup>14</sup> Nurmiwati Nurmiwati and Fahidah Fahidah, "MAKNA UNGKAPAN TRADISIONAL DALAM MASYARAKAT BIMA," *Jurnal Ilmiah Telaah* 3, no. 2 (October 2019): 123, <https://doi.org/10.31764/telaah.v3i2.1229>; Joko Santoso et al., "Membangun Karakter Siswa Sekolah Dasar Melalui Media Ungkapan Hikmah," *Al-Islam Dan Kemuhmadiyah Multiperspektif*, 2018, 65–75; Ursula M. Staudinger and Judith Glück, "Psychological Wisdom Research: Commonalities and Differences in a Growing Field," *Annual Review of Psychology* 62 (2011): 215–41, <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.121208.131659>;

<sup>15</sup> Zhen Dong Wang et al., "The Comparison of the Wisdom View in Chinese and Western Cultures," *Current Psychology* 41, no. 11 (2022): 8032–43, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-020-01226-w>.

<sup>16</sup> Kartono et al., "Cultural Heritage Protection and Revitalization of Its Local Wisdom: A Case Study."

<sup>17</sup> Dessy Artina, "Government Policies in the Preservation of Malay Culture in Siak Regency, Riau," *Jambe Law Journal* 4, no. 2 (November 2021): 217–35, <https://doi.org/10.22437/jlj.4.2.211-230>.

From a constitutional law perspective, preserving local cultures such as AJ is not only a constitutional duty of the state but also illustrates how the state can integrate tradition with modern regulations. The state should develop policies that support the preservation of traditions while aligning with existing legal principles, including animal rights and environmental conservation. Thus, preserving traditions must be viewed through both a cultural lens and a comprehensive legal framework.

Few studies have addressed the same issues as this research, although previous work by Adinugraha and Antonius Satria has laid some groundwork. Their findings indicate that the state has both a legal and moral obligation to protect and restore cultural objects as essential aspect of national heritage and cultural identity. Such restoration efforts can be pursued through international law, diplomacy, or bilateral and multilateral cooperation. Additionally, the state is required to strengthen domestic regulations, enhance the capacity of relevant institutions, and raise public awareness about the importance of preserving cultural artifacts. This research underscores that restoring cultural objects involves not only legal considerations, but also historical justice and respect for cultural values.<sup>18</sup> What sets this study apart from previous research is its focus on analyzing the state's responsibility for preserving local culture through a constitutional law lens, specifically in relation to the practice of Akapalumba Jarangk. The study will investigate how the state can effectively fulfill its role in safeguarding these traditions while adhering to applicable regulations, including those concerning animal welfare and environmental sustainability. Furthermore, this research will identify the challenges faced in preserving local traditions in today's modern era and propose how governments can develop sustainable policies to support these cultural practices. Through this research, we hope to establish a balance between cultural preservation and compliance with existing legal frameworks. Additionally, we aim to provide relevant policy recommendations for the government to maintain and protect local cultures like Akapalumba Jarangk, ensuring that this tradition can continue to thrive without conflicting with modern legal principles. Ultimately, we aspire for Akapalumba Jarangk to remain an integral part of the cultural identity of the people of Jenepono and Indonesia as a whole, serving as an exemplary model of how local traditions can be preserved within a robust and sustainable constitutional framework.

## RESEARCH METHODS

This research was conducted in Jenepono Regency, located in South Sulawesi Province, Indonesia. Jenepono is well-known as the "horse city," where the horse serves not only as a cultural icon but also as a symbol or logo of the Jenepono Regency government, particularly in the context of Akapalumba Jarangk (AJ) tradition. This research focuses on AJ, which has been actively practiced since 2020, as indicated by administrative records we hold. However, the specific examination of the human-horse relationship presented in this paper has been carried out from February 2024 to the completion of this study, contributing to our ongoing exploration of Jenepono's rich cultural heritage.

<sup>18</sup> Antonius Satria Adinugraha, "THE RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS OF THE STATE IN THE RESTORATION OF CULTURAL HERITAGE: A REVIEW ON INTERNATIONAL LAW AND THE PRACTICE OF INDONESIA," *Indonesian Journal of International Law* 13, no. 4 (July 2016), <https://doi.org/10.17304/ijil.vol13.4.666>.



We utilize a qualitative approach to understand the social dynamics of the human-horse relationship within AJ.<sup>19</sup> This paper aims to integrate the theoretical frameworks of Symbolic Interactionism and Anthropomorphism through qualitative methods, making this approach well-suited for examining the bond between humans and horses in this context. Data collection involved observations, semi-structured interviews, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), and documentation. Observations took place openly within the community and specifically at the AJ events.

We conducted interviews with key informants, including Karaeng Sutte, a racehorse owner and politician, at his home for 75 minutes. Additionally, we spoke with Ferawati, a cultural official from Jeneponto Regency, at a local café for 30 minutes. Another interview was conducted with Daeng Gassing, one of the papiara (caretakers), lasting 60 minutes at his residence.

Two FGDs were organized at different locations and times, each consisting of 15 participants from diverse backgrounds, including racehorse owners, papiara (caretakers), pabai (jockeys), members of the AJ enthusiast community, and the general public as inheritors of AJ. Each FGD lasted around 90 minutes. We documented the outcomes of the interviews and FGDs using photographs, audio recordings, transcriptions, and some video recordings. The interview and FGD questions were designed to elicit narratives about participants' practices, experiences, views, and their relationships with horses and AJ. Transcriptions were organized by theme, focusing particularly on the human-horse relationship. These were subsequently analyzed through the lenses of Symbolic Interactionism and Anthropomorphism.<sup>20</sup> Our findings are presented as community social narratives or reflections of AJ, expressed through hikmah (wisdom) based on participants' experiences and practices within AJ. These expressions function as both an investigative method and a form of evidence, complemented by theoretical insights discussed throughout the paper.

## ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

### Tracing the Origin of 'Akapalumba Jarangk' and Expressions of Wisdom

Much like horse racing traditions across the globe, Akapalumba Jarangk (AJ) enjoys popularity among nobility, government officials, and affluent individuals. During the kingdom era, kings and nobles often engaged in horseback riding, whether for leisure, training in swordsmanship and archery, hunting deer, or participating in horse races. Horseback riding was a significant pastime, and the practice of AJ emerged from this equestrian culture. Originally rooted in the tradition of hunting and capturing deer, the activity evolved into Tariqah Akapalumba Jarangk (TAJ). While these two pursuits are fundamentally different, TAJ effectively supplanted the declining tradition of deer hunting. As a result, AJ transformed into a custom that has been passed down orally through royal traditions (based on FGD data analysis, 2020).

AJ became a beloved pastime of nobles and a source of entertainment for the public. It is typically organized following the agricultural harvest, during royal ceremonies, and at noble celebrations. As a cultural tradition, AJ is conducted in a simple format and continues to be held in an uncomplicated manner to this day. This simplicity is reflected in its basic locations

<sup>19</sup> Hamed Taherdoost, "What Are Different Research Approaches? Comprehensive Review of Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Method Research, Their Applications, Types, and Limitations," *Journal of Management Science & Engineering Research* 5, no. 1 (2022): 53–63, <https://doi.org/10.30564/jmsr.v5i1.4538>.

<sup>20</sup> Michael J Carter and Celene Fuller, "Symbols, Meaning, and Action: The Past, Present, and Future of Symbolic Interactionism," *Current Sociology* 64, no. 6 (October 2016): 931–61, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0011392116638396>.

and straightforward rules. The venues are modest; they are not specialized horse racing arenas. The rules are also uncomplicated: rather than using a professional “Start Gate,” the race begins when a trusted person appointed by the AJ committee manually holds and releases the horses. The track and race structure are similarly straightforward, with horses sprinting along a linear path of approximately 250-350 meters. Although some circular tracks can extend up to 700 meters, this variation depends on the class of the race (based on an interview with Karaeng Sutte, 2021, and FGD data analysis, 2020).

Today, AJ is commonly held during various celebrations such as “Independence Day,” “Jeneponto Regency Anniversary,” “Anniversary of a Government Institution,” or following events of special significance. Notably, one venue consistently hosts AJ every Saturday and Sunday at Karsut Beach in the Arungkeke District of Jeneponto Regency, Indonesia. When a horse wins at AJ, it brings immense joy, pride, and happiness. Achieving victory requires collaboration among nobles, who are the racehorse owners, the papiara (caretakers), the pabai (jockeys), and the horses themselves. Each participant must understand one another, coordinate efforts, and work together to succeed in the AJ competition (based on an interview with Karaeng Sutte, 2021; and FGD data analysis, 2020).

The key informant is a racehorse owner, arena manager, politician, horse-riding enthusiast, and inheritor of the TAJ tradition, which has been passed down through generations from his parents and grandparents. His grandfather once ruled as the king of the Binamu Kingdom (a local kingdom in Jeneponto). This informant provided valuable insights into the human-horse relationship within TAJ, particularly relating to the principles of symbolic interactionism and anthropomorphism. He also shared several hikmah (wisdom) expressions, which will be discussed further. He noted that the performance of a racehorse heavily relies on its papiara (caretaker). Therefore, it is essential for the owner to cultivate a strong relationship with the caretaker, fostering communication that resonates at an emotional and heartfelt level (based on an interview with Karaeng Sutte, 2021).

Typically, the day before an AJ competition, the racehorse owner meets with the papiara (caretaker) to assess the horse's readiness and fitness for the race. Once they agree to participate in AJ, they visit the horse together that evening. During the visit, they engage in triangular communication among the racehorse owner, the caretaker, and the horse. This process involves understanding each other's emotions and interpreting signals or symbols (based on an interview with Karaeng Sutte and Daeng Gassing, 2021). This dynamic illustrates the effort to strengthen the bond between humans and horses through direct interaction, communication, and the exchange of significant signs or symbols.

The second informant, Daeng Gassing, is both a papiara (caretaker) and a former pabai (jockey). A papiara holds a specialized role that involves intensive interaction with horses, utilizing all possible means to communicate and win races. This profession is traditionally passed down from parent to child through practical experience. During training sessions, the papiara often involves their children to observe and learn, facilitating knowledge transfer. Daeng Gassing shared that his father was also a papiara, and he frequently accompanied him during horse training, watching how his father engaged with the horses. It was during these moments that Daeng Gassing acquired training to become a pabai (jockey), illustrating how knowledge has been inherited through generations (based on an interview with Daeng Gassing, 2021).

Furthermore, a papiara must possess expertise in specific rituals for approaching, communicating with, and training the horse, including rituals related to race participation. The number of papiara is limited, as they require specialized knowledge to interact effectively with horses, including an understanding of supernatural elements. Mastering these spiritual aspects is essential in the ritual process, allowing the papiara to comprehend the horse's instincts through its signals or symbols. For example, if a papiara is feeling angry or emotional, they should refrain from approaching the horse, as the animal may respond negatively or become agitated. In contrast, when the papiara is happy, the horse typically signals its compliance by lowering its head, indicating submission (based on an interview with Daeng Gassing, 2021).

A papiara also serves as a manager and mediator, acting as a bridge between the racehorse owner and the horse. They effectively communicate the horse's signals to the owner and convey the owner's wishes to the horse. When the papiara interacts with the horse, it often responds by nodding, suggesting an understanding of its owner's intentions. According to Daeng Gassing, horses require affection and thrive on regular stroking, which serves as a form of attention and care (based on an interview with Daeng Gassing, 2021).

Another way that a papiara demonstrates attention and care is by staying with, accompanying, and even sleeping beside the horse in its stable when it is unwell. Daeng Gassing explained that whenever his horse fell ill or was injured, he dedicated all his focus to the animal, providing treatment and care until it fully recovered and was ready to compete (based on an interview with Daeng Gassing and Karaeng Sutte, 2021).

**Horse Communication:** Horses communicate through various signals, including vocalizations and body movements. Understanding the meaning of these signals develops gradually through interaction and is not instantaneous; it relies heavily on the relationship between the caretaker and the horse. Over time, this interaction fosters mutual understanding. The training process, along with the attention and communication between Daeng Gassing and his horse, becomes more intensive as a competition approaches, especially in the day leading up to the race when preparations peak, making the horse ready to leave the stable for the race arena (based on an interview with Daeng Gassing, 2021).

Before taking the horse out of the stable and into the race arena, the caretaker performs a ritual that involves chanting mantras. The caretaker recites these mantras to the horse, known locally as "*dibaca-bacai*," or simply "prayed for," until the horse responds. This response is interpreted as meaningful signal, indicated through the horse's movements. Daeng Gassing noted that he waits for these symbolic reactions. Positive signs or omens include the horse's genitalia suddenly raising, the horse rubbing its body, pawing at the ground as if eager to leap, and pulling at its tether like it wants to run. Upon observing these signs, the caretaker promptly brings the horse out of the stable and into the race (based on an interview with Daeng Gassing, Karaeng Sutte, 2021; and FGD data analysis, 2020).

These signals or symbols hold great significance for the caretaker. Without them, the caretaker may feel disheartened and might even refrain from participating in the race. Thus, these symbols are critical, as caretakers firmly believe they are omens of victory or good fortune based on local knowledge and experience. However, in the empirical reality in the race arena, the outcome—whether they win or lose—is relative, since nearly all papiara (caretakers) and racehorse owners perform similar rituals, while only one ultimately emerging victorious. These signs serve as good

omens that motivate them to compete, and at the very least, the rituals are conducted to mitigate the risk of serious accidents (based on an interview with Daeng Gassing, Karaeng Sutte, 2021; and FGD data analysis, 2020).

Historical records indicate that kings and nobles in the past preserved meaningful signals and symbols to uphold their horseback riding traditions. These symbols, whether expressed as hikmah (wisdom) sayings or visual representations, were deliberately created to safeguard and promote cultural values. These have evolved into important mental and social constructs within the community of Jeneponto. Many of these expressions remain vivid in the collective memory of the community and have been essential in sustaining the practice of TAJ to this day. The hikmah expressions include:

1. The people of Jeneponto believe that “Loving horses reflects a warrior spirit.” Horse riding is a pursuit full of challenges and risks. Thus, “riding horses” is synonymous with “loving horses,” signifying a person who embodies the spirit of a warrior—one who embraces challenges and demonstrates courage. To underscore this level, royal advisors often convey wisdom expressions within the community, such as, “One must not fear facing an opponent or confronting life; rather, one should fear the honest person.” This message is frequently shared by royal advisors (based on an interview with Karaeng Sutte, 2021; and FGD data analysis, 2020).
2. The people of Jeneponto hold that “Owning and caring for horses brings blessings.” The blessings referred to encompass both material and non-material benefits that arise from owning or caring for a racehorse (based on an interview with Karaeng Sutte, 2021).
3. The people of Jeneponto believe that “Horses can emit both positive and negative energy.” This expression highlights the importance of empathy and solidarity between humans and horses. The community believes that horses have sensitivity and possess both good and bad characteristics, much like humans. Additionally, horses are regarded as intelligent creatures with emotions. Therefore, there should be synergy between humans and horses; if a horse is treated well, it can generate positive energy for its owner, caretaker, trainer, and jockey (based on an interview with Karaeng Sutte, 2021; FGD data analysis, 2020).
4. The people of Jeneponto assert that “A person from Jeneponto who does not love horses does not truly love Jeneponto.” This expression serves as an indirect form of indoctrination within the community and is reinforced by customary sanctions. The consequences for not loving horses is exile or banishment to the Kare region (based on an interview with Karaeng Sutte, 2021; FGD data analysis, 2020).

The Kare region served as a free or independent area, as well as a political asylum during the kingdom era in Jeneponto, designated for those who were exiled. Four areas were classified as Kare regions: Kare Loe, Kare Bosi, Kare Nasara, and Kare Layu. Those exiled included individuals deemed to have violated customary laws, not solely those who did not love horses. Exile was imposed to prevent the community from taking the law into their own hands. While violators of customary law could avoid public punishment, they were still socially marginalized and labeled as “tau tena siri'na” (people without honor). This expression holds significant meaning with social interactions in Jeneponto (based on an interview with Karaeng Sutte, 2021; and FGD data analysis, 2020).



In addition to the wisdom expressions mentioned earlier, horses are also represented as visual symbols. They are featured in the logo or emblem of the Jeneponto Regency government and are used in official government events. The visual symbol is shown in Figure 1 below:



Figure 1: Symbol of Jeneponto Regency

Source: (Central Statistics Agency of Jeneponto Regency, 2024)

Figure 1 illustrates the logo or emblem of the Jeneponto Regency government, which prominently includes an image of a white horse. This signifies that horses have a special historical connection with the people of Jeneponto. This symbol carries intrinsic meaning inherent to horses, as well as extrinsic significance attributed to them by the local community. While all the elements and colors within the logo hold meaning, this paper will focus on the image of the horse as evidence of the relationship between humans and horses in Jeneponto.

Therefore, the traditions of AJ and TAJ represent not just a competitive event, but also a living cultural heritage reflecting the values, beliefs, and identity of the Jeneponto people. The interplay between symbolic interactionism and anthropomorphism in these practices creates a unique cultural framework in which human-animal relationships are ritualized and socially constructed. However, despite the enduring nature of this tradition, modernization and diminishing community participation present significant challenges. Consequently, preserving AJ requires legal support and socio-cultural strengthening to ensure that the values of wisdom embedded in it remain sustainable for future generations.

### **Symbolic Interactionism (SI): Exploring the Symbolic Meaning of the Human-Horse Relationship in TAJ**

Our research findings further affirms that horses are social beings capable of forming bonds and exhibiting traits similar to humans, particularly in their thought processes, despite being instinct-driven.<sup>21</sup> They can cooperate and make choices.<sup>22</sup> This aligns with Mead's theory that humans inhabit a symbolic world.<sup>23</sup> Herbert Blumer later built upon Mead's ideas and articulated three fundamental principles of Symbolic Interactionism (SI). These principles can also be applied to the relationship between humans and horses, as both parties adhere to them. The first principle posits that humans and horses respond to one another through meaningful signals or symbols. The second principle emphasizes that humans and horses can interact effectively due to their long-standing

<sup>21</sup> Thomas Pughe, "Nature's Social Union: Re-Reading Anthropomorphism in Poetry About Animals," *Caliban*, no. 64 (October 2020): 283–307, <https://doi.org/10.4000/caliban.9253>.

<sup>22</sup> Maurer, "Humanizing Horses: Transitions in Perception and Perspective."

<sup>23</sup> Aswati Panicker, Kavya Basu, and Chia-Fang Chung, "Changing Roles and Contexts: Symbolic Interactionism in the Sharing of Food and Eating Practices between Remote, Intergenerational Family Members," *Proceedings of the ACM on Human-Computer Interaction* 4, no. CSCW1 (May 2020): 1–19, <https://doi.org/10.1145/3392848>.

relationship. The third principle asserts that their interactions are continuously renewed, modified, and reconstructed, leading to the creation of new meanings. Horses learn and adapt through training, which encourages their instincts and body language as a form of symbolic communication.

The use of symbols facilitates social communication and fosters mutual understanding. Continuous interaction among humans and horses gradually leads to the formation of new insights. In the context of repeated training, the aim is to develop and shape distinct personalities in the horses. This illustrates how the principles of SI, with its three core premises, continually generate new meanings. SI views human behavior as an enveloping process, defined through symbolic dialogue, akin to the interactions among horse owners, caretakers, and the horses themselves. The day before the race, they come together to discuss, engage in dialogue, and redefine their intentions through symbols.<sup>24</sup>

Maurstad's perspective suggests that the relationship between humans and horses is a mutual partnership. This partnership thrives on the interdependence of both parties: humans gain numerous benefits from horses, while horses depend on humans for protection and care. To establish this mutual partnership, maintaining harmony and balance is essential, along with discipline from both parties. Horses must be disciplined, but humans, as their partners, must also exhibit self-discipline as responsible leaders. Horses communicate subjectively and possess their own unique personalities; they should not be forced into action but rather invited to participate and trained with empathy.

The perspective presented above highlights the importance of humans being sensitive to and capable of interpreting the subjective communication of horses through symbols. It also emphasizes that the human-horse relationship is inherently personal. However, in the context of TAJ, we discovered that this relationship extends beyond personal connections to include social and cultural interactions. These interactions are reflected in the social narratives of the community and expressions of wisdom. In this paper, we view these social narratives and wisdom expressions as symbols arising from the social and cultural engagement between the people of Jeneponto and horses.

The human-horse relationship in TAJ is supported by social and cultural factors that further reinforce their connection. This indicates that the existence and continuity of TAJ are enhanced by a social environment that nurtures and strengthens these relationships. Thus, the principles of Symbolic Interactionism (SI) serve as a highly relevant theoretical framework for this research. SI effectively communicates and intertwines the past, present, and future (Carter & Fuller, 2016), facilitating an ongoing and dynamic dialogue.

### **Anthropomorphization: Viewing Horses as Part of Humanity in TAJ**

Anthropomorphism is a cognitive concept that enables humans to better comprehend objects or entities that differ in function and existence. This is why anthropomorphism is often employed to attribute human traits to a wide range of entities, including animals and events. Whether to understand something unfamiliar or intricate, or to establish a connection with certain entities, anthropomorphization involves assigning human characteristics to non-human beings. The aim is to facilitate interaction and give meaning to these anthropomorphized entities as part of human

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<sup>24</sup> Nilgun Aksan et al., "Symbolic Interaction Theory," *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* 1, no. 1 (2009): 902–4, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2009.01.160>.

experience.

Anthropomorphization can be understood as a perception, imagination, or interpretation, and can be viewed from two perspectives: as an empirical attribution or merely as a narrative or myth. However, we contend that the anthropomorphization of horses in TAJ is more than just a myth or fabrication. The social narratives and wisdom expressions associated with it represent empirical realities within the community. This practice of anthropomorphization has endured from ancient times to the present day precisely because it is grounded in empirical facts and remains functional. While we acknowledge that anthropomorphism can sometimes involve storytelling—especially concerning inanimate objects and robots for educational or service purposes—this does not negate its empirical basis in the context of horses.

Our research indicates that these wisdom expressions and social narratives have been practiced since the era of the kingdom and continue to persist today. These practices have shaped how the people of Jeneponto think, behave, interact, and live. They embody the community's pro-social behaviors. Thus, the context of horse anthropomorphization in TAJ represents the construction of empirical reality through symbols. Wisdom expressions and social narratives either directly or indirectly infuse the spirit into the practice within TAJ.

The development of wisdom expressions and social narratives is crucial to the use of anthropomorphism. In TAJ, the anthropomorphization of horses reflects the social and cultural life of the community. Thus, anthropomorphism plays an essential role and provides significant benefits within TAJ. Research has extensively explored the advantages of anthropomorphism across various fields, including its role as a cultural representation, its ability to enhance empathy, its impact on increasing awareness and knowledge of animals, its potential to raise environmental consciousness, and its efficacy in reducing instrumental violence. However, anthropomorphization can sometimes be excessive, merging empirical reality with mere fiction, which can lead to negative consequences, as demonstrated by Hooykaas in children's animal storybooks.

Despite the potential positive and negative effects of anthropomorphism, we stress the importance of maintaining a balanced perspective based on empirical facts. Our observations reveal that some *papiara* (caretakers) and *pabai* (jockeys) occasionally punish their horses, which we consider a form of cruelty. Yet, they also exhibit profound affection for their horses. For example, Daeng Gassing (a caretaker/*papiara*) consistently communicates with his horses and even sleeps beside his sick horses in the stable at night, engaging in interaction and fostering mutual understanding to achieve shared goals. These moments exemplify the practice of treating horses as an integral part of oneself.

The findings of this study further confirm that horses are social creatures capable of forming bonds and possess characteristics that mirror human thought processes, even though they primarily rely on instinct. Horses can cooperate and respond to their environment with their own will. This aligns closely with Mead's notion that humans exist in a symbolic world. Mead's ideas were later expanded by Herbert Blumer, who outlined three fundamental principles of Symbolic Interactionism (SI). These principles can also be applied to the relationship between humans and horses, as both meet the same criteria.

The first principle asserts that humans and horses communicate through meaningful signals or symbols. The second principle emphasizes that the longstanding relationship between humans and horses can be well established over time. The third principle indicates that these interactions are

continually updated, modified, and redefined to create new meanings. Horses undergo a learning and training process with from humans, which enhances their instincts and body language as forms of symbolic communication.

The use of symbols in social communication fosters a deeper understanding. Ongoing interactions ultimately lead to the development of new meanings, particularly in the repetitive training of horses. It is hoped that this process will help shape and create distinct personalities for the horses. The principles of Symbolic Interactionism (SI), with their three foundational premises, consistently generate new meanings in these interactions. SI views human behavior as a dynamic process shaped by symbolic redefinition, a practice reflected in the actions of horse owners, caretakers (*papiara*), and jockeys (*pabai*). The day before a race, they gather to discuss and redefine their intentions through specific symbols. Maurstad's perspective further elucidates that the relationship between humans and horses constitutes a mutual partnership. This partnership thrives on the interdependence of both parties: humans greatly benefit from horses, while horses rely on humans for safety and well-being. To maintain balance, both humans and horses must cultivate harmony and self-discipline. Not only must horses be disciplined, but humans, as their partners, must also exercise self-discipline as responsible leaders. Because horses possess subjective forms of communication and a unique personalities, they should not be forced into actions; rather, they should be invited to engage and trained with empathy.

This perspective underscores the necessity for humans to be sensitive to the subjective communication of horses through symbols. In the context of TAJ, however, the connection extend beyond personal relationships to encompass broader social and cultural interactions. This relationship is reflected in the construction of social narratives and expressions of community wisdom. In this study, we frame these social narratives and wisdom expressions as symbols arising from the social and cultural interactions between the people of Jenepono and their horses.

The relationship between humans and horses in TAJ is bolstered by social and cultural factors that further enhance their bond. This indicates that the existence and sustainability of TAJ are heavily reliant on a supportive social environment that strengthens these relationships. Thus, the principles of SI serve as a highly relevant theoretical framework for this study. SI effectively links and intertwines the past, present, and future (Carter & Fuller, 2016), creating a dialogue that is ongoing and never ending.

### **The Unification of the Human-Horse Relationship in TAJ**

When a horse is treated well based on the belief that it possesses feelings and characteristics similar to humans, such treatment exemplifies horse anthropomorphization. While this approach is not inherently wrong, we believe it is somewhat lacking because it does not fully address the abstract reasoning behind why humans assign these characteristics to animals. Symbolic Interactionism (SI) posits that such treatment arises from the interactions that occur between humans and horses. Humans ascribe characteristics to an entity when that entity provides signs or symbols, in accordance with the principles of SI.<sup>25</sup>

Anthropomorphization is directly related to the interactions that develop, which foster empathy. Over investigation reveals that both SI and anthropomorphism in the human-horse

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<sup>25</sup> Carter and Fuller, "Symbols, Meaning, and Action: The Past, Present, and Future of Symbolic Interactionism."

relationship highlight the importance of empathy. Empathy is a foundational element that precedes the realization of symbolic interactionism in this context. In anthropomorphism, empathy serves as a catalyst that allows individuals to connect emotionally with an entity. This illustrates the link between SI and anthropomorphism within TAJ as a practice of unifying humans and horses on both personal and social levels.<sup>26</sup>

This connection leads us to believe that the Jeneponto community collectively and culturally assigns significance to the human-horse relationship. This perception is reflected by the informants and participants in the focus group discussions (FGDs) conducted in this study. The findings indicate that the human-horse relationship has a long history, evolving alongside human civilization and giving rise to symbolic expressions of wisdom and social narratives. These expressions are meaningful symbols that derive their significance from two sources: first, intrinsic meaning, or the inherent attributes associated with the entity, and second, extrinsic meaning, or the significance attributed to the entity by humans. Consequently, the creation of wisdom expressions involves the process of ascribing meaning to horses, serving as a means of unifying humans and horses.

In the context of TAJ, the social narratives and expressions of wisdom highlighted in the research findings represent meaningful constructions that shape the dynamic of the human-horse relationship. These constructs generate social narratives and expressions of wisdom.<sup>27</sup> This perspective is informed by the work of Linghede and Maurstad, who explored the concept of human-horse relations as participatory and collaborative. Rather than stemming from pre-existing individuality, this relationship emerges from a long-lasting shared experience.<sup>28</sup>

Over time, the human-horse relationship has fostered a sweet, romantic legacy, as reflected in practices with TAJ. In Jeneponto, this relationship aligns with a romantic view that posits humans and animals as biologically similar, contributing to the closeness between humans and horses. Humans observe and learn from horse behavior, while horses, in turn, can interpret human actions, particularly those of their owners and caretakers. Therefore, it is important for humans to protect positive energy toward their horses so that horses can reciprocate that positive energy.

This practice of transmitting positive energy is evident not only in TAJ but also in various horse care practices. For instance, in the films “War Horse” and “Ride On,” this connection is portrayed vividly. “War Horse,” featuring Jeremy Irvine as Albert Narracott, centers on a horse named Joey, representing between human and horse. Similarly, in “Ride On,” Jackie Chan plays Lao Luo, whose horse is named Red Hare, also symbolizing the human-horse relationship.

Both films illustrate the strong bond between humans and horses, emphasizing that this relationship is not just a mutual partnership but also a deeper emotional connection, akin to family. In both narratives, separation from their horses causes significant anxiety for both the humans and the horses, prompting desperate attempts to reunite. This relationship is truly remarkable. While we do not assert that these films capture the essence of the human-horse relationship in TAJ, they demonstrate how these bonds can be preserved and strengthened into deep emotional and socio-

<sup>26</sup> Clayton, “HORSE SPECIES SYMPOSIUM: Biomechanics of the Exercising Horse1.”

<sup>27</sup> Patrícia Luciana Moreira-Dias et al., “Searching for Human Connection to Transcend Symbolisms in Pediatric Palliative Care,” *Revista Brasileira de Enfermagem* 76, no. 3 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.1590/0034-7167-2022-0476>.

<sup>28</sup> Anita Maurstad, Dona Davis, and Sarah Cowles, “Co-Being and Intra-Action in Horse-Human Relationships: A Multi-Species Ethnography of Be(Com)Ing Human and Be(Com)Ing Horse,” *Social Anthropology* 21, no. 3 (August 2013): 322–35, <https://doi.org/10.1111/1469-8676.12029>.



cultural connections, through shared experiences.

Additionally, horse owners often choose meaningful and well-known names for their horses. Every racehorse in AJ competitions have names, such as “Garuda Bangsa” or “Tri Sakti,” both of which carry positive connotations within Jeneponto society. Bestowing human-like names on horses serves to anthropomorphize them, imbuing them with significance and expectations for their future. Naming holds deep traditional value in the community, as names are viewed as an extension of prayer and the owner's hopes.

### **The State's Responsibility in Preserving Local Culture: The Case of Akapalumba Jarangk Through the Lens of Constitutional Law**

The findings from the research on the state's responsibility to preserve local culture, specifically the practice of Akapalumba Jarangk (AJ), can be examined through the framework of constitutional law, with a focus on regulations concerning cultural preservation, animal welfare, and sustainable development. The state has a constitutional and legal duty to protect local culture as mandated by Article 32 of the 1945 Constitution, which calls for the protection and promotion of national culture, including local traditions like AJ.<sup>29</sup> This horse racing tradition is a crucial aspect of the social and cultural identity of the Jeneponto community in South Sulawesi. In this context, the state must ensure the preservation of AJ while also aligning with modern values related to animal welfare and sustainability.<sup>30</sup>

A key aspect of the state's responsibility to preserve local culture is reflected in the implementation of Law No. 11 of 2010 on Cultural Heritage. This law requires that all cultural heritage, both tangible and intangible, be protected, maintained, and passed on to future generations. The AJ tradition, as a form of intangible cultural heritage, falls within the scope of what the state must safeguard. The state is obligated to inventory, document, and manage this tradition through supportive policies and programs aimed at its preservation. Concrete expressions of this responsibility may include financial support for the annual AJ event, training programs related for the care of racehorses, and promoting AJ as a tourist attraction that enhances both local and national cultural identity.

Furthermore, the state's duty regarding animal welfare is regulated by Law No. 41 of 2014 on Livestock and Animal Health. The AJ tradition, which involves horse racing, must adhere to animal welfare principles outlined in this law.<sup>31</sup> The state is responsible for ensuring that the horses involved in AJ are treated appropriately, receiving adequate care, proper nutrition, and health maintenance that meets established standards. Additionally, the state must prevent any exploitation or abuse of horses during the races by implementing strict oversight and enforcement measures in the event of violations. This reflects the state's responsibility to balance the preservation of cultural traditions with compliance with contemporary regulations concerning animal welfare.

<sup>29</sup> Vani Dias Adiprabowo, “Cultural Communication in Wayang Sada and Preservation of Local Values,” *Communicare : Journal of Communication Studies* 11, no. 1 (2024): 66–77, <https://doi.org/DOI: https://doi.org/10.37535/101011120245>.

<sup>30</sup> M D ALSUNAH, “... OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND CUSTOMARY INSTITUTIONS IN CARRYING OUT THE PRESERVATION OF KENDURI SKO CULTURE IN THE TRADITIONAL ...,” *JURNAL ADMINISTRASI NUSANTARA*, 2022, <https://doi.org/DOI: 10.51279/jan.v5i1.563>.

<sup>31</sup> A E Suprihono, “SAVING ‘JOGED MATARAM’ VIA YOUTUBE: PRESERVATION AND DISSEMINATION OF LOCAL CULTURE IN THE DIGITAL AGE,” *International Journal of Humanity Studies (IJHS)*, 2022, <https://doi.org/DOI: 10.24071/ijhs.v5i2.4304>.

The state's responsibility also encompasses sustainable development, as outlined in Law No. 32 of 2009 on Environmental Protection and Management. If managed effectively, the Akapalumba Jarangk (AJ) tradition can contribute to sustainable development in the region, particularly in relation to the management of natural resources and the environment connected to horse racing activities. The state must ensure that the practice of AJ does not negatively impact the environment, such as causing land degradation or disrupting local ecosystems. Therefore, it is essential for the state to develop policies that promote the sustainable execution of AJ. This may include regulating the use of racetracks, encouraging eco-friendly horse care, and marketing the tradition as a component of ecotourism that aids in environmental conservation. Additionally, the state, through local governments,<sup>32</sup> bears the responsibility for ensuring the sustainability of the AJ tradition by implementing local regulations (perda) that legally support its practice in a sustainable manner. The Jeneponto local government can take the initiative by drafting a perda that outlines procedures for conducting AJ events, managing resources, and maintaining racehorses in accordance with animal welfare and environmental protection principles. Thus, the responsibilities of the state, both at the national and local levels, are crucial for ensuring the preservation of the AJ tradition while adhering to relevant national and international regulations.

Furthermore, the state also is obligated to involve the community in efforts to preserve AJ. By adopting a participatory approach, the state can encourage local residents to actively engage in safeguarding and maintaining this tradition. Initiatives such as community empowerment programs, education on the importance of cultural preservation and animal welfare, and financial support for horse owners and race organizers can form a part of the state's strategy to preserve local culture. With community involvement, the preservation of AJ will be more sustainable, as it will be supported by the awareness and active participation of the community—an integral component of the tradition itself.

The analysis reveals that the preservation of local culture, particularly the Akapalumba Jarangk (TAJ) tradition, encounters significant challenges due to legal, social, and economic factors. Constitutionally, the Indonesian government is tasked with maintaining and protecting cultural heritage, as stated in Article 32 of the 1945 Constitution. However, the implementation of this constitutional obligation has been less than optimal. Many existing policies offer only general protection and fail to address the specific needs of local cultures, including Akapalumba Jarangk. The lack of targeted legal instruments and the absence of alignment between central and regional government regulations have led to weak enforcement of cultural preservation laws.

Examining the narrative of Akapalumba Jarangk uncovers a rich repository of indigenous wisdom and expressions that embody the values, beliefs, and lifestyle of the local community. This tradition is not merely a ritual, but a deeply rooted cultural practice that reflects the harmony between humans and nature, particularly the relationship with horses. Through various proverbs and oral traditions, TAJ articulates a philosophy of balance, respect, and interdependence between humans and their environment.

From a Symbolic Interactionism (SI) perspective, Akapalumba Jarangk can be seen as a symbolic expression of the complex relationship between humans and horses. The interactions

<sup>32</sup> Hariyanto Hariyanto, Ahmad Rezy Meidina, and Mabarroh Azizah, "Decentralization and the Fulfilments of Children's Rights: Challenges and Opportunities for Local Government in Indonesia," *Lex Scientia Law Review* 8, no. 2 (November 30, 2024): 677–706, <https://doi.org/10.15294/LSLR.V8I2.14373>.

within TAJ are imbued with meanings that go beyond mere physical engagement, revealing deeper social and spiritual dimensions. Horses are not simply utilitarian in this tradition; they serve as a medium for communicating identity, status, and communal values. Therefore, the enactment of TAJ becomes a performative narrative that strengthens social bonds and fosters a shared understanding of cultural symbols.

Moreover, the concept of anthropomorphization is vital in the Akapalumba Jarangk (TAJ) tradition, as horses are regarded not merely as animals but as essential members of the community. The profound emotional bond between humans and horses in this context reflects an anthropomorphic approach, attributing human-like qualities such as loyalty, intelligence, and emotional sensitivity to these animals. This perspective fosters a sense of kinship and mutual respect, ensuring that the tradition is not exclusively focused on human activity but also recognizes the agency of animals in cultural expression.

Economically, the preservation of local culture often faces challenges due to limited financial support. Funds allocated by the government for cultural preservation are frequently inadequate and not prioritized within regional development plans. Consequently, traditional cultural practices struggle to endure amidst economic pressures and rapid infrastructure development. Additionally, the absence of economic incentives for communities that uphold traditions leads to a gradual decline in participation.

To address these challenges, we need a more comprehensive and integrated policy framework. The government must establish specific regulations that acknowledge specific regulations and protect local cultural practices, ensuring they receive adequate legal and financial support. It is essential to strengthen collaboration between central and regional governments to enhance the effectiveness of these policies. Additionally, incorporating cultural education into the formal education system is crucial for raising awareness and fostering appreciation among younger generations. Economic incentives, such as tourism development centered around local culture, can also help sustain these traditions while benefiting local communities financially. By implementing these measures, we can more effectively preserve the Akapalumba Jarangk tradition and other local cultures in Indonesia for future generations.

## CONCLUSION

Preserving local culture is vital for maintaining national identity and heritage. This study has emphasized the constitutional obligation of the state to protect cultural traditions like Akapalumba Jarangk. However, challenges remain, including inadequate legal enforcement, low public awareness, and the declining involvement of local communities in sustaining these traditions. To overcome these issues, a robust legal framework is necessary, supported by concrete policies that ensure active state engagement. Furthermore, collaboration among the government, local communities, and cultural institutions is essential for promoting indigenous practices. Future research can play a significant role by exploring effective legal mechanisms for cultural protection, assessing globalization's impact on local traditions, and developing policy recommendations to enhance the enforcement of constitutional mandates related to cultural preservation. By addressing these gaps, subsequent studies can provide valuable insights into how states can more effectively protect and revitalize local cultures.

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