



The Survival of the Dukuh Indigenous Community Amidst the Modern Crisis: Paradoxical Aesthetics as a Form of Cultural Resilience

Iip Sarip Hidayana^{1*}, Sophia Septiani¹, Rufus Goang Swaradesy¹

¹Cultural Anthropology, Faculty of Culture and Media, Institut Seni Budaya Indonesia Bandung
Kota Bandung, Jawa Barat 40265, Indonesia

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Abstract

This research explores the cultural resilience of the Dukuh Indigenous Community in Garut during modern crises, focusing on the philosophical values of weweling (ancestral advice) written in Pegon script. The study investigates how paradoxical aesthetics serve as a moral compass to guide the community toward simplicity, spiritual balance, and environmental harmony against materialistic pressures. This research uses an interpretative qualitative approach with an embedded design strategy that integrates three main methods: (1) participatory field observation, (2) in-depth literature study, and (3) text analysis based on Jakob Sumardjo's paradoxical aesthetics to examine the Sundanese text "Nu sugih bakal prihatin..." within its cultural context. The results show that weweling functions as a mechanism of resilience for the Dukuh Indigenous Community, allowing them to adapt to contemporary changes without losing the essence of their ancestral values. The study identifies that the paradoxical nature of these teachings effectively counters modernity by prioritizing spiritual and environmental sustainability over material accumulation. This study offers an important contribution to understanding the strategies of indigenous communities for cultural survival in an ever-changing world. It provides alternative insights into sustainable development models centered on local wisdom rather than globalized industrial norms. By documenting these localized philosophical systems, the research highlights the enduring relevance of traditional scripts and oral traditions in maintaining social stability during modern crises.

1. INTRODUCTION

Indigenous communities in Indonesia, including those in the Sundanese region, are currently at a crucial crossroads, facing significant challenges due to the waves of modernization and globalization. The rapid advancement of technology, widespread internet penetration, and the dominance of global culture have created tremendous pressure on local cultural identities [1]. Understanding that the character of a nation can be seen from its cultural background [2]. However, the main concern with technological progress is the potential marginalization of rich local cultures, such as Sundanese culture, with all its linguistic, artistic, and traditional values. This phenomenon is manifested in declining participation

*Correspondence author, Contact(s): iipsarip9@gmail.com

and interest in Sundanese arts and traditions, as well as a serious threat to the survival of regional languages that are potentially facing extinction.

Existing scholarship on indigenous cultural resilience has made significant advances in documenting what traditional communities preserve and that they resist modernization, but it has been considerably less successful in explaining how philosophical systems operationalize that resistance at the level of daily practice and social structure. Studies on local wisdom in the Sundanese context have largely approached cultural preservation as a curatorial problem: identifying, cataloguing, and transmitting heritage artifacts, texts, and practices before they disappear [1][2]. This preservationist orientation, while valuable, treats traditional knowledge as a static deposit to be protected rather than as a dynamic philosophical system that actively reconfigures how communities perceive and respond to external pressures. Meanwhile, broader theoretical work on cultural resilience tends to describe resilience as an adaptive capacity without adequately accounting for the internal epistemological logic that makes such adaptation possible in specific communities [3]. The result is a conceptual gap: current literature can describe the outcomes of cultural resilience (communities that survive modernization with their identities intact) but lacks the analytical tools to explain the mechanism specifically, how a paradoxical philosophy such as *Completio Oppositorum* translates into concrete social governance, spatial organization, and moral authority during a modern crisis. This gap is particularly acute in the context of Islamic-indigenous communities in Java and Sunda, where the interaction between Sufi ethical frameworks and pre-Islamic cosmological structures produces forms of resilience that neither Islamic studies nor indigenous knowledge studies, taken separately, can fully theorize. The Dukuh Indigenous Community, with its documented *weweling* tradition encoded in Pegon script, offers a rare and analytically precise case through which this operationalization can be examined, not as an absence in the literature to be filled, but as a theoretical limit in existing frameworks to be directly challenged.

Jakob Sumardjo's concept of paradoxical aesthetics was developed primarily through the analysis of material culture such as Javanese *gunungan* wayang, Jambi batik motifs, and ritual objects, in which contradictory cosmological principles (sacred/profane, heaven/earth, human/supernatural) are held in simultaneous tension within a single form [4][5]. In these material manifestations, the paradox is not decorative but ontological: the object does not represent the union of opposites, functioning as a site where dualistic cosmological forces are made present and operative in the world. The theoretical question this study must address, however, is whether this framework can be validly extended to describe the organizational logic of a living community navigating modern global pressures. We argue that it can, but only if Sumardjo's framework is understood not as an art theory in the narrow sense, but as a description of a Sundanese epistemological structure that precedes and underlies its material expressions.

The *gunungan* and batik motifs are not the source of the paradoxical logic. The source is a prior cosmological orientation in which reality is apprehended as irreducibly dual, and in which social order, spatial arrangement, and ethical conduct are organized according to the same *Pola Dua* principle that governs the aesthetic object. If this is correct, then the same structure that organizes the vertical axis of a *gunungan* (bottom-middle-top as earth-transition-heaven) should also be observable in the way a community organizes its social space (outer zone-boundary-inner core), its moral taxonomy (material wealth vs. spiritual wealth), and its governance logic (openness to modernity vs. preservation of ancestral law). The Dukuh Indigenous Community, as this study demonstrates, is precisely such a case: a community whose spatial layout, social differentiation between Dukuh Luar and Dukuh Dalam, and *weweling* philosophical system all reproduce the *Completio Oppositorum* structure, not in stone or cloth, but in living social practice. Extending Sumardjo's framework to the Dukuh context is therefore not an analytical overreach; it is a test of

whether paradoxical aesthetics names a feature of specific objects or a generative epistemological logic capable of organizing an entire way of life. The evidence from Dukuh suggests the latter and in doing so, it expands Sumardjo's framework from a theory of pre-modern art into a theory of indigenous socio-ecological resilience under conditions of modern crisis.

The weweling tradition of the Dukuh Indigenous Community, ancestral philosophical teachings encoded in Pegon script (Arab Gundul) and organized around paradoxical values of life. It constitutes a theoretical provocation directed at dominant frameworks of cultural resilience and sustainable development, which have consistently privileged externally legible, institutionally scalable, and technologically mediated forms of knowledge as the basis for community adaptation. Mainstream sustainable development discourse, including UNESCO frameworks on intangible cultural heritage and SDG-linked indigenous knowledge programs, tends to evaluate traditional knowledge systems by their capacity to be documented, digitized, and transferred into policy-compatible formats. Weweling, by contrast, derives its resilience precisely from its resistance to such externalization: encoded in a script inaccessible to outsiders, transmitted through initiated oral practice rather than formal documentation, and embedded in a governance structure that cannot be decoupled from the cosmological authority of the kuncen. This study argues that this resistance is not a limitation to be overcome but a structurally necessary feature of the system's resilience, a finding that directly challenges the assumption, widespread in development literature, that accessibility and scalability are prerequisites for the sustainability of indigenous knowledge.

At the same time, this study advances existing theories of cultural resilience by demonstrating that the Pola Dua framework is not merely descriptive of pre-modern aesthetic objects but generative of socio-ecological survival strategies in contemporary conditions. Where subaltern studies scholarship, following Spivak and others, has theorized indigenous resistance primarily in terms of voice, representation, and counter-narrative [3], the Dukuh case reveals a form of resistance that operates through epistemological inaccessibility rather than public assertion: a community that does not seek to be heard by modernity but constructs its resilience through the deliberate maintenance of a knowledge system that modernity cannot fully read. Documenting and theorizing this mechanism contributes to broader global conversations about what sustainable development can mean when led by communities whose philosophical foundations are neither legible nor scalable on global terms and whose survival may depend, precisely, on keeping it that way.

2. METHODS

2.1. Methods

This research uses an interpretive qualitative approach with a strategy that combines three main methods: (1) field observation, (2) in-depth literature review, and (3) text analysis based on Jakob Sumardjo's paradoxical aesthetics. The methodological framework was designed to answer the research questions regarding the manifestation of weweling, the function of the Pegon script, and the resilience of paradoxical culture in the Dukuh indigenous community.

Field observations were conducted intensively from October to December 2025, with a total of three field visits. Key informants were selected purposively based on the criteria of being traditional leaders or kuncen (leaders) of the Dukuh community, having direct knowledge of weweling and the Pegon script, and being native residents of Dukuh.

To deepen contextual and historical understanding, this research was supplemented with an in-depth literature review. This literature review serves to place the findings of the field observations within the broader historical, theological, and intellectual framework, particularly regarding the development and significance of the Pegon script and local wisdom concepts such as *weweling*.

2.2. Theory

A key and distinguishing element in this research data analysis is the application of text analysis based on Jakob Sumardjo's paradoxical aesthetics. Sumardjo's theoretical framework is used as the primary lens for critically analyzing both data from participant observation (e.g., rituals, symbols, oral narratives) and textual data from literature studies (Pegon manuscripts, customary documents). This analysis focuses on identifying, describing, and interpreting how seemingly contradictory or paradoxical elements (such as sacred-profane, tradition-modernity, local-universal) coexist, interact, and shape the unique cultural resilience of the Dukuh indigenous community.

The observational data enriches understanding of the text, the literature study provides context for interpreting the observations, and Sumardjo's paradoxical framework serves as an analytical tool that unifies and deepens the meaning of all findings.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Result

The traditional village of Dukuh, founded in the 17th century by Syekh Abdul Jalil (a religious scholar who relinquished institutional authority in Sumedang to uphold his principles) embeds this founding paradox into its very cultural DNA: true authority derives not from position, but from knowledge and spiritual integrity [6]. This founding ethos directly shapes how sacred knowledge is held and transmitted today, particularly through the Pegon script and its carrier text, *weweling*.

The indigenous community of Dukuh adheres to the Shafi'i school of thought and Sufism, forming what they themselves identify as "adat Islam" – a synthesis in which Islamic beliefs and *kasauran karuhun* (ancestral mandates) are inseparable [7]. During fieldwork conducted in [month/year], this integration was consistently observed across daily practices. In one recorded field observation, the *kuncen* (community caretaker) opened a communal gathering not with recitation from a printed Quran, but by reading aloud from a handwritten Pegon manuscript, the text passed between generations without formal institutional endorsement

3.1.1. Sub Result

Weweling functions simultaneously as ethical code, social contract, and cosmological map. It governs daily conduct, reinforces collective values of *silih asih*, *silih asah*, *jeung silih asuh* (loving, teaching, and nurturing one another), and enforces taboos such as the prohibition of trade within Dukuh Dalam and the rejection of electricity. Violations are understood not merely as rule-breaking but as cosmological transgression. As one elder informant stated during an interview conducted on [date]:

"Lamun urang ngalanggar *weweling*, lain ngan sekadar salah ka manusa, tapi salah ka karuhun, salah ka Gusti."

("If we violate *weweling*, it is not merely a transgression against people, it is a transgression against the ancestors, against God.")

This statement is not rhetorical. It reveals a governance logic in which the weweling text itself carries juridical and theological weight simultaneously.

Pegon script operates as an ideological gatekeeper in the strictest sense: it is a writing system that is locally legible but externally opaque. Adapted from Arabic Hijaiyah letters to encode Sundanese phonology Pegon scripts cannot be read by native Arabic speakers, nor by most Indonesians schooled only in the Latin alphabet [8][9][10][11][12]. This deliberate illegibility is not a historical accident but a structural feature that actively concentrates interpretive authority within the community. During field observation, it was noted that even among younger Dukuh residents, only those who underwent direct mentorship under the kuncen could read the manuscripts; formal Islamic education in pesantren outside the village did not confer this ability. As one informant who had studied at an external pesantren explained:

"Di pesantren luar, saya belajar Arab. Tapi Pegon di sini lain, saya baru bisa membaca setelah Kuncen mengajari saya langsung selama berbulan-bulan."

("At the outside pesantren, I learned Arabic. But the Pegon here is different – I could only read it after the Kuncen taught me directly for several months.")

This testimony confirms that mastery of Dukuh's Pegon is not a transferable literacy skill but an initiated knowledge practice. The corpus of weweling manuscripts encountered in the field (comprising 1 handwritten texts stored in a culture figur) are accordingly not publicly archived or digitally reproduced. Their physical inaccessibility mirrors their interpretive inaccessibility: both are guarded conditions, not incidental ones. In the 19th century, this same exclusivity served as a tool of cultural resistance against colonial administration [10]; today, it performs an analogous function against the homogenizing pressures of digital modernity. The script does not merely preserve Sundanese-Islamic identity, it actively controls the conditions under which that identity may be accessed, interpreted, and transmitted.

3.2. Discussion

3.2.1. The Paradox of the Dukuh Traditional Community

The bond between nature and humans in the Dukuh Indigenous Community is not merely a philosophical abstraction, but it is a lived, spatially organized reality, observable in the physical arrangement of the village itself. During fieldwork conducted in october - december 2025, it was noted that the boundary between the forested communal land (leuweung larangan) and the residential core of Dukuh Dalam is not marked by a fence or signage, but is understood and enforced entirely through internalized weweling values [13]. Community members do not harvest timber from this zone even when economically pressured to do. Weweling, in this sense, is the mechanism through which nature-human relations are not just transmitted but enforced from within [14].

This internalization is inseparable from the role of the kuncen as the living custodian of weweling. The kuncen does not function as a punitive authority in the modern bureaucratic sense; rather, he operates as a spiritual interpreter whose judgments carry cosmological, not merely social, weight. When asked during a field interview on October 14, how violations of ancestral rules are handled in the age of smartphones and social media, the kuncen responded:

"Urang teu bisa ngalarang ku aturan. Urang ngan bisa ngingetkeun yén éta moal alus pikeun jiwa. Lamun aya nu mawa HP ka Dukuh Jero, urang carita heula, naon nu bakal karandapan ku batinna."

("We cannot prohibit through rules alone. We can only remind them that it will not be good for the soul. If someone brings a mobile phone into Dukuh Jero, we first speak to them, about what their inner self will experience.")

This response reveals a governance model that is fundamentally different from coercive regulation: compliance is achieved through the cultivation of awareness of spiritual consequence, not fear of institutional punishment. It also directly explains why the prohibition on electronics has endured not through enforcement but through cosmological persuasion [8][15].

The spatial differentiation between Dukuh Dalam (Dukuh Jero) and Dukuh Luar is the structural expression of this governance logic, and warrants direct ethnographic description rather than theoretical summary. In field observation, Dukuh Dalam presents as a deliberately austere spatial environment: no electrical infrastructure, no permanent concrete structures, no commercial signage. Buildings are constructed from natural materials such as bamboo, wood, and woven palm and arranged in a pattern that the kuncen described as following ancestral spatial prescriptions (*pola tatanan karuhun*). In contrast, Dukuh Luar, observed during the same fieldwork period, contains paved roads, mobile phone stalls, and residents engaged in small-scale commerce. Crucially, however, residents of Dukuh Luar interviewed during fieldwork consistently described Dukuh Dalam not as a place of restriction but as a place of orienting authority which is a cultural center to which they remained symbolically accountable:

"Kami di luar boleh pakai listrik, boleh dagang. Tapi kalau ada masalah besar yakni tentang soal adat, soal bencana, soal keputusan penting, kami tetap ke dalam, ke kuncen."

("We outside may use electricity, may trade. But when there is a major matter of custom, of disaster, of important decisions, we still go inside, to the kuncen.")

This testimony substantiates the theoretical framing of Dukuh Dalam as a "conservation core" and Dukuh Luar as an "adaptation zone" [17], but with an important empirical nuance: the two zones are not merely spatially distinct, they are hierarchically ordered. Dukuh Luar's modernization is not simply tolerated; it is permitted precisely because Dukuh Dalam remains inviolable. The selective permeability of the outer zone depends structurally on the impermeability of the inner one. This dynamic balance constitutes what the Dukuh community practices as cultural resilience: not a static refusal of change, but a paradoxical architecture in which controlled openness and strict closure mutually sustain one another [16].

Globalization, with all its impacts, often creates paradoxes. There is an eternal tension between universalism (global values that tend to be uniform) and cultural relativism (the uniqueness of local values). In this context, local cultures must find ways to harmonize "internal" values (indigenous or primordial) with "external" values (foreign or modern) for their survival. The ability to manage these contradictions is key. Cultural resilience in the Dukuh indigenous community can be seen as a dynamic paradoxical adaptation process. This is not merely a matter of surviving the onslaught of modernity, but rather the ability to manage and even utilize the contradictions that arise from interaction with the modern world. By accepting duality (for example, the existence of the strict community of Dukuh Dalam and the more open Dukuh Luar community, or the interdependence between the teachings of *Islam* and *kasauran karuhun*), the community has created a flexible and resilient system. This system allows them to absorb change and interact with modernity without losing their cultural essence. This paradox, where opposites actually reinforce each other, is the foundation for the ability of culture to evolve and remain sustainable.

The survival of indigenous communities amidst modern crises requires cultural resilience mechanisms that bridge traditional knowledge systems with contemporary challenges. Indigenous knowledge (IK), defined as "a collection of knowledge, beliefs, practices, traditions, and customs outlining the relationships between organisms (including humans) and their environments that have evolved through adaptive processes over time and have been passed down through generations via cultural transmission" [18], serves as a dynamic framework rather than a static concept [19]. The Dukuh Indigenous Community's *weweling* in Pegon script exemplifies how indigenous aesthetics function not merely as artistic expression but as "dynamic socio-spatial practices through which state and non-state actors assert power, construct particular visions of a city, and shape conditions of belonging" [20]. This paradoxical aesthetic system demonstrates what scholars identify as decolonial aesthetics that "create new ways of knowing/being/doing outside of settler logic" [20], enabling communities to maintain cultural continuity while adapting to external pressures. Research shows that indigenous communities employ holistic approaches integrating "spiritual and physical lifeways in a constant relationship, contributing to a holistic state of being that is in constant flux as we navigate the human experience" [21], which aligns with the Dukuh's emphasis on spiritual balance over material accumulation.

The resilience framework of indigenous communities is particularly evident in how "enduring Indigeneity" challenges elimination as a totalizing process by insisting on Indigenous presence and life despite pervasive settler colonialism [22], a pattern observable in the Dukuh's resistance to modern materialistic pressures through ancestral teachings. Furthermore, indigenous aesthetic systems are "grounded in epistemological cosmologies, rendering simple designs into complex cultural codes for ordering the world, a prominent source for understanding beauty" [21], suggesting that the Dukuh's paradoxical teachings serve as sophisticated knowledge preservation mechanisms. Studies on indigenous resilience confirm that "the envisioned Healing and Wellness Centre is a pillar of hope, providing a sacred space for cultural reconnection, resilience building, and holistic wellness promotion across generations" [23], paralleling how *weweling* functions as moral architecture for the Dukuh community. The integration of indigenous knowledge into climate adaptation strategies demonstrates that "Indigenous people use IK to predict extreme climatic conditions, prepare for it, and live through it making use of Indigenous adaptation strategies in multiple manifestations" [24], reflecting broader patterns of indigenous resilience applicable to the Dukuh's navigation of modern crises. Moreover, indigenous management theory emphasizes that "it is a management theory, which is developed for resolving management issues that are based on a particular environment, context, or society" [25], underscoring the localized nature of the Dukuh's philosophical framework. The effectiveness of such traditional systems is evidenced by findings that "bridging IK and scientific knowledge systems will complement each other" [24] in addressing contemporary challenges, suggesting that the Dukuh's paradoxical aesthetics represent a sophisticated adaptive strategy rather than mere cultural conservatism.

3.2.2. Analysis of the Weweling of the Dukuh Indigenous Community

Sumardjo's concept of *Completio Oppositorum* or *Pola Dua* posits that pre-modern Sundanese epistemology understands reality not as a linear hierarchy of opposites, but as a dynamic field in which contradictory elements are mutually constitutive: neither pole holds meaning without the other, and resolution is achieved not by eliminating one side but by holding both in productive tension [4]. Within this framework, a paradox is not a logical failure to be resolved; it is an epistemological structure through which the Sundanese subject accesses truth. To know the sacred, one must pass through the profane. To understand wealth, one must encounter suffering. The Dukuh *weweling* text, however, does not simply reproduce this indigenous dualist schema, it transforms it through the lens of Islamic Sufi theology,

producing a synthesis that neither Sumardjo's framework nor classical Sufism alone can fully account for.

In orthodox Sufi thought, the renunciation of material wealth (*zuhud*) and the cultivation of patience (*sabr*) are understood as stages on a vertical path (*maqam*) toward divine proximity. In the Sundanese *Pola Dua*, by contrast, opposites do not resolve vertically but coexist horizontally: the sacred and the profane are not ranked but paired. The *weweling* text "*Nu sugih bakal prihatin/ Nu beunghar bakal sangsara*" (The rich will suffer/ Those with wealth will be wretched) does not instruct the community to abandon wealth as a stage in spiritual ascent. It reconfigures wealth itself as a cosmological threat when severed from ethical reciprocity. This is not classical Sufi renunciation; it is Sundanese dualism absorbing Sufi ethics into its own structural logic. The *weweling* does not tell the listener to move away from wealth toward God, but it tells them that wealth without spiritual balance is already a broken cosmos.

This synthesis becomes clearer in the text's second movement: "*Nu asih nu bakal sugih/ Nu sobar nu bakal beunghar/ Nu percaya nu bakal mulya*" (Those who love will be truly prosperous/ Those who are patient will be truly abundant/ Those who believe will be noble). Here, the Islamic virtues of *mahabbah* (love), *sabr* (patience), and *iman* (faith) are not presented as replacements for material wealth, but they are presented as its true ontological form. Wealth is not abolished; it is redefined within the *Pola Dua* structure as a complementary pair: false wealth (*sugih* as accumulation) and true wealth (*sugih* as love). The same word, *sugih*, carries both meanings simultaneously, enacting the very *Completio Oppositorum* it describes. This is where the *Dukuh* case makes a theoretical contribution that extends beyond Sumardjo's original formulation: it demonstrates that *Pola Dua* is not a static indigenous framework but a generative epistemological template capable of incorporating Islamic theological content without surrendering its structural logic. The result is neither syncretism in the superficial sense nor straightforward Islamization, but a third formation (what we might term Sufi-Sundanese dualism) in which Islamic virtues are rendered intelligible and binding through the pre-existing architecture of paradox.

The final line, "*Geus tangtu moal sulaya*" (It is certain that they will not fail), performs a crucial closing function within this framework. In Sufi discourse, certainty (*yaqin*) marks the highest stage of faith. In Sundanese *Pola Dua*, closure of a paradoxical pair restores cosmic order. The line does both simultaneously: it affirms divine guarantee in Islamic terms while signaling the resolution of the text's dualistic tension in Sundanese epistemological terms. Its authority derives precisely from its operation at both registers at once. The *weweling* text, read through this lens, is not merely a cultural artifact, but it is a site of active theoretical production, where two philosophical systems negotiate and co-constitute each other in real time.

3.2.2.1. Literal and Philosophical Interpretation

The first two lines of this *weweling* directly present a striking paradox, "*Nu sugih bakal prihatin*" and "*Nu beunghar bakal sangsara*." Literally, this states that material wealth or possessions will lead to worry or misery. This statement is a direct antithesis to the modern view that generally associates wealth with happiness and ease. This contradiction challenges the basic assumptions of contemporary society regarding the value and purpose of life.

The third and fourth lines, "*Eta teh da bongan saha, Langgar tina hukum Syarà*," provide a religious explanation for this paradox. The misery caused by wealth is explained as a consequence of violating Sharia law (Islamic law). This affirms that moral and spiritual values have a higher and more important position than material achievements. Thus, this *weweling* is not only a warning, but also an affirmation that true prosperity is tied to spiritual obedience and ethics.

The resolution of this paradox is presented in the fifth to seventh lines: "*Nu asih nu bakal sugih, Nu sobar nu bakal beunghar, Nu prihatin nu bakal mulya.*" This section shifts the definition of "wealth" from the material realm to the ethical-spiritual realm. True prosperity (*sugih* and *beunghar*) and glory (*mulya*) are not achieved through the accumulation of wealth, but through noble qualities such as compassion (*asih*), patience (*sobar*), and simplicity or concern (*prihatin*). This is a fundamental redefinition of what is considered "success" or "prosperity" in life.

The last line, "*Geus tangtu moal sulaya,*" affirms the universal truth and certainty of this teaching. This phrase gives absolute authority to the *weweling*, implying that the principles contained therein are divine laws that will never fail or betray, guaranteeing certain consequences for those who follow or violate them.

4. CONCLUSION

This study set out to examine how the Dukuh Indigenous Community operationalizes paradoxical aesthetics as a mechanism of cultural resilience during modern crises and the findings reveal a system considerably more sophisticated than the existing literature on indigenous knowledge preservation had anticipated. The *weweling* tradition is not a passive heritage artifact requiring external protection; it is an active governance architecture whose resilience derives precisely from features that mainstream development frameworks would classify as deficiencies: its restricted legibility, its resistance to digitization, and its dependence on embodied, non-transferable transmission through the *kuncen*. This finding advances Sumardjo's *Completio Oppositorum* beyond its original application in material aesthetics, demonstrating that the *Pola Dua* structure functions as a generative epistemological template capable of organizing spatial governance, social ethics, and moral authority simultaneously. More significantly, the Dukuh case reveals that the Islamic-Sufi ethical register (*mahabbah*, *sabr*, *iman*) does not replace the Sundanese dualist cosmology but is absorbed into its structural logic, producing what this study terms a Sufi-Sundanese dualism that neither Islamic studies nor indigenous knowledge scholarship, taken separately, possesses the analytical tools to fully account for. This synthesis is the study's primary theoretical contribution, and it opens a comparative research agenda for other Islamized indigenous communities across maritime Southeast Asia where analogous processes of cosmological negotiation remain understudied.

The implications for sustainable development discourse are direct. If the Dukuh community's resilience is structurally dependent on the inaccessibility of its knowledge system, then policy frameworks premised on the documentation, digitization, and scaling of indigenous knowledge may not only fail to strengthen such communities, but they may actively undermine the conditions that make their resilience possible. The Dukuh case thus constitutes an empirical challenge to the accessibility assumption embedded in UNESCO intangible heritage protocols and SDG.

This study carries several limitations that must be stated with transparency. First, the highly insular character of Dukuh Dalam constrained the depth and duration of fieldwork possible. Extended residence within Dukuh Dalam was not permitted, meaning that the ethnographic record is necessarily partial: it captures observable surface behaviors and the accounts of informants willing to speak to researchers, but cannot fully access the interior dimensions of communal deliberation, ritual practice, or transgression that remain deliberately shielded from external observation. The community's resistance to external documentation is not incidental. The researcher therefore faces a constitutive methodological tension: the

most analytically significant features of the Dukuh system are precisely those least accessible to outside investigation.

Second, the cross-cultural translation of weweling texts from Sundanese-Pegon into academic English involved multiple interpretive layers each of which introduced the possibility of semantic displacement. Concepts such as *sugih*, *beunghar*, and *mulya* carry cosmological connotations embedded in Sundanese-Islamic oral tradition that resist direct equivalence in English-language academic prose. The translations offered in this study represent interpretive positions, not transparent renderings, and should be read accordingly. Future studies would benefit from collaborative translation methodologies involving native Sundanese-speaking scholars with expertise in Pegon philology.

Third, the positionality of the research team as outside observers – inevitably shaped what informants chose to share and how they framed their responses. Despite efforts toward reflexive fieldwork practice, the accounts gathered reflect the community's representation of itself to an outside interlocutor, not an unmediated account of internal life. Researcher reflexivity in this context requires acknowledging that the community's skill in managing external perception is itself a dimension of their resilience strategy, meaning that the data gathered may be, in part, a performance of cultural identity as much as a transparent disclosure of it.

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