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## *Ruwat Desa and Ritual Resilience Amid Agrarian Transformation: An Ethnographic Study in Wunut Village*

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### ABSTRACT

*Ruwat Desa*, a Javanese agricultural ritual, persists in Wunut Village, Sidoarjo, despite losing 66% of farmland to industrial conversion (1985-2024). This pattern appears across Java's industrializing regions, where villages lost 45-65% of agricultural land, yet ritual participation declined only 15-20%. How does an agricultural ritual persist when its material foundations vanish? Existing frameworks fail: Geertzian involution explains cultural maintenance through agricultural intensification, not cultural intensification when land disappears. This study applies Bourdieu's practice theory to reveal capital substitution – communities strategically replace declining economic capital with enhanced cultural and symbolic capital. Three-year ethnographic research (2022-2024) with 10 informants demonstrates three mechanisms: funding shifted from 85% farmer contributions (pre-1990s) to 60% non-farmer sources (post-2000s); communities preserve core elements (sacred site, wayang performance) while adapting peripherals (*gunungan* contents, organization); generational habitus transformed from cosmological conviction to pragmatic observance to heritage valorization. Cultural sustainability operates through strategic capital restructuring rather than material continuity, advancing beyond predictions of cultural decline and offering insights for agrarian-industrial transitions across Indonesia and the Global South.

### A. INTRODUCTION

The *Ruwat Desa* tradition represents a critical intersection between cultural resilience and structural transformation in contemporary Java. Unlike other Javanese rituals that have gradually disappeared or become commodified tourist attractions, *Ruwat Desa* presents a unique puzzle: it persists and even intensifies precisely when its agricultural foundations erode. Where ceremonies like *Wiwit* (rice planting rituals) have virtually vanished in industrialized Javanese regions and *Labuhan* (offerings to the sea) now function primarily as staged cultural tourism, *Ruwat Desa* maintains its sacred character and community participation despite radical

economic transformation. This distinction is significant: it reveals *Ruwat Desa's* capacity to demonstrate how communities strategically negotiate modernity while maintaining cultural identity a challenge facing agrarian societies across Indonesia and the Global South.

As an integral component of Javanese abangan culture (Geertz, 1976), this agricultural thanksgiving ritual embodies what Koentjaraningrat conceptualizes as the transmission of meanings through symbols. It functions as a system through which communities communicate, maintain, and develop their knowledge and attitudes toward life (Dindha Pertiwi, 2019). Through three years of ethnographic fieldwork (2021-2024), this study empirically documented the ritual's symbolic transmission through three mechanisms. First, generational pedagogy occurs

when elders instruct youth in proper ceremonial procedures observed directly during pre-ritual preparation sessions. Second, bodily practices encompass prayer postures, food preparation techniques, and spatial orientations during ceremonies, recorded through participant observation. Third, material culture manifests in *gunungan* construction, *wayang kulit* or puppet performances, and sacred site maintenance, documented through visual ethnography and interviews with ritual specialists. Yet this tradition now confronts a challenge unprecedented in its historical trajectory. While Javanese agricultural rituals have historically adapted to demographic pressures and political changes, the current velocity and scale of land conversion presents a qualitatively different threat.

Statistical evidence demonstrates this crisis's magnitude: East Java witnessed a dramatic reduction of paddy fields from 7.75 million hectares (2013) to 7.1 million hectares (2018) a loss of 650,000 hectares within five years (Firmansyah, 2021). Yet in Wunut Village, despite losing over two-thirds of its agricultural base since 1985, annual *Ruwat Desa* participation remains robust, with village records indicating consistent household involvement across the post-2000 period.

The contemporary dilemma facing traditions like *Ruwat Desa* extends beyond simple preservation concerns. Indonesia has experienced the conversion of approximately 150,000-200,000 hectares of agricultural land annually into industrial estates and modern markets, with Java despite comprising only 7% of national territory bearing disproportionate impact. This phenomenon creates a fundamental paradox: as the material basis for agricultural rituals disappears, communities must negotiate between abandoning traditions tied to farming cycles and adapting practices to radically altered socio-economic conditions.

In East Java, this crisis intensifies. The province, home to 2.29 million hectares of rice cultivation, witnessed a dramatic reduction of paddy fields from 7.75 million hectares (2013) to 7.1 million hectares (2018) a loss of 650,000 hectares within five years (Firmansyah, 2021). Wunut Village, Porong, Sidoarjo exemplifies this transformation. Originally possessing three major agricultural blocks totaling 67.3 hectares (101 *pracik*), the village saw systematic land acquisition from 1985-1990s. The Poh Block (22.4 ha) transferred to Suncity Group for commercial development. The Santren Block (21.5 ha) fragmented for arterial roads and toll infrastructure. The Kidul Umah Block (23.4 ha) shifted from community farming to corporate sugar production. Despite losing over two-thirds of its agricultural base, Wunut Village continues performing *Ruwat Desa* annually. This raises the central question: how does a farming ritual persist when the farms themselves have largely vanished?

Existing scholarship confronts a fundamental theoretical impasse: how do agricultural rituals persist when their material foundations vanish? Recent

anthropological work has advanced understanding of cultural transformation under capitalism notably (Tsing, 2021) analysis of salvage accumulation in contaminated landscapes and (McSweeney et al., 2014) examination of rural livelihood transformation amid agrarian disruption in Central America. Yet these frameworks, while illuminating broader processes of material adaptation, struggle to explain the specific paradox of agricultural ritual intensification in post-agricultural contexts. This impasse stems from three methodological limitations. First, semiotic approaches decode ritual meanings but cannot explain why those meanings remain compelling when referential contexts disappear. Second, cultural economic frameworks assume stable agricultural bases and thus cannot theorize post-agricultural ritual intensification. Third, functionalist analyses treat rituals as reflections of economic structures, failing when those structures transform while rituals persist. Current frameworks fail because they assume ritual-economy correspondence. (Purwanti et al., 2023) apply Barthesian semiotics to decode mantra meanings, but semiotics cannot explain why decoded meanings remain salient when agricultural contexts disappear. (Shafillah, 2023) uses Geertzian economic anthropology to analyze cultural-economic relations, yet Geertz's framework presumes stable agricultural bases it cannot theorize post-agricultural ritual intensification.

The analytical gap is not empirical but conceptual: existing theories lack mechanisms for understanding cultural reproduction through capital transformation. They cannot explain the paradox that Wunut Village elaborates *Ruwat Desa* precisely as agriculture declines ritual investment increases as material basis erodes. This requires Bourdieu's practice theory. The theory reveals rituals not as reflections of economic bases but as autonomous fields. In these fields, symbolic capital operates according to conversion logics independent of economic capital. Communities strategically reconfigure capital portfolios: they substitute declining economic capital (land) with enhanced cultural capital (ritual expertise) and symbolic capital (sacred legitimacy). This substitution allows them to maintain field positions despite structural transformation.

This research deploys Pierre Bourdieu's practice theory to address these gaps, offering three analytical advantages over previous approaches. First, the habitus-capital-field dialectic reveals *Ruwat Desa* not as mechanical tradition but as dynamic interaction between internalized farming dispositions, multiple capital forms, and contested social arenas. Unlike Geertz's cultural interpretation or structural functionalism, Bourdieu's framework explains how rituals transform internally while maintaining external continuity communities shift capital investment from agricultural land to cultural performance while preserving ritual structures.

Second, the theory illuminates capital substitution: when economic capital diminishes,

communities strategically enhance cultural capital (ritual knowledge, artistic expertise) and symbolic capital (sacred site preservation, religious legitimacy). This redistribution explains ritual persistence despite agricultural decline practices adapt by changing capital composition while retaining social function. Empirical evidence includes funding shifts from 85% farmer contributions pre-1990s to 60% non-farmer sources post-2000s, ritual expertise redistribution across diverse occupational groups, and symbolic authority maintained through sacred site preservation despite economic power loss. This contrasts with Geertzian involution, which assumed stable land tenure and cannot explain cultural intensification when land disappears.

Third, the concept of "field" reveals *Ruwat Desa* as a contested arena where traditional farmers, industrial developers, religious authorities, and generational cohorts negotiate positions. This contestation drives strategic innovation: sacred spaces (Sumberan location, *wayang* performances) become strictly preserved precisely because public spaces (*gunungan* variations, entertainment forms) undergo modification. (Detailed empirical demonstration of these mechanisms appears in Sections 3-4.)

This study positions *Ruwat Desa* as a strategic cultural adaptation mechanism rather than a tradition passively resisting change. The research demonstrates that ritual sustainability under structural transformation depends not on preserving material conditions (agricultural land) but on communities' capacity to: reconfigure capital investments from economic to cultural-symbolic domains; maintain strategic essentialism by protecting non-negotiable sacred elements; enable controlled innovation by adapting peripheral ritual components; and reproduce habitus through new materialities by performing farming rituals in post-agricultural contexts.

This analytical repositioning advances beyond Geertz's "agricultural involution" concept, which described Javanese farming intensification under population pressure (Geertz, 1963) but cannot explain post-agricultural cultural intensification. It also transcends (Li, 2014) analysis of agrarian capitalization and engages with contemporary debates on cultural survival amid capitalist transformation (Tsing, 2021) (McSweeney et al., 2014). The study reveals how cultural practices persist through their own forms of capital transformation, independent of economic base persistence, a process that complements Tsing's salvage accumulation framework while focusing specifically on ritual domains. Where (McSweeney et al., 2014) examine livelihood adaptation to agrarian disruption, this research illuminates how cultural practices negotiate similar structural transformations through symbolic capital mechanisms. Through three years of ethnographic engagement (2021-2024) with Wunut Village's *Ruwat Desa* practice, this study aims to: analyze how habitus-capital-field interaction produces ritual adaptation strategies

under land conversion pressure; map capital transformation patterns when economic foundations erode; identify mechanisms distinguishing adaptable ritual elements from non-negotiable sacred components; and theorize cultural sustainability as active reconstruction rather than passive preservation.

The research offers critical insights for understanding cultural resilience in developing regions experiencing rapid structural transformation. As Indonesia and similar contexts navigate industrialization while maintaining cultural identity, this study provides an analytical model for comprehending how communities strategically adapt traditions without abandoning them, revealing sustainability not as conservation but as creative negotiation between inheritance and innovation.

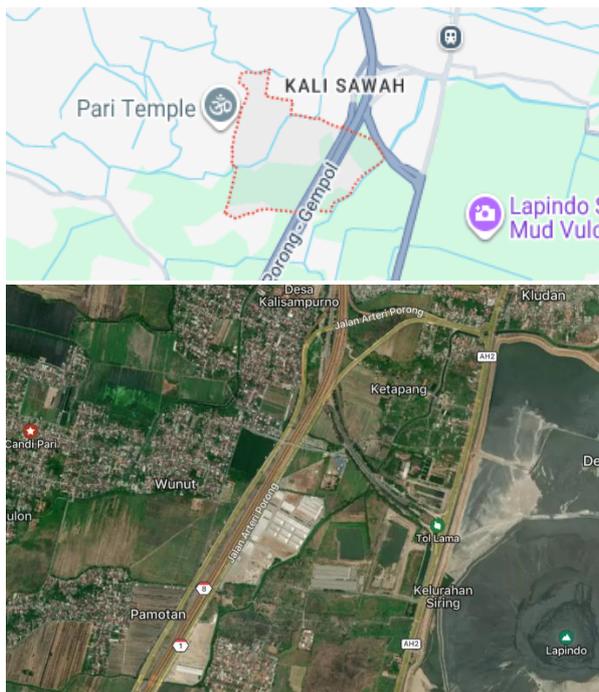
The central argument of this research is that *Ruwat Desa* survives in post-agricultural Wunut Village not despite land conversion but through strategic adaptation enabled by Bourdieusian capital transformation. Communities substitute economic capital (land) with enhanced cultural and symbolic capital (ritual expertise, sacred legitimacy), maintaining practice through habitus-field negotiation rather than material continuity.

## B. METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach integrating Pierre Bourdieu's theory of social practice with ethnomethodological methods. Bourdieu's triadic framework (habitus-capital-field) provides the theoretical lens for analyzing how *Ruwat Desa* persists through structural transformation, revealing ritual adaptation as strategic capital reconfiguration rather than passive preservation. Ethnomethodology complements this structural analysis by illuminating the situated practices through which community members accomplish and maintain ritual meanings in everyday interactions. This theoretical integration enables the research to capture both objective capital distributions and agents' practical reasoning, avoiding structural determinism while maintaining analytical rigor.

The primary objective is to gain an in-depth understanding of how the *Ruwat Desa* tradition adapts to agrarian transformation in Wunut Village, Porong District, Sidoarjo Regency, East Java. Wunut Village is located approximately 2 km from Porong subdistrict office and 8 km from Sidoarjo regency center. The village experienced significant land conversion, reducing agricultural area from 67.3 hectares to approximately 34 hectares following industrial development between 1985-2024. This geographic context is critical because land loss provides the empirical setting for investigating ritual resilience mechanisms.

**Figure 1.** Geographical location of Wunut Village, Porong, Sidoarjo



### 1. Theoretical Framework

Bourdieu's social practice theory serves as the analytical framework to identify and analyze the dialectical relationship between habitus (internalized dispositions), various forms of capital (economic, social, cultural, symbolic), and the social field in which *Ruwat Desa* operates. This approach reveals how social structures and agents interact dynamically in creating and sustaining traditional practices under conditions of structural transformation. Ethnomethodology complements this by exploring the practical methods through which local people create and understand their social reality. Its focus on common-sense knowledge and indexical practices enables the researcher to understand how Wunut villagers construct, interpret, and sustain the *Ruwat Desa* tradition through daily interactions, providing micro-level insights into the macro-structural processes identified through Bourdieusian analysis.

### 2. Data Collection

Field research was conducted over three consecutive years (2022-2024), with intensive observation periods during each annual *Ruwat Desa* ceremony held in the month of Ruwah (the month before Ramadhan). Each annual observation lasted 2-3 days, covering all ritual stages from preparation through completion. The selection of informants employed purposive sampling to ensure representation across generations, genders, and social positions. Ten key informants were selected: one community elder (SK, 80 years), one traditional leader (SU, 79 years), three farmers' wives (AT, TW, AR, aged 30-55 years), three village residents (LA, CA, RO, aged 28-40

years), and two village youth (FI, NA, aged 20-30 years). This composition captures generational habitus transformation while maintaining gender diversity. The study acknowledges that a sample of ten informants from a single village limits statistical generalizability; however, the depth of engagement over three years and triangulation across demographic categories provides analytical validity for theoretical claims about ritual adaptation mechanisms.

Data collection employed multiple methods for triangulation. Through participant observation, the researcher participated in three consecutive ceremonies, recording detailed field notes on ritual activities, social interactions, funding negotiations, and community responses, with particular focus on capital transformation patterns (who contributes what resources) and field dynamics (power negotiations over ritual decisions). Semi-structured interviews lasting 30-60 minutes were conducted with all informants, covering collective memories of past practices, meanings attributed to ritual elements, experiences of social change, strategies for tradition preservation, and perspectives on adaptation. Questions were designed to elicit both objective information (funding amounts, attendance numbers) and subjective interpretations (beliefs about efficacy, motivations for participation). Documentation through audio recordings captured interview content and ritual proceedings, while photographs documented material culture elements (*gunungan* construction, spatial arrangements, participant demographics) enabling post-field analysis of symbolic representations.

### 3. Researcher Positionality and Ethics

The primary researcher, positioned as an outsider with Javanese cultural background, maintained reflexivity through regular journaling, supervisory discussions, and member checking with key informants. The researcher's status as a university student was transparently communicated to all participants. Ethical principles were rigorously observed: verbal informed consent was obtained from all participants, confidentiality maintained through coding (initials used rather than full names), voluntary participation ensured without coercion, and cultural sensitivity demonstrated through appropriate ritual participation and reciprocal contributions to community events (assisting with food preparation, documentation services).

### 4. Data Analysis

Data analysis proceeded through iterative stages linked to theoretical frameworks. Audio recordings were transcribed in original Javanese with Indonesian translation, preserving linguistic nuances relevant to cultural interpretation. Initial open coding identified recurring themes, actions, and meanings without predetermined categories, which were then grouped through focused coding into categories aligned with Bourdieu's framework: habitus codes (embodied dispositions, generational differences, practical logic), capital codes (economic resources, cultural capital, social

capital, symbolic capital), and field codes (power relations, position-taking, struggles over legitimate practice). Thematic analysis identified emerging themes beyond Bourdieusian categories, particularly adaptation strategies and selective preservation patterns. Theoretical synthesis integrated two analytical perspectives. Bourdieusian analysis examined capital transformation patterns, habitus hysteresis, and field autonomy dynamics, while ethnomethodological analysis explored indexicality (how meanings depend on context), reflexivity (how actors monitor their own practices), and documentary methods (how actors use typifications to make sense of situations). Both perspectives were synthesized to understand *Ruwat Desa* as a dynamic social practice embedded in complex relationships of power, meaning, and identity. Analysis was conducted manually without specialized software, using systematic comparison across informant categories and temporal periods to identify patterns of continuity and change.

### 5. Validation Techniques

Multiple validation strategies ensured reliability and credibility. Triangulation of sources systematically compared data from diverse informants (SK, SU, AT, TW, AR, LA, CA, RO, FI, NA) representing different social positions, while triangulation of methods cross-referenced observations, interviews, and documentation to verify consistency. Theoretical triangulation employed Bourdieu's structural perspective and ethnomethodology's micro-interactionist approach as complementary analytical lenses. Member checking verified key interpretations with SK, AT, and SU, who confirmed or corrected researcher understandings, and peer debriefing through regular discussions with academic supervisors identified potential biases and alternative interpretations. This methodological design enables systematic analysis of how *Ruwat Desa* functions as a field where habitus, capital, and structural forces interact to produce cultural continuity through transformation.

## C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The *Ruwat Desa* tradition in Wunut represents a complex field of cultural reproduction where symbolic power, collective memory, and structural transformation intersect. Through Bourdieu's conceptual triad habitus, capital, and arena this study reveals how agrarian rituals function as sites of social negotiation, class mediation, and cultural resistance against industrial modernity. Rather than viewing *Ruwat Desa* as mere ceremonial practice, this analysis demonstrates how ritual becomes a mechanism through which communities assert symbolic capital, reproduce power relations, and navigate the tensions between sacred tradition and capitalist transformation.

## 1. Collective Memory as Embodied Habitus: Agricultural Risk and Ritual Disposition

### a. The Habitus of Agricultural Uncertainty

The *Ruwat Desa* tradition embodies what (Bourdieu, 1990) terms the "durably installed generative principle" of habitus the deeply internalized dispositions that organize agricultural communities' responses to environmental unpredictability. The *ujung* ritual (rain-asking ceremony) and *keleman* tradition (post-planting celebration) exemplify how habitus operates not as conscious strategy but as embodied "practical sense" shaped by generations of farming under precarious conditions. These practices demonstrate the agricultural community's collective adaptation to nature's volatility, transforming individual vulnerability into communal efficacy through ritualized performance.

The *ujung* ritual reveals habitus operating through double misrecognition the community simultaneously forgets and naturalizes social construction. First-level misrecognition: participants experience invulnerability ("will not bleed") as supernatural gift rather than recognizing years of bodily training producing pain tolerance. SK's testimony "Mr. Ngalmbo has extraordinary physical strength" attributes to individual charisma what results from collective pedagogical labor. Second-level misrecognition: the community experiences ritual as efficacious response to drought rather than recognizing it as symbolic management of agricultural anxiety under uncontrollable conditions. This double structure demonstrates Bourdieu's concept of illusion investment in the ritual game depends on collective amnesia regarding its social origins. The ritual "works" precisely because participants misrecognize their own productive labor (training, prayer, performance) as passive reception of divine intervention. Habitus thus operates as practical faith: farmers act as if rituals control rain not because they consciously believe this causality, but because embodied dispositions generate practice before conscious deliberation. The body "knows" the ritual sequence; intellectual doubt remains secondary to incorporated conviction. The *ujung*'s disappearance in the 1990s reveals habitus's material dependence: embodied dispositions persist only when social conditions reproduce the practices generating them. Mechanization destroyed the temporal rhythms (manual plowing cycles) and spatial arrangements (communal labor coordination) that sustained rain-asking rituals. This demonstrates Bourdieu's argument that habitus exhibits "hysteresis" it continues generating practices appropriate to past conditions even after structural transformation, until accumulated mismatches force adaptation. The 30-year lag between mechanization and ritual abandonment shows habitus's temporal inertia: communities preserve practices through one generation before disappearance becomes inevitable.

This invulnerability demonstrates culturally specific ways of mobilizing bodily practices to achieve supernatural intervention. The ritual involved specific equipment called "cocok bakal" and special prayers performed in the afternoon around 3-4pm. SU, as traditional leader, corroborates the ritual's historical depth, confirming its practice since the 1940s before cessation in the 1990s.

This timeline reveals how shifts in material infrastructure erode the habitus that sustained particular ritual forms. The *ujung* tradition's disappearance approximately 30-35 years ago correlates directly with agricultural mechanization, supporting (Bourdieu, 1977) argument that habitus remains durable only when material conditions reproduce the practices it generates. The ritual operated through "embodied cultural capital" specialized knowledge transmitted through apprenticeship and bodily discipline requiring years of spiritual preparation. This illustrates how cultural capital accumulates through time-intensive investment in traditional learning systems, demonstrating the dialectical relationship between economic base and ritual practice.

The *keleman* tradition of distributing pleret cakes to landless villagers illustrates the habitus of reciprocity embedded in agrarian social structures. SK explained that this celebratory event occurred after farmers finished planting rice, where "it is a social activity of the farmers to the villagers who do not have rice fields." This practice operationalizes asymmetrical exchange that reinforces social solidarity while simultaneously marking class distinctions between landowners and laborers. AT, TW, and AR three farmers' wives aged 30-55 provide contemporary perspectives on how these redistribution practices persist despite land conversion pressures, though in modified forms as mechanization has transformed the agricultural cycle.

SK mentioned significant changes: "But now it has changed, because now the rice fields are not plowed with cows, with machines, then the harvest is not the farmers who reap the rice, but harvested with machines directly out into rice, that kind of event is gone." This transformation demonstrates how technological changes dismantle the material conditions that sustained particular habitus formations, revealing ritual practice as dependent upon specific modes of agricultural production.

#### **b. B. Indexical Memory and Ritual Efficacy: Symbolic Capital Through Collective Belief**

The collective memory linking crop failure to ritual neglect functions as what (Douglas, 1966) analyzed as "purity systems" classification schemes where ritual pollution produces material contamination. AT's testimony reveals this causal logic: "If it is not held there, the sawahe will be damaged, once it was held in Samben, but the rice

fields were damaged by a locust infestation (wereng)." This narrative connects agricultural disaster (leafhopper infestation) directly to ritual transgression (performing ceremonies at improper locations), constructing a cosmological causality that renders ritual performance materially consequential. TW and AR independently confirmed similar narratives, demonstrating the community's pattern recognition through accumulated instances where ritual violations preceded agricultural failures.

This indexical relationship demonstrates how symbolic systems provide cognitive frameworks for explaining agricultural disasters that exceed rational prediction or technical control. The Sumberan location's sanctity becomes enforced through experiential correlation between spatial transgression and crop failure. This mechanism operates through what Bourdieu termed "misrecognition" the community experiences supernatural causation rather than recognizing the social construction of sacred geography. Here, symbolic capital accumulates through collective validation of cosmological beliefs that naturalize arbitrary spatial classifications as metaphysical necessities.

LA, CA, and RO village residents aged 28-40 representing a transitional generation illustrate habitus persistence despite occupational shifts. Their testimonies reveal pragmatic adherence to ritual protocols motivated by risk aversion, demonstrating the "wager" logic: minimal investment (ritual observance) provides insurance against catastrophic loss (crop failure) even if causal mechanisms remain unproven. This exemplifies how habitus adapts to social change, maintaining practical observance while transforming underlying motivations from cosmological necessity to prudential insurance.

The presence of specialized ritual knowledge holders demonstrates how collective memory becomes institutionalized through key figures serving as living repositories of tradition. SK recounts Pak Sarmadi, an ice-tape seller who possessed authoritative knowledge of appropriate *wayang* (shadow puppet) stories: "When I was a teenager, his name was Mr. Sarmadi, who was a basket of ice tape carried on his back, he was an expert in shadow puppet stories so that if they wanted to play in Wunut, they would first ask him, what will the story be?" This reveals how cultural capital accumulates through dedicated observation rather than formal credentials, with Sarmadi's authority recognized even by professional *dalang* (puppeteers). His symbolic authority operated independently of economic or political power demonstrating cultural capital's capacity to generate legitimate authority autonomous from material resources.

Another phenomenon involved six elderly women who functioned as ritual supervisors during

wayang performances. SK recounts: "There used to be a special audience... there were six women... grandmothers who were fans of *wayang*, and they would bring a small piece of wood, then give a banana leaf to be torn like that, if the puppeteer made a mistake... *kepyok*... wrong... like that." These women's corrective actions exemplify gendered ritual authority operating through embodied symbolic capital accumulated across decades of apprenticeship. Their surveillance function demonstrates how cultural capital acquisition remains accessible to women despite their exclusion from formal *dalang* roles a male-dominated profession requiring years of training and institutional legitimation. While men monopolize performative ritual authority through puppetry, these elderly women wielded corrective authority through connoisseurship, demonstrating alternative pathways for accumulating symbolic capital within patriarchal structures. Their expertise operated through what Bourdieu terms "embodied cultural capital" knowledge inscribed in bodily dispositions through prolonged immersion in cultural practice. Unlike men's ritual authority derived from formal apprenticeship and public performance, these women's authority emerged through decades of attentive observation, developing refined aesthetic judgment that professional puppeteers themselves recognized as legitimate.

This gendered division of ritual labor men as performers, women as critical audiences reflects broader patterns where women's cultural authority operates through evaluative rather than productive roles, yet remains materially consequential in enforcing artistic standards. The micro-penalties they administered (*kepyok* sounds, torn banana leaves) functioned as distributed enforcement mechanisms operating without institutional backing, relying instead on social recognition of their expertise. This illustrates how symbolic capital can generate practical authority even for actors occupying subordinate positions within formal hierarchies. Their advanced age proved crucial only elderly women possessed sufficient accumulated observation hours and freedom from reproductive labor to develop such refined connoisseurship. Younger women, constrained by domestic responsibilities, lacked time for the intensive cultural immersion enabling this specialized knowledge. AT, TW, and AR lament the absence of such specialized audiences today, attributing their disappearance to generational shifts where younger women pursue wage labor rather than investing in traditional cultural apprenticeship. This transformation reveals how economic restructuring eliminates the material conditions enabling particular forms of gendered symbolic capital. The women's corrective authority depended on agricultural economy's temporal rhythms, which provided elderly women leisure for cultural specialization after fulfilling reproductive roles. Industrial work

schedules foreclose such accumulation, demonstrating how capitalist time-discipline restructures gendered possibilities for symbolic capital acquisition. FI and NA village youth aged 20-30 report emerging digital documentation efforts through smartphones, suggesting new forms of cultural capital accumulation adapted to digital modernity, though these remain gender-neutral compared to the explicitly gendered knowledge systems of previous generations.

The meticulousness of *wayang* supervision illustrates the community's belief that mistakes in ritual execution can result in crop failure. This collective memory continues through key figures who serve as custodians of tradition. Although some practices no longer exist, stories persist through SK and SU's testimonies, demonstrating how *Ruwat Desa* undergoes continuous transformation while maintaining spiritual essence.

The Islamic prayers integrated into this ritual are led first by *pak mudin*, then by *dalang* puppeteer. This dual leadership illustrates Javanese religious syncretism, where Hindu-Buddhist cosmology, animist spirituality, and Islamic orthodoxy coexist in practical accommodation. Notably, this syncretism influences adaptation strategies in the post-agricultural period. It enables the ritual to maintain legitimacy across multiple religious frameworks even as its material foundations shift from agricultural practice to industrial economy.

## 2. Religion as Symbolic Violence: Sacred Space and Arena Control

### a. Sumberan as Consecrated Arena: Spatial Control and Symbolic Domination

The Sumberan case reveals symbolic capital's dialectical paradox: it derives power from collective belief yet constrains individual rationality through objective force. When rituals relocated from privatized Sumberan, attendance collapsed SK reports "only five people watched." This demonstrates symbolic capital operating as objective structure: even skeptics who doubt Sumberan's supernatural power cannot attend alternative venues without social sanction. The boycott functions through distributed enforcement no central authority commands non-attendance; rather, each individual anticipates others' judgment, creating self-regulating conformity. This mechanism exemplifies Bourdieu's concept of "doxa" the universe of undiscussed presuppositions structuring practical sense. Community members don't consciously decide "I will boycott incorrect venues"; rather, embodied dispositions generate discomfort at ritual transgression before intellectual deliberation. AT's testimony captures this pre-reflective certainty: "The rice fields will be damaged. It was once held in Samben, but the rice fields

were damaged by locust attacks." The narrative links spatial violation to agricultural disaster not through logical argumentation but through indexical correlation a pattern recognition inscribed in collective memory. Crucially, this symbolic power operates as "violence" (Bourdieu's term) because it secures compliance without coercion through misrecognition. The community experiences Sumberan's sacredness as metaphysical fact rather than recognizing it as social construction maintained through collective performance. This misrecognition is not false consciousness it is the condition of symbolic capital's efficacy. If participants consciously recognized sacred geography as arbitrary social convention, it would lose compelling force. Symbolic violence thus requires subjects' complicity in their own domination they must invest in classifications that constrain their freedom. The successful defense against privatization reveals symbolic capital's capacity to contest economic capital when field autonomy remains high. The landowner's accommodation demonstrates that property rights formal legal entitlements backed by state violence can be practically suspended when symbolic obligations prove sufficiently compelling. SU attributes this to supernatural fear: the owner risks crop failure if preventing ritual access. Yet this "superstition" functions as material force the owner's economic interest (agricultural productivity) depends on maintaining symbolic legitimacy within community cosmology. Here symbolic and economic capital interpenetrate: economic actors must recognize symbolic obligations to maintain productive relations. However, this autonomy remains precarious. Sumberan represents exceptional successful resistance; other sacred sites underwent privatization without comparable mobilization. This variability demonstrates that symbolic capital's efficacy depends on conjunctural factors: ritual centrality to community identity, timing relative to ceremonial calendar, landowner's susceptibility to social pressure. Symbolic power cannot be abstracted from specific field configurations it operates through accumulated historical relations that create particular balances between capital forms. As industrial encroachment continues, economic capital's territorializing logic progressively subordinates symbolic claims, suggesting Sumberan's defense may represent temporary resistance rather than permanent victory. SK's observation captures this dynamic: "Once we put the puppet show in the village hall, because Sumberan had been bought by someone, no one came. Only five people watched it." This dramatic attendance drop demonstrates "symbolic efficacy" ritual power depends on collective recognition of legitimate sites, not intrinsic sacred properties.

The near-total abandonment reveals how symbolic capital becomes "field-specific" valuable only within particular social arenas defined by community consensus. SK elaborated: "Yes, the people are so convinced of Sumberan that they don't know what to do now. But it is

placed in Sumberan, so many people come." This illustrates doxa unquestioned beliefs that structure social practice while remaining invisible as arbitrary constructions. FI and NA, as village youth, confirm continued reverence for Sumberan despite increased exposure to urban values. Their acceptance demonstrates successful intergenerational transmission of cosmological classifications, revealing how symbolic violence operates most effectively when dominated groups internalize subordination as legitimate natural order.

The sacredness attributed to Sumberan resonates with (Durkheim, 1912) sacred/profane dichotomy not as metaphysical reality but as social construction organizing collective consciousness. SU elaborates Sumberan's historical transformation: "The reason why the village *ruwat* is held near Mbah Sumber, sir? Because it is considered to have supernatural powers. Its name is Sumberan." He explains Sumberan functioned originally as water source and oil/gas extraction point, later closed following the Lapindo Mud tragedy. This narrative illustrates the manifestation of sacred power in particular locations that become axis mundi for community identity.

AT reinforces this through ancestral connections: "It's been a long time since There it is, he said there is *pepunden*. *Pepunden* of wunut village." The term *pepunden* refers to sacred ancestral sites housing founding spirits or supernatural guardians. This classification transforms Sumberan from mere location into sacred territory, with violations risking ancestral displeasure manifesting through agricultural disasters. TW and AR embody the practical dimension of sacred space maintenance through gendered labor in food preparation and *gunungan* construction "symbolic work" that naturalizes social classifications through everyday activities.

The continued use of Sumberan for *kenduri* (salvation meals) despite post-Lapindo environmental transformation demonstrates symbolic geography's resilience even when material conditions change radically. SK reports the food prepared at Sumberan serves as location for community *kenduri* ceremonies, illustrating how sacred space maintains ritual functions despite ecological devastation. LA, CA, and RO mid-generation residents aged 28-40 report pragmatic ritual observance motivated by risk aversion rather than deep cosmological conviction. Their testimonies reveal maintaining ritual purity from prudential concern that violations carry unpredictable material consequences. This pragmatic observance nonetheless reproduces practice and transmits tradition even as underlying motivations transform.

## **B. *Wayang Kulit* as Liturgical Necessity: Symbolic Boundaries and Ritual Purity**

**Figure 2.** Wayang performance as part of the *Ruwat* activities in Wunut Porong Village, Sidoarjo



The mandatory use of *wayang kulit* shadow puppet theater, contrasted with prohibited substitutes like *ludruk* folk drama, operates through symbolic boundaries distinguishing legitimate from illegitimate practice. AT's insistence captures this liturgical rigidity: "Yes, it can't be like *ludruk* tok, it can't be just entertainment, if it's for *ruwat*, it's the puppet..It's obligatory...if you can do the ritual, because if you do *ludruk*, you can't do the ritual...the obligatory thing is the puppet." This emphatic repetition reveals how ritual form becomes fetishized as essential to efficacy, with puppet classified as possessing cleansing power (*ruwatan* function) while other performance genres lack this supernatural capacity. TW and AR echo this liturgical rigidity, demonstrating consensus across farming households.

This classification exemplifies what (Tambiah, 1985) termed "ritual as performative act" ceremonies whose power derives from precise formal execution rather than participant belief. The puppet performance functions as "speech act" doing rather than describing, where proper utterance accomplishes social transformation. Just as legal pronouncements create new social realities through authorized speech, puppet performances purify villages through ritualized enactment of cosmic narratives. SU explains the dual prayer structure: "The first prayer is led by the pak mudin (religious leader), then the village *ruwat* is led by the dalang (puppeteer)." This sequencing Islamic invocation followed by Hindu-Javanese puppetry demonstrates Javanese religious syncretism.

SK provides detailed accounts of puppet's historical centrality. FI and NA report continued youth engagement with puppet performances despite competing entertainment options, though their motivations differ from elders' cosmological conviction. This intergenerational continuity demonstrates puppet's enduring symbolic capital across demographic cohorts, though the capital's basis shifts from sacred necessity to cultural heritage preservation. The younger generation's

participation nonetheless reproduces practice and transmits tradition in modified form.

The *wayang* performance's dual function entertaining the living while communicating with supernatural forces creates threshold spaces where normal social categories dissolve. The special prayers recited during village *ruwat* ceremonies transform *wayang* from cultural performance into utterances that derive efficacy from adherence to prescribed form. AT explains: "*Ruwatan* is like the village is cleaned... Yes, the people here still believe in performing *wayang* when they *ruwat* their village... it's the *wayang* that cleanses the village."

LA, CA, and RO, occupying liminal positions between agricultural and industrial sectors, particularly value puppet's mediating function. They report heightened ritual attendance during personal crises, revealing how cosmological interpretations persist alongside pragmatic rationality, activated situationally when technical solutions prove inadequate. The community thus maintains multiple explanatory systems simultaneously, deploying them strategically as circumstances require.

### 3. Symbolic Capital and Class Reproduction: Ritual as Arena of Economic Competition

#### a. Funding Structures as Class Markers: Converting Economic to Symbolic Capital

The voluntary contribution system financing *Ruwat Desa* operationalizes what (Bourdieu, 1984) termed "symbolic capital" economic resources transubstantiated into prestige through cultural mediation that obscures material status hierarchies. AT's explanation reveals this capital conversion: "The source of funds is usually from here, support from the village treasury, the village usually gets money from the sub-district, the regency. But usually it is a voluntary contribution." This hybrid funding model transforms ritual participation into theater for displaying class position through conspicuous generosity. While formally voluntary, contributions carry obligatory force through community surveillance, resembling ostensibly free exchanges that actually create binding debt relations organizing social hierarchies.

TW and AR, as wives in economically differentiated farming households, provide contrasting perspectives illuminating class stratification. TW's household contributes modestly within constrained means, while AR's more prosperous family makes conspicuous donations establishing superior status. These differential contributions illustrate "conspicuous consumption" economic expenditure producing symbolic profit through public recognition of generosity, converting money into honor. The ritual functions as status competition arena where economic capital displays itself through culturally

legitimate consumption rather than crude wealth exhibition.

LA, CA, and RO MSME entrepreneurs representing emergent economic capital holders following post-Lapindo land conversion report increased contribution expectations correlating with visible business success. Community monitoring systems track individual prosperity and adjust donation expectations accordingly, creating informal progressive taxation where wealthier residents subsidize poorer members' participation while gaining public recognition. This redistribution mechanism represents "moral economy" normative systems obligating better-off community members to share prosperity through institutionalized generosity that legitimizes inequality by demonstrating elite benevolence.

SK recounts historical funding patterns when landholding farmers dominated contributions, their economic power derived from agricultural land ownership conferring ritual leadership. SU confirms contemporary shifts toward diversified donor bases including factory workers, small business owners, and service sector employees. This transformation illustrates capital form conversion, where declining agricultural economic capital yields primacy to commercial and wage capital as primary wealth sources. Yet ritual participation partially compensates farmers' economic losses through symbolic capital preservation, allowing them to retain social influence disproportionate to declining material power.

The ability of economically privileged attendees to pay *sinden* (female vocalist) performers for special song requests demonstrates "cultural capital conversion" transforming economic resources into cultural distinction through consumption of aesthetic experiences displaying refined taste and generous patronage. SK describes: "Sometimes there is a variation of the *sinden* singing while standing because there are male visitors or guests who come there who want to donate money to the *sinden* so that they can sing, whether it is Rp. 50,000...100,000." These transactions function as micro-rituals where wealth displays itself through cultural consumption. FI and NA report observing these transactions, learning class performance protocols through peripheral participation, acquiring embodied understanding of social hierarchies.

## b. Gunungan as Symbolic Redistribution: Material Flows and Ideological Naturalization

**Figure 3.** People scramble for *Gunungan* in a series of *Ruwat* activities in Wunut Village, Porong, Sidoarjo



The *gunungan* scramble exemplifies symbolic violence's sophisticated operation through three simultaneous functions: material redistribution providing genuine economic benefits as wealthier neighborhoods face community pressure to contribute substantially, creating informal progressive taxation that improves poorer residents' household welfare; symbolic legitimation that transforms arbitrary class relations into legitimate hierarchies through gift logic, where recipients experience gratitude toward donors rather than questioning structural inequality, operating through misrecognition as neither party consciously manipulates ritual for reproduction; and competitive display generating collectively irrational consumption spirals as neighborhoods exceed ritual necessity pursuing relative prestige, revealing the dialectical contradiction where redistribution simultaneously enables subordinate classes' rational benefit-maximization within constrained options while foreclosing radical alternatives like structural land reform, demonstrating that symbolic violence operates through practices that are simultaneously exploitative and beneficial, with domination emerging from strategic field navigation generating unintended structural effects rather than conscious conspiracy, transcending simplistic domination/resistance binaries by showing actors as neither duped victims nor heroic resisters but pragmatic strategists accepting structural limits while maximizing available capitals. The *gunungan* itself an elaborate construction resembling a mountain adorned with agricultural products functions as object shifting between economic and symbolic registers. AT describes neighborhood-level contribution systems: "Each neighborhood association has its own fund, which is collected and used to distribute whatever needs to be brought, whatever the important harvest is." This decentralized organization creates competitive dynamics between neighborhoods.

LA, CA, and RO report intense inter-neighborhood competition where their RTs face social

pressure to contribute *gunungan* elements equivalent to wealthier areas, creating wasteful consumption producing prestige rather than utility. The *gunungan's* agricultural products SK describes "There are eggplants, walo parang [a local vegetable variety], long beans, corn, bananas, carrots, and so on" represent fertility symbolically while materially displaying each neighborhood's productive capacity. TW and AR detail procurement strategies revealing class-differentiated participation: TW's household contributes homegrown vegetables reflecting limited means, while AR's purchases imported fruits enhancing visual impact.

SK recalls historical *gunungan* compositions featuring exclusively local agricultural products, contrasting with FI and NA's observations of contemporary versions incorporating packaged goods like instant noodles and bottled beverages. This transformation illustrates how industrial commodities penetrate traditional practices, creating hybrid forms presenting commercial products within traditional ceremonial frameworks selective incorporation of global commodities into local practices transforming both elements.

The distribution of *gunungan* contents through ritualized scrambling functions as symbolic compensation for structural inequality where elites maintain legitimacy through ritualized generosity. However, this redistribution simultaneously reinforces class hierarchies by positioning recipients as grateful beneficiaries dependent on elite benevolence rather than empowered claimants possessing rights to communal resources. The rebutan *gunungan* operates ambivalently, providing material benefits while ideologically naturalizing inequalities through spectacular display celebrating donors' generosity.

AT explains the *gunungan* skeleton's symbolic function: "It is made like the shape of a mountain that has its own meaning...Yes, like the hill, yes, so that it is beautiful and also the *gunungan* is a symbol of prosperity, fertility, I mean." This cosmological interpretation frames the structure as representing Mount Meru the sacred mountain at the universe's center in Hindu-Buddhist cosmology transforming agricultural products into offerings connecting community to cosmic forces governing fertility. The ritual operates simultaneously on material (redistributing food) and symbolic (invoking supernatural prosperity) registers, with both functions integral to its social efficacy.

#### **4. Habitus Hysteresis and Structural Transformation: Temporal Lag in Agricultural-Industrial Transition**

##### **a. Capital Conversion Dynamics: From Agricultural to Commercial Hegemony**

The capital transformation reveals a three-stage dialectical process. First, the pre-1990s period showed capital correspondence. Landholding farmers' economic power (land ownership) and cultural authority (ritual expertise) reinforced each other through structural homology. Second, the 1990s-2010s witnessed capital decoupling. Land conversion stripped farmers of economic resources. However, they retained cultural legitimacy through hysteresis effect. They strategically emphasized ritual knowledge to compensate for material decline. Third, the post-2010s period demonstrates capital redistribution. MSME entrepreneurs now leverage commercial wealth to claim ritual influence despite lacking agricultural heritage. This creates unstable equilibrium. Farmers' symbolic authority persists disproportionately to their economic power, while entrepreneurs face cultural legitimacy deficits. This demonstrates that capital forms exhibit relative autonomy yet require material foundations. Agricultural decline progressively undermines these foundations. The ritual's current vitality thus represents either temporary resilience or successful transition—the outcome remains undetermined. The village's identity as agricultural community made farmers natural ritual authorities whose seasonal expertise and land ownership combined to establish unquestioned leadership.

Contemporary patterns documented through AT, TW, AR, LA, CA, RO, FI, and NA reveal systematic capital transformations restructuring class positions. AT, TW, and AR, as farmers' wives, report declining agricultural incomes amid land conversion to industrial and residential uses following Lapindo disaster. Yet they maintain farmer identity and leverage symbolic capital accumulated through agricultural heritage to retain ritual influence disproportionate to reduced economic power, illustrating how cultural classifications can partially insulate status positions from material transformations.

LA, CA, and RO, as MSME entrepreneurs, represent emergent capital holders whose wealth derives from commercial activities. Their increased ritual funding shares despite lacking traditional farmer status illustrates capital form substitution commercial wealth replacing agricultural landholding as economic dominance marker. This demonstrates "field restructuring" where relative capital values shift as external conditions change. However, economic capital's ascendance remains incomplete because symbolic authority structures still privilege farmers, creating tensions between those possessing different capital forms.

The shift from informal farmer coordination to formal bureaucratic structures involving RT/RW officials and youth organizations illustrates "rationalization" transformation of customary practice into bureaucratic procedure. SK recalls historical simplicity where dual structure acknowledged farmers' special cosmological

relationship while integrating wider community through informal leadership. Contemporary committee structures involve multiple organizational layers, specialized subcommittees, documented budgets, and bureaucratic reporting administrative elaboration characteristic of modern organizational forms.

#### **b. Ritual Elaboration and Spectacularization: Compensating Agricultural Decline**

The shift from "simple, appropriate" to "elaborate and festive" event forms represents what Bourdieu termed "habitus hysteresis" temporal lag between changed conditions and adapted dispositions where internalized schemas continue generating practices appropriate to previous contexts despite structural transformations. SK describes historical rituals as simple affairs: minimal decoration, single singer "sinden", no formal committees, organic community participation flowing from shared agricultural rhythms. SU attributes contemporary elaboration to compensation logic aesthetic intensification offsetting lost agricultural authenticity by creating spectacular displays distracting from underlying economic decline and cultural hollowing.

AT, TW, and AR report feeling pressured to contribute elaborate *gunungan* elements matching wealthier neighborhoods despite strained budgets, illustrating how status competition drives consumption expenditures beyond rational economic calculations. This pressure exemplifies "conspicuous consumption" expenditure motivated by status display rather than use-value, with symbolic benefits justifying economic irrationality. The competitive elaboration creates upward spirals where each neighborhood escalates contributions attempting to match or exceed others, collectively driving ritual costs higher.

LA, CA, and RO view ritual elaboration positively, preferring professional entertainment quality over amateur traditional performances they find aesthetically unsatisfying. Their preferences reflect how aesthetic judgments correlate with class positions, with those possessing greater economic and cultural capital demanding higher production values. This creates tensions between those (farmers, elders) valuing ritual authenticity versus those (entrepreneurs, youth) prioritizing entertainment quality and spectacular display.

FI and NA describe Youth Organization (Karang Taruna) innovations including social media promotion, professional photography, and live-streaming *wayang* for urban migrants unable to attend physically. These initiatives represent how cultural practices transform into self-conscious performances when original contexts disappear, requiring explicit staging and documentation. Digital documentation democratizes access by enabling absent community members to observe ceremonies

remotely, potentially strengthening diaspora connections. However, it also risks commodifying sacred practices by circulating them as entertainment content consumed by distant audiences lacking ritual participation's embodied communal dimensions.

The transformation from farmer community exclusivity to heterogeneous participation involving diverse occupational groups reflects community composition shifts from agricultural homogeneity to economic differentiation. Contemporary ritual organization involves farmers, industrial workers, service sector employees, entrepreneurs, bureaucrats, and youth reflecting occupational diversity replacing previous agricultural monoculture. This heterogeneity complicates ritual meanings since agricultural symbolism resonates less powerfully for non-farming participants lacking experiential connection to cultivation cycles.

### **5. Arena Contestation and Symbolic Resistance: Defending Commons Against Capitalist Enclosure**

#### **a. Privatization Crisis: When Economic Capital Subordinates Symbolic Practice**

The privatization of Sumberan through land sale created what Bourdieu termed "field crisis" AT, TW, and AR report collective refusal to attend alternative venues, exercising "collective sense of limits" shared understanding of legitimate versus illegitimate practice enforcing conformity through social sanction. moments when arena autonomy collapses under external domination as economic capital's territorializing logic threatens to subordinate symbolic practice to property rights. SK recounts dramatic non-attendance when rituals relocated from privatized Sumberan, with community members boycotting ceremonies held at wrong locations regardless of practical considerations. SU describes subsequent community negotiations with new landowners securing continued ritual access despite private ownership, illustrating symbolic capital's capacity to contest economic capital's territorial claims through mobilizing collective conviction that certain spaces possess sacred character transcending property rights. The Sumberan case demonstrates both the power and precarity of symbolic resistance. While other sacred sites in Wunut underwent privatization without comparable mobilization including former agricultural ritual sites near the Poh Block and ancestral shrines in the Santren area Sumberan's successful defense reveals specific factors enabling resistance: its centrality to village ritual identity as the primary *Ruwat Desa* venue, strategic timing relative to the ceremonial calendar when negotiations occurred just before the annual ritual, and the particular landowner's susceptibility to social pressure combined with cosmological concerns

about disrupting sacred geography. The contrast with abandoned sites illustrates that symbolic capital's efficacy depends on conjunctural factors rather than inherent power, suggesting Sumberan represents exceptional success rather than generalizable pattern of resistance against capitalist enclosure. SU describes subsequent community negotiations with new landowners securing continued ritual access despite private ownership, illustrating symbolic capital's capacity to contest economic capital's territorial claims through mobilizing collective conviction that certain spaces possess sacred character transcending property rights.

This conflict exemplifies "accumulation by dispossession" capitalism's appropriation of commons transforming use-values (ritual sites) into exchange-values (commodified real estate) through privatization processes. The Sumberan case illustrates how capitalist land relations penetrate rural areas following industrial development and environmental disasters like Lapindo mud flow. LA, CA, and RO, as MSME entrepreneurs navigating market logics daily, nonetheless support community symbolic claims to Sumberan despite understanding property law's formal support for owner exclusion rights. Their testimonies demonstrate limits to capital's cultural hegemony even market-embedded actors maintain commitments to traditional cosmologies when facing conflicts between economic rationality and sacred geography.

AT, TW, and AR report collective refusal to attend alternative venues, exercising "collective sense of limits" shared understanding of legitimate versus illegitimate practice enforcing conformity through social sanction. This informal enforcement proves more effective than legal mechanisms in several crucial ways. First, while formal legal mechanisms require explicit state coercion backed by police power and court enforcement, informal sanctions operate through distributed social pressure requiring no centralized authority. Each community member becomes enforcer through everyday interactions subtle expressions of disapproval, strategic silence, exclusion from social reciprocity networks. Second, legal enforcement faces resistance as external imposition, whereas informal sanctions achieve compliance through internalized dispositions. Community members experience their boycott as natural response to inappropriate ritual locations rather than submission to external commands. Third, formal legal mechanisms incur high transaction costs (litigation, documentation, official proceedings), while informal sanctions operate through low-cost everyday practices (gossip, altered social relations, withheld cooperation). The landowner faces no legal penalty for excluding rituals from private property, yet informal pressure fear of crop failure, social ostracism, cosmological retribution makes exercising legal rights practically untenable. This demonstrates symbolic power's capacity to create obligations that constrain economic

rationality more effectively than state law, operating through misrecognition that renders domination invisible while maximally effective in regulating behavior. This informal enforcement proves more effective than legal mechanisms because it operates through consensual misrecognition, with community members experiencing their boycott as natural response to inappropriate ritual locations. FI and NA describe learning these boundaries experientially proposing venue changes during committee meetings, encountering immediate elder opposition teaching field-specific rules about sacred space's non-negotiability.

The community's successful maintenance of Sumberan access demonstrates "symbolic power" the capacity to impose legitimate visions of social world that constrain other power forms through creating obligations transcending legal rights. SU attributes negotiation success partly to landowners' fear of supernatural retribution should they prevent ritual access, illustrating how cosmological beliefs constrain economic rationality by attaching potential costs to legally permissible actions. This mechanism represents everyday resistance contesting domination without direct confrontation through informal pressures making certain legal rights practically unenforceable.

However, this successful resistance remains precarious. Multiple Wunut locations underwent privatization post-Lapindo, with Sumberan representing rare successful defense rather than general pattern. SU notes other sacred sites lost to development without comparable community mobilization, suggesting Sumberan's survival reflects particular historical circumstances its centrality to village identity, timing relative to ritual calendar, landowner's personal characteristics rather than demonstrating general capacity for symbolic resistance against property rights.

#### **b. Theoretical Implications: How *Ruwat Desa* Mediates Class Relations and Rural Modernity**

This analysis demonstrates that *Ruwat Desa* operates as arena where multiple forms of capital compete for dominance under conditions of radical structural transformation. Three theoretical contributions emerge from this ethnographic examination, extending Bourdieu's framework while engaging broader debates regarding tradition, modernity, and cultural change.

This study advances three theoretical contributions that fundamentally challenge conventional frameworks. First, ritual as capital transformation arena demonstrates that cultural practice exhibits relative autonomy from economic determination through capital substitution logic, where communities strategically redistribute investments from declining agricultural capital toward enhanced ritual expertise and symbolic legitimacy.

This reveals that neither economic determinism nor cultural autonomy adequately captures practice. Instead, Bourdieu's dialectical framework shows mutual constitution where habitus exhibits dynamic plasticity through practical reflexivity, yet operates within structural constraints manifested as hysteresis effects. The three-generation transformation demonstrates rapid habitus modification within single lifetimes, though farmers retain symbolic authority disproportionate to economic power for decades after land loss, indicating that adaptation occurs only after accumulated mismatches force transformation.

Second, symbolic capital's contested autonomy reveals that while Sumberan's successful defense demonstrates symbolic power operating as objective material constraint suspending formal property rights through misrecognition, this resistance proves precarious due to conjunctural dependency on specific field configurations, scale limitations where external corporate capital exceeds local moral economies, and temporal precarity as generational replacement erodes cosmological convictions. The theoretical advance lies in recognizing that symbolic resistance simultaneously challenges and reproduces domination by providing cultural victories that potentially distract from material defeats while requiring subjects' complicity in mystification. Communities successfully defend ritual sites while losing broader struggles over land use and economic security, demonstrating that *Ruwat Desa* operates through practical logics where actors pursue field-specific strategies generating ambivalent structural effects.

Third, post-agricultural cultural reproduction reconceptualizes tradition from passive preservation to active strategic reconstruction through regulated improvisation. Communities maintain structural position by selectively preserving non-negotiable elements establishing identity continuity while pragmatically modifying peripheral components, revealing that rituals persist not despite but through modernization by incorporating contemporary elements while maintaining symbolic functions. This transcends static preservation/dynamic change dichotomies to show cultural continuity as actively produced through agents' practical negotiations between inherited classifications delimiting possible innovations and contemporary challenges requiring creative reinterpretation. The synthesis demonstrates that tradition constitutes strategic repertoire where inherited resources are deployed addressing contemporary challenges, requiring neither preserving fixed forms nor abandoning heritage, but creatively reinterpreting practices through engagement with structural transformations.

**Table 1.** Ruwat Desa Transformation Matrix: Bourdieusian Analysis Before and After Agricultural-Industrial Land Use Change in Wunut Village (1985-2024)

Bourdieu's Framework	Analytical Aspects	Before Land Use Change (Pre-1990s)	After Land Use Change (Post-2000s)
Habitus	Event Commodification	Simple, appropriate ceremonies	Elaborate and festive, additional events
	Committee Structure	None (informal coordination)	Formalized bureaucratic organization
	Performance Variety	Fixed traditional forms	Diversified contemporary forms
	Food Source	Local agricultural products Mixed	Mixed sources (local-market-factory)
	Primary Organizer	Farmer community exclusively	Heterogeneous community participation
Capital	Economic Capital	Agricultural land tenure dominance	MSME commercial wealth emerging
	Cultural Capital	Traditional customary knowledge holders	Formalized institutional expertise
	Social Capital	Homogeneous dense kinship networks	Heterogeneous pragmatic ties
	Symbolic Capital	Sacred cosmological values dominant	Heritage cultural value emerging
Field / Arena	Ritual Location	Fixed sacred places (Sumberan)	Negotiated spaces (Sumberan defended)
	Environmental Context	Agricultural landscape dominant	Residential-industrial mixed zones
	Arena Autonomy	High (community-governed)	Limited (owner-dependent, contested)
	Space Competition	Minimal/absent	Intense privatization pressures

**Source:** Ethnographic fieldwork data (2022-2024), cross-referenced with informant testimonies (SK, SU, AT, TW, AR, LA, CA, RO, FI, NA)

## D. CONCLUSIONS

This research resolves a theoretical puzzle: how do agricultural rituals persist when their material foundations vanish? Through three-year ethnographic study of Ruwat Desa in Wunut Village (2022-2024), we demonstrate that cultural sustainability operates through strategic capital transformation rather than material continuity.

The evidence documents systematic transformation across four dimensions. First, capital redistribution shifted ritual funding from 85% farmer contributions (pre-1990s) to 60% non-farmer sources (post-2000s). Communities substitute declining economic capital with enhanced symbolic and cultural capitals. Second, selective preservation maintains two non-negotiable elements Sumberan sacred site and *wayang kulit* performance—while adapting four peripheral components: *gunungan* contents, entertainment formats, organizational structure, and digital documentation. Third, generational transformation reveals dramatically different orientations. Elders (SK, 80 years) maintain cosmological conviction rooted in agricultural experience. Middle-aged residents (AT, TW, AR, 30-55 years) practice pragmatic observance balancing tradition with economic pressures. Youth (FI, NA, 20-30 years) articulate heritage valorization emphasizing cultural identity over supernatural efficacy. Yet hysteresis effects persist: agricultural elders retain symbolic authority decades after economic decline, as evidenced when their cosmological claims successfully contested property rights during the Sumberan defense.

This study advances three contributions beyond existing frameworks. First, it transcends economic determinism. Wunut Village intensifies ritual investment precisely as agriculture declines. This challenges predictions of cultural collapse following economic transformation. Yet capital substitution reveals structural constraint through resource redirection. The dialectical insight: economic transformation constrains but doesn't determine cultural adaptation. Communities strategically navigate structured fields, deploying available capital. Second, it reconceptualizes habitus plasticity. Three-generation transformation demonstrates rapid adaptation within single lifetimes. This challenges conceptions of habitus as rigidly reproducing past conditions. The evidence shows habitus operating as a dynamic equilibrium, constantly negotiating incorporated history and immediate practice. Farmers maintain symbolic authority despite lost economic power. Youth introduce digital documentation within constraints established by elder control over sacred sites. Structure constraints through agent strategy rather than mechanical determination. Third, it theorizes symbolic capital's contested autonomy. The Sumberan defense demonstrates that ritual obligations can practically suspend property rights when symbolic capital proves sufficiently

compelling. However, this autonomy is limited and conditional. It depends on ritual centrality, strategic timing, and landowner susceptibility. The analysis reveals practices simultaneously reproducing and challenging inequality. *Gunungan* redistribution provides genuine material benefits, improving household welfare. Yet this legitimates structural hierarchies through symbolic violence. Recipients experience gratitude rather than questioning inequality. Practices operate through subjects' complicity in mystifications that both constrain and enable agency.

Heritage preservation requires enabling transformation rather than freezing practices. Communities maintain traditions by adapting them, not by resisting change. Development planning should recognize symbolic capital in spatial decision-making. Sacred geography operates as material constraint despite lacking legal recognition, as the Sumberan case demonstrates. Support mechanisms should facilitate capital redistribution through three pathways. First, targeted resources for ritual expertise transmission prevent knowledge loss during economic transitions. Second, sacred site maintenance acknowledges symbolic landscapes in land-use planning. Third, flexible funding structures support diverse contribution mechanisms as economic bases shift. Research limitations suggest productive directions. The study provides insufficient class analysis of landless poor experiences, inadequate documentation of women's specialized ritual knowledge, and single-village focus limiting generalizability. Three-year observation cannot predict long-term trajectories. Single-theory application might benefit from incorporating feminist and postcolonial perspectives alongside Bourdieu's framework.

**\*\*Concluding Statement\*\*** This research fundamentally reconceptualizes cultural sustainability from passive preservation to active strategic reconstruction. Ruwat Desa persists not by resisting change but through transformation. Communities selectively preserve identity-constituting cores while creatively adapting peripheral elements. Cultural vitality depends on strategic adaptation capacity rather than material continuity. Heritage persists through creative reinterpretation rather than preservation. These principles apply globally to communities navigating rapid structural transformations. Policy frameworks require shifting from preservationist approaches protecting static traditions toward facilitative strategies supporting communities' creative negotiations with modernity. Cultural sustainability emerges not from resistance to change, but from strategic adaptation.

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