

# PHILOSOPHICAL ANALYSIS OF SPECIAL VILLAGE DEVELOPMENT AREAS BASED ON LOCAL POTENTIAL TO ACHIEVE VILLAGE INDEPENDENCE (EMPIRICAL STUDY IN BOJONG VILLAGE, BUNGBULANG)

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## Abstract

This study aims to analyze the implementation of economic development in Bojong Village, Bungbulang District, Garut Regency, by referring to the theory of Special Area Village Development, while also examining the philosophical basis of development and empowerment of rural economy in an effort to realize Independent Village. Bojong Village is an agrarian area that has abundant natural resources, including 350-350 Ha of rice fields, 1,200-1,200 Ha of forest area, seven waterfalls, and potential A (gold) mining of 8080 Ha. However, this village faces major problems in the form of high unemployment and social welfare issues, which are seen from the dominance of livelihoods as farm laborers (885-885 people) and the existence of 180-180 units of uninhabitable houses (RTLH). The study uses a descriptive qualitative approach by utilizing the 2025 Village Profile data as a source of analysis. The results of the philosophical-critical analysis indicate an imbalance in the distribution between the wealth of extractive resources (gold) and the low level of welfare of poor community groups (PMKS). The ongoing development is considered not to fully reflect the principles of Distributive Justice (Rawls, 1999) or the concept of Authentic Empowerment (Friedmann, 1992). Therefore, this study recommends the integration of Special Area programs that emphasize economic diversification towards more sustainable ecotourism and cultural sectors, and are reinforced by a transformative public administration philosophy to ensure substantive community autonomy in managing village assets.

**Keywords:** Local Potential Base, Special Area Village Development, Village Independence.

## A. INTRODUCTION

Bojong Village is an agricultural village located in Bungbulang District, Garut Regency, West Java Province. According to the 2025 Bojong Village Profile, the village area has a hilly/mountainous topography with an altitude ranging from 400–800 meters above sea level. ({Bojong Village Government}, 2025). In terms of land use, the area of Bojong Village in 2025 was recorded at 2,128.42 hectares, with land uses including rice fields, cultivation, smallholder plantations, and social forestry. (Bojong Village Government, 2025) In the same year, prominent natural resource potential included 350 hectares of rice fields and 403 hectares of plantation crops (including cloves, coffee, vanilla, and cardamom).

In addition to the agricultural sector, the 2025 Bojong Village Profile also inventories the village's natural tourism and public space potential, including seven waterfalls and the 2-hectare Situ Kabuyutan tourist attraction. (Bojong Village Government, 2025) The same document lists several other destinations/activity spaces, such as Situ Gadog (1 ha) and the Ciomas Campground (4 ha), which can be considered assets supporting local economic development based on local resources. ({Bojong Village Government}, 2025)

Historically, Bojong Village is said to have originated from the Bojong Ceremony, with a narrative related to the Cirompang River flood and the role of the traditional figure Eyang Sutadipa in local oral traditions. In terms of government, the Bojong Village Profile states that the Village Head is Atep Sumiarsa Bakri, S.Pd., who has served since July 2021; The implementation of village head elections is also in line with the provision that village head elections are held simultaneously within the district/city scope as stipulated in Law Number 6 of 2014 concerning Villages. ({Bojong Village Government}, 2025).

With a population of 5,172, Bojong Village, Garut Regency, exemplifies a development paradox that requires analysis:

- The potential of the special area divided into Bojong is very rich in extractives, with 80 hectares of gold and manganese potential, as well as tourism/cultural resources, including 7 waterfalls, 3 lakes/campgrounds, and 36 arts and cultural groups.
- The challenge of structural inequality. Despite its wealth, Bojong's employment structure is highly vulnerable, with 885 heads of families working as farm laborers and 341 casual laborers. According to PMKS data, 180 houses are uninhabitable. This disparity demonstrates that the existing natural resources, especially extractive ones, have not yet become the basis for equitable prosperity.

Based on the character of Bojong Village as an agrarian-hilly area with a resource base of agricultural/plantation land and supporting natural tourism assets, village development programs need to be directed in a planned manner to transform this potential into achievable economic added value. Within the village development plan framework, economic empowerment can be placed as a regional focus, namely through the integration of production development (on-farm), processing (off-farm), and supporting services (marketing, institutions, and basic infrastructure), so that the value chains of leading commodities and tourist destinations are mutually reinforcing.

Economic empowerment in Bojong Village is further directed at strengthening the superior products of MSMEs based on agricultural processed foods particularly coffee, palm sugar, and cloves as a strategy to increase the added value of plantation resources identified at the village level. This program direction is relevant because the 2025 Bojong Village Profile notes the potential for plantation crops (including cloves and coffee) across an area of 403 hectares, which can serve as the basis for developing the upstream-to-downstream value chain.

Within the framework of the village development plan for the economic empowerment area, this focus can be operationalized through capacity building for business actors, product quality improvement, strengthening economic institutions, and expanding market access, so that commodities are not only marketed as raw materials but also processed into products with higher economic value. This approach also aligns with the character of Bojong Village as an agrarian rural area, where community economic activity relies heavily on the cultivation and utilization of agricultural/plantation products. ({Bojong Village Government}, 2025)

However, strengthening MSMEs is not solely oriented towards economic growth; it also requires ensuring that production processes, branding, and business development maintain the local socio-cultural identity. This is important considering that the Bojong Village Profile also

includes a narrative of the village's history (for example, the origins of Bojong Cereme and the figure of Eyang Sutadipa) as part of collective memory and local wisdom that can serve as a foundation for development ethics and encompass product/brand stories (local storytelling) without sacrificing community values. (Bojong Village Government, 2025)

Rural development in Indonesia is based on Law Number 6 of 2014 concerning Villages (Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 6 of 2014 concerning Villages, 2014), which grants village governments the broadest possible autonomy to promote the realization of Independent Villages. One instrument supporting policy differentiation is the Special Area Village Development approach, designed to tailor development programs to the unique and specific characteristics of a region. (Amri, 2021).

The purpose of this study is to analyze the implementation practices of Special Area Village Development in Bojong Village and formulate philosophical guidelines based on the Philosophy of Public Administration to achieve equitable and sustainable economic empowerment towards Independent Villages.

## B. LITERATURE REVIEW

### Distributive Justice

Distributive justice positions “justice” as the primary moral benchmark in public policy, particularly when policy concerns the allocation of economic and social benefits within society. Within the *justice as fairness* framework, inequality is not automatically viewed as wrong; however, it is only acceptable insofar as it produces the greatest benefit for the least advantaged groups. This principle known as the *Difference Principle* practically encourages governments, including village governments, not to stop at aggregate or average achievements, but to assess whether development programs genuinely improve the conditions of the most vulnerable groups. Importantly, in the village context, this principle helps interpret a “development paradox” that often appears when a village has considerable resource potential but does not experience tangible improvements in employment conditions, poverty reduction, or residents’ quality of life. Accordingly, the *Difference Principle* can serve as a normative lens for testing the legitimacy of village programs: whether development is “just” ultimately depends on its impact on the weakest groups (Rawls, 1999). Indicators:

- A reduction in the number of uninhabitable houses (RTLH) after village programs are implemented.
- The percentage of village resource benefits/profits allocated to poor and vulnerable groups.
- The income ratio of the poorest group compared to the village’s average household income.

### Empowerment

Empowerment should be understood not as temporary assistance, but as a process that strengthens people’s capacity to make life choices and to control resources that shape their well-being. Interestingly, from this perspective, development success is not primarily judged by the sheer number of programs, but by increased *agency* the ability of community members to act, negotiate, and influence public decisions that affect their interests. Empowerment also presupposes the growth of critical awareness, so that citizens are not merely policy objects but become subjects who understand their rights, interests, and collective strategies. For this reason, empowerment is transformative: control gradually shifts away from external actors toward the community’s own capabilities. Its ultimate aim, as emphasized in classic empowerment literature, is social emancipation when communities are able to formulate and realize their welfare more independently and sustainably (Friedmann, 1992). Indicators:

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- Increased capacity of residents/groups (farmers, MSMEs, youth) to manage village assets and programs.
- More initiatives emerging from the community (bottom-up), rather than being dominated by village officials or external parties.
- Substantive community participation in decision-making (deliberation/planning), not merely procedural formality.
- Improved ability of local groups to access markets, information, networks, and technical support independently.

### **New Public Service / Transformative Public Administration**

*New Public Service* emphasizes that public administrators exist fundamentally to serve citizens and strengthen citizenship, rather than to “control” society in pursuit of bureaucratic targets. Its central orientation lies in dialogue, collaboration, and the creation of *public value* that is recognized and experienced by the community not merely in the fulfillment of administrative procedures. Within this framework, citizens are positioned as subjects rather than passive customers, so administrative quality is assessed by the extent to which governance processes expand meaningful participation and moral accountability. Nevertheless, this is a demanding shift because officials must move from being procedural implementers to facilitators who open deliberative space and seriously absorb public feedback. At the village level, this approach is relevant because it encourages the development of substantive autonomy namely, when citizens and local institutions have the capacity to manage assets and set development priorities in a more legitimate manner (Denhardt & Denhardt, 2015). Indicators:

- Village officials acting as facilitators (not commanders) in planning forums and program management.
- The level of involvement of BPD/LPM/farmer groups in strategic decisions (e.g., BUMDes and investment direction).
- The degree of *public value*: transparency of information, service responsiveness, and public trust in the process.
- Moral accountability: the presence of evaluation mechanisms open to public review (reports, evaluative deliberations, feedback channels).
- The proportion of program decisions that originate from citizens’/local groups’ aspirations.

### **C. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This research uses an interpretive qualitative approach with a descriptive–analytical case study design. This approach was selected because it enables the researcher to interpret in depth the relationship between Bojong Village’s development potential and the lived reality of community welfare as reflected in concrete, field-based conditions. The study is situated in Bojong Village, Bungbulang District, Garut Regency.

The unit of analysis covers village-level information on natural resource potential, employment conditions, and the role of village institutions specifically the Village Consultative Body (BPD), the Community Empowerment Institution (LPM), and farmer groups primarily drawn from the *Bojong Village Profile 2025* document. Data collection was conducted through a documentary study of this village profile and other relevant supporting documents, which together provide the empirical basis for describing and interpreting the village’s socio-economic and institutional context (Bojong Village Government, 2025).

Data sources consist of (1) primary data derived from the *Bojong Village Profile 2025* and (2) secondary data drawn from academic literature and philosophical studies relevant to

development issues. Data were analyzed using descriptive–interpretive content analysis through the stages of data reduction, thematic categorization, and interpretation, with a particular emphasis on information related to mining/tourism potential, poverty, and employment conditions. The findings are presented in narrative form and then developed further through a critical–philosophical analysis that inductively interprets empirical patterns using three theoretical frameworks justice, empowerment, and transformative administration to generate normative recommendations regarding what should be done

#### D. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This discussion outlines three key theoretical frameworks, analyzes their implementation based on Bojong Village data, and formulates a philosophical review of the goals of Village Independence.

##### **Theory of Village Development in Special Areas (PDKK)**

The Theory of Village Development in Special Areas (PDKK) is a development of the regional development concept as stipulated in the Village Law (Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 6 of 2014 concerning Villages, 2014), which emphasizes the need for differentiated development approaches according to the characteristics and uniqueness of each region.

Table 1. Special Village Development Area (PDKK)

| <i>Key Theory</i>                       | <i>Theory Explanation</i>   |
|---|---|
| Special Village Development Area (PDKK) | This approach prioritizes program differentiation and customization, ensuring that development plans are tailored to the geographic, social, and economic characteristics of a particular village or region, such as border areas, tourist destinations, or disaster-prone and natural resource-based areas. This perspective directs the PDKK to integrate various cross-sectoral interventions in a comprehensive and interconnected manner to achieve a holistic, integrated program. (Wibowo, 2019) |

Source: Processed by Researchers, 2026

Theoretically, Special Village Development Areas (PDKK) can be explained through the operationalization of the following variables:

##### **PDKK Variable Concept:**

Refers to development implemented in an integrated and sustainable manner in villages or areas with specific characteristics geographical, socio-cultural, or economic requiring specific strategies and management.

##### **Sub-variables**

- Identification of Special Characteristics: Determining the type of specialization (e.g., Tourism Area, Extractive Area, Customary Area).
- Policy Differentiation: Adjusting programs and budgets that differ from regular village development.
- Cross-Sector Program Integration: Synergy between sectors (Village Government, Village-Owned Enterprises, Private Sector) within the area.

##### **Variable Dimensions**

- Spatial Specificity (Locus): Natural potential (Waterfalls, Gold Mines) and supporting infrastructure (Roads, Wi-Fi Towers).

- Institutional Specificity: Readiness of Village-Owned Enterprises, Farmer Groups, and Community Empowerment Institutions (LPM) in managing potential.
- Economic Specificity: Diversification of income sources (Agriculture, Tourism, Extractives).

#### **Indicators**

- Percentage of Village Fund allocation for differentiation programs.
- Success rate of income diversification outside the agricultural/extractive sector.
- Number of village policies (Perdes) supporting Special Area status.
- Level of local institutional participation in special program planning.

#### **Analysis of Bojong Village:**

Theoretically, Bojong Village should be developed as a Special Area due to its multi-sectoral potential. The current implementation is considered non-adaptive and fails to achieve optimal differentiation.

- Differentiation Failure: Bojong Village has 80 hectares of potential for Gold (Mining A) and Ecotourism (7 Waterfalls). Special Area development should select the most sustainable and participatory potential. However, if the development focus is diverted to extractive potential (Gold), this contradicts the principles of sustainable development.
- Philosophical Implications (Goal of Independence): If Special Area Development is solely oriented towards quick results from resource extraction, Bojong Village will achieve false economic progress. True independence demands development rooted in internal assets (tourism, culture, crafts) that can be autonomously controlled by the community, rather than in resources easily exploited by outsiders.
- Theoretically, Special Area Village Development (PDKK) requires policy differentiation and cross-sectoral program integration that adapts to the unique characteristics of the region. (Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 6 of 2014 concerning Villages, 2014), (Wibowo, 2019)
- Spatial Specificity Analysis (Locus)

Table 2. Analysis of Bojong Village

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| <i>Dimensions</i>         | <i>Indicator</i>                      | <i>Bojong Village Data (Facts)</i>   | <i>Critical Analysis (Gap)</i>   |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| Spatial Specificity       | Diversification of Superior Resources | The village has 80 hectares of potential A (Gold) mining and 7 waterfalls and Situ Kabuyutan.  | There is a dilemma: focusing on extractive (mining) vs. sustainable (ecotourism). PDKK demands the selection of potential that best benefits the community.  |
| Economic Specificity      | Diversification Success Rate          | The majority of the population are farm laborers (885 people) and casual laborers (341 people). There are 2 cooperatives and 15 farmer groups. | The level of non-agrarian/extractive diversification is low. Tourism potential and economic institutions (cooperatives) have not succeeded in shifting the dominance of the vulnerable primary sector. |
| Institutional Specificity | Institutional Readiness               | There are LPM (10 people), BPD (5 people), and Karang Taruna (360 people).   | Institutions are available in quantity, but their effectiveness in formulating differentiation policies (e.g., Tourism Village Regulations) needs to be further tested.                                |

Source: Processed by Researchers, 2026

- Initial Conclusion: Bojong Village is worthy of being designated as a Special Zone, but currently faces a strategic dilemma: whether to become an Extractive Zone (which risks creating an enclave economy) or a sustainable Ecotourism Zone. The PDKK should choose the latter option for the sake of long-term independence.
- Philosophy of Distributive Justice: Testing the Difference Principle  
John Rawls's Theory of Distributive Justice, particularly the Second Principle (Difference Principle), serves as the normative basis for measuring the morality and legitimacy of village development policies.

Table 3. Distributive Justice

| <i>Key Theory</i>                           | <i>Theory Explanation</i>   |
|---|---|
| Distributive Justice (Difference Principle) | The essence of this principle is that social and economic inequalities (e.g., differences in benefits) are only permissible if they provide the greatest benefit to the least advantaged members of society. In the rural context, this is the poor and vulnerable. (Fatah, 2018) |

Source: Processed by Researchers, 2026

In theory, Distributive Justice is described in the operationalization of the following variables:

**Concept of Distributive Justice/Justice as Fairness (Rawls, 1999):**

The principle governing the fair allocation of primary social goods.

**Sub-variables**

- Equal Liberty Principle: Everyone has the same basic rights.
- Difference Principle: Economic and social inequalities should be regulated in such a way as to provide the greatest benefit to the least advantaged members of society.

**Variable Dimensions**

- Equal Distribution of Basic Rights: Access to education and health.
- Equal Opportunity: Access to positions and positions (fair equality of opportunity).
- Distribution of Wealth: Reduction of economic inequality (village wealth).

**Indicators**

- Rate of decline in RTLH (180 units) after the implementation of the BUMDes/Village Fund program.
- The percentage of profits from natural resources (e.g., gold mining) allocated specifically to the poor/farm laborers.
- The income ratio between the poorest community groups and the average village income.

**Analysis of Bojong Village:**

The gap between resource wealth and poverty in Bojong Village indicates a serious violation of the Difference Principle.

- Violation of the Difference Principle: With 80 hectares of gold mining potential and 180 units of Uninhabitable Housing (RTLH), philosophically, all profits from gold exploration should be directed primarily towards addressing RTLH issues and creating formal employment for 885 farm laborers. If profits flow solely to the village elite or outsiders, then development is unfair. (Estella, 2023)
- Public Administration Review: Transformative public administration requires village officials to act as stewards of justice. Management of Village-Owned Enterprises (BUMDes) or mining fees must be directed towards the interests of the poorest and be transparent, not merely complying with formal procedures but achieving substantive justice.
- Universal Philosophical Analysis (Rawls)

Table 4. Description in the Context of Distributive Justice Village Development

| <i>Philosophical Aspects</i> | <i>Description in the Context of Distributive Justice Village Development</i>  |
|------------------------------|--|
| Ontology (Essence)           | The Essence of Just Development: The essence of village development is to achieve primary social goods for all, not just to increase village GDP. Justice must be the ontological condition of village existence (Rawls, 1999).  |
| Epistemology (How to Know)   | Knowledge of Justice: Justice is known through Original Position and the Veil of Ignorance. Village administrators should plan programs as if they do not know their own social position (whether they are Village Heads or Farm |

| <i>Philosophical Aspects</i>  | <i>Description in the Context of Distributive Justice Village Development</i>  |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Axiology<br>(Values/Purposes) | Laborers), so that the program will favor the most vulnerable (e.g., 180 RTLH). (Rawls, 1999)<br>Development Goal: To create a well-ordered society. The primary goal is social stability, legal certainty, and prosperity, guaranteed by the Principle of Difference, so that no one feels disadvantaged by the village development system. |

Source: Processed by Researchers, 2026

This analysis uses John Rawls's (1999) Difference Principle as a benchmark for the axiology (value/goal) of development, namely that inequality should provide the greatest benefit to the least advantaged.

- Empowerment and Autonomy Philosophy: Transformative Public Administration  
This study combines Friedmann's Empowerment Philosophy with the Transformative Public Administration Philosophy (Denhardt, 2015) to assess the quality of autonomy in Bojong Village.

Table 5. Empowerment and Autonomy Philosophy

| <i>Key Theory</i>                                | <i>Theory Explanation</i>  |
|--|--|
| Empowerment                                      | Empowerment is not simply about providing assistance, but rather a process of increasing community capacity, critical awareness, and self-control (agency). The goal is social emancipation, where communities become subjects capable of defining and realizing their own well-being. (Friedmann, 1992) |
| Transform Administration<br>(New Public Service) | Public (New Public Service)<br>Emphasizing that the administrator's role is to serve the public and facilitate dialogue and citizenship, not to steer. This is relevant to ensuring substantive autonomy at the village level. (Denhardt, 2015)  |

This study combines the Philosophy of Empowerment (Friedmann, 1992) with the Philosophy of Transformative Public Administration (Denhardt, 2015) to assess the quality of autonomy in Bojong Village. The following are the following:

**Concept of Transformative Public Administration (APT) / New Public Service (NPS) Variables (Denhardt, 2015):**

An administrative model that positions citizens as subjects and prioritizes dialogue, service, and the creation of public value. (Mardikanto, 2017)

**Sub-variables**

- Empowerment (Subject Capacity): Increasing the community's ability to control resources;
- Serving, Not Steering (Role of Apparatus): Village officials act as facilitators, not commanders;
- Public Value: Creation of values recognized and desired by residents.

**Variable Dimensions**

- Substantive Autonomy: Control of village institutions (BPD/LPM) over economic assets;
- Critical Participation: Community involvement in decision-making (not just implementation);
- Moral Accountability: Officials' responsibility to the values of democracy and justice.

**Indicators**

- Level of involvement of the Community Empowerment Institute (LPM) and Youth Organization (Karang Taruna) in planning the Village-Owned Enterprise (BUMDes) for Ecotourism.
- Percentage of BUMDes strategic decisions originating from community/farmer group initiatives.
- Level of community satisfaction with the role of village officials as facilitators.
- The active participation of cultural groups (Pencak Silat) in supporting village identity (authenticity values).

**Analysis of Bojong Village:**

Despite the existence of Village Institutions (BPD, LPM, Economic Empowerment Section), the problems of unemployment and casual laborers indicate that community agency remains weak, indicating that development has not been empowering.

Table 6. Description of the Relevance of Village Development and Administration

| <i>Philosophical Aspects</i> | <i>Description of the Relevance of Village Development and Administration</i>  |
|------------------------------|--|
| Ontology (Essence)           | The Nature of the Relationship Between Administration and Citizens: It is essentially a relationship between citizens, not a government-customer relationship. Villages, as political-social entities, must be managed based on shared values, not just bureaucratic efficiency. (Denhardt, 2015)                          |
| Epistemology (How to Know)   | Development Knowledge: Valid knowledge (for development) comes from Participatory Dialogue and local wisdom (authenticity). Administrators should not assume they know what is best; they must learn from the needs of Farm Workers and artists in Bojong Village. (Friedmann, 1992)                                       |
| Axiology (Values/Purposes)   | Village Development Goals (APT): Achieving Social Emancipation and True Autonomy. Its core values are authenticity (development rooted in the village's original potential, e.g., ecotourism), justice, and community dignity, not merely administrative reporting. This ensures that development is a liberating process. |

Source: Processed by Researchers, 2026

Autonomy vs. Dependence: Bojong Village's autonomy is threatened if its economic policies are still dictated by top-down programs or external capital (mining investors). True autonomy must be rooted in the 15 Farmer Groups and 36 Arts and Culture Groups to manage the potential of Ecotourism (Waterfall, Situ Kabuyutan).

- Philosophical Implications (Goal of Independence): Bojong Village's independence will only be achieved when the village apparatus implements Transformative Public Administration, namely ensuring that the LPM and Farmer Groups have a dominant voice in BUMDes investment decisions, shifting the focus from extractives to community-managed tourism. This is the embodiment of the philosophy of serving (NPS), not controlling.

## E. CONCLUSION

Key Findings: Bojong Village has an extreme dualism of potential: gold (extractive) and ecotourism-culture (sustainable). The large gap between this wealth and low welfare (180 households with low household income and dominated by farm laborers) indicates a failure in the aspect of distributive justice in development implementation. This research finding reinforces the view that village independence is determined not only by local potential, but also by the readiness of the bureaucracy to manage adaptive and digital public services, as emphasized in the philosophical study of local potential-based village development. (Mulyaningsih, n.d.)

Philosophical Implications: Development towards an Independent Village in Bojong Village requires philosophical reflection to adopt an approach to Village Development in a Special Ecotourism Area that is: (a) Based on Distributive Justice (Rawls), meaning economic benefits must prioritize the poorest; and (b) Based on Authentic Empowerment (Friedmann/NPS), ensuring substantive community autonomy in managing village assets. Policy Recommendations: Prioritize the Special Area program for the development of Waterfall and Cultural Ecotourism.

Require Village-Owned Enterprises (BUMDes), as managers of village assets (tourism or mining), to allocate dividends in a transparent and measurable manner, prioritize the eradication of 180 PMKS RTLH (uninhabitable housing) and create job training for farm laborers.

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