

FROM TOURISM TO VILLAGE DEVELOPMENT: POLICY DIFFERENTIATION IN MULTILEVEL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING IN BANYUMAS AND CILACAP

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Abstract

Tourism is increasingly positioned as part of Indonesia's development agenda, not only as a sector contributing to economic growth but also as an instrument for strengthening local economies and promoting community-based development. In a decentralized system of government, national tourism development priorities do not necessarily result in uniform policies across regions. Instead, these priorities undergo processes of interpretation and adjustment according to regional characteristics, development orientations, and institutional arrangements in each region. This study examines how national tourism priorities are translated into regional development planning documents and how policy differentiation emerges in tourism development in Banyumas Regency and Cilacap Regency. The study employs a qualitative approach through a comparative document analysis of development planning documents at the national, provincial, and regency levels. These documents include the 2025–2045 National Long-Term Development Plan (RPJPN), the 2025–2029 National Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMN), the Ministry of Tourism's 2025–2029 Strategic Plan, the 2025–2029 Regional Medium-Term Development Plan of Central Java Province, and tourism-related development planning documents in Banyumas Regency and Cilacap Regency. The analysis focuses on four dimensions: the position of tourism within the development agenda, development directions, policy instruments, and the characteristics of local policy differentiation. The findings reveal a shift in policy orientation from the national level to the local level. At the national level, tourism is primarily positioned as an instrument of economic transformation. At the provincial level, this orientation is translated into a region-based development approach, with the strengthening of tourism villages serving as one of the instruments for local economic development. At the regency level, Banyumas emphasizes the links between tourism villages, Village-Owned Enterprises (BUMDes), Tourism Awareness Groups (Pokdarwis), local culture, and community economic empowerment. Cilacap, meanwhile, combines tourism villages with agrotourism, local products, and community

empowerment. These differences indicate that a single policy framework can produce different local policy orientations through processes of adaptation to regional characteristics and development priorities. Tourism villages, therefore, serve not only as instruments for tourism development but also as an empirical lens through which to understand how decentralization operates through planning processes and policy adaptation at the local level.

Keywords: Tourism Policy; Tourism Villages; Decentralization; Policy Differentiation; Development Planning; Local Government.

INTRODUCTION

Tourism is increasingly gaining prominence in Indonesia's development agenda. Its contributions are associated not only with economic growth, employment opportunities, and increased regional revenue, but also with strengthening local economies, developing regional potential, and enhancing community participation (Andriani et al., 2022; Kesuma et al., 2025). The development of tourism village policies reflects an expansion of these functions. Villages are no longer positioned merely as locations where tourism activities take place, but also as spaces for local economic development involving communities, village institutions, and local resources (Nugroho, 2018; Kesuma et al., 2025).

This broader orientation has emerged within the context of decentralized governance. Development policies in Indonesia are formulated across multiple levels of government, each with distinct functions and authorities (Regiyani et al., 2026). The national government establishes development directions and sectoral priorities, while provincial and regency governments translate them into development plans according to regional conditions and needs. In tourism planning, this relationship is reflected in the existence of tourism development plans at the national, provincial, and regency/municipal levels (Fasya & Furqan, 2025; Suarjana et al., 2026). However, relationships between these levels of government do not always produce uniform policy patterns. Priorities formulated at the national level may receive different emphases when translated into regional planning documents.

This situation highlights the importance of understanding policy not merely as a top-down implementation process, but also as a process of interpretation and adaptation. Regional governments have room to connect national priorities with regional characteristics, local resources, institutional capacities, and regional development orientations (Rafi & Novriana, 2024). In tourism, this flexibility becomes particularly important because destination development is strongly influenced by geographical conditions, cultural and economic potential, community institutions, and the characteristics of local resources (Ridwan & Aini, 2020; Bakty et al., 2025; Batubara et al., 2024). Destination planning ultimately serves as an instrument for translating tourism policy visions into more operational strategies tailored to regional contexts (Pristiwasa, 2026). Policy adaptation is also related to the characteristics of local communities and their readiness to participate. Tourism village development does not follow a uniform institutional pattern, as management models must accommodate the social characteristics, community readiness, customary practices, and unique potential of each village (Krisnawati, 2021). Furthermore, tourism village development requires coordination among government, the tourism industry, universities, the media, communities, and the environment to promote sustainable tourism development. This is because tourism village development involves interactions among stakeholders and encompasses economic, social, infrastructure, and environmental dimensions (Buchari et al., 2024). These perspectives indicate that tourism village development requires an integrated approach suited to local conditions and supported by various stakeholders. Consequently, differences in regional characteristics and development

orientations are important for understanding how tourism policies are translated at the regency level within regional tourism governance arrangements (Nopianti et al., 2024).

These differences can be observed in tourism development in Central Java Province. Provincial planning documents position tourism as a strategic sector and promote tourism village development as part of regional development. At the regency level, these priorities are translated with somewhat different emphases. Banyumas Regency links tourism village development with Village-Owned Enterprises (BUMDes), Tourism Awareness Groups (Pokdarwis), local culture, and community economic empowerment. Cilacap Regency develops tourism villages with an emphasis on agrotourism, local products, and community empowerment. Both regencies operate within the same provincial policy framework but exhibit different policy configurations.

These differences warrant further examination because they demonstrate that decentralization involves not only the formal distribution of authority but also the ways in which policies are interpreted and adapted through development planning processes. In this context, *policy differentiation* provides a useful perspective for understanding why policies originating from a relatively similar set of priorities may produce different policy emphases at the regional level. Differences in policy emphasis should be distinguished from development outcomes. Village development outcomes are associated with supporting characteristics of tourism, such as attractions, accessibility, and village facilities, because tourism development and village development outcomes are related but distinct phenomena (Fafurida et al., 2023). Banyumas and Cilacap exhibit different tourism policy orientations and planning instruments; therefore, assessments of development success also require different outcome indicators (Laka et al., 2020).

Existing studies on tourism policy have largely focused on destination development, community-based tourism, sustainability, and tourism's contribution to regional economies (Rama, 2020; Kesuma et al., 2025; Rojabi et al., 2023). The tourism planning literature has also recognized RIPPARNAS, RIPPARPROV, and RIPPARKAB/KOTA as components of a multilevel planning framework (Fasya & Furqan, 2025; Indrajaya & MM, 2024). However, the relationship between tourism priorities in multilevel development planning and policy differentiation at the regency level requires further attention. This perspective makes it possible to examine tourism development as part of the broader regional development process, particularly when tourism villages are used to connect tourism agendas with local economic development and rural community empowerment (Nugroho, 2018).

This study uses Banyumas and Cilacap as comparative cases to examine how tourism priorities move from the national to the regional level and how different policy orientations emerge within the same provincial development framework. Tourism villages serve as the analytical focus because they bring together tourism agendas, local economic development, village institutions, and community empowerment (Devi & Tjitjik Rahaju, 2025). Against this background, the study addresses two main research questions: how are national tourism priorities translated into development planning at the provincial and regency levels, and how do Banyumas Regency and Cilacap Regency differentiate their tourism policies within the same provincial policy framework?

This study argues that tourism policy undergoes a process of translation across levels of government. This process not only maintains the overall direction of national policy but also generates adjustments to regional characteristics and development priorities (Sari et al., 2026). The policy differentiation that emerges at the regency level demonstrates that decentralization operates through processes of planning, interpretation, and policy adaptation, rather than solely through the formal distribution of authority.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative approach using comparative document analysis. Planning documents are treated as representations of policy choices, development directions, and government priorities at each level of government. Document analysis is used to trace how tourism is positioned at the national level, translated at the provincial level, and subsequently adapted at the regency level.

The documents analyzed cover several levels of development planning. At the national level, the study examines the 2025–2045 National Long-Term Development Plan (RPJPN), the 2025–2029 National Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMN), and the Ministry of Tourism's 2025–2029 Strategic Plan. At the provincial level, the analysis includes the 2025–2029 Regional Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMD) of Central Java Province and strategic documents from regional government agencies related to tourism development. At the regency level, the documents analyzed include the RPJMD of Banyumas Regency, tourism development planning documents for Banyumas, the RPJMD of Cilacap Regency, and planning documents related to tourism development and tourism villages in both regencies.

The analysis is conducted across four dimensions. First, the position of tourism within the development agenda, which examines how tourism is formulated and linked to development objectives at each level of government. Second, development directions, which encompass the objectives, strategies, and orientations of tourism and tourism village development. Third, policy instruments, including programs, institutional arrangements, funding support, and targets used to achieve these development directions. Fourth, local policy differentiation, which examines differences in emphasis, instruments, and orientations between Banyumas and Cilacap.

The analysis proceeds in several stages. First, national-level documents are examined to identify tourism development priorities and directions. Second, provincial-level documents are analyzed to determine how these priorities are translated within the context of regional development in Central Java. Third, documents from Banyumas and Cilacap are compared to identify forms of policy adaptation and differentiation at the regency level. This comparison is used to examine both continuity and shifts in policy orientation across levels of government.

This approach is not intended to measure the effectiveness of policy implementation or establish a causal relationship between local government capacity and policy choices. Instead, the analysis focuses on policy patterns reflected in planning documents and on how tourism priorities are constructed and differentiated at each level of government.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Tourism in the National Economic Transformation Agenda

National development planning documents position tourism within a broader framework of economic development. The 2025–2045 National Long-Term Development Plan (RPJPN) links tourism sector development to increased productivity, economic strengthening, and the creation of sustainable growth. This direction is subsequently translated into the 2025–2029 National Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMN) through the promotion of quality and sustainable tourism.

At the national level, the policy orientation remains macro-level in nature. Tourism is associated with increasing its contribution to the economy, value creation, investment, employment, and strengthened competitiveness. This orientation provides a general framework for regional governments but does not specifically determine the form of tourism development in each region. This position indicates that national priorities serve as a framework for development direction rather than a fully uniform policy design for all regions. Regional

governments still need to undertake a process of translation to connect these priorities with their respective regional characteristics and development agendas, particularly because tourism villages serve as one instrument for linking tourism agendas with local economic development (Fafurida et al., 2023). As the tourism agenda moves to the regional level, tourism villages can assume a broader role as instruments of local economic development. Therefore, differences in regional characteristics and potential are important for understanding how the same tourism priorities can be translated into different policy orientations at the provincial and regency levels.

Provincial Translation: Linking Tourism with Regional and Village Development

At the level of Central Java Province, national tourism priorities acquire a more territorial dimension. Tourism is positioned as a sector supporting regional development and is linked to destination development, the creative economy, local economic strengthening, and tourism village development (Suryawan et al., 2025). One important indication of this orientation is the promotion of the development of 1,000 tourism villages. This target reflects a shift from a destination-oriented tourism approach toward one that is more spatially distributed. Villages are positioned as important units in regional tourism development (Aziz Abdul, 2026).

This translation broadens the meaning of tourism policy. At the national level, tourism is primarily positioned within the framework of economic transformation. At the provincial level, this agenda begins to be linked to regional development and the strengthening of community economies. Tourism villages serve as an instrument connecting these two orientations (Maria Gisela, 2025). This pattern indicates that provincial governments do not merely act as implementers of national priorities. Provinces also perform a translation function by providing a territorial context for national agendas (Aini et al., 2026). At this stage, policy begins to create greater room for regency governments to determine forms of development suited to their respective regional characteristics.

This scope for policy adaptation is related to the role of local governments in developing tourism village potential and strengthening community capacity. Tourism development requires policy directions capable of connecting local potential with economic development objectives and the preservation of local wisdom (Rahmi, 2016). Provincial-level planning needs to provide strategic direction, while regency governments retain room to adapt it to regional conditions and community needs (Nurfadlilah & Karniawati, 2023).

Banyumas: Tourism Villages as Instruments for Strengthening the Local Economy

At the regency level, this translation process produces a more specific policy orientation. In Banyumas, tourism village development is associated with strengthening the local economy, village economic institutions, community participation, and the utilization of cultural potential and local resources. The connection with Village-Owned Enterprises (BUMDes) indicates that tourism development is positioned not merely as an economic activity at tourism destinations but also as part of efforts to strengthen village economic institutions. Tourism villages can provide spaces for developing products, services, and economic activities managed by or involving local institutions.

In addition to BUMDes, Tourism Awareness Groups (Pokdarwis) constitute an important component of Banyumas's tourism policy configuration (Hidayat et al., 2025). The involvement of community groups in tourism management demonstrates attention to community capacity and participation in destination development. This orientation indicates that tourism policy is linked to strengthening local actors rather than merely increasing the number or quality of destinations. Banyumas's policy also provides room for developing local culture as part of tourism attractions (Ahdiati, 2020). Cultural potential is positioned not only

as a tourism asset but also as something that can be linked to strengthening community identity and economic activities, thereby connecting local potential with the economic and social interests of communities (Yamin et al., 2026). Tourism potential needs to be supported by management arrangements that involve communities, preserve local characteristics, and distribute development benefits more proportionately.

This configuration demonstrates that Banyumas translates the tourism village agenda through the relationship between destinations, village institutions, communities, and the local economy. Thus, tourism development becomes part of a broader local development agenda.

Cilacap: Tourism Villages through Agrotourism and Community Empowerment

Cilacap exhibits a policy configuration that shares common ground with Banyumas but places emphasis on different aspects. Tourism village development in Cilacap is associated with agrotourism, local products, and community empowerment. This approach demonstrates an effort to connect tourism activities with the characteristics of the local economy and available resources (Widyamurti et al., 2024). Agrotourism development adds a distinct dimension to the concept of tourism villages. Tourism activities do not rely solely on cultural attractions or destinations but also draw on agricultural potential and local products.

Through this approach, existing economic resources in the region can become part of tourism activities. Cilacap had 30 tourism villages in 2024. The presence of various actors in tourism management also indicates that tourism development does not take place solely through local government structures. Communities and local actors form part of the destination management ecosystem. The emphasis on community empowerment demonstrates that tourism village development is positioned as part of the process of strengthening local economic capacity (Barimbing et al., 2026). Utilizing local potential for tourism development requires connections between available resources, facility readiness, and community capacity to manage them. Natural and cultural potential does not automatically generate development benefits without adequate planning and organization (Widyamurti et al., 2024).

Accordingly, Cilacap's policy connects tourism villages, agrotourism, local products, and community empowerment within a single development configuration. The differences from Banyumas do not mean that the two regions pursue conflicting policy directions; both remain within the same provincial and national priority frameworks (Putri et al., 2020). Rather, the differences lie in how each regency connects the tourism agenda with local resources, institutions, and development priorities.

Policy Differentiation in Multilevel Development Planning

The comparison between Banyumas and Cilacap reveals a process of policy differentiation within a multilevel planning framework. At the national level, tourism is positioned within the economic transformation agenda. At the provincial level, this agenda is translated through a regional development approach and tourism village development. At the regency level, policies acquire more specific emphases according to regional characteristics and development orientations.

Table 1. Policy Differentiation across Levels of Government

Source: Authors' analysis of the data, 2026.

Level of Government	Policy Orientation	Main Emphasis
National	Economic transformation	Growth, economic value, competitiveness, and investment
Central Java Province	Regional development	Destinations, local economies, and tourism villages

Banyumas	Strengthening the local economy	Tourism villages, BUMDes, Pokdarwis, and local culture
Cilacap	Development of local potential	Tourism villages, agrotourism, local products, and empowerment

The table shows that differentiation does not occur through a break with policies at higher levels of government. Instead, it involves both continuity and shifts in emphasis. National priorities remain the general framework, but their meaning changes as they are incorporated into regional development contexts.

In this case, policy differentiation can be understood as the result of a process of *translation and adaptation*. Regional governments translate broad agendas into forms that are more appropriate to local conditions. Banyumas emphasizes the relationship between tourism villages, village economic institutions, and the strengthening of the local economy, whereas Cilacap places greater emphasis on the connections between tourism villages, agrotourism, local products, and community empowerment.

The findings also indicate that policy differentiation cannot automatically be interpreted as an indicator of policy innovation. Policy differences may reflect adaptation to local conditions, but they may also indicate differences in institutional arrangements, institutional support, or development orientations. Based on document analysis, this study identifies **differences in policy orientation** without claiming that these differences are directly caused by the capacity of particular governments.

This perspective broadens the understanding of decentralization. Decentralization operates not only through the distribution of authority from central to regional governments but also through policy interpretation within development planning processes (Zuhro et al., 2026). When national policies are translated into local contexts, regional governments have room to determine how a particular priority is connected to regional development problems, potential, and agendas. Differences in tourism development strategies can also be observed in how governments connect policies with local economic institutions. Village-Owned Enterprises (BUMDes), for example, can serve as an instrument for organizing tourism businesses and linking village potential with community economic activities. However, the existence of such institutions needs to be supported by a division of roles and management arrangements suited to local needs (Elok et al., 2024). Thus, policy differentiation can be understood as an institutional approach through which tourism development is supported and organized according to local contexts.

Tourism Villages as a Lens for Understanding Decentralization and Local Development

Tourism villages provide a clear illustration of this process because they lie at the intersection of sectoral policies and local development. On the one hand, tourism villages form part of the tourism development agenda. On the other hand, they are connected to strengthening community economies, village institutions, the utilization of local resources, and empowerment. This position makes tourism villages an instrument through which regional governments can connect sectoral priorities with local development needs. Banyumas and Cilacap demonstrate that these connections can take different forms even though both regencies operate within the same provincial policy framework.

These findings show that the implementation of decentralization does not always produce either identical or entirely different policies. Instead, it generates a process of multilevel adaptation in which policies at higher levels provide strategic direction, while governments at lower levels introduce local context and emphasis. From a public administration perspective, this condition highlights the importance of viewing development planning as an arena of interaction between levels of government. Planning documents do not

merely contain lists of programs; they also reveal how regional governments understand development problems, select priorities, and connect sectoral agendas with regional needs.

Ultimately, tourism villages can be understood as more than instruments for promoting destinations. They provide an empirical setting for examining how national policies are translated, how provincial priorities are contextualized, and how regency governments shape policy choices according to regional characteristics. The resulting differentiation demonstrates that decentralization operates through a dynamic policy process between national frameworks and local needs.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that tourism policy in Indonesia undergoes a process of translation across levels of government. At the national level, tourism is positioned as part of the economic transformation agenda and efforts to strengthen competitiveness. At the level of Central Java Province, these priorities are translated into a regional development approach that connects tourism with the local economy and tourism village development. At the regency level, Banyumas and Cilacap subsequently adapt this framework with different policy emphases.

Banyumas positions tourism villages in close connection with Village-Owned Enterprises (BUMDes), Tourism Awareness Groups (Pokdarwis), local culture, and the strengthening of community economies. Cilacap develops tourism villages by linking them with agrotourism, local products, and community empowerment. These differences indicate policy differentiation within a shared framework of priorities. Differentiation does not indicate a break from national and provincial policies but rather reflects a process of adaptation to local characteristics and development orientations.

The findings also demonstrate that policy differentiation cannot automatically be equated with policy innovation. Differences in regional orientations may reflect adaptation processes, local resource characteristics, or different institutional arrangements. The document analysis in this study primarily identifies policy patterns and orientations; therefore, the factors underlying these policy choices require further investigation.

Tourism villages are thus relevant not only as instruments for tourism development but also as a lens for understanding how decentralization operates through development planning processes. Tourism village development illustrates the relationship between national priorities, provincial translation, and regency-level adaptation in shaping local development policies.

Future research could extend the analysis to the village level by examining village planning and development documents. Such an analysis could reveal how tourism priorities formulated at the regency level are translated into village development strategies and how communities and local institutions participate in this process.

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