

# “Loved to Death”: Tourism Case Studies in Baguio and Batad, Philippines

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## Abstract

Sustainable tourism is based on the idea of sustainable development, which is development that preserves environmental resources for future generations while allowing for the present generation to meet their own needs (Hunter, 1997). As an industry, it functions in a way that protects its environmental resource base for future development, while allowing for cultural, economic, social, and political development (Timur and Getz, 2009) (Drost, 1996). Baguio City provides an example of a city whose tourist attractions of natural beauty and favorable climate are being threatened by not just the industry that promotes them, but by the people that are enticed by those qualities as well. Tourism activities and tourists themselves add to increased consumption of the city's goods and services, which has exacted an enormous toll on the city's environment (Estoque and Murayama, 2013). Shifting to a more rural context of tourism, the village of Batad contains rice terraces that are part of the Rice Terraces of the Philippine Cordilleras World Heritage Site (Rice Terraces). Problems of abandonment due to low rice yield, poor irrigation and damage, and reduced farm labor that contributed to the site being placed on the World Heritage in Danger List in the past still exist today (Calderon et al, 2010). These two areas were chosen as research sites because Batad represents a rural perspective with minimal tourism development in comparison to Baguio, a more urban site, representing effects of unsustainable tourism growth. What is key to long term sustainability of the industry is the “inclusion” of all relevant interest groups- members of the local community, government officials, NGOs, and private companies- in all phases of tourism development (Byrd et al, 2009). How do various interest groups interact to conserve the environment in the face of increased tourism?

## Introduction and Research Setting

### Introduction

Sustainable tourism is based on the idea of sustainable development, which is development that preserves environmental resources for future generations while allowing for the present generation to meet their own needs (Hunter, 1997, 850). As an industry, it functions in a way that protects its environmental resource base for future development, while allowing for cultural, economic, social, and political development (Hunter, 1997, 850) (Drost, 1996, 479).

### Batad

This rural village is home to the Ifugao Rice Terraces, a World Heritage Site that was moved to the World Heritage in Danger List in 2001. Problems due to low rice yield, poor irrigation and damage, and reduced farm labor that have contributed to this re-classification in the past still exist today. The municipal government in Banaue does not have the budget to maintain the terraces on their own and as a result must rely on intervention from the government and other outside sources.

### Baguio

The city was envisioned by its American colonial authorities as an idyllic “summer capital” of the Philippines. It was planned by Daniel H. Burnham in 1905 to be a center of convalescence and recreation for the Western tourist with a carrying capacity of up to 25,000 people. Since the 1980's, the city has undergone rapid urbanization and expansion without proper development of infrastructure, with a population over 40 times greater than its original carrying capacity. Tourism activities and tourists themselves add to increased consumption of the city's goods and services which have led to serious environmental impacts such as deforestation of the “City of the Pines”.

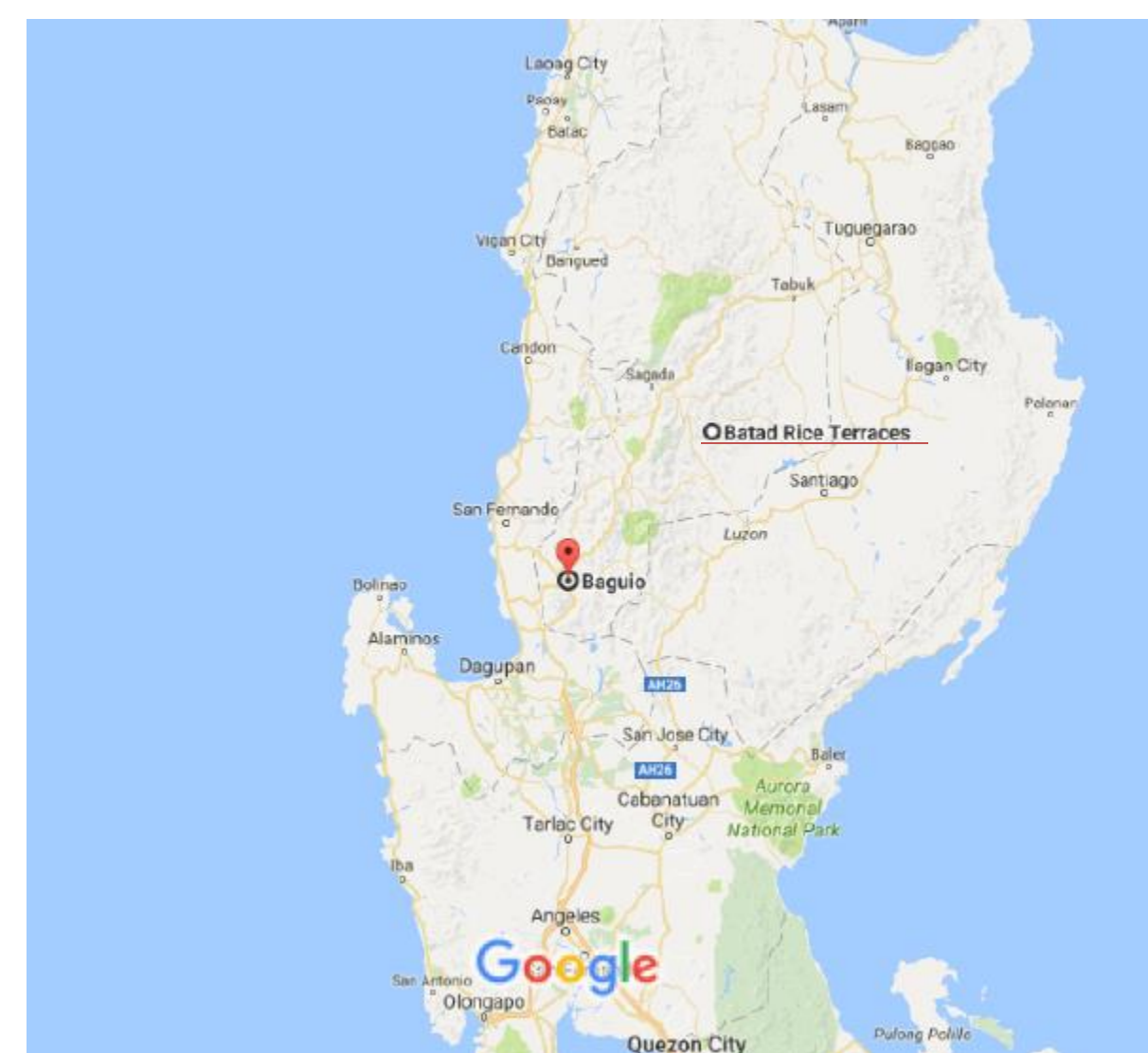


Fig. 1: Map of the Northern Philippines.



Fig. 2: View of Batad and its rice terraces.



Fig. 3: View of Baguio City and its houses.

## Methodology and Key Players

- Three Weeks in Baguio
- One week in Batad
- Semi-Structured Interviews
- Participant Observation

- **Government:** Department of Tourism, Baguio Tourism Office, Banaue Municipal Council
- **Private Industry:** SunTrust, Mega Pines Development, Casa Vallejo, Venus Parkview, Tamawan, Easter Weaving Room, Various Inn Keepers
- **Community Members:** Save Baguio, The Baguio Heritage Foundation, The Baguio We Want, MaryKnoll Ecological Sanctuary, Cordillera Youth Association, Farmers, Ilike Artist Village

## Goals

### Goals of Government

#### Baguio

- Bring back stability in city's environmental degradation through implementation of “green” programs
- Comprehensive land use plan to encourage development of neighboring municipalities
- Make Baguio more accessible to tourists

#### Batad

- Emphasis on restoring cultural values and youth education
- Development of infrastructure to support tourism services
- National agency would like the UNESCO inscription to be maintained, but the local government sees the organization as somewhat disempowering

### Goals of Community

#### Baguio

- Provide informational and educational experience to tourists
- Conservation and preservation
- Mutual development of neighboring provinces

#### Batad

- More accepting of the future, leave conservation and preservation to outside groups
- Children are seen as lazy, leaving terraces to work in more profitable industries



Fig. 4: Garbage in a “No Dumping” Zone.



Fig. 5: Banaue – seat of Batad's municipal government.

### Goals of Private Industry

#### Baguio

- More parks and open spaces
- Maintain cleanliness of the city
- Concerned with public image – want to be friendly with the local community (through being seen as “eco”-friendly) but practices are motivated by profit



Fig. 6: Advertisement for SunTrust property depicting a building surrounded by pines.

## Barriers

### Barriers to Government

#### Baguio

- “Influx of so many people who love Baguio” – the city is loved, perhaps too much, by outsiders
- Promotion of ecotourism and implementing a carrying capacity are “not applicable” to Baguio in its current state (Baguio City Official)

#### Batad

- UNESCO's contradictory stance of demanding a site's preservation, while seemingly not giving funds for preservation
- Climate change
- Development of infrastructure to resolve problems caused by tourism limited by political barriers

### Barriers to Community

#### Baguio

- The city's local community felt that as it currently stands, there is no sustainable tourism plan for Baguio
- Part of the problem lies with the local government, which, with its many elected officials, each with their own different problems and priorities, creating a cohesive sustainable tourism plan is difficult to achieve

#### Batad

- The terraces themselves aren't seen as economically viable – they can't feed a whole family year-round – and as a result, most farmers are planting for sentimental purposes
- The local community of Batad cited professionalization as a barrier as well, with some expressing that “if all children are educated, they will leave Batad” and only come back if they can't find work elsewhere

### Barriers to Private Industry

#### Baguio

- Barriers to environmentally friendly practices include misinformation, or a lack of available information to companies and their investors
- Perceived high cost of sustainability



Fig. 7: Litter at Baguio's Botanical Gardens. “[The litter] is almost as plentiful as the flowers.” – Jenna Rochelle, '18

## Predictions

### Predictions of Government

#### Baguio

- Changing administration beneficial to tourism; president ran on a platform to “bolster safety and security”

#### Batad

- Tourists are a constant; they will always come despite any degradation

### Predictions of Community

#### Baguio

- City will lose its edge in tourism, leading to a negative impact on city's economy

#### Batad

- Rice terraces will become gardens
- Tourists will cease to come

### Predictions of Private Industry

#### Baguio

- “Will be like Manila”
- Increased economic benefits contribute to city's decay
- Tourists will continue to come



Fig. 8: SunTrust's slogan.

## Conclusion

- Conservation cannot be done alone
- Holistic tourism plan
  - Different interest groups have different perceptions of Baguio/Batad dependent on focus
- Implications for other areas
  - Use of tourism as primary means of economic development
  - Unsustainable tourism puts environment and cultural heritage at risk
  - Tourists can be more self-aware
  - Interest groups work in tandem

### Potential Prescriptions:

- Implementation of a holistic tourism plan
- Regulated system of environmental fees to preserve the terraces
  - Economic incentive

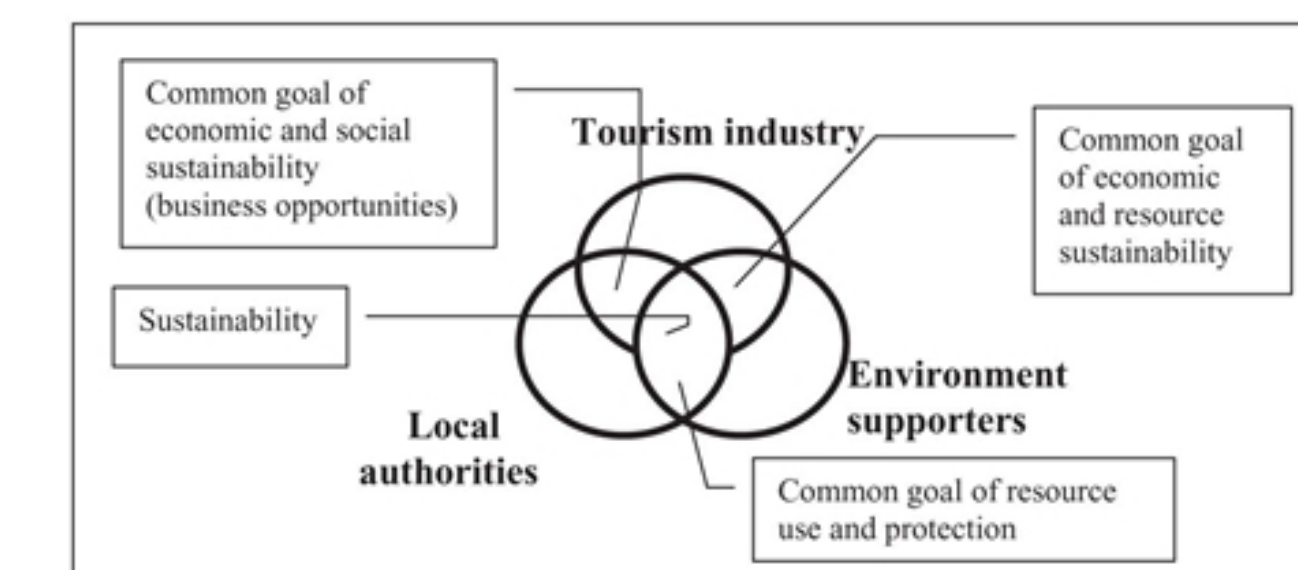


Fig. 9: Sustainability goals of tourism's main interest groups.

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