

## Paradoxes of Inclusion: The Current Planning Paradigm in the City of Baguio, Philippines

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### ABSTRACT

*In the context of a Developing Country like the Philippines, a highly centralized land use planning and decision making seems to be the rule rather than the exception. As a result, land use planning theory and practice in the Cordillera particularly in Baguio City is framed by the top-down planning approach guided by the rational comprehensive paradigm leading to the emergence of problems and disconnect between government policy and indigenous people aspirations and land claims which are all qualitatively summarized in the themes of discordance between people, power, and process. It is for this purpose that this study was undertaken, primarily we seek to find out what problems do the city planners experience in the application of the existing land use planning paradigm? Considering that Baguio City is a center of indigenous cultures and how inclusive were the emergent land use planning system? In conclusion discordance in capacities, where legal and statutory provisions themselves provided the limitations to indigenous participation and involvement in planning; and discordances in spatial specific performances provided the constraints for wider and more participative involvement outside the structure of power to the disadvantage of a sustainable land use plan.*

**Keywords:** *Planning Paradigms, Paradoxes, Land use plan, Indigenous people, Discordances*

### INTRODUCTION

The City of Baguio has been characterized by many planners as un-plannable. Characterized by urban sprawl and massive stifling congestion in many of its residential areas, the city daunts the most serious urban planner who seeks to impose order and developmental sustainability to the chaos and disorder within it.

It is not that the city was built and subsequently administered without plans. It was, as a matter of fact, an originally planned settlement – a colonial hill station (See **Figure 1**), designed by the world-renowned architect Daniel H. Burnham (Reed, 1999) who had been careful enough to note that existing circumstances then “point to the development in the near future of a town not exceeding 25,000 inhabitants.” (Burnham & Anderson, 1905, p. 1) However, by 2010, it has grown into a city of 325,880 residents and a population density of 5.2 per square kilometer (Cleto, 2010).

Unfortunately, any attempt to rein in the city’s population growth rate would be met with extreme difficulty due to the city’s functional

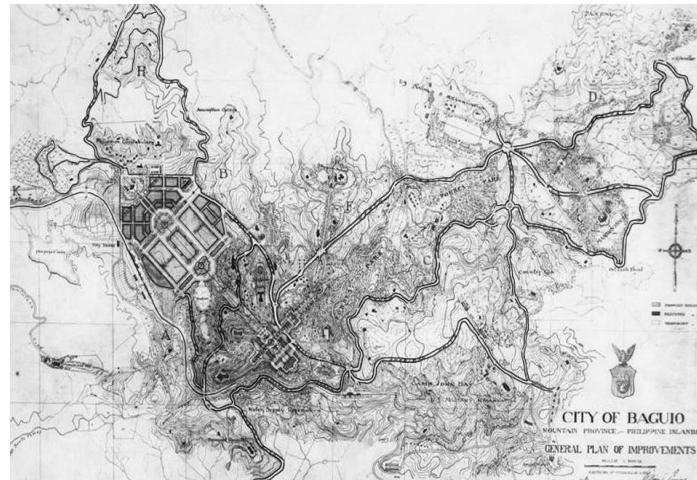
roles to the Cordillera Administrative Region as a popular tourist destination, center of education, health services, and real estate development, roles defined by the City’s own development plan (City Government of Baguio, 2015). These roles may well be themselves responsible for the city’s huge transient population and high rate of in-migration. Thus, despite vestiges of Burnham’s original plan still being perceived in its current morphology, highly urbanized Baguio City currently is more reflective of uncontrolled growth (Gonzales, L.B.2017). The City Planning and Development Office, thus, operates under extremely trying conditions, trying to formulate a comprehensive land use plan that would guide the city’s land utilization policies rationally for the next ten years. The current CLUP was approved on second reading in 2015 but it still has to be formally and finally passed as a full- pledged City resolution.

To address, thus, the first concern of this study, to wit, the question of what land use planning paradigms are currently being utilized in planning indigenous regions within the CAR

## Paradoxes of Inclusion: The Current Planning Paradigm in the City of Baguio, Philippines

and what problems beset CAR municipal planners in their quest to develop responsive and sustainable development and strategic spatial plans for their jurisdictions, we bear now on the hypothesis that basic theoretical and conceptual contradictions characterize existing planning paradigms and approaches used in planning indigenous regions particularly in the Cordillera

Administrative Region and that these paradoxes lead to problematic applications resulting in urban sprawls and congestion. Furthermore, reengineering planning concepts within indigenous regions of the Philippines such as the Cordillera necessitates the delineation and mapping out of the specifics of these contradictions.

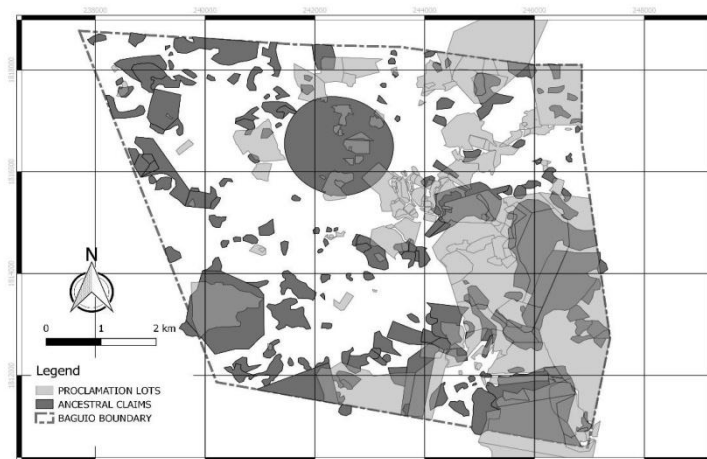


**Figure 1.** *The Burnham Baguio City Plan (1900)*

### LAND USE PLANNING IN THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLES RIGHTS ACT (R.A 8371)

The different provisions in the IPRA's declaration of principles that allude to land use planning are replete and full of possibilities regarding the democratization of planning in indigenous regions. Furthermore, Sections 16 of the law states that "ICCs/IPs have the right to participate fully, if they so choose, at all levels of decision making in matters which may affect their rights, lives and destinies through procedures determined by them as well as to maintain and develop their own indigenous

political structures. Consequently, the State shall ensure that the ICCs/IPs shall be given mandatory representation in policy-making bodies and other local legislative councils." (Congress of the Philippines, 1997) Thus, Section 17 mandates that "the ICCs/IPs shall have the right to determine and decide their own priorities for development affecting their lives, beliefs, institutions, spiritual well-being, and the lands they own, occupy or use. They shall participate in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of policies, plans and programs for national, regional and local development which may directly affect them."



**Figure 2.** *Ancestral Claims of Baguio City*

However, as Buhangin (2012) has already noted, only within ancestral domains was a

formal instrument of land use planning institutionalized in state policy. This instrument

is the Ancestral Domain Sustainable Development and Protection Plan (ADSDPP). In other indigenous areas where domains do not exist and only ancestral lands are found, (See Figure 2) no formal plan by the IPs is formulated and considered as an input in the Comprehensive Land Use Plan (CLUP). The IPRA, therefore, could be said to be more of a constraining rather than an enabling law for realizing indigenous people power in Buhangin's first planning scenario (i.e. jurisdictions where there are no ancestral domain claims). This is particularly true in the City of Baguio, which, as per Section 78 of the law "shall remain to be governed by its Charter and all lands proclaimed as part of its town site reservation.

### METHODOLOGY

Data was collected through interviews with thirty six (36) study participants or key informants, with whom the researcher conducted 33-60 minutes face-to-face interviews. These interviews were digitally audio-recorded and the data was manually transcribed immediately after every interview session. The tool used for data gathering was the semi-structured interview guide. A question template was used to provide the initial content for the interviews and the researcher added questions in the interviews as required. Questions were utilized only to guide interviewees and to generate thoughtful responses. As part of the constant comparative method employed in grounded theory research, pertinent documents such as minutes of meetings and resolutions of the Baguio City Council were only examined when prompted by the interviews with informants. The Comprehensive Land Use Plan of the City of Baguio (2013-2022) was used as a primary source document. Since concepts (or variables) have not been developed prior to data collection, the articulation of concepts was part of the data collection process itself. The variables or concepts were initiated by the interviewees and were further developed and conceptualized by the researcher. Data was collected until theoretical saturation was reached or until no new or relevant data still emerged.

The goal of data analysis for the study was to discover core concepts through procedures of constant comparison that involved coding, categorizing and analyzing incoming data. Data collection and analysis occurred concurrently, rather than in a linear sequence. As interviews

were carried out, interview transcripts were processed at once. Interview results were then compared with subsequent interviews. The initial theory which emerged was compared to all data as they were gathered. The theory continued to be refined by contrasting it with each new piece of data that became available.

In carrying out the coding process, open coding, which involved reading through the data several times and then creating tentative labels for lumps of data that summarized what were seen as happening, were carried out each time interview transcripts were generated. Thirty Six key informants, all of whom had been involved in planning and consultancy in the City of Baguio were involved in the data-gathering process. The informants' discourses brought up some 426 matters in open coding which were collapsed to 31 patterns in axial coding. These were subsequently brought together in three final constructs or themes among the open codes. Selective- theoretical coding was focused on figuring out the core concepts and the relationships that have been established between categories.

The readers ideas were discerned in memos. Finally, final coding fitted together the categories which resulted in a model that looks at the impact of the proposed legal framework on planning processes within and for the City.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

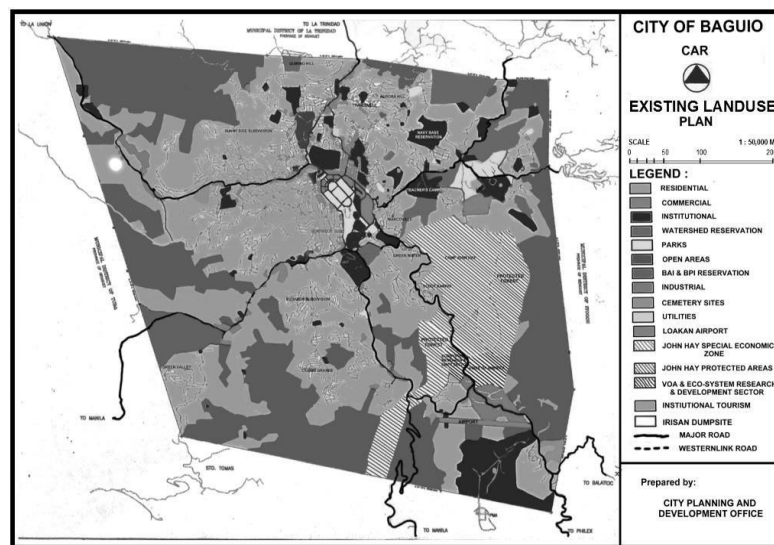
The findings show that in theory and in practice, land use planning in the Cordillera and in Baguio City in particular is framed by the top-down planning approach guided by the rational comprehensive paradigm. It would be shown later, however, that the use of the said paradigm leads to the emergence of various different problems represented by three themes, namely, people, power and process.

The interviews reveal that the current land use planning framework utilized in the formulation of Baguio City land use plans is a highly hierarchical form best described as a "top-down" approach. This has always been the approach adopted in previous land use plans including the very first city plan, i.e. the Burnham Plan. Guided by the rational-comprehensive paradigm, the top-down approach aligns lower level land use plans (i.e. municipal and city plans) to centrally determined comprehensive goals of national development. Indeed, the official guidebook on land use planning in the Philippines starts off

## Paradoxes of Inclusion: The Current Planning Paradigm in the City of Baguio, Philippines

with the declaration that “one of the critical elements of a successful land use policy will be to establish the primacy of the National Physical Framework Plan (NFPF) over all other types of plans being made for the country, including the Philippine Medium-Term Development Plan.” (Housing and Land Use Regulatory Board, 2013). But ideally, land use planning in Philippine municipalities and cities involves a bottom-up component. Planning guidelines state

that barangay development plans can be integrated into the municipal or city land use plan. Yet the same official guidelines are careful to suggest that this is merely one methodology that the LGU may adopt. In the absence of a barangay development plan, planning guidelines do not recommend the prior formulation of one but advises the LGU to simply adopt the top-to-bottom approach (Housing and Land Use Regulatory Board, 2013, p.18).



**Figure 3.** Existing Land Use Map of Baguio City

In actual planning practice in the City of Baguio according to the interviewees, this type of top-to-bottom planning is the preferred approach although two of them were careful to emphasize that there had been recent changes in the paradigm in consideration of some factors:

“...dominantly top to bottom planning...Although I might say that ... there are innovations starting with the implementation of the Local Government Code...”(C)

“...all policies of the national level are ...are being taken into consideration... and all national laws...” (E)

However, there remains a strong undercurrent of hesitance to draw the plan from the barangay level. An informant from the Housing and Land Use Regulatory Board, himself, says,

“...when you go immediately to the barangay, well and good...but you also have to understand that they have limited thinking, just think of their barangays, that’s the usual attitude....

The first disconnect and conflict occurs in the theoretical precept that each program planned for development must be done in consultation with the people. In concept, consultations occur at different levels under the National

Framework Plan development as was specifically mentioned by one participant. However, in practice, this, according to one participant is “disconnected from the provincial to the municipality,” to wit:

“...the municipality...and the city is on their own... (sic)”

In this regard, Lane has noted that the dominant epistemology of planning, best encapsulated as the rational- comprehensive paradigm, tends to marginalize indigenous perspectives (Lane, 2003). In the Philippines, the marginalization is effected in at least two levels. First, all city or municipal land use plans have to conform to the national guidelines promulgated by the Housing and Land Use Regulatory Board (HLURB). As a matter of fact, all planners have to attend a series of conferences by the HLURB where these guidelines are disseminated and participate in workshops where they are trained to tailor their plans according to these guidelines. In the desire to conform to the nationally prescribed model of land use planning, local planners tend to limit people’s participations to the mandatory consultations of the model. No municipal or city land use plan is approved at the HLURB until and unless the plan conformed to the guidelines.

## Paradoxes of Inclusion: The Current Planning Paradigm in the City of Baguio, Philippines

Second, local initiatives are hammered into shape – “integrated” appears to be the politically correct word – to conform to the form and content of the prescription which already sets beforehand the “functional role” of the city or municipality in the overall development of the province, region, or the country. Thus, Baguio City is planned to be developed as the “Garden / Flower City, (the) Summer Capital of the

Philippines, the (CAR) Regional Government Center, Tourists Center, (the) Education Center of the North, (as well as the) Center for Health Services, (and positioned to be in the) Top Ten Next Wave Cities” of the Philippines (City Government of Baguio, 2015, p. 50). All inputs from all other sectors now have to be aligned to this functional role.

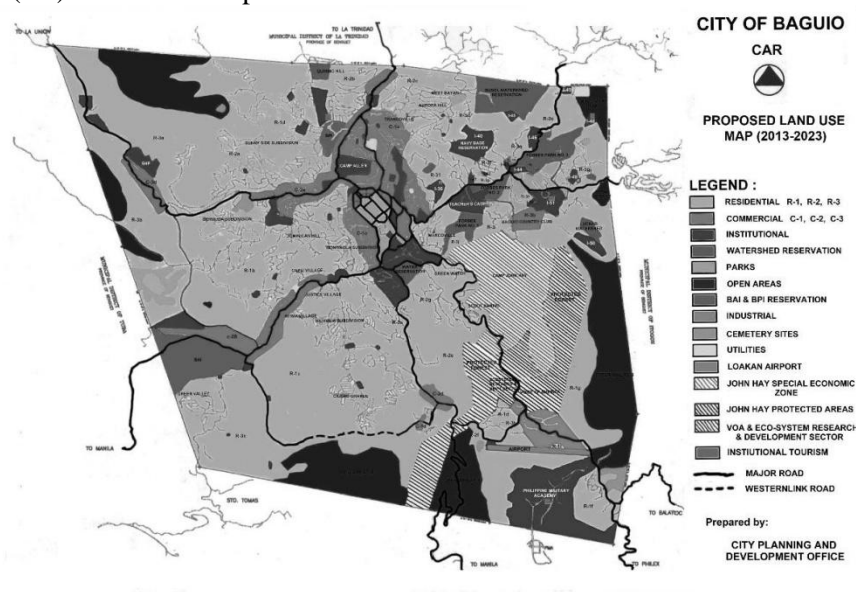


Figure 4. Proposed Land Uses in Baguio City (2013-2023)

The problems arising from the utilization of the highly hierarchical paradigm in CAR were collapsed into three themes namely people (role and identity discordances), power (discordances in capacity) and process (discordances in

spatial-specific performances). Schematically, these themes are presented in Figure 5, below. The next sections explore these problems and how each of them in turn affects the others in greater complexity.

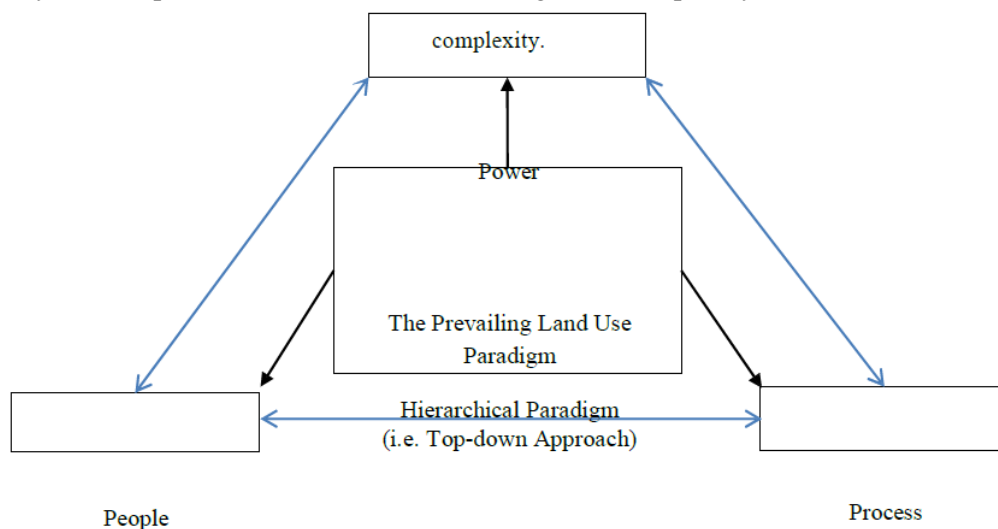


Figure 5. Conceptual Diagram

### People – Role and Identity Discordances

The “people” encompasses individuals involved in the planning process (planners) as well as those they are planning for (people of Baguio both indigenous and migrants). People as individuals are a composite of what they are and

what makes them unique, thus it is necessary to discuss these in light of what they bring in in land use planning.

People involved in planning within the city, whether elected or appointed officials, are recognized as indigenous whether or not they

are true “Baguio-boys” or migrants. This was aptly captured by an informant who said,

“...Within CAR siguro kasla automatic daytan e...indigenous da met am- aminen...the SB, amin da diay munisipyo” (Within CAR, it is automatic...they are all indigenous...the SB and all those (people) in the municipal hall)

As planners, they are at the top of the planning hierarchy or are implementers of planning programs. However, in Baguio, issues emerge when it is assumed that the planners will think of and act in representation of the indigenous (even if by birth or historicity they truly are). The IPRA defines the indigenous as,

“ a group of people or homogenous societies identified by self-ascription and ascription by others, who have continuously lived as organized community on communally bounded and defined territory, and who have, under claims of ownership since time immemorial, occupied, possessed and utilized such territories, sharing common bonds of language, customs, traditions and other distinctive cultural traits, or who have, through resistance to political, social and cultural inroads of colonization, non-indigenous religions and cultures, became historically differentiated from the majority of Filipinos. ICCs/IPs shall likewise include peoples who are regarded as indigenous on account of their descent from the populations which inhabited the country, at the time of conquest or colonization, or at the time of inroads of non- indigenous religions and cultures, or the establishment of present state boundaries, who retain some or all of their own social, economic, cultural and political institutions, but who may have been displaced from their traditional domains or who may have resettled outside their ancestral domains;”(Congress of the Philippines, 1997)

Under such a definition, Baguio’s indigenous peoples would include at least three categories of residents: the descendants of the occupants of the original 20 rancherias of Kafagway (under the first clause); Cordillerans who migrated to Baguio (under the second and third clauses); and the native-born, i.e. Baguio-born, Baguio-educated current residents whose ascendants (whether Cordilleran or lowlander) have settled in Baguio since its conception as a city (under the third clause).

However, the argument that being indigenous in origin makes city planners representative of the indigenous ways of doing and thinking is flawed

in several levels. First as planners, they represent their agency and thus its goals, vision and mission. This would mean that if an agency is economic in nature, the programs and plans implemented will reflect their goals for economic development. Second, they represent their profession (as architects or engineers and such). Third, they represent their office or position (as head of office for instance). To say that their indigenous identity will take a back seat is an understatement as over and above their personal origin, other considerations are usually taken which supersedes their ability to become representatives of the indigenous. Fourth, they have been trained in planning models adapted from the national (and international) settings and are therefore not exempt from globalizing trends and tendencies. Certainly, incongruences arise from the dialectical relationships arising from their indigenous origins and the influences of their current formal and informal fields.

Thus, the most recent Baguio City CLUP barely mentioned the indigenous population as an integral component. Despite its vision of Baguio City as “a melting pot of various cultures from the Cordillera highlands to the lowlands of Luzon and even from outside the country... (And that) the city shall be a living stage of the way of life of different cultures as they contribute to city development,” (City Government of Baguio, 2015, p. 51), the document was careful to clinically delineate the indigenous population as a mere minority, listing down the Ibalois as merely constituting 3.44%, the Bontocs 3.02%, and Ifugaos 1.06% of the population (p. 8). The entries never even merited a line of discussion.

Moreover, even as it has been recognized that claims to land and resources challenge and complicate the ways in which states carry out their land allocation and management tasks (Rangan & Lane, 2001), the fact that there are over 600 indigenous land claimants within Baguio City was apparently never considered in the city’s CLUP – not even in its SWOT Analysis (p. 50). As a matter of fact, indigeneity itself was never considered in the analysis; the only mention of a cultural dimension is that of heritage sites as part of its strengths in the area of tour

### Power – Discordances in Capacities

Power is the authority in the planning process. It cannot be avoided in any discourse on planning. (Flyvbjerg & Richardson, 2002). It is

however indivisible from those that wield it as well as from policy from whence the authority and power come from. Those who wield it can sway the direction of decisions and on the other hand, the policy dictates what authority an office (and the officer therein) has over decisions that are to be made.

The ultimate power over planning in any place in the country resides in the national government. In the city, power resides in the current authorities, the extent of which is dictated by their positions in the hierarchy. Informants, by their own admission, recognize the discordant distribution of power and capacity in the planning process. They perceive the need for its redistribution, the empowerment of the indigenous in planning their own spatial attributes and entitlements. However, they inadvertently revert back to the idea that popular participation should be limited to consultations once the basic outlines of the land use plan has been laid out. When asked how the empowerment contained in the Baguio CLUP vision can be realized through the planning process, an informant succinctly but emphatically replied,

“...through consultations! That is why the people should never belittle public hearings because it is through these that they get to propose their own suggestions and inputs...Ket isuda met gamin ket di da met umay no adda hearing... sa dan to sao nga sao nga awan kano participation da... (But they don't come to hearings. Then later they say they had no participation.)

The legal provisions limit the exercise of power by the indigenous to the approval or disapproval of a plan already made. They do not envision prior involvement in the laying out of the plan itself. The capacity to approve is granted; the capacity to initiate is denied. Indeed, they are in agreement that once consultation with the indigenous in public hearings have been complied with, the land use plan – integrating only the inputs of the indigenous into the general plan – that resultant plan would have to meet the final approval of the state through the Sangguniang Panlungsod and the Housing and Land Use Regulatory Board (HLURB), taking into consideration its final compliance with the form and content of the latter.

Holcomb maintains that “participation and empowerment do not just happen. There has to be a strategy and a set of actions to allow them to develop.” (Holcomb, 1995, p. 5) It is not

enough that officials post public hearing notices on the city hall bulletin boards and expect people to flock and make their voices heard. Popular involvement in policy making and empowerment are never process that evolve on their own. They are products of constant education and practice and framed by a political field that encourages and informs people not only of what they can do in terms of political strategizing and political participation but also of what they must do as members of the body politic with their own interests, knowledge, and capacities. (Nielsen & Risbjerg, 2001)

Indeed, many plans have failed because of their failure to take into consideration the notion of power, or because they are ambivalent about it, or more primarily because they fail to recognize its inevitability in any planning discourse. (Friedmann, 1998). From the discourses of the informants, power appears to be a side-stepped concept, even taken for granted. Participation or involvement appears sublated with the idea of power such that power is exercised once involvement is opened. In this discourse, power is initially and recognized to be in the hands of the state and is redistributed, handed out, or shared with the indigenous in public hearings and various forums.

This view of power, limits it to an external thing that, when divided equally, redistributed, or shared, leads to good and equitable planning. I argue that this is a very limited conception of power and it is precisely why even numerous public hearings fail to come up with a viable and sustainable plan for the city. I agree with Healey (2003) that power is a relational concept and is expressed in the social relations between, in our field of discussion, the planners and the planned for and is built upon the knowledge that each stakeholder carries to their relations. This is why this specific problematique, informed and expounded by the first, carries over into the third theme emergent from the results of the interviews

### Process – Discordances in Spatial-Specific Performances

It must be noted here that there are several “guides” to planning developed for CAR and the City of Baguio such as the CLUP. In the same note however, these guides are not processes as defined. This means that procedures to be followed in land use planning are in actuality, non-existent. In fact, among the interviewees, there is a conflict as to whether their agency (or

office) is following the planning process. According to informants,

“...But in our city planning office kase is kwan umm, land use planning for me seriously was never considered as aaa, what do you call this...uhmm it was never a serious process of the government”(L)

“...there is no singular process but I think we are following a...a universal standard in planning”(U)

This lack of planning process allows the entry of agential and individual interpretations into existing standards or a guideline leading to confusion which is what exemplifies the current planning process in CAR today. That is, dichotomous, compartmentalized and uncoordinated land use planning.

First, conflicts arise when the people who wield the power (planners) do not take into consideration the unique characteristics of the place and people they are planning for as in the case of the CLUP developed for the CAR and the city of Baguio. Although the CLUP was developed with different factors in consideration, there are different agencies within the city whose power over what to plan and implement for that may either be conflicting or even overlapping.

Beauregard (1987, p. 367) has noted as early as the eighties that, even in “in its fullest development, the Rational Model had neither subject nor object.

It ignored the nature of the agents who carried out planning and was indifferent to the object of their efforts.” This is painfully true in the formulation of the most recent Baguio City Land Use Plan.

In their desire to follow the strict requirements of law and policy, in the faithful adherence to rationalize how Baguio’s unique characteristics and attributes could be harnessed to promote regional and national development goals, and in rationalizing ten-year development goals with carefully gathered and scientifically-treated (i.e. empirical) data, city planners have succeeded in reducing the indigenous population of the city to an invisible sector, recognized only for their voices in consultation, but never really involved in the planning process and in the implementation of planning policies supposedly developed for them and their city. In all phases of urban planning and implementation, processes have been relegated to city, regional,

and national agencies. Civil society and small indigenous peoples’ organizations have been already consulted. Their part in the process has been recognized. In upholding the rational-comprehensive model, little regard is given to the notion that plan implementation is largely a negotiative process between and among interested actors.(Healey, 2002)

### CONCLUSION

Thus, this section of the study reaches the following conclusions. First, the current land use planning paradigm followed in the City of Baguio remains to be the rational comprehensive paradigm utilizing the top-down planning approach in which lower level plans such as the land use plan are aligned along the major developmental contours of higher level plans, that is, the National Physical Framework Plan (NPFPP). Second, the employment of this planning paradigm leads to the emergence of several problems in Baguio City planning. These, summarized in the themes of people, power, and process, include: role and identity discordances, in which issues on the identity and roles of indigenous peoples lead to the failure to include them fully and completely in land use planning for sustainable development; discordances in capacities, where legal and statutory provisions themselves provide the limitations to indigenous participation and involvement in planning; and discordances in spatial specific performances, where the very processes of planning concentrated in central deliberating venues provide the constraints for wider and more participative involvement outside the structures of power.

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