



**SUSTAINABLE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT  
FROM COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM:  
LESSONS FROM ITS PRACTICES AND  
CHALLENGES IN THE TERRITORY OF  
PARATY/RJ, BRAZIL**

**DESENVOLVIMENTO LOCAL SUSTENTÁVEL A PARTIR  
DO TURISMO DE BASE COMUNITÁRIA: LIÇÕES DAS SUAS  
PRÁTICAS E DESAFIOS NO TERRITÓRIO DE PARATY/RJ, BRASIL**

# SUSTAINABLE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FROM COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM: LESSONS FROM ITS PRACTICES AND CHALLENGES IN THE TERRITORY OF PARATY/RJ, BRAZIL

## DESENVOLVIMENTO LOCAL SUSTENTÁVEL A PARTIR DO TURISMO DE BASE COMUNITÁRIA: LIÇÕES DAS SUAS PRÁTICAS E DESAFIOS NO TERRITÓRIO DE PARATY/RJ, BRASIL

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### ABSTRACT

Community-Based Tourism (CBT) is a way of managing visitor activities that integrates several endogenous-territorial and sustainable principles. This model is associated with Sustainable Local Development (SLD), particularly in its cultural, ecological, economic, political, and social dimensions. However, achieving these principles is challenging, as it requires practices that actively materialize them. Accordingly, this study sought to describe CBT practices linked to SLD and the challenges encountered in this process. This objective was pursued through a case study in the territory of Paraty/RJ, a region with a well-established CBT framework and potential to contribute to SLD. Data collection involved documentary surveys, a semi-structured questionnaire, and direct observation, with data interpreted using thematic content analysis. Findings show that CBT practices in Paraty relate to various SLD dimensions, such as gastronomy, artistic productions, the presentation of historical sites, and expressions of local lifestyles that characterize the territory. Challenges to these practices include internal factors within community action and external factors beyond community control. This research advances understanding of how CBT practices that support SLD are implemented, addressing a gap in the literature. Furthermore, it identifies specific bottlenecks that may be addressed to enhance the feasibility of endogenous and sustainable development.

**Keywords:** Community-Based Tourism. Sustainable Local Development. Territories. Paraty/RJ. Crucial Case Study.

## RESUMO

O Turismo de Base Comunitária (TBC) é composto por modos de gestão das atividades de visitação que têm diversos princípios endógenos-territoriais e sustentáveis. Por conta disso, ele se associa à perspectiva do Desenvolvimento Local Sustentável (DLS), especialmente às suas dimensões cultural, ecológica, econômica, política e social. No entanto, o alcance desses princípios não é algo simples, pois ocorre pela realização de práticas desafiadoras que os materializam. Em vista disso, este trabalho buscou descrever práticas do TBC que se articulam ao DLS e seus desafios nesse processo. Tal objetivo ocorreu através de um estudo de caso crucial no território de Paraty/RJ, que tem um TBC bem fortalecido e com possibilidades para contribuir com o DLS. A coleta dos dados se deu por levantamentos documentais, aplicação de um questionário semiestruturado e observação direta. A interpretação dos dados baseou-se na técnica análise de conteúdo temática. Como resultados, verificou-se práticas de TBC em Paraty articuladas a diferentes fatores do DLS, por meio: da gastronomia; produções artísticas; apresentação de lugares históricos e dos modos de vida que singularizam o território etc. Já os desafios dessas práticas envolvem questões tanto internas (no campo comunitário de atuação), como externas (que não dependem apenas da comunidade). Desta forma, essa pesquisa ajuda a avançar no entendimento de como ações do TBC aderentes ao DLS são realizadas, uma lacuna da literatura. Além disso, mostra alguns gargalos que podem ser superados para que um desenvolvimento endógeno e sustentável seja possível.

**Palavras-chave:** Turismo de Base Comunitária. Desenvolvimento Local Sustentável. Territórios. Paraty/RJ. Estudo de Caso Crucial.

## INTRODUCTION

The Community-Based Tourism (CBT) model integrates various practices related to Sustainable Local Development (SLD) by promoting and preserving local culture, conserving natural resources, distributing tourism income within the community, empowering local populations in tourism management, and reducing socio-territorial exclusion among low-income individuals (Almeida & Emmendoerfer, 2023). These principles collectively balance the cultural, ecological, economic, political, and social dimensions of SLD processes (Almeida & Emmendoerfer, 2023).

According to Alves and Silva (2021), SLD integrates social equity, environmental conservation, and economic growth. SLD values each territory's distinct culture, resources, and needs, recognizing these as key components to achieving sustainability (Assis, França & Coelho, 2019; Dantas & Guenther, 2021; Sant'ana, Bento & Pereira, 2022). While SLD offers long-term benefits for improving local quality of life, it is a complex process that rarely reaches full realization due to numerous challenges (Junqueira, 2000).



When analyzing CBT practices or other management models that contribute to SLD, it is also important to consider these challenges, which vary according to the study's objectives and context.

This study examines CBT practices linked to SLD. Dangi and Petrick (2021) emphasize the need for further academic research to clarify how this relationship develops. Additionally, Almeida and Emmendoerfer (2023) suggest future research directions, such as theoretical and empirical analyses of how CBT promotes SLD across cultural, ecological, economic, political, and social dimensions.

The selected research context is the territory of Paraty/RJ, chosen through a “pathway” critical case study approach, which demonstrates how theoretical concepts are realized in a representative scenario (Gerring, 2007). Paraty was selected for its stable, community-supported CBT structure (Barros & Rodrigues, 2019; Cardoso, 2016; Martins, 2020; Monteiro, 2017), which supports activities intended to promote SLD. The CBT framework in Paraty primarily involves traditional *Caiçara*, Indigenous, and *Quilombola* populations (Mendonça et al., 2017).

This paper describes CBT practices in Paraty that align with SLD principles across cultural, ecological, economic, political, and social dimensions, as well as the challenges encountered in their implementation. Data were collected through document analysis, semi-structured questionnaires, and direct observations, then analyzed using thematic content analysis to identify key themes related to the study's objectives (Bardin, 2018).

This research addresses a gap in the literature by demonstrating how CBT has contributed to realizing SLD in a specific context (Dangi & Petrick, 2021; Almeida & Emmendoerfer, 2023). In relation to public management, the study emphasizes the need for supportive policies for CBT, which can strengthen communities and advance sustainable and endogenous development.

## **ENDOGENOUS AND SUSTAINABLE TERRITORIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM**

CBT is a tourism management model in which community members oversee activities to foster collective development based on shared territorial ties (Sarabia-Molina, Soares & Lois-González, 2022; Fernandes, 1973). Through these connections, CBT enables communities to collaboratively organize tourism activities that strengthen local networks (Masotti, 2023).



As an alternative to traditional mass tourism, which often prioritizes economic objectives (Masotti, 2023), CBT aligns with a responsible tourism movement that emerged in the late 20th century in response to issues like gentrification and unregulated development in conservation areas (Fabrino, 2013).

Responsible tourism fundamentally contrasts with market-oriented tourism models (Nascimento & Lanzarini, 2023). While recognizing profit's role in sustaining tourism businesses, it emphasizes that financial goals should be balanced with other important values.

According to Almeida and Emmendoerfer (2023) and Arratia et al. (2022), CBT practices align with SLD principles by embodying sustainable and endogenous principles across economic, ecological, social, cultural, and political dimensions (Almeida & Emmendoerfer, 2023). These principles will be further discussed in the following section within the SLD framework.

Among CBT's benefits for SLD, Sarabia-Molina, Soares, and Lois-González (2022) highlight its ability to mobilize "active community participation, through an intercultural perspective, for appropriate management of natural and cultural heritage, based on equity and local benefit distribution principles" (p. 1, our translation). Likewise, Lima, Irving, and Oliveira (2022) demonstrate that CBT prioritizes local culture, natural resources, and populations.

CBT also has the potential to diversify tourism services in ways that respect the unique characteristics of local populations (Espinoza, Tarabó & Soares, 2017), avoiding rigid standards. It enables visitors to experience the lifestyle of traditional communities and residents (Santos et al., 2019), helping to prevent cultural misinterpretations.

Despite CBT's numerous benefits for SLD, realizing this potential involves considerable challenges. Tinoco, Serrallonga, and Casellas (2021) point out that sustainability through CBT can be undermined by limited collaboration among territorial actors, low community capacity, and inadequate resources for CBT enterprises, threatening their viability.

This study, therefore, aims to identify both the challenges and achievements of CBT in Paraty's territory in advancing SLD, offering insights to inform the broader academic discourse. The following section examines the SLD concept, which serves as the foundation for analyzing the case study data.

## SUSTAINABLE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT AND ITS DIMENSIONS RELATED TO COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM

Development is a broadly defined concept, encompassing various approaches (Alves, Melo, & Signorelli, 2020), and is typically characterized as a process aimed at improving aspects of society (Bresser-Pereira, 2014). Sustainable Local Development (SLD), the primary focus of this work, gained prominence in sustainable development discourse during the 1990s (Fernández et al., 2019). This perspective emerged from the recognition that achieving sustainable development—balancing environmental, social, and economic dimensions—requires attention to local specificities (Rizzo et al., 2021).

The primary aim of SLD is to address local needs by harmonizing territorial factors to support long-term development (Assis, França, & Coelho, 2019; Sant’ana, Bento, & Pereira, 2022). Guarascio (2022) notes that SLD is strengthened when it emerges from interactions among local representatives who engage in discussions about the territory’s needs and potential.

Thus, SLD represents territorial development as a product of socio-territorial relationships. However, “local” should not suggest a smaller scale of development but rather endogenous development driven by internal factors (Tenório, 2012). “Local” can refer to a country in relation to the world, a state in relation to the country, a municipality in relation to the state, and so forth. In other words, what is considered “local” can vary widely depending on the context of analysis, yet it must emphasize the territory’s specificities within a broader (or global) framework.

The sustainable nature of SLD lies in its goal to improve quality of life by balancing environmental, social, and economic factors (Rizzo et al., 2021). Although these three factors are the most widely discussed in the literature, others are also relevant; for example, Dantas and Guenther (2021) suggest that culture and education are important attributes to include in SLD.

Therefore, the dimensions considered within SLD largely depend on the study’s focus. Since this study examines CBT practices in Paraty/RJ in relation to SLD, it adopts the dimensions outlined by Almeida and Emmendoerfer (2023). Their work identifies CBT’s potential contributions to SLD across the territorial dimensions of culture, ecology, economy, politics, and society, each of which is detailed in Table 1 below.



**Table 1** | SLD Factors that CBT Can Balance

Factor	Description
Cultural	Through the appreciation of local culture
Ecological	By raising awareness of the preservation of local natural resources
Economic	Through income generation for the local population
Political	By enhancing the decision-making role of the local population
Social	By reducing socio-territorial exclusion in the locality

Source: Adapted from Almeida and Emmendoerfer (2023).

These dimensions are not the only possibilities but are the ones examined in this article due to their direct relevance to CBT principles. Furthermore, achieving these factors, whether individually or collectively, is a complex task (Almeida & Emmendoerfer, 2023). Although fully realizing SLD may be difficult and often aspirational, it remains a valuable framework for guiding human actions.

This recognition does not diminish the challenges involved in bringing actions closer to this “ideal.” Accordingly, this research also seeks to identify the factors limiting the alignment of CBT in Paraty with SLD. The following section outlines the methodological procedures for achieving the article’s objectives.

## METHODOLOGY

Qualitative research examines the study subject through a subjective and individualized perspective (Flick, 2009). As a research strategy, a pathway case study was conducted. According to Gerring (2007), this approach describes how theoretical concepts are manifested in specific contexts. Pathway case studies rely on deductive logic (Gerring, 2007), moving from broad theoretical premises to address more specific issues (Bryman, 2016).

This study employs this approach to investigate how CBT may support SLD, focusing on practices and challenges observed in Paraty. This locale was chosen for its stable, community-supported CBT structure (Barros & Rodrigues, 2019), self-managed by *Quilombola*, *Caiçara*, and Indigenous populations (Cardoso, 2016), whose ways of life align with SLD principles (Araújo et al., 2017). Furthermore, Paraty’s CBT participates in collective territorial development efforts, such as the Paraty Municipal Tourism Council (COMTUR).



Three techniques were employed for data collection: document analysis, a semi-structured questionnaire, and direct observation. According to Mendonça, Moellwald, and Mago (2014), these techniques are widely applicable and commonly used in case studies. Document analysis, defined as the examination of information in documents (May, 2004), focused on meeting minutes from COMTUR sessions held between October 2022 and October 2023, available on the Council's website (COMTUR, 2024). These documents provided data on collective discussions and deliberations involving Paraty's CBT, which may influence SLD processes.

The semi-structured questionnaire, which included both open- and closed-ended questions (Mendonça, Moellwald, & Mago, 2014), was administered remotely via Google Forms. It was shared with individuals involved in CBT in Paraty through email and social media platforms, including WhatsApp and Instagram. Contact information for these participants was collected through online searches and a snowball sampling process, whereby initial respondents referred others. A total of 10 responses were gathered between 08/01/2023 and 10/31/2023, with no personal or indirectly identifiable data disclosed to ensure ethical standards. The questionnaire guide is provided in the Appendix.

Direct observation, a technique involving site visits to observe phenomena in real-time (Mendonça, Moellwald, & Mago, 2014), was conducted throughout 2023. Observations included visits to CBT-practicing communities in Paraty, walks in central tourist areas, attendance at COMTUR meetings as an observer, and visits to municipal tourism-related public agencies. Although the researcher did not participate in the observed activities, informal interactions and conversations occurred.

The collected data were organized into reports from document analysis, summaries of questionnaire responses, and field diaries from observations, providing a robust basis for data reliability. The data collection instruments underwent expert review prior to use and received approval from a University Research Ethics Committee, adhering to the ethical guidelines of Resolution No. 510/2016 (Brasil, 2016).

The data were analyzed through thematic content analysis to identify meanings relevant to the study's objectives (Bardin, 2018). These meanings were categorized to highlight CBT practices in Paraty that align with SLD, along with the associated challenges in integrating CBT with SLD. The analysis considered cultural, ecological, economic, political, and social aspects as intersections between CBT and SLD (Almeida & Emmendoerfer, 2023).





## RESULTS

Various forms of CBT in Paraty were documented during the research, including self-managed activities by local residents such as gastronomy, crafts, visual arts, boat tours, guided routes, dance, music, and local event organization. Figures 1 and 2 below illustrate these CBT activities in Paraty.

**Figure 1** | CBT in Paraty through gastronomy, crafts, and visual arts



Source: Documented and prepared by the authors.

**Figure 2** | CBT in Paraty through boat tours and guided routes, dances, music, and local event production



Source: Documented and prepared by the authors.

Some CBT enterprises in Paraty could not be identified, partly because not all local participants responded to the questionnaire or were available for in-person contact. Additionally, Paraty's tourism sector is vast and continually evolving, with numerous and varied activities.

The analysis in this study is contextual, reflecting only the typical CBT practices in Paraty. Although this limitation was unavoidable, the observed practices and challenges were consistent, allowing for data saturation.

This section presents and discusses the research findings, focusing on the categories identified through document analysis, semi-structured questionnaires, and direct observation. These categories represent CBT practices in Paraty linked to core dimensions that require internal balance within the SLD process, along with associated challenges.

## CULTURAL DIMENSION

In the cultural dimension, local gastronomy is expressed through both traditional and newly created dishes that reinterpret local flavors. This practice was documented during visits to CBT initiatives in Paraty that operate restaurants and participate in gastronomic events (Direct Observation, 2023).

Other practices related to the cultural dimension of SLD include musical and traditional dance performances by local artists. Minutes from one of the COMTUR meetings showed the hiring of these artists for a municipal event (Document Analysis, 2022, 2023), as well as reports from questionnaire respondents and observations during a musical performance at a local festival (Direct Observation, 2023; Semi-Structured Questionnaire, 2023).

Some traditional music and dances in Paraty are tied to religious rituals within local communities, reflecting another cultural practice observed (Direct Observation, 2023). Additionally, literary production, crafts, and visual arts that represent Paraty's culture have emerged as distinctive CBT practices. These items are typically created and sold within the community, at the Paraty Arts Market, or in locations around the historic city center (Direct Observation, 2023; Semi-Structured Questionnaire, 2023).

Furthermore, historical monuments and unique sites within the territory are introduced to visitors through guided tours organized by CBT initiatives (Document Analysis, 2022, 2023; Direct Observation, 2023; Semi-Structured Questionnaire, 2023). Additionally, visitors are introduced to the traditional lifestyles of local communities through visits and stays in Caiçara, Indigenous, and Quilombola communities in Paraty.

Challenges to sustaining CBT practices include ensuring that future generations continue to pass on local cultural elements. Some young people have left Paraty's communities, limiting their participation in cultural tourism activities (Semi-Structured Questionnaire, 2023). Another challenge involves preserving raw materials essential for traditional products, as these resources may eventually be threatened by pollution and deforestation, despite currently being abundant, particularly within Conservation Units (Semi-Structured Questionnaire, 2023).



Another issue is the need to ensure that local artists and products are consistently valued in municipal events and initiatives, whether organized by public or private entities, to prevent them from being overshadowed by more popular national or international alternatives (Document Analysis, 2022, 2023; Direct Observation, 2023). Lastly, preserving local historical and cultural heritage and its narratives is important to avoid loss or distortion over time (Direct Observation, 2023; Semi-Structured Questionnaire, 2023). A summary of these practices and identified challenges is provided in Table 2 below.

**Table 2** | CBT practices carried out by CBT in Paraty linked to the cultural dimension of SLD and its challenges

Cultural Dimension	
Practices	Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Production of traditional dishes (both old and new).</li> <li>• Musical and traditional dance performances by local artists.</li> <li>• Religious rituals by traditional communities.</li> <li>• Production of crafts and visual arts featuring elements of Paraty.</li> <li>• Composition and reproduction of local literary texts.</li> <li>• Presentation of historical monuments and unique locations in the territory.</li> <li>• Sharing the lifestyles of local traditional communities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensuring future generations continue to reproduce local cultural elements.</li> <li>• Preserving raw materials for traditional local products.</li> <li>• Ensuring local artists and products are consistently valued in events and activities held in the municipality.</li> <li>• Preserving the historical and cultural heritage of the locality, along with its historical narratives.</li> </ul>

Source: Prepared by the authors based on research data.

## ECOLOGICAL DIMENSION

The Ecological Dimension of SLD emerged in accounts from CBT participants in Paraty, who reported a commitment to responsible waste management within their enterprises (Semi-Structured Questionnaire, 2023). CBT initiatives also encourage organic food practices, sourcing from local family farmers or cultivating a community garden (Direct Observation, 2023; Semi-Structured Questionnaire, 2023).

The preservation of local fauna and flora has also been adopted by CBT initiatives in Paraty (Document Analysis, 2022, 2023). As one respondent noted in the Semi-Structured Questionnaire (2023), this commitment stems from a desire to sustain traditional lifestyles, which are marked by “a relationship of identity and reciprocity with nature, and thus, there is always a need to care for it.”



Beyond direct actions, CBT in Paraty has developed educational activities to increase tourists' awareness of environmental protection, helping to preserve resources and quality of life for future generations (Document Analysis, 2022, 2023; Direct Observation, 2023). Nonetheless, challenges remain in educating both tourists and those interested in CBT about the need to change common practices that impact the environment (Semi-Structured Questionnaire, 2023).

More specifically, prioritizing organic products, even when they are more accessible and less expensive, has proven challenging. In many cases, although there is a preference for organic agriculture, the use of industrial products with environmental impacts is sometimes necessary (Direct Observation, 2023).

Unauthorized construction in natural reserve areas in parts of Paraty poses a significant challenge to the region's ecological balance (Direct Observation, 2023). Additionally, there are difficulties in establishing structured public spaces for effective waste disposal during tourist activities (Document Analysis, 2022, 2023), including implementing a consistent system for selective waste collection (Semi-Structured Questionnaire, 2023). A summary of these practices and challenges is provided in Table 3 below.

**Table 3 |** CBT practices and challenges in Paraty related to the ecological dimension of SLD

Ecological Dimension	
Practices	Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proper disposal of waste.</li> <li>• Production and purchase of local organic foods.</li> <li>• Preservation of native fauna and flora in the territory.</li> <li>• Development of educational initiatives on environmental preservation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raising awareness about the need to change common inadequate habits.</li> <li>• Prioritizing the purchase of organic products, even when they are less accessible and more expensive.</li> <li>• Preventing unauthorized construction in natural reserve areas.</li> <li>• Ensuring structured public spaces for proper waste disposal, including selective waste collection.</li> </ul>

Source: Prepared by the authors based on research data.



## ECONOMIC DIMENSION

The economic factor is observed in income generated through the sale of food products, both in their natural form and as value-added products. In Paraty, these sales occur through restaurants, home-delivered agricultural products, and market or event stalls (Document Analysis, 2022, 2023; Direct Observation, 2023; Semi-Structured Questionnaire, 2023).

In addition to food products, Paraty's CBT initiatives frequently produce and sell artistic items such as crafts, sculptures, paintings, and books (Document Analysis, 2022, 2023; Semi-Structured Questionnaire, 2023). These items are sold within the community, at events, and in specific city locations, such as the Arts Market (Direct Observation, 2023).

Musical and dance performances also provide income for community artists, although they are not always remunerated (Semi-Structured Questionnaire, 2023). Guided tours and activities conducted by community members were identified as a particularly frequent and profitable practice for CBT in Paraty (Direct Observation, 2023). Additionally, accommodation services, especially within the homes of local CBT participants, contribute to the economic dimension (Semi-Structured Questionnaire, 2023).

Key challenges for economically strengthening Paraty's CBT include the limited resources available for many individuals to start and invest in a business, which hinder their creation and maintenance. Competition with more established enterprises concentrated in the city center was also seen as a challenge for CBT in attracting more tourists and achieving economic sustainability (Document Analysis, 2022, 2023; Direct Observation, 2023). However, CBT is not aimed at mass tourism and is designed to coexist alongside conventional tourism.

Lastly, a noted challenge is ensuring that Paraty's CBT participants have regular access to training and technical support to help them manage their businesses effectively (Semi-Structured Questionnaire, 2023). Limited institutions and opportunities in the municipality restrict access to this important training (Direct Observation, 2023). Table 4 below summarizes the practices and challenges discussed in this subsection.



**Table 4** | CBT practices challenges in Paraty related to the economic dimension of SLD

Economic Dimension	
Practices	Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sale of natural and value-added food products.</li><li>• Sale of crafts, visual arts, books, and other locally produced artefacts.</li><li>• Engagement of local artists in musical and dance performances.</li><li>• Commercialization of tours and tourist experiences led by community members.</li><li>• Accommodation services within the community.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Limited resources to start and invest in CBT enterprises.</li><li>• Competition with more structured and centralized businesses.</li><li>• Frequent access to training and technical support for effective business management.</li></ul>

Source: Prepared by the authors based on research data.

## POLITICAL DIMENSION

In the political dimension, CBT initiatives enable community members to exercise autonomy in tourism management (Direct Observation, 2023; Semi-Structured Questionnaire, 2023). This contrasts with mass tourism, where local populations are often relegated to subordinate roles (Masotti, 2023).

This political dimension is evident when CBT representatives in COMTUR advocate for the rights and interests of traditional peoples and local communities (Document Analysis, 2022, 2023). Another CBT practice in Paraty that strengthens the political capacity of the local population is fostering collaborative ties between community members and external actors supporting tourism development in the region (Document Analysis, 2022, 2023; Direct Observation, 2023).

Community members participate in collective decision-making spaces through the representational role that CBT holds in these forums (Direct Observation, 2023; Semi-Structured Questionnaire, 2023). A key challenge is addressing conflicts of interest among community members involved in CBT organization or with external entities in governance mechanisms (Document Analysis, 2022, 2023). Such conflicts may impede the collective pursuit of SLD.

Additionally, a key challenge for Paraty’s CBT initiatives is ensuring consistent, active participation in governance spaces. Not all individuals involved in CBT in the region engage in these governance spaces or frequently interact with other territorial actors (Semi-Structured Questionnaire, 2023). Table 5 below provides a summary of the political practices and challenges discussed in this section.

**Table 5 |** CBT practices and challenges in Paraty related to the political dimension of SLD

Political Dimension	
Practices	Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grant autonomy to community actors to manage tourism.</li> <li>Advocate for the rights of traditional peoples and local communities.</li> <li>Establish collaborative relationships among those involved in CBT or those seeking its local strengthening.</li> <li>Include community actors in collective decision-making spaces open to CBT representatives.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Address conflicts of interest among community actors within and outside of CBT initiatives.</li> <li>Continuously and actively participate in governance spaces and interact with other territorial actors.</li> </ul>

Source: Prepared by the authors based on research data.

## SOCIAL DIMENSION

The final dimension analyzed, the social dimension, is evident in how CBT has strengthened the relationship between Paraty’s communities and their territories, fostering a greater sense of belonging and ownership (Direct Observation, 2023). As one respondent stated in the Semi-Structured Questionnaire (2023), CBT “made the community more resilient in defending the place it inhabits” and enhanced their social empowerment.

Another impact of CBT in Paraty is maintaining accessible areas for lower-income populations to engage in tourism activities. Unlike the gentrification associated with mass tourism, housing and visitation costs have not increased significantly (Direct Observation, 2023). Additionally, a significant social practice is providing personalized rather than standardized tourism. Paraty’s CBT respects and represents the lifestyles of local populations, preserving traditions and offering activities that reflect the diversity and authenticity of local culture (Document Analysis, 2022, 2023; Direct Observation, 2023).





The challenges observed during Direct Observation (2023) include managing real estate speculation in various parts of Paraty, which can hinder the social impact and consolidation of CBT, as seen in the historic center of the city. Additionally, there is a need for more public policies that guarantee socially vulnerable people the right to access the city—for example, as with the Municipal Cinema in Paraty Square, where all screenings are free (Paraty/RJ, 2023). These practices and challenges are presented in Table 6.

**Table 6** | CBT practices challenges in Paraty related to the social dimension of SLD

Social Dimension	
Practices	Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthen the relationship between the community and its territory.</li> <li>• Maintain territory accessibility for low-income populations, avoiding gentrification processes.</li> <li>• Ensure that tourism is more personalized, preserving the lifestyles of the local population.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manage high real estate speculation in certain areas of Paraty.</li> <li>• Implement diverse public policies that guarantee socially vulnerable people the right to access the city.</li> </ul>

Source: Prepared by the authors based on research data.

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

This article demonstrated that CBT in Paraty engages in various practices aligned with SLD’s cultural, ecological, economic, political, and social factors. It also highlighted that promoting SLD involves significant challenges, as indicated in the findings. This underscores the idea that SLD has an “idealistic” nature, serving as a guiding framework that, while not fully attainable, enriches human actions and becomes more achievable through strengthening management models aligned with its principles, such as CBT.

Moreover, it is important to note that the practices and challenges identified in this study are specific to Paraty but may also be relevant in other locations with established CBT practices. Another limitation of this article is that it does not cover all CBT practices in Paraty related to SLD



and its challenges; instead, it focuses on those evident within the five dimensions analyzed and within the research's methodological scope.

Given the diversity and dynamism of tourism activities in Paraty, future studies could examine emerging forms of CBT for SLD in the region. Additionally, analyzing empirical cases in Brazil and internationally may provide comparative insights. Another relevant area for study is how CBT actors have organized to overcome challenges that impede the fulfilment of CBT principles.

Furthermore, this study contributes to the literature by examining how CBT has implemented actions and stances aligned with SLD, considering its limitations and challenges and addressing a theoretical gap (Dangi & Petrick, 2021), particularly in the cultural, ecological, economic, political, and social dimensions (Almeida & Emmendoerfer, 2023). In practical terms, this work may serve as a foundation for refining or proposing public policies that support CBT, considering both the challenges and benefits of its practices for sustainable territorial development.

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## APPENDIX | SEMI-STRUCTURED QUESTIONNAIRE GUIDE

### Target Audience

Individuals involved in Community-Based Tourism (CBT) in Paraty.

### Topic

Community-Based Tourism and Sustainable Local Development

### Preamble

Sustainable Local Development (SLD) is an endogenous process (based on local resources and needs) that aims to generate long-lasting societal benefits by balancing various territorial dimensions, such as cultural, ecological, economic, political, and social.

### Subtopics

### Questions

Cultural Dimension

1. Does your CBT initiative engage in cultural activities (such as producing practices related to local traditions)?  
( ) Yes ( ) No

1.1 If you answered “Yes,” please describe which:  
1.2 If you believe any challenges prevent or limit cultural activities in your CBT initiative, please describe below:

Ecological Dimension

2. Does your CBT initiative engage in ecological activities (such as preserving or conserving local natural resources)?  
( ) Yes ( ) No

1.1 If you answered “Yes,” please describe which:  
1.2 If you believe there is any challenge that prevents or limits ecological activities in your CBT initiative, please describe below:

Economic Dimension

3. Does your CBT initiative engage in economic activities (such as creating jobs and income for residents)?  
( ) Yes ( ) No

3.1 If you answered “Yes,” please describe which:  
3.2 If you believe there is any challenge that prevents or limits economic activities in your CBT initiative, please describe below:



Political Dimension

4. Does your CBT initiative engage in political activities (such as empowering residents in decision-making)?

Yes  No

4.1 If you answered "Yes," please describe which:

4.2 If you believe there is any challenge that prevents or limits political activities in your CBT initiative, please describe below:

Social Dimension

5. Does your CBT initiative engage in any social activities (such as impacting the local population's well-being)?

Yes  No

5.1 If you answered "Yes," please describe which:

5.2 If you believe there is any challenge that prevents or limits social activities in your CBT initiative, please describe below:

Contributions to SLD  
(Open-Ended)

6. Do you believe that your CBT initiative can contribute to promoting SLD, considering the definition of SLD provided in the preamble?

Yes  No

6.1 If you answered "Yes," please explain why:

6.2 If you answered "No," please explain why:



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