

INTEGRATING COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM INTO TERRITORIAL PUBLIC GOVERNANCE: A CASE STUDY OF PARATY/RJ (BRAZIL)

INTEGRAÇÃO DO TURISMO COMUNITÁRIO À GOVERNANÇA PÚBLICA TERRITORIAL: UM ESTUDO DE CASO DE PARATY/RJ (BRASIL)

INTEGRACIÓN DEL TURISMO COMUNITARIO EN LA GOBERNANZA PÚBLICA TERRITORIAL: UN ESTUDIO DE CASO DE PARATY/RJ (BRASIL)

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ABSTRACT:

Purpose – This study aims to analyze how representatives of Community-Based Tourism (CBT) have participated in Territorial Public Governance (TPG), considering elements that qualify this insertion.

Design/methodology/approach – This qualitative research conducted a case study in Paraty/RJ (Brazil), where CBT initiatives are consolidated and interact with local governance structures. Data collection involved document analysis, direct observation, and semi-structured questionnaires. Data interpretation was performed using thematic content analysis.

Findings – The results indicate that, although the integration of CBT into the analyzed TPG faces several restrictions that limit more effective exchanges, it is fundamental for fostering endogenous and sustainable practices, generating a collective effort in the proposal, evaluation, and implementation of decisions.

Practical implications – This research provides public managers, municipalities, tourism initiatives, and other stakeholders, a diagnosis of the challenges and how to improve the participation of CBT in TPG spaces to promote sustainable local development.

Originality/value – This article contributes to the understanding of CBT involvement in TPG and how this can help promote sustainable visitation activities, which is a gap in the literature.

Research limitations – It was limited to general and recurring issues of community participation in Paraty, without addressing the specificities of individual communities or initiatives.

Keywords: community-based tourism; territorial public governance; territorial planning; sustainable tourism management; Paraty/RJ.

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RESUMO:

Objetivo – Objetiva-se analisar como representantes do Turismo de Base Comunitária (TBC) têm participado da Governança Pública Territorial (GPT), considerando elementos que qualificam essa inserção.

Desenho/metodologia/abordagem – A pesquisa, de caráter qualitativo, realizou um estudo de caso em Paraty/RJ (Brasil), onde as iniciativas de TBC são consolidadas e interagem com as estruturas de governança local. A coleta dos dados envolveu levantamento documental, observação direta e questionários semiestruturados. Já a interpretação deles ocorreu por uma análise de conteúdo temática.

Resultados – Os resultados indicam que, embora a integração do TBC na GPT analisada enfrente diversas restrições que limitam trocas mais efetivas, ela é fundamental para o fomento de práticas endógenas e sustentáveis, gerando um esforço coletivo na proposição, avaliação e realização das deliberações.

Implicações práticas – A pesquisa proporciona aos gestores públicos, às autarquias, às iniciativas turísticas e demais interessados, um diagnóstico dos desafios e de como melhorar a participação do TBC nos espaços de GPT para promoção do desenvolvimento local sustentável.

Originalidade/valor – Este artigo contribui para a compreensão do envolvimento do TBC na GPT e como isso pode ajudar na promoção de atividades de visitação sustentáveis, que é uma lacuna da literatura.

Limitações da pesquisa – Limitou-se a questões gerais e recorrentes de participação comunitária em Paraty, sem abordar as especificidades de comunidades ou iniciativas individuais.

Palavras-chave: turismo de base comunitária; governança pública territorial; planejamento territorial; gestão sustentável do turismo; Paraty/RJ.

RESUMEN:

Propósito – El objetivo es analizar cómo los representantes del Turismo Comunitario (TC) han participado en la Gobernanza Pública Territorial (GPT), considerando los elementos que caracterizan esta inserción.

Diseño/metodología/enfoque – La investigación, de carácter cualitativo, realizó un estudio de caso en Paraty/RJ (Brasil), donde las iniciativas de TC están consolidadas e interactúan con las estructuras de gobernanza local. La recolección de datos incluyó revisión documental, observación directa y cuestionarios semiestruturados. La interpretación de los datos se realizó mediante análisis de contenido temático.

Hallazgos – Los resultados indican que, si bien la integración del TC en la GPT analizada enfrenta diversas restricciones que limitan intercambios más efectivos, es fundamental para la promoción de prácticas endógenas y sostenibles, generando un esfuerzo colectivo en la propuesta, evaluación e implementación de decisiones.

Implicaciones prácticas – La investigación proporciona a gestores públicos, municipios, iniciativas turísticas y otros actores un diagnóstico de los desafíos y estrategias para mejorar la participación del TC en los espacios de la GPT, con el fin de promover el desarrollo local sostenible.

Originalidad/valor – Este artículo contribuye a la comprensión de la participación del turismo comunitario en la gobernanza pública territorial y cómo esta puede ayudar a promover actividades turísticas sostenibles, un tema poco explorado en la literatura.

Limitaciones de la investigación – Se limitó a cuestiones generales y recurrentes de la participación comunitaria en Paraty, sin abordar las particularidades de comunidades o iniciativas individuales.

Palabras Clave: turismo comunitario; gobernanza pública territorial; planificación territorial; gestión turística sostenible; Paraty/RJ.

INTRODUCTION

Community-Based Tourism (CBT) is part of a political movement that advocates for more responsible tourism activities compared to conventional mass tourism, and that are carried out through management methods that aim to promote more collective benefits for a given community and its territory (Forero et al., 2025; Isaza & Salas, 2024). Such benefits involve the community's leading role in conducting tourism activities, the exaltation of local traditions, the strengthening of the community's economy, and the careful use of natural resources (Almeida & Emmendoerfer, 2023a; Cornelisse, 2019).

CBT seeks to promote sustainable territorial development (Abreu et al., 2024), particularly from an endogenous perspective. However, to achieve broader impact, its practices must be more widely adopted (Sebele, 2010). Thus, it is essential for CBT to collaborate with other territorial actors, aligning interests and fostering collective initiatives that drive progress (Dionisio et al., 2019). This vital collaboration between CBT and local stakeholders can be further solidified by embedding CBT within public governance frameworks, particularly those focused on territorial governance (Almeida & Emmendoerfer, 2023a).

According to Canadas et al. (2024) and Dallabrida (2011), Territorial Public Governance (TPG) occurs when the management of public affairs in a territory is carried out through discussion and decision-making mechanisms composed of various social and institutional groups, so that all of them can position themselves and have decision-making power. In this way, TPG mechanisms can deal with the elaboration of strategies for development or the identification of social problems in a territory (Bucurică, 2023; Cisterna, 2024; Richmond & Magri, 2025).

Almeida and Emmendoerfer (2023b) and Empinotti et al. (2023) highlight that the critical dialogical process inherent in TPG, while important, is intricate and fraught with challenges. A primary challenge is harmonizing the interests of groups with divergent priorities and contexts (Almeida & Emmendoerfer, 2023b). Moreover, the mere existence of governance frameworks does not guarantee effective outcomes, as governance processes may not meet intended goals. Consequently, TPG must not only be operational but also demonstrate qualities of “Good” governance (Bataglia et al., 2023).

Therefore, this research contends that the analysis of CBT participation in TPG should focus on factors that enhance the quality of its mechanisms, following the criteria proposed by Almeida and Emmendoerfer (2023c), which will be employed in this study. Furthermore, the literature (Dangi & Petrick, 2021) indicates a need for deeper exploration of the involvement of CBT representatives in governance frameworks, especially through context-specific and thorough research.

This study aims to answer the research question: How have CBT representatives participated in the TPG, considering important factors for their qualification? The research examines the Paraty/RJ territory, selected for its well-established CBT, recognized nationally (Barros & Rodrigues, 2019; Cardoso, 2016), and its partial involvement in collective territorial management.

A qualitative approach was employed, utilizing the crucial pathway case study method to explore the application of theoretical concepts in a specific context (Gerring, 2007). Data collection involved semi-structured questionnaires, direct observation, and document analysis, with thematic content analysis guiding the interpretation.

The objective is to show the way in which CBT representatives from the Paraty/RJ territory participate in the TPG, checking what happens and what can be improved for a qualified interaction. This study offers practical insights by pinpointing challenges that limit the engagement of community tourism representatives in Paraty’s public governance. Additionally, it enhances the theoretical understanding of CBT initiatives’ interactions with other territorial stakeholders, addressing a gap in the literature (Dangi & Petrick, 2021).

COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM AND THE IMPORTANCE OF ITS INTERACTION WITH OTHER TERRITORIAL ACTORS

Since the late 20th century, discussions on responsible tourism have increasingly emphasized the need to balance financial benefits with the preservation of environmental, cultural, and historical heritage (Fabrino, 2013). CBT has emerged as a prominent model within this discourse, aligning well with the principles of responsible tourism management (Barreto & Lanzarini, 2023).

In addition, CBT relates to the proposal of cultural tourism, considering the importance of valuing and reproducing the culture of the territory through visitation activities (Moraes et al., 2018). The cultural tourism movement has highlighted the importance of preserving the cultural heritage of places, extolling the customs of native peoples (such as indigenous peoples), as well as their tangible and intangible resources (Richards, 2018, 2021).

CBT first gained recognition in the 1980s among rural communities in Latin America (Maldonado, 2009). Maldonado (2009) and Cornelisse (2019) note that CBT arose from the realization that these communities could generate income by offering tourism experiences that authentically reflect their lifestyle, without adhering to external management standards that disregard their financial and cultural contexts. As a result, CBT empowers traditional communities to autonomously manage tourism activities within their own social framework (Moliterni et al., 2025), standing in contrast to the practices of conventional mass tourism.

Tuyen et al. (2023) define CBT as a model focused on tourism activities that emphasize cultural identity and preserve local environmental resources. It operates through cooperative management structures, fostering collaboration and ensuring that economic benefits are equitably distributed among local families (Junaid, 2023; Masotti, 2023).

While CBT promotes responsible practices that contribute to sustainable local development and encourages collaborative management to enhance its benefits (Forero et al., 2025; Moliterni et al., 2025), it is crucial for CBT to engage with other territorial actors (Abreu et al., 2024; Sebele, 2010). Addressing socio-territorial issues often requires collective action, as

these challenges cannot be resolved by isolated efforts alone. Therefore, CBT must engage with other stakeholders in its territory, potentially through participation in governance bodies (Almeida & Emmendoerfer, 2023a).

However, this process is not without significant challenges. Almeida and Emmendoerfer (2023b) identify key obstacles to CBT's effective participation in TPG mechanisms: accessing opportunities for participation, maintaining active engagement of representatives, overcoming the dominance of state decision-making in governance spaces created by public authorities, and mitigating the influence of purely market-driven interests in collective discussions.

Each context has its own specific nuances, and the findings of this study reflect the situation in Paraty. To facilitate the research, it was first identified that Paraty's CBT is represented in territorial governance spaces, such as the Municipal Tourism Council, where direct observation took place. However, before investigating Paraty's specifics, the next section will explore the concept of TPG and the essential elements for its effective operation.

TERRITORIAL PUBLIC GOVERNANCE AND THE MAIN ATTRIBUTES FOR ITS QUALIFICATION

Public governance expanded significantly in the late 20th century (Tribunal de Contas da União, 2014), driven by a shift towards a new public administration model that encourages greater societal participation in public service planning (Silvestre, 2019). Over time, TPG, also known as territorial governance, has emerged as a distinct approach within public governance, specifically focused on managing territories.

It is important to note that TPG is not limited to state participation, although the state often plays a key role in promoting its mechanisms. TPG can also be composed entirely of non-state groups, as long as they collectively manage public territorial issues (Cisterna, 2024; Dallabrida, 2011). Nonetheless, this study specifically focuses on a TPG space that involves both state representatives from the municipal government and non-state representatives from CBT, through direct observation.

TPG can be understood as a framework for managing public affairs within a territory, involving the participation of diverse social and institutional representatives in a collective decision-making process (Dallabrida, 2011 Richmond & Magri, 2025). TPG is grounded in the belief that effective public policies for territorial development require the involvement of multiple actors (Lopes & Mota, 2021), as the identification of issues must consider the diverse needs of different realities.

Moreover, TPG deepens the understanding of the complexities of public issues and fosters creative solutions by incorporating diverse perspectives (Ferrão, 2010). Calvo and Fernández (2021) and Canadas et al. (2024) suggest that governance spaces are fertile ground for strategies that would be unattainable by individual actors. These spaces also play a crucial role in enabling social oversight, particularly of state actions (Ferrão, 2010).

However, despite TPG's importance in promoting territorial development, its existence does not guarantee the effective establishment or achievement of desired outcomes. Many governance mechanisms suffer from unequal decision-making power among members and frequently fail to implement collectively agreed-upon decisions (Almeida & Emmendoerfer, 2023b). Such situations can undermine decision-making decentralization, turning these spaces into mere instruments for validating individual agendas.

Therefore, assessing TPG's quality (Bataglia et al., 2023) is important, considering both its processes and outcomes. The quality of TPG is not fixed but varies according to its objectives and can be evaluated based on specific criteria. As this research examines CBT, which practices sustainable local development, it uses the key attributes of Good TPG identified by Almeida and Emmendoerfer (2023c) through a literature review as a reference. Table 1 below outlines these attributes.

Table 1. Main attributes for a good TPG

Attributes	Description
Access to governance mechanisms	The extent to which governance mechanisms are open to local actors interested in participating.
Engagement of local actors in governance	The interest and initiative shown by local actors in participating in governance mechanisms.
Local representation in governance	The equitable presence and participation of diverse local actors in governance mechanisms.
Transparency of governance actions	Assessed by how broadly actions produced by governance spaces are communicated.
Sustainable responsibility in governance	The commitment of participants to balancing environmental, economic, and social factors, ensuring no single factor dominates collective decisions.
Effectiveness of governance	The degree to which deliberations collectively defined in governance mechanisms are implemented and realized.

Source: Adapted from Almeida and Emmendoerfer (2023c).

The study assessed Paraty's CBT participation in TPG through several criteria: access to governance mechanisms, local actor engagement, representation within governance, transparency of governance actions, sustainable responsibility, and effectiveness of governance. The analysis identified existing practices and potential improvements within the case study.

These attributes are not the only indicators of TPG's quality, as evaluations depend on specific contexts and analytical perspectives. The concept of Good TPG serves as an ideal benchmark, which, though not always fully realized, helps in understanding practices within particular contexts.

Although there is extensive literature on CBT and territorial governance separately, it is important that more studies empirically investigate the articulation between these two dimensions, especially in Brazilian territories with a strong presence of traditional communities. The following section details the methodological procedures and how research data were analyzed according to the attributes in Table 1.

METHODOLOGY

This study utilizes a qualitative approach, examining the subject through a subjective and contextual lens (Bryman, 2016). A crucial pathway case study was employed to investigate how broader theoretical concepts are realized within a specific context (Gerring, 2007). The crucial case study, based on deductive logic (Gerring, 2007), explores context-specific phenomena that may contribute to the consolidation, reconsideration, or redefinition of a theory.

This research starts from the theoretical premise that effective CBT participation in TPG spaces facilitates the achievement of its goals and contributes to territorial development. Accordingly, the study analyzed the integration of Paraty's CBT into these spaces to identify existing practices and areas for enhancement.

Paraty was selected as the case study for its distinctive characteristics pertinent to the research topic. The city is noted for its preservation and reinterpretation of traditions through architecture, cuisine, crafts, and festivals (Caponero et al., 2019; Souza, 2008). Additionally, Paraty encompasses one of Brazil's largest preserved areas of Atlantic Forest (Barros & Rodrigues, 2019; Caponero et al., 2019).

Paraty was designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2019, becoming the only city in Brazil recognized for both cultural and natural heritage (Ministério do Turismo, 2022). The city is also home to traditional communities, including quilombolas, indigenous groups, and caiçaras, who have organized to self-manage tourism activities (Mendonça et al., 2017).

Over time, various communities in Paraty, both traditional and local, have developed and strengthened CBT, establishing it as a reference point for numerous studies (Mendonça et al., 2017). Additionally, CBT has gained representation in local governance forums, such as the Municipal Tourism Council (COMTUR), the Municipal Council for Cultural Policy (CMPC), and the Forum of Traditional Communities (FCT), which also includes other municipalities in the Serra da Bocaina (Bocaina Mountain Range) region. For these reasons, Paraty is considered an important case study.

Data were collected using three methods: a semi-structured questionnaire, direct observation, and document analysis. The questionnaire featured both closed and open-ended questions, intended to be completed without direct interaction with the researcher (Filippo et al., 2011). It targeted individuals engaged in CBT in Paraty and was distributed online through Google Forms. The questionnaire was shared via e-mail and on social media accounts associated with CBT, available from August 1, 2023, to October 31, 2023. Using snowball sampling, where initial respondents referred others, 10 responses were obtained.

Direct observation involves the researcher visiting the site of the phenomenon to capture insights otherwise unattainable (Mendonça et al., 2014). This was carried out throughout 2023, including visits to CBT communities, tours of the historical center's tourist sites, attendance at two COMTUR meetings as an observer, and visits to municipal institutions related to tourism and culture. During these observations, the researcher did not participate in the activities but engaged in informal, unscripted conversations on the subject, which were documented in field notes.

The document analysis focused on the laws establishing local councils to assess CBT representation; the official websites of identified governance bodies; and the minutes from COMTUR meetings held in 2022 and 2023. These public documents (<https://sites.google.com/view/comturparaty/in%C3%ADcio>) were selected because they capture interactions between CBT representatives and other territorial actors within the primary municipal-level public tourism governance space (Trentin, 2016). Additionally, the minutes were cross-referenced with observations from COMTUR meetings to verify the accuracy of the records.

Thus, the diversity of sources ensured greater reliability and confidence in the data obtained. It is also noteworthy that the data collection instruments (questionnaire scripts, observation, and document analysis) were approved by the University's Research Ethics Committee and comply with the ethical guidelines set forth in Resolution No. 510/2016 (https://www.in.gov.br/materia/-/asset_publisher/Kujrw0TZC2Mb/content/id/22917581).

A thematic content analysis was conducted to interpret the data. Rosa and Mackedanz (2021) describe this technique as identifying semantic elements in data sources that address the research problem. In this study, these elements were categorized to reflect Paraty/RJ's CBT participation in TPG. Categories include access to governance mechanisms, local actor engagement, local representation, transparency of governance actions, sustainable responsibility, and effectiveness of governance – main factors in evaluating participation quality (Almeida & Emmendoerfer, 2023c). The data coded during the analytical reading of the responses to the questionnaires, documents and observation reports - triangulating the data sources.

RESULTS

This section presents the research findings, outlining Paraty's CBT participation in TPG. Before the research, local governance spaces with CBT representatives were identified. Paraty's CBT actors' participation in TPG is not unidimensional; it varies based on individual political influence and contributions within these mechanisms.

However, broader and recurring issues in Paraty will be examined to foster actions that enhance territorial governance and its public policy process. The subsections of this chapter will outline existing conditions and potential improvements for each key factor in evaluating TPG quality, as identified by Almeida and Emmendoerfer (2023c).

Access to governance mechanisms

Before conducting a detailed document review, an e-mail was sent to the municipal government asking which institutions and governance spaces in the municipality involve and represent CBT. The following information was obtained:

Community-Based Tourism (CBT) initiatives in Paraty are involved with the Department of Culture, including representation on the Council of Cultural Policy, where related topics are addressed, though no seats are exclusively dedicated to CBT. However, the Department of Tourism is the primary municipal body for sector development. In the Tourism Council, CBT is regularly addressed, alongside the concept of Experiential Tourism (Direct Observation, 2023).

Based on this and other documentary evidence, the analysis focused directly on the Municipal Tourism Council (COMTUR) and indirectly on the Municipal Council of Cultural Policy (CMPC). It should also be noted that CBT actors may engage in other municipal governance spaces relevant to their work, such as the Municipal Councils for Environmental Protection, Fisheries, and Agriculture.

In addition to these spaces promoted by the municipal government, the FCT was also analyzed. Although the FCT is not a council organized by the municipal government, it receives support from Paraty City Hall (Document Review, 2024). However, the FCT does not focus solely on Paraty's territorial issues but rather on the broader Serra da Bocaina (Bocaina Mountain Range) region, which includes other municipalities (Document Review, 2024).

Regarding access to COMTUR, which is consultative and deliberative, it was observed that CBT occupies the seat for "d) traditional peoples," as established by Municipal Law No. 2.341/2021 (Document Review, 2021; Direct Observation, 2023). CBT can also participate in other sector-specific seats on the council, either as a primary or alternate representative, if it meets the criteria. These sectors include: a) Accommodation Providers; b) Tourism Agencies and Operators; c) Bars and Restaurants; e) Microenterprises and Independent Tourism Support Services; f) Organized Civil Society; g) Tourism and Cultural Institutions; h) Public Regulatory Institutions (Document Review, 2021).

In other words, they are not confined to the seat for traditional peoples, although this seat is more directly aligned with CBT in the region. CBT actors can also be members of the municipal executive branch and occupy one of the six seats (three for primary representatives and three for alternates) allocated to public authorities.

Another TPG space available for Paraty's CBT participation is the Municipal Council of Cultural Policy (CMPC), through the seat for traditional peoples and communities, as defined by Municipal Law No. 1.997/2015 (Document Review, 2015). The CMPC, like COMTUR which is consultative and deliberative, offers other civil society seats that CBT actors from Paraty can fill: visual arts; audiovisual and cinema; music; performing arts; tangible and intangible heritage; libraries, books, reading, and literature; and cultural institutions and facilities (Document Review, 2015).

FCT participation is open but lacks the consultative and deliberative functions of municipal councils in shaping local public policies (Document Survey, 2018). However, through a collaborative network, it monitors the implementation of policies, plans, projects, and actions related to traditional peoples and communities (Observatory of Sustainable and Healthy Territories of Bocaina, 2018).

Enhancing CBT representation in these spaces is necessary. Direct Observation (2023) found that smaller CBT initiatives, with limited political influence, often cannot engage in councils due to seat limitations. Although these spaces permit guest participation, voting power remains with prominent actors, potentially overlooking some CBT initiatives in Paraty (Document Survey, 2023; Direct Observation, 2023).

Another area for improvement is ensuring exclusive seats for CBT representatives in the TPG. Currently, other territorial groups can occupy many CBT-designated seats (Document Survey, 2025, 2021), creating unpredictability in CBT access, particularly regarding voting rights. Table 2 below summarizes current conditions and suggests improvements for CBT access to governance in Paraty.

Table 2. CBT participation on TPG in Paraty regarding access

Access to governance mechanisms	
What exists	What can be improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - COMTUR access through fixed and rotating voting representations. - CMPC access through fixed and rotating voting representations. - FCT access through fixed voting representations, though the mechanism is not directly linked to state public policy production. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure CBT has access to diverse representations within these spaces. - Increase the exclusivity of seats for CBT representatives in TPG.

Source: Prepared by the authors.

Engagement of local actors in governance

The involvement of Paraty's CBT actors in TPG varies among individuals and encompasses multiple dimensions. During Direct Observation (2023), some community members participating in the TPG reported feeling motivated because their concerns were acknowledged, especially by public authorities. One representative noted, "(...) when I attend the council and forum, I can address the challenges we face and highlight our contributions to Paraty's tourism. This is important as it prevents us from feeling isolated" (Direct Observation, 2023).

During COMTUR meetings, representatives from CBT and other civil society groups emphasized that the council aligns interests and efforts to strengthen local tourism (Document Survey 2022, 2023; Direct Observation, 2023). One representative remarked that the council facilitates "(...) exchanges of information and group deliberations that would hardly be possible otherwise" (Direct Observation, 2023), highlighting this as a central reason for their involvement in the TPG.

While some individuals are motivated to engage in Paraty's TPG, others refrain, feeling they lack a political profile and that others are already fulfilling that role, even though direct interaction in advancing their agendas may be limited (Direct Observation, 2023; Semi-Structured Questionnaire, 2023). This underscores the need for the providers of Paraty's TPG mechanisms to raise awareness among CBT actors about the importance of their participation, whether through indirect representation or non-voting involvement.

Another issue concerning engagement is that some CBT agents refrain from participating in municipal councils, perceiving these forums as merely validating predetermined government actions (Direct Observation, 2023; Semi-Structured Questionnaire, 2023). This highlights the need for public authorities to establish conditions that build trust in the TPG among Paraty's CBT actors and ensure they feel genuinely included. Table 3 below illustrates the current situation and potential areas for improving the engagement of CBT actors in Paraty's TPG.

Table 3. CBT participation on TPG in Paraty regarding engagement

Engagement of local actors in governance	
What exists	What can be improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Some people are motivated to participate in TPG because they believe their demands will be heard. - Some are engaged because they see these spaces as opportunities to unify interests and strengthen local tourism. - Some do not participate because they feel they lack a political profile and believe representatives already exist to fulfill this role. - Some do not participate in municipal councils, believing these spaces only validate government actions already decided upon. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Raise awareness among CBT actors about the importance of their participation, even if it is indirect or without voting rights. - Provide the necessary conditions for CBT actors in Paraty to trust in TPG spaces and feel included.

Source: Prepared by the authors.

Local representation in governance

It was observed that representatives from the CBT sector participate in Paraty’s TPG mechanisms through both fixed seats, allocated to traditional peoples and communities, and rotating seats, open to individuals regardless of their involvement in CBT enterprises. This was discussed in subsection “ Access to governance mechanisms” where these representations were identified in COMTUR, CMPC, and FCT.

Despite existing representation, some individuals observed that the fixed seats for CBT do not adequately represent the diversity of communities and enterprises in Paraty involved in CBT (Direct Observation, 2023; Semi-Structured Questionnaire). As a result, CBT representation in the territory’s TPG is more effective when its actors occupy non-exclusive seats (Direct Observation, 2023). Therefore, increasing the number of exclusive seats for CBT representation in Paraty’s TPG is recommended.

Another point is that not all CBT initiatives in Paraty actively participate in or communicate their positions to their TPG representatives. Along with observations from community members during Direct Observation (2023), responses from the Semi-Structured Questionnaire (2023) indicated a significant lack of participation (direct or indirect) in governance by those involved in CBT in the territory: “More people from the community could be participating” and “Not everyone can always participate.” To address this, preliminary meetings should be organized to ensure that all CBT initiatives in the territory can communicate their positions to their representatives in the TPG.

It was also observed that, although council deliberations result from collective decision-making through representation, they sometimes diverge from what was agreed upon due to a more exclusive stance taken by public authorities (Direct Observation, 2023; Document Survey, 2023). Therefore, it is essential to strengthen the deliberative capacity of TPG spaces to ensure that decisions are genuinely representative and adhere to the distributive parameters of voting.

Table 4. CBT participation on TPG in Paraty regarding local representation

Local representation in governance	
What exists	What can be improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There are CBT representatives in Paraty’s governance mechanisms through fixed (traditional peoples) and rotating seats. - Not all CBT initiatives participate or communicate their positions to representatives in Paraty’s TPG. - Although deliberations result from collective decision-making through representations, some territorial public issues are handled differently than deliberated – mainly due to a more exclusive stance by public authorities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase the number of fixed seats for CBT representatives in Paraty’s TPG. - Organize preliminary meetings to enable all CBT initiatives in the territory to communicate their positions to their representatives in TPG. - Expand the deliberative capacity of TPG spaces.

Source: Prepared by the authors.

Transparency of actions produced by governance mechanisms

The concept of transparency is multifaceted; in this study, it refers to the publication (in various forms) of actions produced within TPG spaces. Transparency varies by mechanism, prompting a detailed analysis of COMTUR, CMPC, and FCT, with some general observations drawn from community actor reports.

For COMTUR, an institutional website (<https://sites.google.com/view/comturparaty>) was identified that provides information on its representatives, related legislation (including its founding law, as previously mentioned, and the bylaws), the Municipal Tourism Fund, and the minutes of all meetings (Document Survey, 2024). COMTUR also uses other official communication channels, such as e-mail and an Instagram profile, where photos and updates on its activities are shared (Document Survey, 2024).

The CMPC centralizes its communication through the Municipal Department of Culture's website (<https://www.culturaparaty.rj.gov.br/>), providing contact information, including a phone number, e-mail, and social media profiles on Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube (Document Survey, 2024). Unlike COMTUR, no exclusive website was identified to host meeting minutes and related legislation (Document Survey, 2024). Additionally, the Department of Culture's website lacks a dedicated section for CMPC-specific documents, unlike the more organized structure of COMTUR's website.

For FCT, there is an institutional website (<https://www.forumdecomunidadestradicionais.org/>) where newsletters, news, and campaigns are published (Document Survey, 2024). The FCT also maintains social media accounts on Vimeo, Facebook, and Instagram, where it shares videos, photos, and updates on its meetings (Document Survey, 2024).

Although information from TPG spaces is conveyed directly – both physically and digitally through individual or group messages (Direct Observation, 2023) – some CBT actors reported difficulties accessing specific information, even when electronically available (Participant Observation, 2023; Semi-structured Questionnaire, 2023).

Some individuals working in CBT within the territory have low digital literacy, making it difficult for them to access information online (Participant Observation, 2023). To address this, consolidating physical communication channels for these mechanisms is essential to ensure broader accessibility.

Additionally, crucial governance information, such as the mechanism's law and/or bylaws, meeting minutes or similar documents with agendas, discussions, and decisions, and financial expenditure data (when available), is not consistently accessible across all websites. Only the COMTUR website provides this information in a well-organized and easily accessible manner (Document Survey, 2024). Therefore, it is recommended to enhance the organization and availability of general TPG data. Table 5 below summarizes the current transparency measures and areas needing improvement in governance.

Table 5. CBT participation on TPG in Paraty regarding transparency

Transparency of actions produced by governance mechanisms	
What exists	What can be improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Actions are published on the council's institutional website, including representations, related legislation, the Municipal Tourism Fund, and meeting minutes. Communication also occurs through social media. - Actions are published on the Municipal Department of Culture's website, though not in a segmented manner. Communication also occurs through social media. - Actions are published on the Forum's institutional website, including actions, news, and campaigns. Communication also occurs through social media. - Communication is conducted directly, both physically and digitally (through individual or group messages with members). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consolidate the physical dissemination of TPG actions to ensure individuals with limited or no digital literacy can access the information. - Improve the organization and accessibility of general TPG data on official websites.

Source: Prepared by the authors.

Sustainable responsibility in governance

Sustainable responsibility in governance is a complex aspect to analyze, as it encompasses various nuances in the decision-making process. This study specifically examined whether the TPG mechanisms involving Paraty's CBT actors are committed to considering environmental, social, and economic factors in their deliberations, with the goal of achieving balanced outcomes.

The research found that deliberations in Paraty's TPG spaces have incorporated environmental concerns. For example, during several COMTUR meetings, actions were taken to develop a system for monitoring proper waste disposal in the territory (Document Survey, 2022, 2023). The following excerpt from the COMTUR meeting minutes highlights a decision based on an environmental agenda:

"Council members referenced an earlier camera monitoring project, which could help not only prevent criminal activities but also monitor improper waste disposal by residents and businesses." "(...) the Municipal Guard will implement a monitoring system in the building currently housing the CIT – Tourist Information Center" (Document Survey, 2023).

Social agendas were also addressed through collective actions, such as organizing a campaign to raise tourist awareness about the importance of cultural, racial, gender, and sexual orientation diversity (Document Survey, 2023). This initiative, along with other socially focused actions, was implemented as defined in Paraty's TPG spaces (Document Survey, 2023; Direct Observation, 2023).

Regarding the economic dimension, a notable example is the fair organized by COMTUR, where CBT initiatives and other tourism-related enterprises from the territory were invited to sell their products (Document Survey, 2023; Direct Observation, 2023). Recurring agendas addressing economic, social, and environmental dimensions were also identified in the CMPC and FCT (Document Survey, 2023; Direct Observation, 2023).

The integration of the three key factors for sustainable development (environmental, social, and economic) largely depends on the specific agenda under deliberation and the resources available. Therefore, it cannot be stated that the TPG spaces analyzed are consistently sensitive to or fully committed to sustainable issues. However, they have clearly developed actions aligned with these three dimensions, as exemplified.

It is also important to recognize that the understanding of sustainability varies among individuals and social groups, leading to differing perspectives. As more social groups participate in the deliberative process, sustainable decisions can become broader and more inclusive. Direct Observation (2023) and responses to the Semi-Structured Questionnaire (2023) revealed that many local tourism community actors still face challenges in effectively presenting their concerns regarding environmental, social, and economic factors in TPG spaces. This indicates that TPG should better engage with external community actors to ensure that sustainable actions are more comprehensive and robust.

Sustainable governance responsibility involves not only collective discussions and balanced decision-making but also the implementation of the commitments made. The study found that in Paraty, sustainable actions, even those derived from TPG deliberations, are not always fully or even partially implemented (Direct Observation, 2023; Semi-Structured Questionnaire, 2023). The primary challenges identified were a lack of resources and political prioritization. Therefore, it is recommended to increase investment and prioritize the implementation of sustainable tourism public policies.

Table 6. CBT participation on TPG in Paraty regarding sustainable responsibility

Sustainable responsibility in governance	
What exists	What can be improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Deliberations have included environmental, social, and economic agendas. - Not all local tourism community actors are able to present what they consider important regarding environmental, social, and economic factors to the TPG. - Sustainable actions, even when collectively deliberated, are not always implemented due to resource constraints and political prioritization. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Engage more with community actors to better understand their priorities regarding environmental, social, and economic factors. - Increase investment and prioritize the implementation of sustainable tourism policies.

Source: Prepared by the authors.

Effectiveness of governance

The final attribute analyzed, effectiveness, addresses the deliberations implemented by the TPG. It underscores that collective discussion and decision-making must be followed by concrete actions to ensure the proposed initiatives are carried out. While many actions deliberated in the TPG spaces involving CBT in Paraty have been implemented, some are not fully or even partially implemented due to various challenges.

Certain territorial issues require practical commitment from the representatives who pledged to take action, but this commitment is sometimes lacking, as noted by a respondent in the Semi-Structured Questionnaire (2023): "Some things do not receive effort from all representatives, and as a result, they are not carried out." Additionally, the implementation of decisions often requires the involvement of external actors, such as a contracted company or broader participation from the local community.

During Direct Observation (2023) and the Document Survey (2022, 2023), cases were identified where the contracted company did not deliver the service/product as expected, and where the local population did not sufficiently cooperate. This highlights the need for better collaboration – both among the representatives and between them and external actors – to ensure that actions derived from the TPG are successfully implemented as intended.

Another issue affecting effectiveness was the lack of resources – whether due to inadequate planning or insufficient political prioritization – that hindered public authorities from fully or even partially implementing, through public policies, what was deliberated in the TPG (Direct Observation, 2023; Document Survey, 2022, 2023). A respondent from the Semi-Struc-

tured Questionnaire (2023) also noted that the failure to implement deliberations often occurs because “many times we do not get government support.”

To address this, it is recommended to increase investments and ensure that actions deliberated by the TPG are incorporated into the local public policy agenda. Additionally, improving budget planning during the proposal and implementation phases of TPG decisions is crucial. Table 7 below summarizes the key points discussed in this subsection.

Table 7. CBT participation on TPG in Paraty regarding effectiveness

Effectiveness of governance	
What exists	What can be improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Some initiatives require contributions from specific TPG representatives and external non-state and state actors to be effective. - Not all TPG representatives and external actors consistently fulfill their commitments, hindering the realization of deliberations. - There are often insufficient resources and public sector support to fully or partially implement deliberated actions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strengthen collaboration among representatives and external actors to ensure TPG actions are implemented as proposed. - Increase investment and prioritize the inclusion of TPG deliberations in the local public policy agenda. - Improve budget planning during the proposal and implementation phases of TPG-defined actions.

Source: Prepared by the authors.

Therefore, the results describes how the theoretical categories indicated in Almeida and Emmendoerfer (2023c) – which had not been empirically investigated – are revealed in the case studied, considering what exists and what can be done to qualify the participation of CBT in TPG mechanisms.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

This article showed how the CBT of Paraty has participated in TPG. While COMTUR remains the primary forum for municipal tourism deliberations (Trentin, 2016), TPG on these matters also involves other mechanisms like CMPC and FCT and other initiatives (such as internal community meetings that are not always documented). The coordination among these mechanisms and TPG initiatives is often fragmented, though sometimes complementary.

Despite several challenges – such as limited mobilization, insufficient broad participation, inadequate dissemination of actions, and the incomplete implementation of some collective decisions – TPG has played a fundamental role in consolidating the principles and practices of CBT in the studied case. The TPG participation has contributed to strengthening CBT in Paraty, establishing it as a model for emerging initiatives in other territories. However, participation should not be seen as unidimensional, as it varies with each individual’s political influence, interest, and access.

This study focused on general and recurring TPG issues, without addressing the specificities of individual communities or initiatives. Future research should investigate the unique aspects of participation relevant to particular CBT communities or initiatives, whether in Paraty or other territories.

Even with limitations, this article advances the understanding of CBT’s involvement in territorial governance and its role in promoting responsible tourism, addressing a gap identified by Dangi and Petrick (2021). Practically, the findings offer to public managers, councils and tourism initiatives a valuable diagnosis of challenges to be addressed for better integrating CBT into TPG in Paraty and improving the outcomes generated by these governance spaces.

Additionally, this research highlights the critical importance of community actor participation in public tourism management for developing and implementing endogenously sustainable development strategies, which can inform the co-production of public policies in similar contexts.

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DATA AVAILABILITY

The research data is in the body of the article.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Thiago Chagas de Almeida: Conceptualization; data curation; data analysis; research methodology; project administration; tool provision; supervision; data and experiment validation; data presentation design; original manuscript writing; writing – revision and editing.

Magnus Luiz Emmendoerfer: Conceptualization; data analysis; funding receipt; project administration; tool provision; supervision; data and experiment validation.

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