



# Cycle Tourism and Community-Based Tourism as Economic Inducers

Isabela da Silva Perotti<sup>1,\*</sup>  and Ivo Reck Neto<sup>2</sup>   
and Jorge Gomes de Oliveira Brand<sup>3</sup>  and  
Fabiana Moro Martins<sup>4</sup> 

<sup>1</sup> University of Coimbra, Coimbra 3004-504, Portugal

<sup>2</sup> Federal University of Paraná, Curitiba 80060-000, Brazil

<sup>3</sup> Legislative Parliament of Paraná, Curitiba 80530-911, Brazil

<sup>4</sup> National Historical and Artistic Heritage Institute, Curitiba 80040-070,  
Brazil

isabelaperotti@icloud.com

**Abstract.** Climate change, in combination with urbanisation, has generated processes that affect the environment and society, calling for cities to become more sustainable and resilient. In this context, the Deputy Goura mandate presented good practices from Brazil at the Nature for Innovative and Inclusive Urban Regeneration (NATiURB) International Conference organised by the URBiNAT project. On this occasion, participants from Europe and Brazil have debated urban regeneration models and development policies that use social technologies and participation as engines for the well-being and inclusion of communities and democratic strengthening at the project scale. Based on a literature review and documentary analysis, this text presents the perspective of cycle tourism, allied to community-based tourism as an inducer of sustainable economic development of the State of Paraná, southern Brazil. In conclusion, the text shows that, especially from the point of view of public policy, some links between cyclotourism allied to Community-based Tourism and Nature-based Solutions lie in their emphasis on sustainability, environment conservation, local community involvement, and social and cultural development.

**Keywords:** Cycle Tourism, Nature-based Solutions, Economy.

## 1 Introduction

Climate change, in combination with urbanisation, has generated processes that affect the environment and society, calling for cities to become more sustainable and resilient. Nature-based solutions (NbS) represent a novel approach to meeting city sustainability goals and improving citizens' quality of life [2,18]. However, the design and planning of NbS oriented to the needs of the local context require exchanges of good practices

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and a qualified debate on the relationships of governance and public policies, sustainability and participatory design, economics and inclusive urban regeneration, networking and cooperation between cities.

In the state of Paraná (South of Brazil), the Environment and Ecology Commission of the Legislative Parliament, led by the progressive Deputy Goura, held an international seminar in 2021 in partnership with the European consortium URBiNAT, to promote dialogue between good practices and evidence produced in Brazil and Europe. The international conference aimed to strengthen municipalities' public and political agenda on the integrated relationship between cities, nature, and people towards a more inclusive and sustainable social transformation in the state by engaging policymakers, local technicians, researchers, students, and citizens. Moreover, the event debated models of urban regeneration and development policies that use social technologies and participation as drivers for the well-being and inclusion of communities and democratic empowerment at the scale of projects.

In this text, we will explore one of the topics addressed at the seminar, which coincides with one of Deputy Goura's central agendas: cycle mobility allied to community-based Tourism (CbT).

First, we present the modality of bicycle tourism as an economic inducer in the state of Paraná, demonstrating the industry and trade chain that developed from it. In the sequence, we present the political agenda instituted from consolidating bills to bicycle tourism and for a state policy of CbT to be applied in partnership with traditional communities.

## **2 Cycle tourism as a local economic inducer**

Cycle tourism as an economic inducer is considered an alternative for sustainable territorial development, which in 2018 represented 10.4% of the world's gross domestic product (GDP). In Brazil, the tourism sector was responsible for the growth of 2.9% of the national GDP in 2022 [21].

The worldwide growth of tourism and its organisation - compared to the industry of the Fordist period - have created standardised tourism products, conquering markets and stimulating the need to travel. Destinations where tourism is installed celebrate the growth of job supply and income and the dynamisation of the economy [13].

However, in the standard tourism model, the destination of these resources, growth, benefits, and wealth does not necessarily go to the local community. Many economists call this the leakage effect, i.e., the evasion or leakage of the tax revenues generated by tourism [21]. Leakages can be divided into two categories: internal leakages, through the import of products and services to attend to tourists, or when visitors' spending does not even enter the local economy because it's all done inside all-inclusive hotels or cruise ships; and external leakages, also called pre-leakages, because the tax revenue does not even enter the local economy. For example, when a tourist buys an airline ticket from a foreign company to visit a third country or through the operationalisation of services by external agents, who will expatriate part of the profits to the countries where the companies are based [21].

Internal leakages account for between 40% and 50% of developing countries and 10% and 20% in developed countries [11]. External leakage can compromise up to 75% of

tax revenues in developing countries that use mass tourism dominated by transnational companies as a model [11,24]. A third type of leakage is invisible leakage, caused by the damage or deterioration of tourist resources.

To overcome *leakages*, the World Tourism Organisation [34] recommends strengthening *linkages*, i.e. tourism's connections with producers and other sectors of the local economy, to emphasise its multiplier effect. This can even be done with producers and service providers in the informal sector since the informal sector can be significant in developing countries.

Once we consider the CbT, the parameters of development are based on a long period and from a resources distribution perspective

[...] economic sustainability, which ensures economically efficient development, guarantees equity in the distribution of the benefits arising from this development and generates resources in such a way that they can support the needs of future generations [6].

In other words, the CbT approach, economic sustainability, refers to tourism's contribution to the local and regional economy. In this context, cycling tourism has taken an important role as a transport that contributes to reducing carbon emissions, preserving natural resources, minimising noise pollution, conserving green spaces, promoting green infrastructure, improving liveability in cities and fostering a stronger connection between people and the natural environment, therefore, cycling and CbT are closely related to NbS and can complement each other to promote sustainable urban development [2, 14, 18].

Cycle tourists are looking for a more complex and intimate experience to appreciate better the elements of local identities and the unique landscapes of a region [10]. The advantage of this tourist behaviour lies in the regional development of little-known or even remote areas [31,32,33], have characteristics such as low population density, mountainous areas and a rural environment [15], differing significantly from mass tourism experiences [9].

Among the economic benefits for the local community, the following can be mentioned: (i) development of local establishments such as hotels, restaurants, retail shops and bicycle repair shops, which serve the needs of cycle tourists; (ii) generating jobs to serve cycle tourists in these local establishments, as well as building cycle infrastructure; (iii) improving the economics of the local property market, as proximity to cycle trails has a positive effect on housing values ; (iv) the economic stability of the agricultural industry by preserving local farmland, increasing tourism tax revenue and educating the public about the importance of local agriculture [4, 19, 23]

Brazil has more than 4.000 kilometres of cycle routes and bike lanes [7]. Brazilian cities have been investing in cycling infrastructure, whether through expanding the cycle network and creating cycle tourism circuits or more specific actions such as developing low-cost bike hire systems and establishing events to encourage cycling. In Curitiba (Capital of the state of Paraná), for example, the city's current cycling plan includes parks interconnected with cycle paths and bike hire stations, making urban mobility a matter of commuting and cycling a means of transport for the development of tourist activity [29, 12].

Based on a literature review on various aspects of cycling planning integrated with tourism, Saldanha et al. [28] analyse the alignment of the existing cycling network in Curitiba with cycle tourism routes. They observed that the local tourism sector's initiatives have available infrastructure and connection of these routes with neighbouring municipalities from an inter-municipal collaboration perspective.

According to the publication *The Bicycle Economy in Brazil* [16], Paraná is the second state that received the most research investment with R\$ 645,200.00, 93% of which goes to the Federal University of Paraná's Cycling Tourism Programme. Through this Cycling Tourism Programme, more than 2.000 cycle tourists have been travelling through the coast side of the state and promoting local economic activity [5].

Even though the development of cycling infrastructure in Brazil has fallen short of expectations due to the current national guidelines for urban development and tourism, the turnover of Brazilian adventure tourism and ecotourism companies, a market segment linked to cycling tourism, is growing. It rose from R\$491.5 million in 2008 to R\$515.9 million in 2009, an increase of 21% [16].

However, all the indicators on this kind of tourism impact are admittedly difficult to produce due to the definition of tourism models and the multi-sectoral nature of the activities considered. Added to this is the lack of an economic branch in which this diversity of activities can be easily recognised and grouped together to make these quantifications feasible.

In Brazil, the City Statute the National Urban Mobility Plan and the Bicycle Brazil Programme have established guidelines to encourage active transport to the detriment of individual vehicles, seeking to make the urban space a social environment with a better quality of life for the population, including traffic management, urban infrastructure and public services [12]. In addition, the Ministry of Cities and the Ministry of Tourism propose and encourage Brazilian cities to create their Cycle Tourism Circuits, encouraging the economic development of the economic development of the regions encompassed by these routes, which can be understood as a proposed route to be followed by cycle tourists, in which support infrastructures are installed [25].

Therefore, in the Brazilian context, instead of creating or emphasising competition with the formal tourism sector, public decision-makers and entrepreneurs can find solutions to include informal workers in the tourist trade, which can positively impact the economy, poverty reduction, and the quality of the tourist experience. In this direction, Deputy Goura's mandate has created many new laws, which we present in the next chapter.

### **3 Public policies for sustainable development: cycling tourism in Paraná**

In the four years of the first mandate, Deputy Goura presented several laws fostering the creation of local circuits of Cycle tourism in Paraná, aiming to establish public policies that strengthen the sustainable development of the state's various regions.

Nationally, Paraná is relevant in the productive chain of bicycles. In the study conducted by the Federation of Industries of the State of Paraná (FIEP) in 2019, Paraná is the second state with more companies manufacturing bicycles, non-motorized tricycles,

and accessories, hosting 80 of the 359 companies in Brazil. Of these, the highest concentration is located in the municipalities of Maringá, with 13 companies, Araçongas and Londrina with seven each, Sarandi with six and Apucarana with five companies. In Curitiba, only one company. Londrina stands out as the main employer pole, with 216 workers, followed by Sarandi with 187 [7].

Bicycle shops, for instance, are present in almost all cities in Paraná, forming another service item that moves local economies. They are the essential basis for bicycle maintenance and trade. As many of them are part of the informal economy, it is understood that there are still other establishments. It is also noted that other industries linked to the sector, such as those that supply accessories like helmets, clothes, glasses, lighting devices, applications, and utensils, make this productive chain even more complex and have more potential. However, although this data is relevant to understanding the macro view of the bicycle industry in the state, it is not necessarily connected with local investment in improving bicycle infrastructure or the local economy [25].

This highlights the aim of this chapter by indicating the importance of linking legislative actions to local sustainable development since once political decision-makers establish regulations for this development, the local community, entrepreneurs and the industrial sector can benefit.

In the democratic presidential regime in which Brazil is politically organised, law drafting generally takes place through three steps in the legislative branch: debates with the community, drafting of the proposal by the parliamentarian's team, and proposal for legislative approval by the other parliamentarians. Once approved, the law follows two stages in the executive branch, which must be sanctioned, regulated and implemented. This means that the implementation stage requires the regulation stage, where the rules will be signed and the budget for each law indicated. At this stage comes the next duty of a deputy: monitoring the executive branch in the observance and implementation of the law [1].

According to the following table, between the years 2.019 and 2.021, 10 bills on cycling tourism were proposed, approved and sanctioned in Paraná - including Law 20.354/2020, which instituted Cycling Tourism in Paraná - thus consolidating the demand for the creation of routes that strengthen and provide various municipalities and communities, an alternative and new perspectives, for local development.

In Brazil, bicycle lanes are called cycle paths (ciclovias), cycle routes (ciclo rota) and cycle lanes (ciclo faixa). What differentiates them is the level of segregation and the type of horizontal signalisation. Cycle paths are segregated, exclusively for bicycles. Cycle routes are slow traffic lanes shared with cars. Cycle lanes are horizontal signs indicating cyclists' presence and priority, especially at junctions and conversions. Therefore, a cycle tourism circuit refers to the connection between these different bicycle spaces, connecting (but not necessarily) the urban and rural contexts [22].

**Table 1.** Laws presented in the state parliament between 2019 and 2020.

Law title	Authors	Status
Law 19.956/2019 Creates the Alto do Iguaçu Cycle Touring Circuit	Deputy Goura et al.	Approved

Law 20.300/2020 Establishes the Campos Gerais Cycle Tourist Circuit	Deputy Goura and Mabel Canto	Approved
Law 20.196/2020 Establishes the Paraná Coastal Bike Touring Circuit	Deputy Goura et al.	Approved
Law 20.068/2019 Establishes the South-west Paraná's Cycle Tourism Circuit	Deputy Goura et al.	Approved
Law 20.354/2020 Creates the Law of Cycle Tourism Law	Deputy Goura et al.	Approved
Law 20.367/2020 Establishes the North Pioneer Route Cycle Touring Circuit	Deputy Goura and Luiz Claudio Romanelli	Approved
Law 20.755/2021 Establishes the West Route Cycle Touring Circuit	Deputy Goura et al.	Approved
Law 20.673/2021, Amended by Law 21.193/2022 Establishes the North Red Foot Route Cycle Touring Circuit	Deputy Goura et al.	Archived

In some cases, the proposed legislation sought to institutionalise and expand the possibilities of investment in routes and paths already used by cyclists and tourists, totalling 9 circuits covering regions from east to west and north to south of Paraná. That is, the cycling circuits presented through the bills in the table above do not provide for actions to open roads exclusively for bicycles and other non-motorized as presented along the lines of the cities mentioned in the article - *The Other Side of the (Policy) Coin: Analyzing Exnovation Policies for the Urban Mobility Transition in Eight Cities Around the Globe* - but yes, aim to share these spaces, routes that are mostly rural and paved without asphalt.

As said before, these routes were already created by the cyclists themselves and needed a legal establishment for the executive power to allocate the necessary investments for its infrastructure. At the same time, once implemented, those laws have the potential to discourage using cars gradually.

In summary, the premises of these laws are a) Incentive to the use of bicycles and ecological tourism; b) Valorization of the culture and tourist attractions of the contemplated regions and their municipalities; c) Improvement of the health and well-being of the citizens through the promotion of leisure and physical activity; d) Development of local productive arrangements and the movement of regional economy; e) Promotion of mobility and accessibility.

The purpose of the laws is to encourage the practice of non-motorized mobility in the circuits created. It is not intended objectively through the laws to discourage car use but to offer and create other possible mobility alternatives for tourists and the local community, indirectly discouraging the car.

The laws seek to connect the districts and municipalities of the regions where they are located, thus creating a statewide network of routes and circuits. Besides benefiting the local communities and distributing the income generated, implementing and managing

tourism-related activities in these places is an opportunity to engage the population in the sustainable development process, respecting the traditional ways of life and the locals' knowledge of the region's attractions and history.

Among the planned actions, the municipalities contemplated in the laws will be able to, among other things, map and publicise the tourist attractions and services existing in the region of the routes, such as historical monuments, natural attractions, accommodations, places to eat and drink; bicycle shops, paracycles and bike racks; health units; in addition to publicising the routes, attractions and services through maps, brochures, websites and applications.

The General Law on Cycle Tourism (table 1) aimed to strengthen regions and municipalities and give them autonomy to develop and implement their circuits. The text presents a series of concepts that contribute to its implementation in different localities of the State. It, therefore, defines cycling tourism as a form of tourism that consists of using a bicycle as a means of transport. It is ecological, considering it to be a segment of the tourist activity that uses the natural and cultural heritage sustainably, encourages its conservation, seeks the formation of environmental awareness through the interpretation of the environment, and promotes the population's well-being.

According to the Law of Cycle Tourism, the local productive arrangement is a set of economic, political and social factors related to the same territory, destined to develop correlated economic activities that present production, interaction, cooperation and learning links. So, a bicycle touring system is defined as a set of circuits, routes, and tourism products focused on bicycle tourism. The cycle touring circuit, in turn, forms a long-distance path in which the starting and finishing points coincide, integrating regional tourist products whose identity is reinforced or attributed to the tourist use. On the other hand, a cycle touring route refers to a short or medium-distance path, itinerary or route that makes up a cycle touring circuit, interconnecting local tourism products whose identity is reinforced or attributed by tourism use.

Those legislative initiatives promote their structure more than the cycling infrastructure for transportation. It encourages fundamental components for social and environmental development. The factor is also confirmed by linking the creation and the layout of circuits and cycle routes allied to the locations of the hydrographic basins, respecting the relief and the historical, cultural and social formation of each region. Besides, it foresees that the connection between bicycle tourism systems and the already existing rural and urban bicycle infrastructure should be prioritised, and the participation of local citizens in this whole arrangement should be guaranteed.

## **4 Community-Based Tourism and Sustainable Development**

According to Grimm [17], several human activities have caused negative effects on the environment, earlier in this text called invisible leakage, therefore, tourism has been discussed, sometimes as an economic activity and sometimes as an economic-social-environmental activity that has given rise to various impacts on the environment. According to Ruschmann [26] tourism impacts refer to

the range of modifications or the sequence of events caused by tourism development in the receiving localities. The variables that cause the impacts have diverse nature, intensity, directions and magnitude; however, the results interact and are generally irreversible when they occur in the natural environment (p.34).

Grimm (2016) highlights that to minimise the negative impacts of the tourism sector and provide confrontation to contemporary challenges, new debates that contribute to improving the planning and management of resources should be stimulated. It is in this sense that Ruschmann [26] states that "(...) planning is fundamental for balanced tourism development and in harmony with the physical, cultural and social resources of the receiving regions, thus avoiding that tourism destroys the bases that make it exist" (p.10).

In this sense, the participation and involvement of local communities are essential to establishing a CbT, allowing experiences of smaller-scale tourism with a direct connection with the territory and with other ways of life, allowing a positive dialogue between tourists and the community / local entrepreneurs, fostering cultural exchanges, knowledge and life experiences, as well as income generation and environmental preservation.

The change and growth in the tourism sector's awareness of climate change in recent years is remarkable. In Brazil, where the activity represents 4% of the gross domestic product, the country recorded in 2014 the entry of 6,429,852 international tourists, exceeding the record mark of 6 million foreigners. The impact of the World Cup was decisive for the increase in tourist arrivals in 2014. According to data from the [20], 71% of international tourists use the plane to transport to arrive in Brazil. Four out of ten (27%) came by road and the rest used sea or river travel. Grimm [17] highlights that the data reaffirms that tourism is essential to the country's economy and, therefore, the challenges imposed by mass tourism (observing visitor flows) and its contribution to global warming require adequate planning allied to NbS to cope with the impacts of this phenomenon.

In this perspective, Deputy Goura also proposed a law on CbT, aiming to prioritise low-impact and small-scale tourism in territories of traditional communities and/or with unique socio-environmental attributes. The PL 138/2021, which received support from several peers and was built with intense citizen participation, is still being processed in the Legislative Parliament of Paraná.

The text proposed in the Law Project (LP), CbT is considered a kind of tourism that incorporates values of the common good, the solidarity economy and fair trade, guiding a sustainable process of tourism organisation in the territories of traditional communities in the countryside, urban areas, forest and water, in line with the development on a local and regional scale, in order to favour socioeconomic and political activity and promote community emancipation, through cultural valorisation, environmental conservation and generation of employment, income and social inclusion.

To consolidate these aspects, the law aims to encourage tourism activities linked to the community role by promoting solidary economic enterprises, participatory planning, sustainable management of natural resources, cultural valorisation, and participation in the decision-making process on tourism in all its stages. It also aims to improve



the use of environmental resources and maintain essential ecological processes, contributing to the conservation of local socio-biodiversity. Respect for the socio-cultural authenticity of host communities through conserving their tangible and intangible cultural assets and contributing to intercultural understanding and tolerance.

According to the General Report of the Brazilian Cyclotourist [27] 62% of the cycle tourists in Brazil have completed higher education or graduate school, 64% have income between 1 and 9 minimum salaries, the length of stay at the landing site varies from two to seven days, and 44.8% spend between R\$100 and R\$250 daily, 48% prefer to stay in inns than hotel, hostel or camping and 70% eat in restaurant.

For these tourists, CbT is innovative in that it provides different ways of coexistence and interaction in the daily life of the hosts, and it is a minimum-impact tourism. Thus, promoting CbT means valuing the environments and lifestyles of the host populations, nature and cultural diversity. In this sense, the role of local communities in managing the activity and the supply of tourist goods and services represents a fundamental aspect.

According to Ferreira [13] the social groups that play the leading role in CbT are indigenous reserves, African-descendent (quilombola) communities, agrarian reform settlers, riverine dwellers, urban peripheral collectives, and fishing communities (caíçaras).

With this in mind, on one side, the motivation to create cycle tourism circuits is a catalyst for encouraging sustainable tourism, transforming urban mobility systems into more sustainable ones, and a significant driver of the local economy in the regions of influence [13].

Conversely, a CbT law also ensures long-term economic activities that offer equitably distributed socioeconomic benefits, including stable opportunities for income generation and social services for host communities that contribute to poverty reduction, complementing the activities traditionally developed by the community.

## **5 Final considerations**

The search for more inclusive, sustainable and resilient development models is a theme in the current rural and urban debate, and integrating these issues into public policies is urgent. This text sought to contribute to this dialogue by explaining the creation of public policies for cyclotourism and CbT in Paraná (Brazil) and discussing their potential as economic and sustainable alternatives for development.

The benefits of bicycle tourism range from the movement of the local economy to the socio-cultural and environmental preservation, so the practice moves millions of people and much money around the world, transforming the economy of regions and positively impacting communities through generating income and jobs, fostering social and cultural development and raising awareness of nature preservation.

CbT also benefits both tourists and the communities that receive them. Cultural valorisation and the conservation of protected environments through promoting activities

with low environmental impact and the opportunity to access economic resources through associated work are the foundations of CbT projects.

From the point of view of a Brazilian public policy at the legislative level, which means three essential tasks: legislating, representing and monitoring, we understand that the links between cycle tourism allied to the CbT and the SbN need to be aligned in the drafting of the law and the development of debates with the communities, thus ensuring legislation that is coherent with the representation of the population and subsequently monitoring the application of this law and its participatively developed principles.

The emphasis is on sustainability, environmental conservation, local community involvement and social and cultural development, so the necessary focus in this territorial context is on creating laws and regulations that promote the budget for better infrastructure and tools for its development.

In sum, by integrating NbS principles into CbT initiatives, destinations can improve their environmental and socio-cultural sustainability, allowing visitors to coexist with traditional ways of life while stimulating local development.

Together, the two policies, democratically implemented, can accommodate the peculiarities of the different ecosystems and traits of the popular culture of Paraná, allowing opportunities for access to economic resources in environmentally relevant and economically vulnerable territories in a manner allied to the preservation of nature and local culture.

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