

Chapter 12

Sustainable Tourism in Brazil: Faxinal and Superagui Case Studies

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Abstract The tourism experience in Brazil is distinctive in many ways. In this chapter we discuss two case studies in two very different settings, but both located in the southeastern Brazil state of Paraná. Both emphasize the need for economic benefit to communities relying on tourism. The first focuses on the Faxinal and its contribution as a micro level sustainable tourism location. The second study involves the island residents near Superagui National park. This ecotourism setting includes extremely rare species and some limited economic impacts. Both case studies emphasize the importance of managing ecosystems and engaging local communities.

Keywords Sustainable tourism • Traditional communities • Local products and services • Brazil

12.1 Introduction

The nation of Brazil has recently undergone major transformation, moving from a newly formed democracy in the mid-1980s to an emerging world economic power in 2015. With over 215 million inhabitants and a land area larger than the continental United States, Brazil promises to be a key player in South American natural resource recreation in the coming years and decades. With a rich, diverse supply of natural resource settings, combined with two mega-events (2014 FIFA World Cup and 2016 Summer Olympics) Brazil is poised to become a destination choice of many tourists.

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The World Tourism Organization expects that tourism to Brazil will double over the next 20 years, with these two sporting mega-events serving as major marketing vehicles.

The tourism experience in Brazil is unique in many ways. Like many great tourism destinations, the very name “Brazil” often evokes a pre-conceived notion. Brazil is unique in that it provides such a vast variety of tourism opportunities, across a broad spectrum of tourism settings. Conversely, a tourist may select the most remote possible settings in which to recreate, from the rivers of the Amazon to remote, wilderness national park settings, to vast stretches of intensely beautiful beaches, devoid of tourists and human impacts. While many people around the world focus on the amazing mass tourism opportunities and settings available in Brazil (e.g., Carnival, developed beach tourism, etc.), this paper describes two unique nature-based tourism settings – and their role as examples of sustainable ecotourism at a micro level.

Brazil is unique in its political and economic realities as well. Although a rising middle-class society has emerged over the past decade, many social problems, such as the continued existence of extremely poor and disenfranchised people, will vex Brazil for decades to come. High intensity agriculture and resource extraction are critically important sectors of the Brazilian economy, with many state-owned or state-supported entities engaged in extractive businesses. Brazil has been plagued by land ownership problems, often related to timber extraction, agricultural interests and their interactions with local populations, including indigenous peoples.

Of critical importance is *how* Brazil’s increase in tourism will occur. Brazil has linked itself closely with mass tourism, and to a lesser degree, nature-based or sustainable tourism. The role of sustainable tourism in developing countries, including Brazil, cannot be understated. Tourism unchecked may bring with it as many problems as it brings jobs and benefits to local communities, which would certainly not be considered sustainable tourism.

UNESCO defines sustainable ecotourism as tourism that respects both the local people and the traveler, cultural heritage and the environment. Accordingly, sustainable tourism falls under the four UNESCO dimensions of sustainable development; conservation, appropriate development, democracy, and peace, equality and human rights, across the four spheres of natural, political, economic and social. Other definitions of sustainable tourism are used frequently, as are definitions of responsible tourism, ecotourism, geo-tourism, volun-tourism, and so on. As the editors expressed in an earlier section of this book, agreement about the definition of sustainable tourism development is unlikely, and we need to ask ourselves which definition is most appropriate for a developing nation such as Brazil.

What is clear is that Brazil needs sustainable tourism, regardless of the nuances of the various definitions, and that Brazil’s natural resource settings have the capacity to absorb more tourism. The Chico Mendes Institute (ICMBio) is the federal government entity responsible for parks and protected areas within Brazil. With support from the US Agency for International Development (USAID) and US Forest Service International Programs (USFS-IP), ICMBio outlined a sustainable tourism

plan in support of the 2014 FIFA World Cup. Ten “Parques da Copa” (World Cup Parks) were identified near the 12 cities across Brazil in which the FIFA soccer games were held. This mega-event required an immense financial investment into protected area infrastructure, including a substantial amount into the Parques da Copa (Palhares 2012). The 2016 Summer Olympics, as well, will be held in Rio de Janeiro, furthering Brazil’s image as a tourism destination.

In a country with massive poverty and other social problems, it is fair to ask if the investment into two of the world’s largest and most prestigious sporting activities will result in a sustainable tourism base for Brazil. Only time will tell if the investment will result in a long term increase in sustainable tourism within Brazil.

Even with great strides recently, sustainable tourism development in Brazil has seen limited success. Although federal tourism policies have been implemented over the past two decades, with positive outcomes, results have been quite varied. One of the earliest policies promoting tourism was the 1994 Program for Tourism Development, which decentralized tourism policies and encouraged local and regional tourism efforts. In 1996, Brazil implemented its National Tourism Policy (PNT), which also focused on local and regional tourism planning efforts. This was followed by the 2004 National Program for the Regionalization of Tourism, a continuation and refinement of earlier efforts. The crux of this effort was on tourism development at a regional level, with an emphasis on local products, nature, and culture (Araujo and Dredge 2012).

12.2 Defining Sustainable Tourism

The concept (and even the definition) of sustainable ecotourism has been hotly debated since its early inception, and this debate continues today. Wall (1997) posited a simple, three word question that we are still attempting to answer today “Is Ecotourism Sustainable.” To understand why this question still remains largely unanswered, a review of the literature related to ecotourism and sustainable tourism is necessary.

Blangy and Wood (1993) suggested sustainable ecotourism includes responsible travel to natural areas, the conservation of the environment, and the sustainability of local peoples. In an effort to bridge the perceived gap between theory and practice, Ross and Wall (1999) operationalized ecotourism as a strategy to support conservation and supporting local development. This effort sought to develop a framework with objectives and indicators against which ecotourism could be measured. These included protection of environment, education, financial gain, local participation, and quality tourism. Boyd and Butler (1996) made an early attempt to examine ecotourism as a variation of an existing social carrying capacity procedure the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) called the Ecotourism Opportunity Spectrum (ECOS). The paper was a reaction to a steep increase in ecotourism in the mid-1980 to mid-1990s; a realization that the management of ecotourism was a necessary step in the evolution of the concept of ecotourism.

Table 12.1 Typology of ecotourism studies

Study	Description of content
Alaeddinoglu and Can (2011)	Nature-based tourism resources in Lake Van basin, Turkey
Alam et al. (2009)	Sustainable forest-based tourism in Bangladesh
Buultjens et al. (2003)	Sustainable forest-based tourism in South Wales, Australia
Gouvea (2004)	Latin American ecotourism challenges and opportunities
Lai and Nepal (2006)	Local perspectives of ecotourism development in Tawushan Nature Reserve, Taiwan
Navalporto et al. (2012)	An examination of tourism development in Spain national parks
Reimer and Walter (2013)	Community-based tourism in Cardamom Mountains of southwestern Cambodia
Torres-Sovero et al. (2012)	Tourist satisfaction in Peruvian Amazon ecotourism lodges
Tsaur et al. (2006)	Taiwanese indigenous community tourism resources
Wright (1995)	Brazil sustainable ecotourism: balancing economic, environmental and social goals within an ethical framework
Wunder (2000)	Ecotourism and economic incentives to local indigenous people in Ecuadorian Amazon region

ECOS focused primarily on the experience sought and provided by ecotourism settings and providers. While this procedure allowed academicians and practitioners to reference other social carrying capacity procedures (e.g., Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS), Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC), and others), one glaring omission was a complete lack of focus on local development or income for local peoples.

The importance of including an economic variable in discussing ecotourism has been heavily emphasized in plethora of publications over the past two decades. Hill and Gale (2009) clearly made the point that economic issues must be considered (e.g., the triple-bottom-line-sustainability (TBLS) concept (Hill and Gale 2009), ecotourism as an economic force in developing communities (Campbell 1999; Gouvea 2004; Silva and McDill 2004; Navalporto et al. 2012; Wunder 2000).

That this economic impact has the potential to be felt in a given local setting has been expressed extensively in the study of ecotourism and sustainable travel and tourism. Case studies have been used extensively, focusing on local and indigenous peoples in developing settings where ecotourism has taken place. Table 12.1 (above) demonstrates some of the varied settings and foci of ecotourism case studies germane to the case studies described in this chapter.

Common themes are seen through the majority of these manuscripts, regardless of continent, nation or community. These include the role of the local people, economic impact/financial impacts, care for the environmental resources, and often engagement of local agents, such as governmental or non-governmental organizations.

12.3 Brazil Tourism

It is generally accepted that all forms of tourism should strive to be sustainable in today's society, regardless of the continent or nation. Sisto (2003) suggested that sustainability, a premise developed over the past two decades, is now a universally accepted practice, and the term is often used by contemporary politicians and scholars when discussing tourism. In other words, the term sustainable tourism has become ubiquitous when discussing nature-based tourism. Another concept that has been relatively universally accepted is that there is an economic cost for tourism that is considered sustainable. The cost, borne by tourists, is a necessary component of sustainable tourism that allows special places to remain special. Such economic costs can also provide for better tourism experiences, which is also a positive attribute of sustainable tourism. For these reasons, the concept of sustainable tourism is fundamental, or must be fundamental, in Brazil as well.

Mielke (2012) has suggested there are three key issues related to the sustainability of community based tourism projects in Brazil. These are access to markets, management of strategic partnerships of interest, and internal governance. Measures of success must be identified early in the planning process, and should be tailored to the specific community in which the project is undertaken.

As a result of these long-term efforts, some success has been seen in the form of sustainable tourism in Brazil, but typically in a micro rather than macro form. Some communities have been involved in efforts where local goods, services and food products have been used as community based tourism products, as we will discuss in the two case studies. These include local guides, lodging and accommodation, handcraft products, and so forth. Community based tourism projects must be carefully thought out, in order to realize the goals of positively impacting the visitor and the local people. Ensuring that community based systems remain sustainable is also a major challenge for non-governmental organizations (NGOs), governmental agencies and other stakeholders.

Educating both tourists and the residents of local communities is a critical variable in maintaining the natural environment in a sustainable manner. Only through education we will be able to achieve sustainable tourism goals. These goals include developing broad awareness and allowing for the understanding of the significant contributions that tourism may bring to the environment and the economy. In addition, one must keep in mind that in order for sustainable tourism to be successful, a strong emphasis on the natural resources is indispensable.

Brazil's Bureau of Tourism suggests that it is necessary to diversify the experiences provided by natural touristic attractions. Accordingly, new ecotourism opportunities, as well as more diverse ecotourism-related services and products must be developed, but in a sustainable manner. If such sustainable development were to occur at a more macro level, the potential of the natural resources could be realized in Brazil. This must be realized, as ecotourism is of such critical importance to the Brazilian government. Brazilian tourism policy has paired ecotourism with a national effort to promote both economic and social development. The unique

natural beauty and ecological value of Brazilian landscapes make the country a worldwide destination for ecotourism, albeit there is much room for improvement.

In 2007, the Brazilian government established the *Política Nacional de Desenvolvimento Sustentável dos Povos e Comunidades Tradicionais* (National Policy of Sustainable Development of Traditional People and Communities or PNPCT). The executive order acknowledged that indigenous and traditional Brazilian people, as well as the culturally diverse communities in which they live, have a strong and important sense of identification. These traditional groups have their own social organization systems and unique ways in which they inhabit and use the land and its natural resources. These include cultural social, religious, ancestral and economic uses, making use of the knowledge, innovations and practices generated and transmitted by tradition (Brasil 2007, Decreto n° 6.040, de 07 de Fevereiro de 2007). There are many such groups in Brazil, such as Indigenous, Maroons, Tappers, Chestnut Collectors, Coco-de-Babaçu Breakers, Faxinalenses, Fishermen, Shellfish Collectors, Riparian, Caissaras, Raftsmen, Campieri, Wetland, Caatingueiros among others. It is important to note that the Brazilian government has realized the importance of such traditional groups, and promotes their sustainability.

Another primary objective of the PNPCT was to promote the sustainable development by residents of traditional communities. The executive order provided for a strong emphasis on recognizing, strengthening, and assurance of their territorial, social, environmental, economic and cultural rights in respect and appreciation to their identity, structural systems and institutions.

Any sort of tourism management and/or planning on indigenous lands or in other traditional communities must have its origins in community discussion and participation. Engaging the communities helps to clarify objectives and mitigate doubts and fears often noted by local residents. Using a community based approach also helps NGOs to understand community organizational systems, and considerations needed to ensure that cultural realities are respected. Understanding these particular aspects of sustainable tourism will allow the local residents to make informed decisions.

12.4 Case Studies

In the following case studies, we will discuss two different attempts at sustainable tourism in two distinctly different settings, both located in the southeastern Brazil state of Paraná (Fig. 12.1). Both case studies exemplify the need for an economic benefit to a local community.

The first case study focuses on a unique type of community, Faxinal, and its contribution as a micro level sustainable tourism location. In this case study we discuss how people in this unique community have developed a sustainable lifestyle by producing, marketing and selling organic foods and vegetables, and other products. These are sold at local produce markets as traditional, local products.



Fig. 12.1 Paraná State Map: Prudentópolis and Superagui National Park

We will also discuss the importance of managing the ecosystem and engaging local NGOs in addition to focusing on economic variables.

The second case study involves a small community of residents living on an island located off the coast of southeastern Brazil, nested within the Superagui National Park. This ecotourism setting includes extremely rare species, such as the endangered purple-faced parrot or Papagaio de cara roxa (*Amazona brasiliensis*) and the black-faced lion tamarin (*Leontopithecus caissara*) among others. In the Superagui community, a healthy fishing economy is supplemented by income the provision of services to tourists visiting the island. The economic impact is felt from

very small and rustic restaurants, taverns and guest houses rather than from locally produced foods and plants. The local residents were “grandfathered in” when the island was designated as a national park, and no new families are permitted to move to the community to participate in the delivery of tourism services. Both the Faxinais and the Superagui settings are considered “traditional” Brazilian communities, but not indigenous communities.

12.4.1 Case Study 1: Faxinais in Prudentópolis

12.4.1.1 Using Ecotourism as a Tool for Sustainable Development

The first case study focuses on a truly unique traditional community; the Faxinais. The Faxinais are small communities located in southeastern Brazil, focusing on communal production of livestock and vegetables for use in a Brazilian form of localized, garden to table concept. There are 19 Faxinais communities within a single protected area named the Serra da Esperança Area of Environmental Preservation. This case study focuses on one of these, located in Prudentópolis, Paraná,

Some of the last significant remainders of Araucaria Moist Forest are located in Prudentópolis. This city is rich in biodiversity and boasts more than 42 cataloged waterfalls, and most of the area’s forested remnants are concentrated in this unique setting. The Faxinais are unique cultural communities that host a similarly unique traditional population. They make up an historical form of social organization of land use whose environmental conditions are considered to be highly preserved in comparison to other communities in the region. Faxinais is a unique style of social organization that can be compared to a communal setting, where forest sites and livestock lands are shared by local families (Chang 1985).

A combination of the unique cooperation within the environment, including both small farm lands and forest settings, with the closely knit social structure allowed for the forests to flourish. The local people worked together to ensure the forests and agriculture lands were maintained in a sustainable manner. The setting is dotted with small, neatly kept homes that often have large, organic gardens surrounding them. This micro level of sustainability, however, has resulted in a setting that is so well maintained that it has become a target of agricultural developers. In fact the forests are so well conserved that they now suffer intense pressure to be converted into large agriculture communal farming plots. Ironically, the Faxinais are in danger because of their sustainability.

The Faxinais are also appealing to tourists for many reasons. They are unique agro-pastoral systems that allow the sustainable existence of nature through practices of family farming and agro-ecology. The forest resources are also used in to grow medicinal plants. The land is divided into planting lands and livestock lands. Some families within the Faxinais are involved in growing and harvesting

sustainable natural resources (pinion, mate herb, etc.) that result in a relatively low impact on the environment. The decision making processes about land and crop management, as well as labor issues, are dealt with within community, making it an unusual social setting within Brazil.

According to Oliveira (2008), the traditional productive activities in the Faxinais areas are under permanent and increasing pressure. This pressure has increased as the soybean has become Brazil's primary agricultural crop, which is a direct result of the extremely high earnings per hectare in comparison to other land uses. The influence of the soybean crop has resulted in a tremendous loss of small family farms, as smaller properties were incorporated to larger farms.

Clearly, ecotourism and its services and products have the potential to become a viable alternative to agricultural practices, and can boost the local development of the region. One of the many benefits of ecotourism in the region is that it may reduce a growing problem of rural exodus and foster family agriculture practices. The natural scenic beauty of the Faxinais, combined with the unusual variety of micro-environments result in an ecosystem mosaic that include a unique diversity of natural attractions. Such attractions can result in an increased number of tourist activity, benefiting tourists and locals alike.

In the project entitled "Ecotourism as a tool for sustainable development of Faxinais in Prudentópolis," a non-governmental organization (NGO) offered training courses that approached issues such as sustainable tourism, hospitality, biodynamic agriculture, business management, and other topics. Those courses were sponsored by the Brazilian Ministry of Environment and supervised by the NGO Institute Guardians of Nature. The objective of this project was to select families that had the interest and the potential to host tourists, and facilitate their ecotourism development efforts.

Since 2007 the NGO has been conducting market surveys that assisted in the identification of trails, environmental diagnosis and geo-referencing of Faxinais at the selected properties. The surveys are used in the development of business plans and to study the potential of some key ecotourism attractions. The primary objectives of the study were to incorporate a visitor use monitoring plan, and to assist in the marketing and the design of a ubiquitous Faxinais logo (A logo with pictures of local flora and fauna livestock, a pine tree, a wagon and riparian forest next to a river) was created in order to convey the image of the Faxinais) (Fig. 12.2).

The results of the survey showed that by empowering the community to work within the ecotourism framework, a first step toward transforming the Faxinais into an economic model of sustainable development was taken. This was done by providing for a better quality of life through economic performance and demonstrating the importance of community-based conservation of the Araucaria Forest to the local inhabitants. The final result was that specific strategies were implemented to develop and market the tourism route, including brochures and a website. Additionally, a partnership with official tourism offices in national and international fairs, focusing on tourism promotion, was developed to stir interest.

Fig. 12.2 Logo for the Faxinais route



12.4.2 Case Study 2: Superagui National Park and the Community

Superagui National Park is located in the city of Guaraqueçaba, on an island along the north coast in the state of Paraná, in the south of Brazil. The park is accessible only by boat trip (1 h via rapid boat, 3 h via traditional boat) from the gateway city of Paranaguá.

Superagui Island has had a long history of recognition as a natural resource setting of great value (Fig. 12.3). In 1970, Superagui Island was considered listed as a natural area by the State of Paraná. In 1991, shortly after being named a National Park, Superagui National Park was included within the Biosphere Reserve “Vale do Ribeira – Serra da Graciosa/Mata Atlântica” by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). In 1998 the region was declared a Natural Heritage of Humanity setting within the “Floresta Atlântica: Reservas do Sudeste” site. Finally, in 2012, the major cultural event in the region, Fandango, was registered by the Institute of National Historical and Artistic Heritage (IPHAN) as a cultural good, known as Intangible Heritage (IPHAN 2013).

The population and its surroundings are considered *traditional* (but not *indigenous*), made up primarily by artisanal fishermen. The setting is noted as one the most significant continuous remnant of rainforest in Brazil. This designation was awarded primarily because of the amount of biological and landscape diversity in its beaches, mangrove areas and sandbanks, as well as its numerous rivers and surrounding bays (Fig. 12.4).

There are three dimensions of sustainability that best express the relationship of ecotourism within the Superagui National Park; environmental, social, and economic. Regarding the environment, biodiversity conservation has a high degree



Fig. 12.3 Superagui Island, at Superagui National Park

Fig. 12.4 Praia Deserta, at Superagui National Park



of importance in the Superagui National Park. As noted previously, the park provides refuge for endangered species such as the papagaio-da-cara-roxa (*Amazona brasiliensis*), the black-faced lion Tamarin (*Leontopithecus caissara*), dolphins such as the boto-cinza (*Sotalia guianensis*), the jacaré do papo amarelo (*Caiman latirostris*), and the porpoise (*Pontoporia blainville*), which is the most endangered cetacean in the South Atlantic Ocean. The island is also home to migratory birds and the guará (*Eudocimus ruber*), a red heron that virtually disappeared from the area for years but has been reappearing over the past several years. The ecosystem of mangroves and sandbanks include key species in the Atlantic forest conservation such as the jussara palmetto (*Euterpe edulis*), the guanandi (*Calophyllum brasiliense*) and the jerivá (*Syagrus romanzoffiana*), which serves as food source for monkeys (ICMBio 2014).

Tourism will most likely not cause a direct negative impact on these natural resources so long as the number of tourists remains low. According to information provided by Superagui National Park management, approximately 4500 visitors stay in the 26 guesthouses or at campsites in the park region every year, with most visits taking place during the Carnival and New Year celebrations. The vast majority of visitation by tourists occurs during the summer, when boat access becomes easier. Boat travel is limited during the winter months, when the open water may be too rough for tourists. Aside from the logistics of travel to the island, there is a limited supply of potable drinking water on the island, and sewage disposal will remain a challenge for park management. The local community places a great deal of emphasis on waste collection, with recycling a large part in the effort.

Focusing on the social component, 14 small communities are located in the boundaries of the Park, totaling approximately 1600 residents. The region's population fluctuates significantly as a result of the practice of nomadism. One community has only one resident, another community's population ranges between three and 280 inhabitants, and the largest has 780 residents.

The dominant discourse concerning tourism on the island is over the constraints imposed by the creation of the National Park and the changed relationship between the residents and the natural resources. A social carrying capacity number had been determined prior to the area being named a park, which allowed for a sufficient number of visitors to make an economic impact on the community. Without the park visitors, the people living in the local communities would have virtually no income outside of a meager income from fishing and shrimping. The guest houses, or "pousadas" that are available to tourists are very simple, with small rustic "hostel-like" amenities. Simplicity is also seen in the island's cuisine, as all foods are made locally and served by a local resident. No motorized vehicles exist on the island, although small motorized boats are used to transport local residents and tourists to and from various places.

In traditional terminology, the Brazilian legislation refers to the locals as caissaras fishermen. The caissaras are traditional anglers and boaters; iconic watermen, immersed in traditional maritime technology (Adams 2000). These fishermen have evolved from traditional family farmers to fishermen over time, as the opportunity

to make a living from fishing evolved into a better way of life for them and their families. This evolution occurred primarily between 1930 and 1950, and the change resulted in the near extinction of traditional farming on the island. The caissaras fishermen are a large part of the cultural fabric of the island, and are a cultural attraction to tourists. The men are sources of information for tourists, as their experiences can be easily shared with the tourists along the sandy beaches. Aside from being artisanal anglers, the fishermen also know and practice oyster farming, make handicrafts from bones and shells, and other traditional practices. These traditional fishermen also practice the art of folklore, telling stories about traditional island fishing traditions and superstitions. They dabble in the use of medicinal herbs, and generally provide a much appreciated, authentic traditional experience for tourists.

One of the most important cultural elements of this population is the traditional Fandango, which is considered as an “intangible Brazilian heritage” by the Brazil federal government. This cultural practice has been characterized as Fandango caissara, and is a choreographic-musical-poetic and festive expression. In essence, fandango is festive traditional folk music, played on handmade instruments. Fandango occurs nightly in local communities throughout the southern coast of Brazil and extends northward into the states of São Paulo and to the north coast of the state of Paraná.

The influx of tourism has added value to the unique characteristics of this art form. The fandango experience is highly sought by visitors for both leisure experiences such as learning how to play an instrument. One of the most popular fandango instruments is the “rabeça,” a kind of violin made with local wood and played much like a fiddle in the style of Appalachian bluegrass), and other cultural aspects. However, there has been a backlash from local religious groups who forbid their group members from participating in the art. It is seen by some as simply “partying” and alcohol consumption, which may inhibit the group’s role of healing and saving the souls of local residents.

Perhaps the economic variable is the most important topic to discuss within the context of this chapter. Even with restrictions on the use of natural resources by locals, artisanal fishing within the communities is encouraged, as it is necessary for family survival. The expansion of tourism on the island has provided local residents with an alternative to their life at sea; perhaps an evolution from artisanal fishing to sustainable tourism services. These include food, transportation, the making and selling of local handicrafts, among others.

One prime example of a community-based economic activity is the manufacturing of Cataia, an alcoholic drink (with cachaça, a sugar cane-based liquor), also known as “caissara whiskey.” The Cataia was established by a Women’s Association from Barra do Arapira, with the support of park management, from a locally grown plant named pepper pseudocaryophyllus. The cachaça is marinated in the plant leaves and its consumption is enjoyed by visitors and locals alike. Many tourists are enchanted by this locally produced beverage specifically because the plant leaves are harvested only in a specific small area of the island.

12.5 Conclusions

The two case studies in this chapter demonstrate two distinctly different strategies, in different settings, that have resulted in what can be defined as sustainable tourism. Referring to Table 12.1, both studies include, to a certain degree, the components that are seen in the sampling of previous case studies around the world.

People living within the local community have been positively impacted through the economic impact, governmental agencies and non-governmental organizations were actively involved in the efforts, and the protected environment in which the communities are nested played a large role.

These successes are the result of an effort by the Brazilian government, both federal and state, to invest in sustainable tourism at a community level. For over two decades, Brazil has been developing sustainable methods of tourism that are designed to find the delicate balance between tourism and local impacts. These case studies were developed as a direct result of governmental policy, non-governmental organizations were involved in the process, and the local community was engaged in the process at the outset. The projects were designed to protect the flora and fauna while celebrating the rich cultural resources that overly the natural resources. The social component is an important variable in that both the local communities and the tourists must perceive a positive impact. In almost all cases of successful sustainable, community-based tourism, this delicate balance must be struck and maintained within the community.

For the Faxinais, the project has shown that it is possible to assist residents in generating income, while still promoting the conservation of the land and offering sustainable alternatives to these communities. If it were not for the economic impact, it is doubtful that the Faxinais would have been able to even continue living in the community.

In discussing solutions, we often refer to tools that can be used by local communities, governments, and non-governmental entities. We suggest it is necessary to encourage the establishment of future programs and implement projects that empower communities to increase their sustainability. The Faxinais and the residents of Superagui, as well as other Brazilian traditional communities, are links in the chain of environmental, cultural and self-sustainable model of community preservation. Many Brazilian communities are conscious about the importance of their organization for the achievement of sustainable development in their community and to conserve natural resources and cultural heritage. These two case studies, though presented in a micro lens, are representative of other successful case studies that have shown common models of success, or tools, in developing sustainable ecotourism.

At the community level, some specific tools or solutions can be suggested, such as focusing on customer satisfaction, marketing efforts, and understanding the various segments of potential tourists (Ahmed 2010). By designing tourism packages that focus on likely potential users, the community members may be more successful in developing sustainable tourism efforts.

Finally, it is important to stress the importance of following the prescriptive methods outlined in the vast literature on the topic of ecotourism and sustainability. At a macro level, it is clear that we still struggle to answer the basic questions posed by Wall (1997) (*is ecotourism sustainable?*), and by Weaver (2006) (*is the concept of sustainability so utopian that it may be impossible to achieve?*). However, at a micro level, within specific communities, and within specific nations around the world, small successes are frequently seen. As we continue to study what makes a successful, sustainable ecotourism program in a community, perhaps we will begin to see threads and trends that will lead us to answer these very important and very complex questions.

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