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Trust, traditions and indigenous women's leadership in sustainable tourism management

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines contextual dynamics shaping the development of trust in the management of indigenous tourism. It focuses in particular on the role of women's leadership in fostering community autonomy and a sense of community, which is argued to be key to building trusting relations essential to sustaining the tourism enterprise. Based on empirical fieldwork with the Pataxó Jaqueira community of Porto Seguro, Brazil involving document analysis, participant observation and interviews, the paper shows how trust, tradition and culturally embedded indigenous leadership capacities interact when seeking to develop and deliver tourism that meets community needs. The data show how investing in cultural resources builds social capital and reinforces the credibility women's leadership, which is then leveraged to challenge patriarchal gender norms. Moreover, it identifies mechanisms of trust development and maintenance between entrepreneurial indigenous women and other community stakeholders, stressing the impacts of the women's capacity for openness, solidarity and risk taking. The article thus provides contextualised and historically-informed, socio-cultural insights regarding the intersections of gender, trust and traditions in shaping sustainable indigenous tourism.

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1. Introduction

The literature on tourism planning and development among indigenous communities has continued to stress the impacts of discrimination and marginalisation, with disparities in power relations controlled by outside interests, and conflict linked to representation, interpretation and control over cultural and natural resources (Codina et al., 2022; Ryan & Aicken, 2005). These tensions have provoked a loss or crisis of trust in planning processes and in community tourism planning (Edwards & Nunkoo, 2015; Swain & Tait, 2007).

There have been growing calls to expand our understanding of trust to facilitate responsible tourism planning and development (Nunkoo & Gursoy, 2017; Nunkoo & Smith, 2015; Williams & Baláz, 2021). Critics have stressed that trust has received inadequate empirical attention in tourism studies, especially relative to concepts such as power (Nunkoo & Gursoy, 2016). Moreover, past work on trust and tourism development and planning has drawn primarily on psychological

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conceptions of trust, focusing on issues such as dispositions, beliefs and attitudes, particularly in relation to institutions, rather than on the interpersonal dimensions of trust, or on the social processes and practices through which it is created and maintained (Nunkoo, 2017; Sun et al., 2020; Williams & Baláž, 2021). These critiques extend to methodological approaches to trust, especially the use of quantitative empirical strategies that apply psychological constructs to measure relationships between precursors, mediators and consequences of trust in attempts to create generalised trust frameworks (Williams & Baláž, 2021). Critics have called for qualitative research that can help to understand the localised, relational dynamics of trust in tourism planning and development (Nunkoo, 2015; Nunkoo & Smith, 2015; Pagliara et al., 2021; Saunders et al., 2015). Moreover, scholars have also called for research that considers the socio-spatial dimensions to better understand the unique contextual factors that shape trust relations in place (Sun et al., 2020). This is particularly important in the context of indigenous tourism, which is often characterised by asymmetrical power relations, but where tourism is an important source of income and affects the sustainability of the community (cf. Codina et al., 2022; Warnholtz et al., 2022).

In light of these critiques and in response to calls for context-sensitive research that helps to understand the processes and practices of trust development in indigenous tourism management, we draw on empirical research with the Pataxó Jaqueira community of Porto Seguro, Brazil, to address two research questions. Firstly, 'What mechanisms of trust development operate in this indigenous community tourism context?'; and secondly, 'How do indigenous leaders and their leadership practices help to create and maintain trust in the community, in the context of the tourism enterprise?' The aim is not create an abstract theoretical framework for trust development; this would be antithetical to place-specific conceptions of trust. Rather, we examine how distinctive leadership practices, in this socio-cultural setting, embedded trust among community stakeholders, and we outline how these practices intersected with the sustainable development of the tourism enterprise. These findings thus provide transferable insights that can be used to evaluate the potential for and, in principle, help facilitate the development of, indigenous tourism in other contexts.

More specifically, empirical data are used to show how indigenous women's investment in community resources built social capital and enhanced community coherence, which reinforced the women's credentials to deliver sustainable tourism, and thus became a precursor to wider trust development. Moreover, we argue that female leadership and the women's capacity for openness, solidarity and risk taking was essential to embedding trust that helped sustain the enterprise. Through these empirical insights, the paper also expands knowledge on intersections of gender and tourism development, and specifically on the role of women's leadership capacities in driving sustainable tourism enterprises (cf. Kutlu & Ngoasong, 2023).

The paper begins by conceptualising trust, synthesising intra and interpersonal perspectives. We acknowledge that intrapersonal approaches, encompassing beliefs, expectations and dispositions to trust, help to understand the basis for trust development in close relationships. Moreover, we argue that interpersonal perspectives help to appreciate the social dimensions of trust since it entails interaction and collaboration among individuals. Building on these viewpoints, we consider how the socio-political characteristics and contextual experiences of indigenous communities can shape how trust intersects with intra and inter group dynamics. After outlining the study setting and methods, we examine how trust was built through women's leadership and its potential impacts on embedded patriarchal gender relations. The data show the implications of investing in community resources and traditions for wider trust relations. The findings also illustrate how enacting inclusive, trustworthy leadership can be leveraged to ensure the enterprise remains sustainable by continuing to serve community interests.

2. Conceptualising trust

Psychological and sociological conceptions of trust both acknowledge that it has a relational dimension, but they focus on disparate intra and interpersonal aspects in explaining its processes

and how it translates into behaviours (Barrera, 2008; Rousseau et al., 1998). Psychological approaches emphasise the role of individual perceptions of and attitudes toward trust when considering relational experiences (Rempel et al., 1985; Rotter, 1971, 1980), whereas sociological studies stress the role of interactions and relationships amongst actors (Barber, 1983; Lewis & Weigert, 1985; Misztal, 1996, 2019; O'Neill, 2002). Hence, it is useful to consider how insights from these different disciplinary approaches can be synthesised to provide a theoretical perspective for approaching analysis in this empirical context.

We are also acutely aware that the development and maintenance of trust operates in a socio-political context, which serves to remind us that conceptions of trust cannot reduce it to an abstract set of dispositions or actions. Consequently, the review considers how the dynamics of trust are shaped by the historical and contemporary relations in which communities are enmeshed. These issues have additional implications for indigenous communities, which have been subject of colonial governance regimes and asymmetric power relations (Carr et al., 2016; Ryan & Aicken, 2005). Adding this contextual sensitivity to our conception also helps to appreciate that trust formation in small (indigenous) communities relies on and is shaped by the embedded micro-politics of the community, and the ongoing reciprocal interactions of its members. Indigenous women's leadership and its impacts on trust can thus be understood as being constructed and performed in relation to and sometimes in contrast with these community practices.

2.1. Intrapersonal conceptions of trust

The development and maintenance of trust involve dispositions to trust, intentions, expectations and beliefs that translate into behaviours (Harrison McKnight & Chervany, 2001). Actors with a disposition to trust have faith in humanity, since they assume that other actors are honest, competent and compassionate (Flores & Solomon, 1998; Harrison McKnight & Chervany, 2001; Rempel et al., 1985). Such dispositions are coupled with intentions to trust and to engage in trusting relationships.

Intentions have been conceived as the willingness of an actor to depend on the other actor, with a feeling of relative security (Castaldo et al., 2010; Harrison McKnight & Chervany, 2001). This suggests that one is prepared to take risks (Harrison McKnight & Chervany, 2001). Uncertainty is the source of risk, and risk taking consequently reinforces a sense of trust when the expected behaviour materializes (Coleman, 1990; Lewis & Weigert, 1985; Rousseau et al., 1998). Expectations regarding behaviours and positive outcomes must therefore be aided by suspension, "a mental leap to faith and the bracketing of the unknowable which represent the defining aspect of the nature of trust" (Möllering, 2001, p. 417).

Trusting behaviours requires an actor to depend voluntarily on another actor, with a feeling of relative confidence, since negative outcomes are likely to occur (Castaldo et al., 2010; Harrison McKnight & Chervany 2001). In this regard, trust behaviour encourages cooperative relationships, and exchange of reliable information (Gambetta, 1988). It has been suggested that actors with high trusting intention seek to establish informal agreements, as opposed to ones that are formalised and articulated through contractual relations (Rotter, 1971; Rousseau et al., 1998), because this signals a willingness to embrace risk and pursue shared interests rather than relying on legalistic prescription or coercion. Moreover, actors with high trusting intentions accept influence from others, grant them autonomy, and engage in transactions on the basis that they relinquish some control over the relations (Harrison McKnight & Chervany, 2001). However, this should not necessary been seen as the surrender or abandonment of agency; rather, agency is exercised through purposeful and explicit sharing of power in a relational scenario where risks and mutual interests are recognised.

A final important component influencing the formation of trust is familiarity, because trust is normally based on an established relationship, underpinned by shared values (Luhmann, 1979; Seligman, 1997). Familiarity can build personal trust, which is transferred to achieve trust in wider social groupings (Luhmann, 2000). However, it is important to recognise that familiarity does not always lead to the creation of trust, but may indeed undermine it, especially when we start viewing trust through a relational, sociological lens.

2.2. Interpersonal conceptions of trust

Trust has been seen by sociologists as the cement of social relations because it is seen to help reduce the complexity of modern societies (Giddens, 1994; O'Neill, 2002); and without trust, society cannot function, leading to fear and inaction (Misztal, 2019; Sasaki, 2019; Sztompka, 2019). Trust, as reciprocal faithfulness among actors and systems interacting through embedded social relations and settings (Good, 1988; Granovetter, 1985), extends from individual expectations and provides the cognitive and moral scaffolding necessary for ongoing interaction (Barber, 1983, p. 19). Trust is oriented by social actors' actions and entails behavioural dimensions (i.e. people act and rely on their evaluation of others' trustworthiness), cognitive dimensions (acquisition of knowledge based on past experiences), and emotional dimensions (investments and bonds) (Lewis & Weigert, 1985). These dimensions of trust in daily situations are thus interconnected and hard to disentangle. Lewis & Weigert (1985, p. 968) argued that,

Trust must be conceived as a property of collective units (ongoing dyads, groups, and collectivities), not of isolated individuals. Being a collective attribute, trust is applicable to the relations among people rather than to their psychological states taken individually. Moreover, trust exists in a social system insofar as the members of that system act according to and are secure in the expected futures constituted by the presence of each other or their symbolic representations.

Trust relies on the social dimensions of the trustor's subjective probability toward the trustee's will (Gambetta, 1988) and leads to collective outcomes (Coleman, 1990). Trust has to be constantly and reflectively reproduced in the social world by the actors involved in an ongoing communication process to ensure continuity and order in social situations (Giddens, 1991, p. 96). Social trust thus needs to be mutually reinforced by individuals' propensity to trust others (Hardin, 2002). The more individuals interact, the more they tend to create an environment for trust to develop (Putnam, 2000), though it is important to recognise that interaction can undermine trust as behaviours and the perceived benefits of cooperation diverge.

Trust can be viewed as a social resource that requires reciprocity and moral obligation from individuals to achieve common goals (Misztal, 1996). Trust relies on cooperation and solidarity based on confidence in the social system and familiarity between actors with shared values (Seligman, 1997). Trust is an "encapsulated interest" between two actors, which oscillates from the personal (i.e. in terms of dispositions, moral guidelines and internalised norms) to the societal level (involving social and political manoeuvres and commitments) (Hardin, 2002, p. 1).

From this relational perspective, trust is the core of the moral space, and a precondition for other moral bonds, which are vital elements for developing and maintaining social and business relations (Sztompka, 2019). Moral bonds include solidarity, a sense of commitment to others' interests and wellbeing (Bianchi et al., 2018). Consequently, respect is seen to moderate asymmetrical relations between actors in working and social settings (Sztompka, 2019).

Finally, coinciding with intrapersonal concerns with familiarity, trust and embedded, patterned behaviour play a central role in shaping social relations. Scholars conceive collective identification and active-based trust as related social constructions that are progressively and actively created and sustained by the actors involved in ongoing communication, reflexive familiarization and mutual understanding (Beritelli, 2011; Child & Möllering, 2003; Möllering, 2005, 2006). These are seen as components that lead to strong and sustainable forms of trust associated with

inclusive public participation processes and community engagement, especially in decisions that affect wider community interests. Within the context of tourism planning and management, the active development and maintenance of trust has been seen “as a way to mitigate the crisis of trust” (Edwards & Nunkoo, 2015, p. 12), since it reduces conflicts and stimulates cooperation in planning processes through identifying opportunities, facilitating new and creative collaborations (Mair, 2015; Swain & Tait, 2007).

2.3. Indigenous communities and trust

Building on the previous discussion of intra and interpersonal trust, it is important to recognise two perspectives that are pertinent for understanding trust development and formation among indigenous groups. The first concerns the size of these communities and how these potentially shape intra-group dynamics; the second concerns the wider socio-political contexts in which these communities exist, which is closely tied to (neo)colonial legacies and power relations. Moreover, it is useful to consider how these two sets of issues may intersect in this empirical context to influence the forms and outcomes of indigenous women's leadership.

Firstly, as noted above, trust relies on familiarity and thus continuity, which enables actors to understand other actors' perspectives, exchange valuable information and engage in behaviours that build confidence to allow them to accept and minimise risk. In larger societal settings, where connections are more superficial, relations are distributed across a wider range of actors, and narrow in scope, the establishment and maintenance of trust often relies on formal, 'contractual' definitions of the terms of engagement (Seligman, 1997). More specifically, the risks that threaten trust are managed through formalised agreements. Under such conditions, contractual arrangements, underpinned by legal principles and infrastructures, may seek to objectify potential expectations, risks, roles, role boundaries and penalties for misbehaviour. Arguably, these conditions make it more difficult to build authentic trust because a) the terms of engagement are fundamentally defined as being transactional, and b) there are fewer opportunities to build deep and meaningful psychological and social connections among actors. This can be contrasted with small communities that have a long-established sense of shared heritage (Misztal, 1996), although it is important not to essentialise (or romanticise) these types of social groupings or the capacity of constituent actors to build meaningful trust relations. Familiarity may breed distrust.

Nevertheless, within indigenous communities, embedded in a distinct symbolic and physical place, and characterised by relatively stable compositions, the meanings and enactments of trust are likely to have particular dynamics. In such small scale communities, common history and tradition are perpetuated through social institutions e.g. kinship ties and leadership structures, and social practices e.g. concerning gender-based roles and divisions of labour (Misztal, 1996). These reproduce norms and value systems, for example concerning property and propriety, on the basis of tacit knowledge and shared understandings. These social and cultural dynamics also shape conceptions and enactments of trust, insofar as responsibilities and expectations from individual members are learned and normalised through socialisation, mutual surveillance and group-based sanctions for transgressions (Misztal, 1996; Weber & Carter, 2005). These group dynamics are important to foreground, because these may be part of restrictive practices that exclude some members of societies, for example women, from assuming positions of responsibility through which they can demonstrate their capacity to build trust and show their trustworthiness (Govier, 1997). However, the ongoing interactions and mutuality that characterises such small indigenous communities may be the basis for building alliances and demonstrating competences through which trust is constructed. Hence the need to examine how such leadership capacities emerge and operate among indigenous communities.

Second, beyond the micro-focus on community dynamics, it is important to recognise the influence of the wider macro political environment in which indigenous communities exist. The development of trust among indigenous people, and between indigenous groups and wider societal actors, is often shaped by historical and contemporary political dynamics and asymmetrical power relations emerging from (neo)colonial legacies (Carr et al., 2016). Attempts by state and commercial actors to assert property rights over indigenous lands and resources, impose systems of governance and to acculturate indigenous people, delineate boundaries and create tensions. Unjust and violent practices towards indigenous groups may thus provoke a sense of collective identity, mutuality and resistance, which creates opportunities to strengthen in-group trust relations (Curtin & Bird, 2022; Devine & Ojeda, 2017). However, such attempts to build a sense of solidarity through collective identification within small indigenous communities can also make it more difficult to build trust between them and external actors, for example, representatives of the state who are seen to be part of a dominant, (neo)colonial legacy.

Tensions concerning asymmetrical power relations, control over cultural and environmental resources, and representation associated with (neo)colonialism remerge in the context of indigenous tourism (Carr et al., 2016; Devine & Ojeda, 2017). Managing the risks associated with tourism thus relies on effective leadership and cooperation among community members, which requires trust. Furthermore, the potential for tourism to be a source of income and collective identity that supports the indigenous community's sustained existence also means it becomes a key domain of activity through which community members can mobilise their knowledge, develop their leadership skills and exercise power. Arguably, building and maintaining intra and intergroup group trust in pursuit of tourism development may also create opportunities to challenge existing traditions, structures and power relations among community members, and between the community and external actors. The current research attempts to examine these intersection of tourism, trust and leadership.

In conclusion, synthesising intra and interpersonal perspectives enables us to comprehend the individual and collective practices and processes that underpinned trust development in this small community context. Moreover, they provide the conceptual basis for examining the roles and impacts of indigenous women's leadership in this empirical setting, particularly regarding how they drew on, mobilised and occasionally subverted embedded cultural norms and traditions to build community relations in developing a sustainable tourism enterprise.

3. Methodology

The research was conducted with the Pataxó community of Jaqueira, in the city of Porto Seguro in the South of Bahia, Brazil. The study was approved by the researchers' institutional ethics review board (Ref. UREC 161031), and the community consented to the fieldworker's presence and research, based on a detailed explanation of the project. Similarly to past tourism research in indigenous communities, the study adopted an interpretivist approach, and utilised a combination of document analysis, semi-structured interviews and participant observation, to develop a holistic and integrative understanding of the community and its relationship with place (see e.g. Codina et al., 2022). The initial fieldwork took place during seven months in 2016-2017, which was followed by multiple shorter visits (ranging from one or two days to several weeks) between 2017 and 2023, and the first author continues to return to the community.

3.1. Research context: the Pataxó Jaqueira community and tourism

The Pataxó population was estimated to be 11,436 inhabitants distributed across 7 communities in the state of Minas Gerais and 36 communities in the south of Bahia (Carvalho & Miranda,

2018), 19 of which are in the municipality of Porto Seguro. The Jaqueira (Jack Fruit tree) community comprised 34 families with 135 members.

Each Pataxó community consisted of one Cacique (male) and Cacica (female) and Vice-Cacique/Cacica (indigenous leaders and vice-leaders), who represented the general interests and affairs of their communities. Community leaders were chosen by the community members *via* an internal assembly. Selection was on the basis of the member's leadership qualities and past behaviours in the community. Among the Pataxó, some members were born with a leadership mission, which was assigned and blessed by the enchanted gods of the forests. Nevertheless, leaders had to earn the trust of the community to maintain these positions.

The Pataxó had fought for land and identity rights for five centuries (Carvalho, 1977). When land rights were obtained in 1997, the community decided to embark on tourism as means to revive traditional practices (Pataxó, 2011). The Jaqueira tourism project was created by three Pataxó sisters, Nitynawã, Jandaia and Nayara, with the aim of protecting the environment and Pataxó culture through tourism.

The community comprised several thatched-roof huts, some traditional houses made from clay and wood, others from bricks and cement, a primary school, community kitchen, football pitch, museum, the Pataxó Institute of Ethno-Tourism office and a Fire Prevention office. One area of the territory was used for agriculture, where community members planted cassava and a range of vegetables and fruits.

The community offered organised tours of indigenous people's lives with the collaboration of local tourism operators. Tourism activities started at 8:00am and finished at 4:00pm. Tourists were first taken by Pataxó guides to the main thatched roof hut where they listened to a talk about Pataxó history, traditions and rights. Community members invited tourists to participate in the traditional dance called Awê, led by the Pajé, the shaman carrying a traditional bowl with herbal incense. Tourists were then taken on a trail in the forest to learn about medicinal plants, types of trees and hunting techniques. Tourists were then invited to have Pataxó face paintings and to taste the traditional fish folded in patióba leaf (a type of flavoured palm tree), which was grilled in a traditional oven and served with cassava flour.

The community received approximately 200 daily visitors during the low season (June-August), and around 600 during the high season (October-March). The sisters and many of the community members relied on revenue generated from tourism and the sales of handicrafts and souvenirs, which represented about 80% of the community's income. The other 20% came from employment by the local council and other regional and national organisations. Some community members were involved in running the community primary school, and were paid by the local authorities. Others worked for a subdivision of the Brazilian Environmental Agency called Prev-Fogo (Fire Prevention) to monitor and prevent arson, illegal dumping and deforestation. The community also employed members of other Pataxó communities as tour guides. The revenue generated from tourism ranged from approximately \$32,400 to \$162,000 per month depending on the season. The income from tourism was distributed monthly according to each member's role and contribution, and some of the income was spent on the common food supply, infrastructure improvement and other community needs. In short, the majority of the community were directly or indirectly involved in tourism and benefitted from its responsible management.

3.2. Document analysis

Document analysis by the first author examined primary sources provided by the Indigenous museum, the Pataxó community, non-governmental organisations, local businesses and government institutions. This phase of the research adopted an open ended, purposeful sampling strategy (Patton, 2014), and documents were selected according to the insights they could

provide in particular regarding the history of the Pataxó, indigenous land rights, and tourism in the area. Studying this evidence helped to contextualise the fieldwork and facilitated data triangulation (Denzin, 2009); it provided rich historical information about the community and about the governance dynamics in the region.

Sources from the Indigenous National foundation (FUNAI) and Indigenous Museum included historical, cultural and constitutional documents and printed newspapers. Reports published by NGOs about the Pataxó, land ownership and the local tourism strategic plan were also scrutinised. The analysis was primarily inductive, but understanding the dynamics and impacts of historical events, actors, agencies and legislation were key sensitizing concepts helping to guide interpretation. Documentary material proved to be particularly important before, during and after the fieldwork in helping to understand the politics of indigenous rights that influenced the evolution of trust between the community and other stakeholders. These sources also provided crucial information on historical events that shaped Pataxó identity, their sense of community, and their relationship with place.

3.3. Participant observation

Participant observation was conducted with the Pataxó community by a non-indigenous Brazilian male from Bahia. He is a native Portuguese speaker, familiar with the community's social and cultural geography. He was raised in 'Baiano' culture, which meant he and community members had shared frames of reference, for example, understanding regional cultural expressions. This helped him to gain acceptance among community members and engage in meaningful interactions. Moreover, he participated in a wide range of tourism-related and other community activities across this period. As other ethnographic studies suggested, embedded interaction helped to gain a detailed understanding of group traditions and it built trust relationships between the community and the field researcher (Tucker, 2007; Wilkinson & Pratiwi, 1995).

During the fieldwork, the researcher observed and experienced how trust was earned through everyday embodied presence. Trust or *ãtxuhã* in Patxohã language had to be gained and maintained through a process of frequent interactions, which required clear communication and a show of respect for Pataxó values. Active listening and close observation of the community's political activities allowed the researcher to appreciate the historical struggles faced by some Pataxó communities for land rights, and to understand the bureaucratic challenges of ancestral land ownership. Attentiveness to these issues, which were important to the community's organising and identification, signalled to the leaders and members that the researcher appreciated their struggles and their ambitions. This was crucial to building trust between the researcher and the community, which encouraged members to be open with him during his observation and the interviews.

3.4. Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted by the first author with indigenous leaders, other members of the community and local tour operators, including managers, owners and employees. Interviews were also conducted with key informants from the local tourism/culture boards responsible for the governance and promotion of the visitor economy. The interviews also employed purposive sampling (Patton, 2014), with individual's position in the community or stakeholder organisation, their experience and insights being the key inclusion criteria (cf. Sun et al., 2020; Wilkinson & Pratiwi, 1995). Thirty-two participants were formally interviewed during the initial 2016-2017 fieldwork: 18 community members (ages 18-97 years old), 7 local tour operators, 6 council representatives and one representative working for the FUNAI office in

Porto Seguro. These formal interviews were complemented by countless informal conversations across six years.

The interviews used an open questioning format to explore people's experiences in the community, with particular reference to tourism-related aspects; key activities and decisions; individual and community relationships with other stakeholders; the challenges they had encountered and their individual/collective responses. Following Saunders et al. (2015, p.175), the first questions did not openly mention the word 'trust'. Rather they began by exploring general issues, before specific trust-related questions were raised. The semi-structured approach allowed us to explore contextual and historical issues, alongside personal experiences and perspectives, to help understand the role of specific actors, actions and events that shaped trust relations. The interviews were conducted in Portuguese, and the first author's personal knowledge of the language and the cultural context helped to ensure that our subsequent analysis and interpretations of the data remained faithful to the original meanings conveyed by our respondents.

3.5. Data analysis

The use of multiple methods, including the document analysis and extended participant observation, meant that analysis was conducted concurrently with data collection. The data generated through the interviews and observation were analysed according to the principles of reflexive thematic analysis across several iterative cycles (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Given the first author's extensive personal experience of fieldwork and close interactions with the Pataxó community, he coded the data manually during initial cycles, reflecting throughout on his positionality and how it shaped his interpretation of the field notes, diaries and interview transcripts. During this phase, the manual open coding followed an inductive approach (Saldaña, 2021), identifying issues such as the female leaders' activities, interactions, behaviours, formal and informal roles etc., particularly from the notes made during observations, as first order codes. Manual coding of the interview transcripts were used to explore these and related issues, for example concerning intentions and beliefs that helped to make sense of the motivations, attitudes and value systems underpinning their actions. At this phase, the open coding of the observational data, which was informed by the documentary analysis, helped to create a descriptive overview of the wider community activities, including the historical events and factors to help understand why and how community activities and relationships with other external stakeholders developed.

In subsequent cycles of analysis, focused coding by the first author began to concentrate on distinctive issues (Saldaña, 2021), for example female leadership, community traditions etc. which became second order categories as the data were gradually reduced and reordered. These second order categories were assembled into thematic areas, for example concerning mechanisms of trust building and of maintenance. During these phases of analysis, the relationship between the first and second order codes and the higher order thematic areas were evaluated through ongoing dialogue with the other authors during which we challenged the interpretation, ordering and display of findings. Researcher triangulation (Denzin, 2009), involving extended processes of data presentation, reflection and revision, helped to enhance the trustworthiness of our individual and collective analysis. This interactive, iterative process was used to assess relationships between thematic areas, including potential hierarchies and interactions. For example, through this interpretive process we determined that investment in maintaining cultural traditions was a precursor to trust development and maintenance because the female leaders' conception of traditions as community resources helped to articulate shared interest; it signalled their commitment to collective interests, and it conveyed their leadership competencies, which underpinned the trust they built with community members and external stakeholders. The emergent thematic areas and their constitutive first and second order concepts were reassessed through engagement with the literature in the construction of the findings and discussion.

4. Findings and discussion

4.1. Establishing credibility and challenging traditions

Before presenting specific findings concerning the intersections of trust and tourism development, it is important to provide some contextual information regarding the women's role in the tourism project and its inception. Document analysis revealed that community self-determination was crucial for exercising autonomous decisions over cultural, spiritual, environmental and organisational resources during the planning phase. This information helped to appreciate the challenges they encountered and it highlighted the role of the female leaders in addressing them, which, in turn, underpinned the subsequent development of trust among and between various stakeholders.

Historically, the Pataxó community leadership was male dominated and characterised by patriarchal values (Carvalho, 1977). The female leaders continually had to negotiate tensions caused by deeply embedded patriarchal power relations. The data suggested that when the three Pataxó sisters initially decided to create the tourism project, they were underestimated by the wider community because of their gender and their perceived ability to manage tourism. Nayara stated:

We heard many unpleasant comments about our tourism project idea ... Even male community members used to say that they did not have this competence and let alone women. Community men undermined our strength and skills.

Karajá, the Sisters' eldest brother, was the Cacique of Jaqueira community. He admitted his initial scepticism towards his three sisters' capacity to manage tourism, as he remarked in a regretful way:

I did underestimate my sisters' ability. We, the men, were not interested in tourism at all because we did not know how we would manage it.... I said that it was not going to work because community women would not be able to manage tourism.

Previous studies on gender in tourism employment and entrepreneurship have shown that women are often marginalised within enterprise activities and face numerous difficulties when performing tourism-related work (e.g. Kutlu & Ngoasong, 2023; Tucker, 2007; Wilkinson & Pratiwi, 1995). This may be partly explained by the perpetuation of deeply embedded patriarchal cultural norms, which permeate social practice, for example, the expectations for women to work only in certain domains of economic activity or to continue performing parenting and caring duties alongside work in tourism. However, these same studies have also shown that tourism as a domain of practice provides opportunities for women to exercise their agency, mobilising (individual and networked) resources to gain economic independence and consequently increase their sense of empowerment.

In a similar vein, the findings from the Jaqueira community showed the impacts of indigenous women's leadership. The women's involvement in the development and management of tourism brought new gender dimensions over decision-making processes by seeking holistic solutions to enhance the community. Nitynawã revealed how her leadership role evolved:

I was appointed as the Director of the Pataxó Institute of Ethno-tourism to manage tourism related issues. Since then, I have been involved in every step of community tourism.... I was very proud because it was the first time that a community woman held a leadership position, so I have been in this position almost 20 years.... With this leadership, I have discovered my ability to negotiate community decisions and interests.... We have come to the spotlight gradually and without having been confronted by community men's attitudes....

The second sister, Nayara, was the Director responsible for managing traditional aspects of Pataxó rituals, celebrations, music and cultural projects. She was also the community female Vice-Cacica, and explained her views on the intersections of leadership and tourism:

Our involvement in tourism changed the whole structure of the community. Thanks to tourism we became female leaders. We have the power over any decisions here. We must be at the centre of any negotiations, debates and discussions concerning community tourism and other community issues. With our commitment to and involvement in tourism, we have been more respected and valued.

Observations showed that patriarchal Pataxó traditions changed during the tourism development process. Because of her leadership role in the tourism project, Nayara was chosen by community members as Vice-Cacica in 1998. Nayara's position has not been challenged by community males, and they continue to endorse her. Moreover, her active roles in the community inspired other Pataxó community women to assume leadership roles. A significant number of Pataxó women in other communities have subsequently become leaders and vice-leaders. Moreover, thanks to the success of the community tourism development, women have become financially independent, becoming teachers, school directors, cloth designers, artists and community tourism managers.

Pataxó women had always been involved in producing arts and handicrafts and in selling them to tourists at the beach (Sampaio, 1994). These spheres of empowerment were created through a combination Pataxó traditional knowledge and access to higher education among female Pataxó teachers, who were at the forefront of community decisions and management as leaders and *Pajés* (Medicine women) in the Kaí-Pequi territory in the city of Prado (da Silva, 2017). Observations revealed that Pataxó women's leadership in tourism built on these evolving cultural dynamics, and their efforts in the enterprise sphere brought significant changes to the community more widely as this became a viable source of income. The women's willingness to champion and actively develop the enterprise changed the way they were perceived by the males in the community, who began to show increasing respect towards them and their capabilities. This was significant because respect is a prerequisite for trust as different community members create a mutual moral space (Sztompka, 2019). Importantly, greater involvement in tourism planning and development enabled the women to build trust among community members.

4.2. Building tradition and community participation as pathways to trust development

The women leaders leveraged their personal commitment and experience to develop the tourism project and to drive community participation in the shared enterprise. Importantly, they did this by coupling the development of the tourism project with the community's sense of identity and their (historically built) relationship with the land. Nitynawã explained:

After so many years waiting for land rights, there were also our feelings of spiritual attachment to the land and commitment to preserve it.... And we had the idea to create a tourism project based on awareness and valorisation of our culture and also the preservation of this piece of Atlantic forest. We [Nayara, Jandaia and I] were very active and determined to open the community for visitation. Basically, we convinced community members that tourism could bring many opportunities. Our commitment and determination were indeed very important. Women were very active in leading the creation of the tourism project, so I believe that trust among us was and has been our main ritual. The tourism project was our dream and we had to fight for achieving it. Trust was essential among us because it showed that we cared for our cultural values and for each other.

The women's commitment to the community demonstrated through their efforts to revive the Pataxó cultural traditions were preconditions for trust to develop. As Nayara stated,

For us the revival of our language was crucial. We started to talk with elderly women who knew about our language...and they started to teach us.... We found existing documents about our people and our language; they were crucial for reviving the Patxohã [language]. Then, we created our own community research group called Atxohã. What you see today here is the result of our long journey of ethnic commitment.... Trust was and is everything. Imagine if you live in a community where you cannot trust your own members? It would not simply work; we would not be here managing tourism for almost 20 years. Trustworthy relations among our members were and have been crucial to the functions of this community.

Observation revealed that Nayara was not only responsible for the cultural aspects of the tourism project, but was also very active in creating and managing community cultural elements and projects. These projects enabled the younger generation to build self-confidence, value their traditions and be proud of their identities as members of the indigenous community.

Théron (2005) viewed community participation as a process where members are given a voice and a chance to influence issues affecting their lives. One of the main barriers to such participation can be the lack of trust among community members. Building a sense of community through engagement in collective cultural activities has been found to be central to fostering support for tourism planning and development (Aref, 2010; 2011; Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2010). Without a sense of community and participation, tourism planning and development often fails.

Based on the field observations, it can be argued that the three sisters' collective actions, their emotional attachment to the community, and their commitment to ethnic values had contributed to the construction of trust within the Jaqueira community. Consistent with the Jaqueira community trust-related experience, Hardin (2002) argued that trust is developed within families, community members and neighbours because they construct a more comprehensive sense of mutual interests through close proximity and intimacy. Trust thus needs to be viewed as being embedded in close ties (Lewis & Weigert, 1985), where group members build on shared values (Seligman, 1997) and familiarity to co-create value that will be realised in the future (Luhmann, 1979).

4.3. Leveraging openness, solidarity and risk taking

Determined to change the future of their community through tourism, these indigenous women leaders' openness and solidarity were used strategically to establish trust relations with other stakeholders interested in developing the scope and scale of the enterprise. Nitynawā explained,

Our desire to succeed and commitment to value our traditions were conveyed to these people and organisations who respected and trusted us ... because without the trust from them, we would not be here today managing tourism activities for almost 20 years. So women were interested in supporting and cooperating when we were planning the project. I think that trust was possible because we were interested in tourism and there were much solidarity among us; we basically understood each other's needs. For example, Luiza's availability and our openness to engage in our community tourism planning have developed this long trustworthy relationship.

Luiza was a female owner of the Pataxó Turismo tour operator. She reinforced the impacts of the three sisters' accessibility, their reciprocal predisposition and their solidarity during the tourism planning process.

I was really glad when I saw the three sisters' willingness and openness to be supported. It was like I was going to do business with three powerful indigenous women. During the planning process there was so much solidarity between us..., so I was seen as the fourth sister and by then I felt that I was more than welcome and trusted by the community.

Observations of their daily interactions in the tourism project demonstrated the emotional attachment between the three sisters and Luiza. Their respectful behaviour toward each other showed that their trustworthy relations were underpinned by being honest and transparent, and by focusing on the needs of the community in operating the project.

Spending time among the women leaders in the context of the project reinforced that predisposition to trust, openness and solidarity were crucial mechanisms required to build trust. This was evidenced by the sisters' attempts to engage with external actors, to create practical processes and mechanisms that would then facilitate opening the community to tourists as part of a sustainable visitor experience. This required them to persuade external stakeholders,

e.g. from the Brazilian Micro and Small Business Support Service (SEBRAE) and the Environmental Agency, and community members of the mutual value of cooperating in the enterprise. For example, showing that the visitor numbers and the types of activities being provided were sustainable and beneficial to the community remained a core part of their business proposition to stakeholders. Conveying these principles were crucial components of trust-building leadership practices in the planning and development of the enterprise. However, the women continued to embed these principles in their ongoing interactions with external actors, including with state agencies and tour operators who brought visitors to the community. By driving these value-based interactions and creating responsible mechanisms that enabled the enterprise to function, the women leaders displayed their predispositions to trust in relation to furthering the community's interests, which strengthened their leadership capacities. Reflecting previous studies, building trust through women's leadership in this context required enactments of solidarity characterised by empathy, mutual intimacy, and a sense of commitment to others' interests (Barrera, 2008; Bianchi et al., 2018; Seligman, 1997).

Finally, it is important to recognise that risk is inevitable in social relations. Uncertainty is the foundation of risk, which paves the way for creating trust (Rousseau et al., 1998). The findings suggested that for trust to be built, the indigenous women had to take risks and recognise associated uncertainties. Nitynawā explained:

Risks and fears were part of a very tough beginning because we were not sure who would be interested in working with us.

Researcher: Did you consider the risks?

Nitynawā: I think I did because I established good and honest relations with those willing to support. I believe that we did not have much to lose as we had to try achieving our tourism project dream.

Nayara also reflected on risk taking and her sense of insecurity:

Insecurity was a normal feeling...as we were exposed to an unusual situation and meeting new people.... Despite the sense of fear, the decision was based on our positive feelings to accept the support we received from people who predisposed themselves to trust us and be part of our tourism project.

Observations of the community engagement with visitor groups suggested that establishing business partnerships, for example, with new operators, continued to provoke a sense of trepidation among the sisters. Such anxieties can be seen as natural responses to emerging relationships that had yet to be substantiated or tested through ongoing interactions. Arguably, risks and fears were very important during the trust building process because trust depends on the existence of uncertainty and the potential for failure and harm, socially, politically, and psychologically (Luhmann, 1979). For instance, following criticisms from an operator regarding the authenticity of community practices, that business relation was abandoned. As the enterprise evolved, the potential risks emerging from prejudice or misunderstanding were recognised by the sisters, but supplanted by the willingness to learn from the positive and negative experiences of establishing partnerships. Trust was founded on dependent and complementary relations between risk and action (Luhmann, 2000). Balancing these two pressures was a critical leadership challenge because trust can be seen as a conscious, sensitive attitude founded as much as on doubt and uncertainty as on confidence (Flores & Solomon, 1998, p. 213). The sisters' decisions to accept vulnerability represented their disposition to trust, which was key to their leadership capacities. However, the success of their leadership also required them to manage hazards in developing trustworthy relations. The women tried to address conflicts with operators through dialogue, but discontinued arrangements where mutual understanding became impossible. Planning processes inevitably entail some level of risk-taking (Swain & Tait, 2007), which can influence the evolution of trust in tourism planning and development (Edwards & Nunkoo, 2015). Effective leadership in this context thus required a predisposition to tolerate uncertainties;

however, it also relied on the capacity to persuade other stakeholders to accept the risks and, importantly, to create mutually acceptable ways to manage risks.

5. Conclusion

In response to growing calls to develop critical and contextually-sensitive understanding of the dynamics of trust in tourism management (Edwards & Nunkoo, 2015; Nunkoo & Gursoy, 2017; Pagliara et al., 2021; Sun et al., 2020), this article contributes to knowledge by identifying key practices and mechanisms driving trust development within an indigenous tourism setting. Moreover, in light of critiques of quantitative empirical strategies that draw primarily on psychological constructs in attempts to measure antecedents and mediators of trust, this study focused on the relational and processual dimensions of trust development, which have remained understudied (Nunkoo, 2017; Williams & Baláž, 2021). Furthermore, the data in this empirical context stressed the role of indigenous women's leadership, and their capacity to exercise their agency, in building trust. This responds to recent calls to examine intersections of gender and tourism development, and to recognise the role of women in driving sustainable tourism enterprises (Kutlu & Ngoasong, 2023).

As we noted at the outset, our aim was not to create an abstract, generalizable theoretical framework for conceptualising trust development mechanisms, which runs counter to contextualised understanding. Nevertheless, our findings highlight distinctive practices in this unique context, which offer potentially transferable insights to help evaluate the potential for, and to support the development of, sustainable indigenous tourism in other socio-cultural settings. The findings highlighted two sets of factors related to the mechanism of trust and indigenous women's leadership practices. The first concerns a group-resource focus, stressing that tourism development was coupled with investment in cultural assets that represented value to other community members insofar as they signalled shared identity, solidarity and mutual interest. The second, concerning indigenous women, highlighted their distinct roles in investing effort, taking risks and assuming personal responsibility, which explicitly tied their practices to those of the success of the community and the tourism enterprise.

Specifically, the findings suggested that the women's willingness and ability to invest in building shared resources, particularly those linked to linguistic and cultural traditions, helped to reinforce a sense of mutual interest and thus community. The women foregrounded goals and mobilised resources in service of traditions linked to a shared identity through which they earned the respect of community members and stakeholders. This was key to facilitating the development of trust insofar as it created shared frames of reference and stressed the collective benefits to be gained from supporting the tourism enterprise, under their leadership.

The data highlighted that trust-building was driven by the women's intentions and beliefs, linked to their ambition to empower women and create a sense of solidarity. Moreover, trust was created through the women's capacity to remain open in their interactions and to take calculated risks to realise mutual benefits. The female leaders' ability to manage constructive relations, and negotiate the risks associated with the tourism enterprise, reinforced their agency and empowerment, the value of their leadership for the community and the trust between them and community stakeholders.

Arguably, the potential value of this type of leadership, which sets moral and behavioural exemplars, while focusing on strengthening cultural traditions for community, represent transferable insights. Advocating these modes of leadership, as drivers and facilitators of trust, could help address injustices observed in past studies of tourism development among indigenous communities, and thus overcome wider crises of trust associated with tourism planning and management (Edwards & Nunkoo, 2015; Swain & Tait, 2007).

However, it is necessary to remain cautious for several reasons. First, although female leadership in this setting helped to challenge patriarchal norms, there are often numerous, deeply

embedded structural factors in different socio-political contexts that limit the potential for women to build and maintain trusting relations among diverse stakeholders. Second, placing specific actors at the centre of trust development and maintenance risks putting excessive emphasis and pressure on those individuals. Sustaining trust relations becomes dependent on their ongoing willingness and ability to mobilise their knowledge and charismatic bases of power in ways that are subjectively and objectively deemed to serve the community. This can be problematic if these individuals withdraw from those roles or (are perceived to) discontinue exercising their agency to pursue collective interests.

It is also important to avoid treating the insights gained from this study reductively, and attempting to create a simplistic formula or generalised theoretical framework to be applied in alternative socio-political contexts. The value of this type of multimethod, ethnographic study is that the data help to appreciate the historical, cultural and political dynamics of this context, including the presence and capacities of the actors to create and maintain trust. The presence or absence of such characteristics cannot be assumed in other empirical settings. Consequently, future research, including policy and practice oriented work, should attempt to understand the local conditions that shape how trust is developed, maintained or undermined, and to understand the influence of multiple actors.

There is considerable scope to conduct comparative studies to identify and evaluate the mechanisms of trust development, particularly among indigenous tourism enterprises that rely on the involvement of external stakeholders whose involvement risks exploitation and asymmetrical power relations. Examining through comparative studies how trust can be established and maintained, and questioning the role of community actors in exercising agency, mobilising resources and performing leadership, could then help to assess the viability of transferring (and adapting) the insights from one empirical setting to another in developing sustainable indigenous tourism.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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