EXCOVER – LOCAL SWOT REPORT

THE UNION OF MUNICIPALITIES OF CARNIA

1 RESIDENTS' WILLINGNESS TO PARTICIPATE

The Union of Municipalities of Carnia joined the EXCOVER Project aiming at improving its residents' life and economic conditions, while preserving the local cultural identity and environmental resources, through the development of sustainable tourism. To reach this goal, the participation of the local community in the tourism development planning and implementation phases is fundamental, in fact it is one of the main characteristics of tourism development processes to be sustainable. Thus, before going into the residents survey-based SWOT Analysis, main topic of this report, the willingness to participate in the local tourism development of the interviewees is investigated by means of a participation index, developed to meet the informative needs of EXCOVER.

The residents participation index is built with information of different kind, both direct (retrieved from the answers to specific questions) and indirect (making use of response rates), collected during the SWOT survey. The index is a weighted average of 5 components:

- "1_COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION": the evaluation of the extent to which the respondent's local community is willing to participate in the local tourist development (directly asked in the questionnaire and measured with the reported level of agreement, in the range [1, 7]);
- "2_MAIL LEFT": the actual willingness to be more involved and active in the tourism development planning (estimated indirectly with the rate of respondents who left their personal e-mail address to be contacted in the near future to provide further information about their town);
- "3_PERSONAL SHARING ATTITUDE": the self-reported willingness of the respondent to make use of sharing economy platforms to share something of his own with visitors (directly asked in the questionnaire).
- "4_WELCOMING COMMUNITY": the assessment of the extent to which tourists and people with different cultures are welcomed by the respondent's local community (directly asked in the questionnaire and measured with the reported level of agreement, in the range [1, 7]);
- "5_RESPONDENT ENGAGEMENT": the manifested intention to participate in the local tourism development by providing information (indirectly retrieved from the average response rate to the SWOT open-ended questions, that require a considerable involvement and effort, compared to closed-ended ones);

As the first 2 components of the index are expressed on a scale ranging between 1 and 7 (while the other components are rates), they are normalized by dividing the average level of agreement by the maximum value possible (that is 7), to facilitate comparisons. The 5 components are weighted based on their relative

importance in the context of EXCOVER, especially in view of the forthcoming activities of the next working packages:

- weight of 1_COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION = 0.4
- weight of 2_MAIL LEFT = 0.2
- weight of 3_PERSONAL SHARING ATTITUDE = 0.2
- weight of 4_WELCOMING COMMUNITY = 0.1
- weight of 5_RESPONDENT ENGAGEMENT = 0.1

By construction, the minimum value of the participation index is 0, the maximum is 1.

1.1 Analysis of the participation index

In *The Union of Municipalities of Carnia,* the participation index and its 5 components, described above, take the following values:
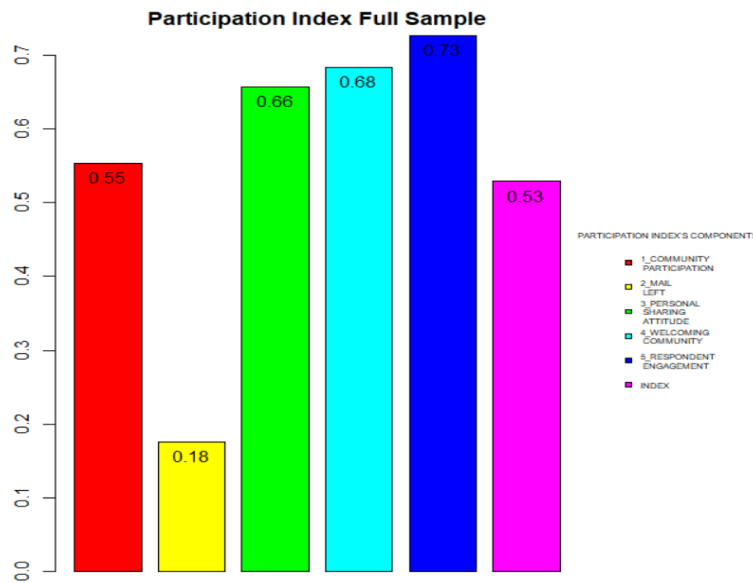
The two histograms, which are located at the two ends of the range of variation of the index, refer to personal involvement:

- The one with the minimum value (0.18) relates to the share of respondents who left their email address
- The maximum value (0.73), concerns the number of those who answered open questions about the negative or positive factors that can influence the development of tourism.

Immediate involvement, through suggestions and advice, is offered by many of the interviewees who, on the other hand, escape when the commitment could continue over time. The failure to respond to the email address request is a clear indication of this.

A global assessment of the orientation towards involvement in tourism cannot, however, ignore the very high value (0.66) that respondents are willing to share some of their resources through sharing economy platforms.

This ambivalence between personal interest and its commercial implications and reluctance on the level of "political" involvement (in the sense of participation in the management of the "polis"), seems to us to be reflected in the values of the two parameters that show these two issues at the community level :

- Welcoming Community which in fact has a value of 0.68, the second position only 0.05 points from the first,
- the Community Participation which is instead equal to 0.55

The participation index, given the weight system, is very affected by the evaluation assigned to the community participation and in fact stands, with 0.53, near the value of this parameter, reflecting the ambiguity of a position of openness to tourism but very cautious in terms of personal commitment to the community, probably preferring to delegate to third parties

As far as the EXCOVER project is concerned, the indications resulting from the survey can be summarized as follows:

- Potential interest in the overall objectives of the project:

  - for the key objective of enhancing the lesser known destinations, or those not yet present on the travel and holidays market,
  - for the strategy based on the use of sharing economy platforms to create the tourist supply chain using individual assets that are not fully used.

- Availability with respect to the opportunities that the project offers the interviewee (and his family) to participate with their own resources in the Sharing Economy platforms
- Great caution, and perhaps a tendency towards delegation as regards participation in community choices.

Participation Index by Destination
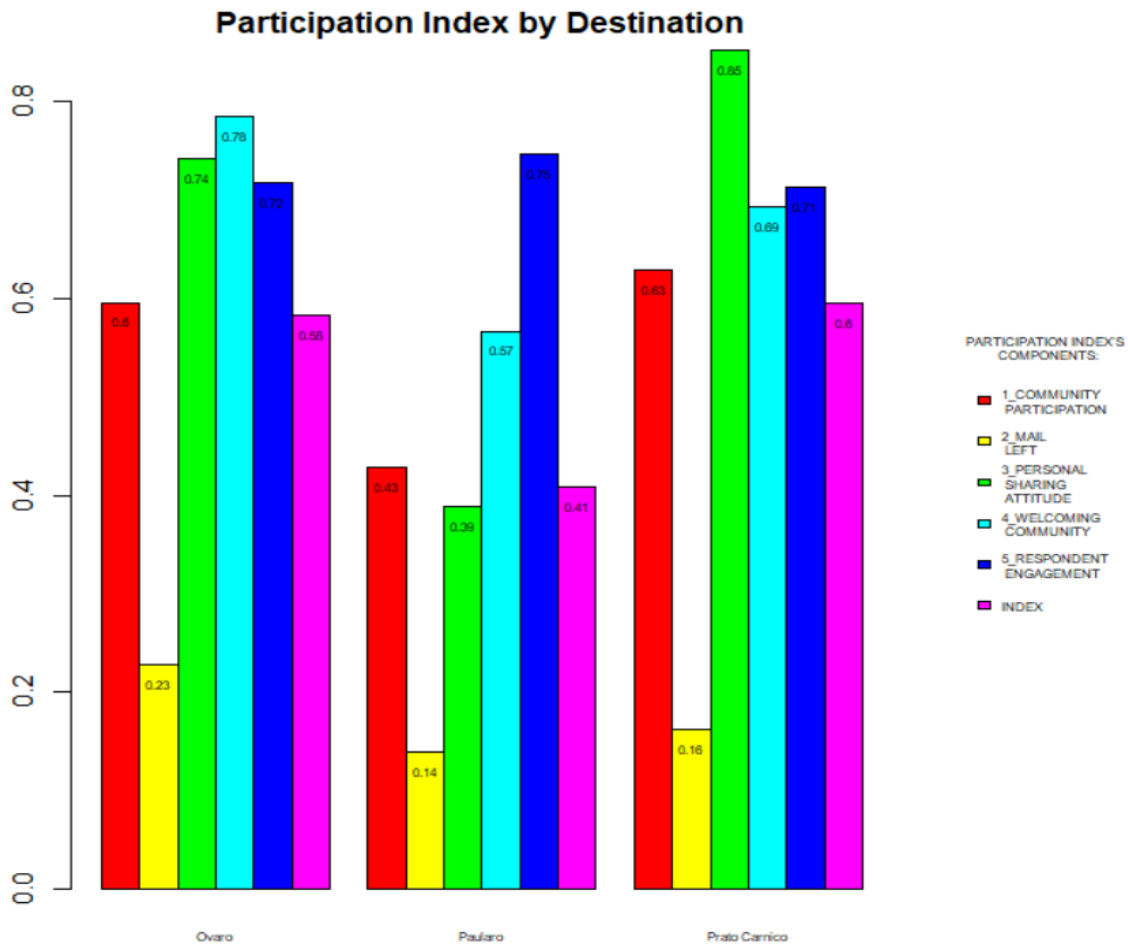
The results of the survey indicate that, as regards the Excover project, Prato Carnico is potentially the most receptive and open community. The global participation index is 0.6 and the community participation index 0,63 and the personal sharing attitude 0,85.

The only discordant figure is the share of emails released during the interview which with 0.16 is in the second place far from the first position of Ovaro (0.23). This location shows indices that do not differ too much from those of Prato Carnico apart, as we have seen, the data about the emails.

Finally, Paularo seems to be a community shrunken on itself.. All the indices show a location not very interested in welcoming tourists or opening up to trade with third parties.

We believe it is an indication to consider carefully when deciding on the inititives to involve the population to create the host community
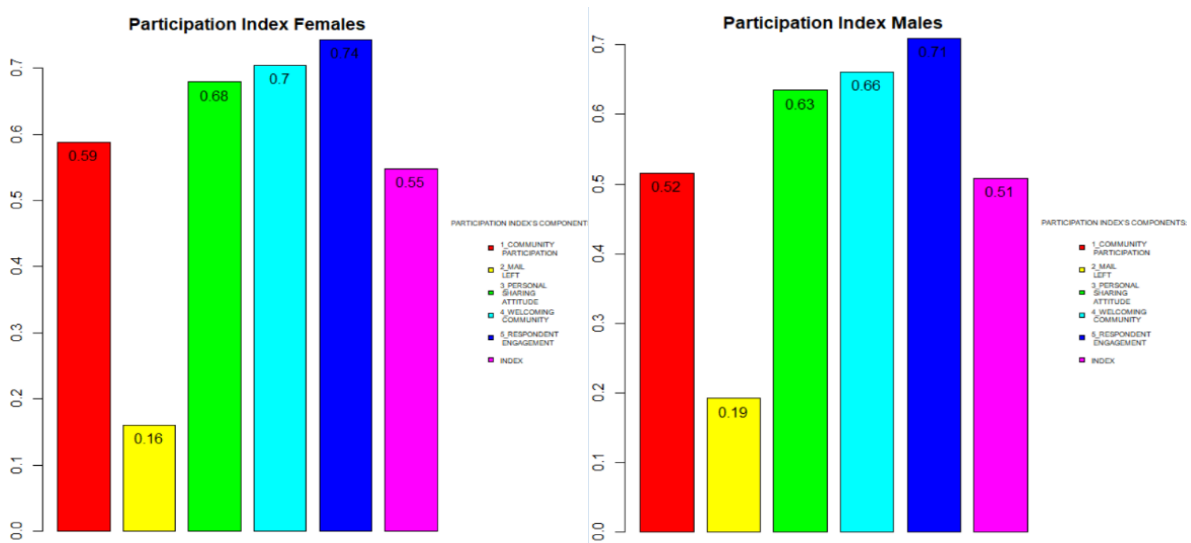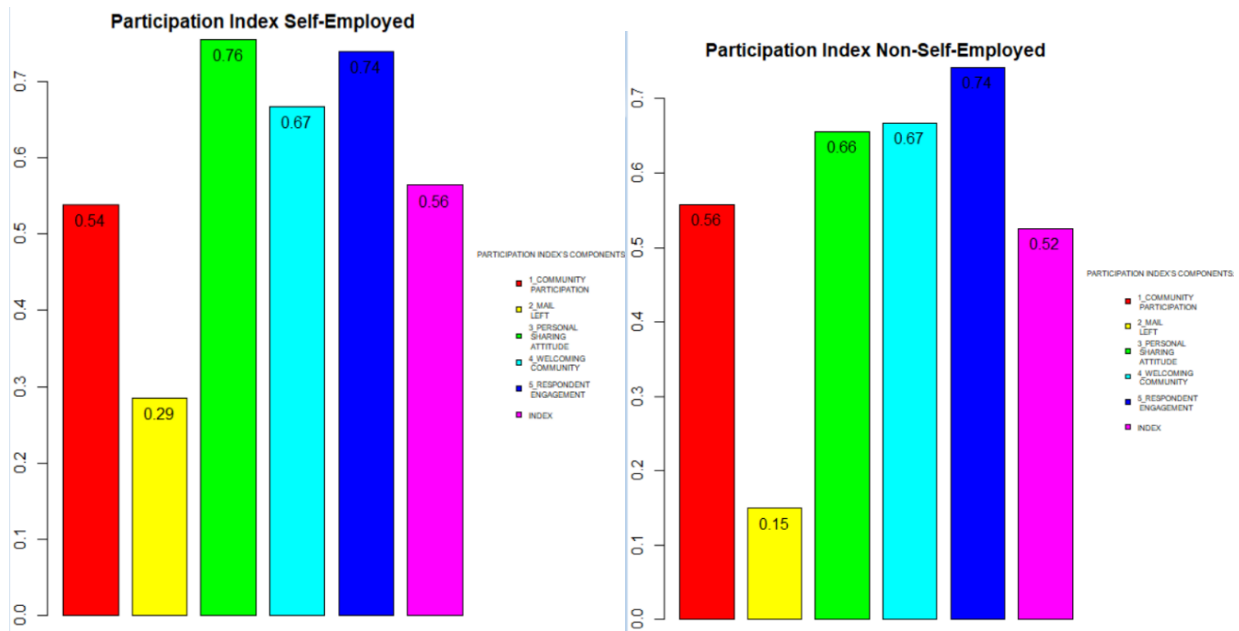

The survey data relating to the sex of the interviewees highlight an interesting fact, the parameters relating to female participation are better than male ones. The differences are not very significant but are systematic and this cannot be the simple product of the case.

An exception is the data relating to email, where however the difference is not very significant, just 0.03 basis points. So looking for female interlocutors for Excover can be a good strategy, at least to be verified.

Participation Index Seniors — Participation Index Juniors
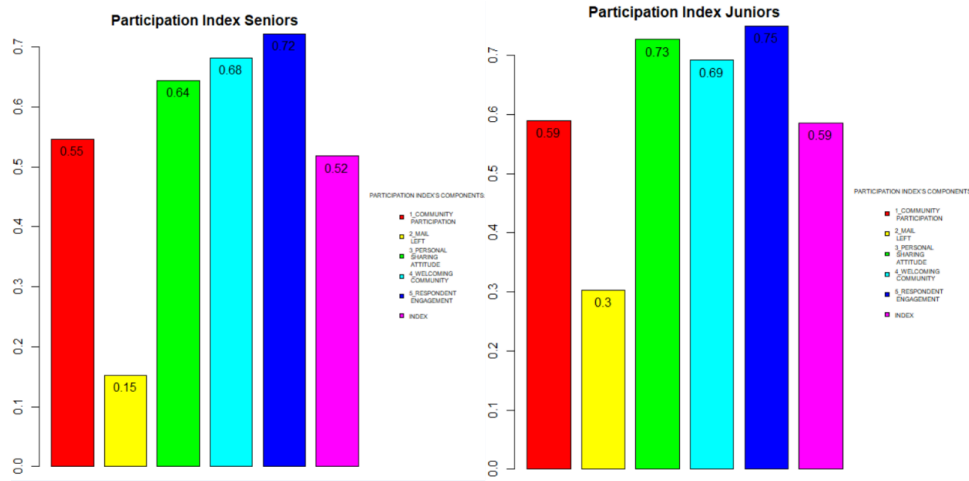
Continuing to scan the demographic parameters, age is another discriminating factor: young people, up to 35 years of age, have systematically higher participation rate values than people over the age.

The more open approach of young people also manifests itself in the higher willingness to release the email, this approach has twice the frequency of group of the "older" and indicates a greater propensity to involve in community policy.

Participation Index Self-Employed / **Participation Index Non-Self-Employed**

PARTICIPATION INDEX'S COMPONENTS:
- 1_COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION
- 2_MAIL LEFT
- 3_PERSONAL SHARING ATTITUDE
- 4_WELCOMING COMMUNITY
- 5_RESPONDENT ENGAGEMENT
- INDEX

The last parameter with strong discriminatory ability on participation rates is the type of occupation: self-employed or employees.

The first in the small villages, the subject of the survey, are mainly composed of traders, farmers and artisans, that is, workers positively affected by an increase in tourist flows. In fact, their indices are systematically equal to or higher than those of employees, apart from the community participation index.

Not only is this group of people interested in the development of the tourist activity but it is also oriented to be informed and perhaps involved in the various phases of project implementation as indicated by the share of those who released their email address equal to almost double that of employees.

Summarizing this first part of the survey, the Excover project can find interested attention in the following categories of respondents:

- Women,
- Young people up to 35 years old
- Self-employed
- Among the inhabitants of Prato Carnico and Ovaro

The last remark does not intend to suggest focusing attention only on previous groups. Even the "least interested" should be considered even only to grasp their objections or the reasons for the lesser interest.

However, having as objective a balance between resources and results, devoting greater attention to those who prove potentially more sensitive and attentive to the development prospects of their community is certainly advisable,
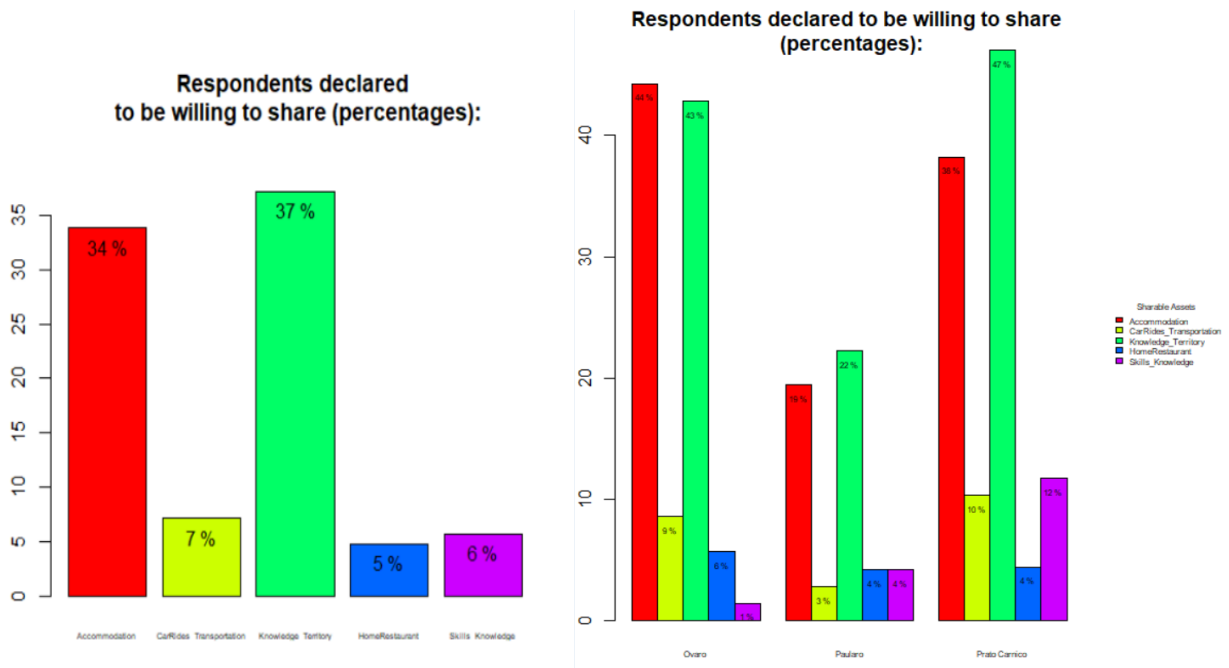
1. RESIDENTS' ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE SHARING ECONOMY

Since EXCOVER aims at developing sustainable tourism in *The Union of Municipalities of Carnia,* where the local natural and cultural heritage constitute potential tourism attractions, but many tourist services and facilities are missing, a crucial phase of the project is dedicated to the construction or strengthening of the local supply chain. But the EXCOVER budget does not allow to make big investments for building accommodation structures, restaurants, transportation services and the like. Therefore, a pivotal idea of the project is to invite the local community to put into play their unused assets to deliver tourist services, by exploiting the new opportunities offered by the sharing economy. 'Sharing economy' means sharing something of a private's own with another person temporarily, in exchange for some money, through the web. Then, for the prosecution of the project, it is essential to understand on which private unused assets the construction of the supply chain can rely. To this aim, the SWOT questionnaire included 2 specific questions:

- In your opinion, what may your fellow villagers be willing to share?
- What would you share?

From the analysis of the correspondent answers, it emerges that the population of the municipalities of Carnia involved in the Excover project is ready to share mainly two types of services with future tourists: accommodation (37%) and knowledge of the area (37%), the other services account for shares marginal values below 10%. Surprising is very low the value of the Home Restaurant which may be affected by the limitations imposed by the new legislation that protects traditional restaurant activities. (see the graphs below)

Ovaro and Prato Carnico show a substantially similar attitude with respect to the use of the Sharing Economy platforms and the type of services to be shared with an index value close to or greater than 0.40 points.

Paularo, on the other hand, once again confirms his lack of enthusiasm for tourism: the indices relating to "Willing to Share" are all below 20 points with the only exception of sharing knowledge of the area (0.22).

Respondents declared to be willing to share (percentages):

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It is worth paying attention to a fact that has perhaps not been sufficiently underlined: the two graphs above indicate the willingness of the residents to actively participate in the tourism sector using the sharing economy platforms to sell their services.
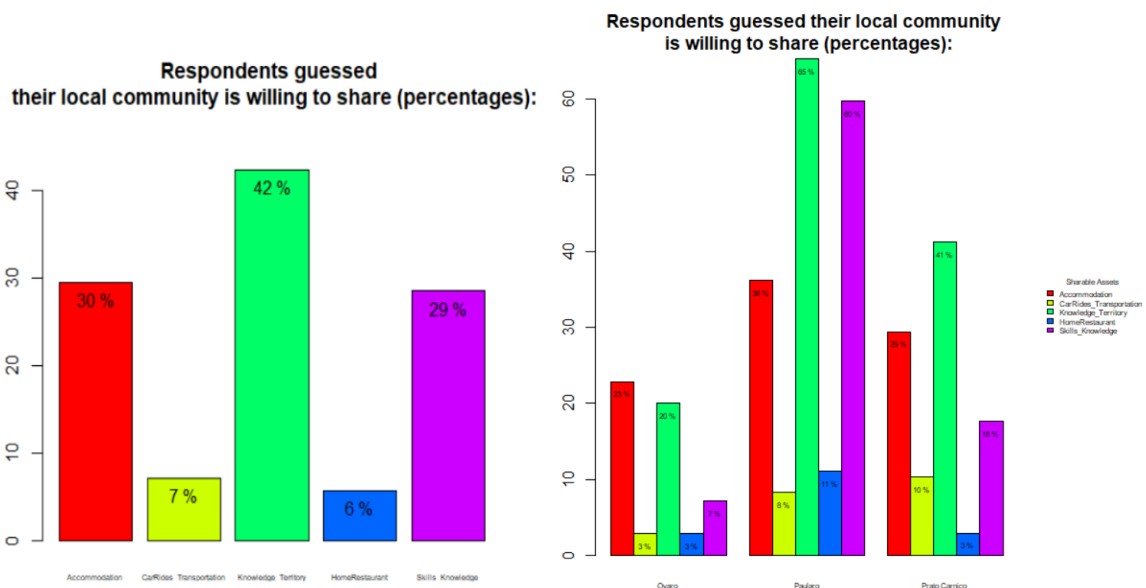
It is interesting to see what happens if respondents are asked to evaluate the propensity of the community in which they live towards tourism and in particular towards the use of sharing economy platforms.

In this case, attention should be paid to the following graphs. The most evident data is the emergence as a service to be shared "the skills present in the territory". It is not specified which skills are but it is not difficult to imagine that they can be "knowledge" related to typical products or productions. The interviewees probably do not have these skills but know that they are present in the community to which they belong.

The second element that emerges is that in Ovaro and Prato Carnico the share of those who claim to want to use the sharing economy services is greater than the share of those who say that the community will follow them on the same road, that is, the country is less enterprising of the group of respondents.

It may be that the interviewer inadvertently selected the group of innovators, but it may also be that it is an unconscious to apply for the opportunity to enter the tourism business.

Paularo's behavior seems to confirm this last hypothesis. We have seen previously that in this municipality the population seems to escape the tourist activity, in this case, they are asked to hypothesize what their community's reaction might be to tourism, there is an overestimation of the will of the "others" to participate to the sharing economy, as if this were a "fault" that does not concern the interviewees. Strange behavior that deserves to be deepened.

Respondents guessed their local community is willing to share (percentages):

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Although very schematic, the survey highlights the undoubted interest of the inhabitants of at least two of the three municipalities analyzed towards the development of tourist activity.

The range of services concerned and the relative quantities appear to be able to create a sufficiently widespread offer system so as to lay the foundations for a significant tourist offer, this at least in Prato Carnico and Ovaro, what happens in Paularo will be explored on the occasion of further surveys that will focus on the resources that can be spent by any location in the tourism sector.

1. SWOT ANALYSIS OF THE LOCAL TOURISM SYSTEM

Although *The Union of Municipalities of Carnia* can lever on some tangible and intangible assets that are potentially attractive for tourists, to boost a sustainable tourism development, the tourism sector and its economic potential is still scarcely unfolded (as described in the Preparatory Local Report attached). Whence the need to deeply investigate how the local resources can be effectively employed to attract and create value for visitors, why they are not currently source of economic growth, which opportunities should be caught, also in terms of valorizing underutilized or neglected assets, and which risks may arise. To this aim, the SWOT Analysis shown in the present Report was conducted.

The SWOT factors were identified through a semi-structured survey on the opinions of *number of interviewed people* residents, as the involvement of the locals is crucial to co-construct a tourism development consistent with their vision of the future of their own territory. The *face to face* survey interviews were carried out inDeember 2019 and January 2020 *during which the interviews were performed* throughout *Ovaro, Paularo and Prato Carnico,* with a special focus on the city center and sites of tourist attractions. The resulting SWOT matrix was discussed with policy makers, who assigned a relative importance score to each SWOT factor, so that the subsequent strategic interventions can be effectively prioritized and financial resources can be efficiently allocated. The resulting weighted SWOT matrix is reported below.

STRENGHTS	WEAKNESSES
Variety and beauty of the landscape.	Lack of promotion and marketing initiatives.
Local culture, history, museums, watchmaking tradition.	Lack of centralized coordination of the tourism sector.
Authenticity of small villages, where tourists can experience the life of a small mountain community.	Poor urban planning, territorial fragmentation, lack of strategies for tourism development, ineffective destination management.
Tranquillity.	Lack of a shared vision of the future.
Hotel Diffuso, small niche accommodation facilities.	Depopulation, aging of the population.
High quality of life, healthy air, absence of traffic and degradation.	Wrong investments, lack of investments for environmental sustainability, green economy and infrastructure.
Wild pristine nature.	Lack of training on tourism and local culture, lack of skills and professionalism for tourism development
OPPORTUNITIES	**THREATS**
Potential for marketing and promotion offered by ICT.	Excessive bureaucracy.
Slow tourism market widening.	Lack of visibility of local culture in the regional, national and international panorama.
Emergence of the tourism market searching for small villages, curious destinations.	National policy.
Green tourism market in expansion.	Strong competition for regional contributions, lack of development funds.
Potential synergies with neighboring destinations.	Disinterest of young people towards tourism.
Many huts for the development of huts tourism.	High tourist demand for services and comforts, absent in the destination.
Medium-high altitude trails: opportunities for trekking, hiking etc.	Economic recession.

1.1 STRENGHTS OF THE LOCAL TOURISM SYSTEM

The main factors of attraction are two: beauty of the places and authenticity

This means that the connection with traditions is not false, it is not a product created for tourists.

Tranquility, good quality of life and small receptivity complete the picture.

These are positive elements consistent with a framework that describes an environment suitable for resting and sharing the holiday period with a small host community.

1.2 WEAKNESSES OF THE LOCAL TOURISM SYSTEM

Traquillity should not be confused with immobility. The weakness factors indicated in the SWOT describe a territory that is peaceful because it is immobile not by choice but only because it rejects choices.

The key element of the weaknesses is the lack of a vision shared by the community about its future.

Without this, the choices become impossible, or if they are made, they are confused as they point from time to time in different directions, for example the land use plans (poor urban planning) pursues the needs of the individuals instead of guiding them but also the public investment or choices in tourism are not coherent.

The escape of young people, depopulation and the consequent aging of the population are only consequences of the above.

1.3 OPPORTUNITIES FOR TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

The opportunities that the tourist market offers to small villages not to be abandoned and disappear are manifold: the interest of tourists for non-mass destinations, green tourism, the search for authenticity, are all trends that go in the direction of small communities.

The opportunities linked to digital infrastructures and smart working also go in this direction and if valorised they can even change the concept of vacation itself. From "hit and run", or "at most a week", the stay can extend for long periods of time, with not only economic but also social impacts including the regeneration of the host community.

1.4 THREATS TO TOURIST DEVELOPMENT

The threats are well known: bureaucracy, low visibility of small communities, tourist demand for high quality services, etc.

However, all these aspects have a characteristic that differentiates them from their strengths: they act in an uncoordinated and more or less random way. They are also difficulties that everyone has and someone has managed to overcome. So there is an opportunity to learn how to deal with these threats and to overcome them.

2. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The SWOT analysis has highlighted the existence in at least two out of three municipalities, Ovaro and Prato Carnico, (Paularo's orientation seems different) of groups of people interested in attempting a tourism development process of their community based on the use of sharing economy platforms.

These are mainly women, young people, with self-employment and therefore used to being entrepreneurs of themselves.

The services offered focus mainly on the receptive ones, but there is also a similar share of activities related to the knowledge of the area. According to the writer, they should not necessarily be interpreted as tourist guides, it could be the knowledge of the best fishing places, or the visit of farms or places of production of typical products or many other activities that are based on meticulous knowledge of the locality or the surroundings.

There are not many who propose themselves for transport or restaurant / home services. But this we don't think is a problem. We assume that visitors to these locations will be equipped with their own means of locomotion and therefore individual local public transport should have a substantially occasional function. So many candidates would be more of a problem than a real opportunity.

Even the home restaurant should be an income opportunity for some elderly keeper of ancient recipes that a competitor of restaurants or the like. An additional attraction factor for locations that need to collect and put together all the attractive resources they have according to a strategy.

But this will be the theme of the next phase.