

# **The Future Is a Shared Country: An Application of the Collaborative Economic Model in Heritage Tourism**

Von der Fakultät für Architektur, Bauingenieurwesen und Stadtplanung der  
Brandenburgischen Technischen Universität Cottbus-Senftenberg

zur Erlangung des akademischen Grades eines

Doktor der Philosophie

genehmigte Dissertation

von

Master of Arts

**Simona Freifrau von Eyb, geb. Cadar**

aus Bacau, Rumänien

Gutachter: Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. (NMU, UA) Michael Schmidt

Gutachter: Gastprofessor Dr. Roland Bernecker

Gutachter: Prof. Dr. Emidio Diodato

Tag der Disputation: 18. Oktober 2022

To Constantin, Julius and Cosima,  
with whom I share so much

## Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Prof. Dr. Michael Schmidt, who has accompanied my growth for so many years. There were many invaluable talks, journeys, dramas and laughter that helped me in the process. Many years ago, in front of the Pantheon, we were debating plans about personal development. This is certainly a very important part of it, for which I am immensely grateful.

I would also like to thank Prof. Dr. Roland Bernecker, who has been a role model for me in so many ways. Quite often, he has showed me direction and purpose. His encouraging words not only gave me a sense of appreciation, but also helped me focus on what matters most.

I am very grateful to Prof. Dr. Emidio Diodato, whose kindness and support for this dissertation have certainly made my work easier.

I wish to express my gratitude to Gayathri Hegde, who made the fieldwork in India possible in the time of Corona, and who has been so helpful and enthusiastic about the topic of my research. To Savita Uday, who has opened the gates to the Halakki communities. To all the people in Bucovina and Karnataka who offered their hospitality and allowed me to listen.

I am immensely thankful to Jayne Linaker, who has offered a great support in the last moments of my dissertation.

To all my students, who kept me motivated throughout the years and made me cherish what I do.

To all my friends, who supported me in so many different ways throughout the process, gave me encouragement and confidence.

To my mother, who has offered me so much love and support throughout the years. I know she will be proud.

Most and last, to my family, without whom I could have never done this.

## Abstract

This thesis contributes to the understanding of the collaborative economic model and its applicability in the development of heritage tourism in rural areas. It does so by examining the conceptual and operational attractiveness of the collaborative economy and by proposing a new collaborative model for tourism development. The first part of the research provides a broad theoretical contextualisation of the collaborative economic model. The main assumption is that the duality between individual and collective values lies at the core of all social interactions, and is essential in understanding the conceptual appeal of the collaborative model. The study draws upon concepts and paradigms from a wide range of academic disciplines to frame this assumption: moral philosophy, religion, history, national and political narratives, neuroscience, evolutionary biology, psychology, anthropology and World Heritage discourses. It continues with an analysis of this duality within various theoretical models in the history of Western political economy, and argues that the search for an ideal model of economic policy represented a constant balancing act between individualist or collective goals. The thesis further investigates this duality at the microeconomic level, in relation to specific aspects of economic behaviour: motivation, interaction, ownership, and modes of consumption. The research continues to examine the key characteristics of the collaborative economy, as an emerging model that challenges the structures of the dominant market economy. It demonstrates how the collaborative economy provides an ingenious manner to reconcile individual interests with a sense of community and cooperative action, developing a narrative that rehabilitates the social nature of economic activities. The second part of the thesis investigates the operational attractiveness of a potential collaborative tourism model. It explores the perspectives of both the providers (hosts) and the consumers (tourists) of travel experiences. With the help of data collected from a survey conducted at four selected locations in Romania (Hrabusna, Breaza de Sus) and India (Bhavikeri, Gokarn), the study identifies a high level of acceptance from potential hosts towards a small-scale collaborative tourism model. Similarly, data collected from an online survey offers valuable insights into the tourists' acceptance of a collaborative tourism model and the functional aspects of its implementation. Finally, the thesis proposes a new collaborative model for small-scale heritage tourism in rural areas – *sharitage*. The findings of this research provide a good basis for the elaboration of new socio-economic practices that would generate development opportunities and transparent benefits for vulnerable communities in rural areas, respond to the growing tourist demand for immersive, locally contextualised travel experiences, and contribute to the safeguarding of traditional knowledge and practices.

Keywords: World Heritage, heritage tourism, collaborative economy, history of economic models, individual and collective values.

## Zusammenfassung

Diese Dissertation leistet einen Beitrag zum Verständnis des kollaborativen Wirtschaftsmodells und seiner Anwendung für die Entwicklung des Kulturerbe-Tourismus im ländlichen Raum. Dies geschieht durch die Untersuchung der konzeptionellen und operativen Attraktivität der kollaborativen Wirtschaft und durch den Vorschlag eines neuen kollaborativen Modells für Tourismusentwicklung. Der erste Teil der Forschungsarbeit stellt eine breite theoretische Kontextualisierung des kollaborativen Wirtschaftsmodells dar. Die Leithypothese lautet, dass die Dualität zwischen individuellen und kollektiven Werten die Grundlage aller sozialen Interaktionen und ein wesentlicher Aspekt der konzeptionellen Anziehungskraft des kollaborativen Modells ist. Die Studie berücksichtigt Konzepte und Paradigmen zahlreicher akademischer Disziplinen, um diese Hypothese zu unterstützen: Moralphilosophie, Religion, Geschichte, nationale und politische Narrativen, Neurowissenschaft, Evolutionsbiologie, Psychologie, Anthropologie und Welterbe-Diskurse. Weiterhin erfolgt eine Analyse dieser Dualität im Rahmen verschiedener theoretischer Modelle in der Geschichte der westlichen politischen Ökonomie. Das Hauptargument ist, dass die Suche nach dem optimalen Modell für Wirtschaftspolitik einen permanenten Balanceakt zwischen individualistischen und kollektiven Zielen darstellte. Die Arbeit erforscht, inwiefern diese Dualität auch auf mikroökonomischer Ebene identifizierbar ist, mit Bezug auf verschiedene für das wirtschaftliche Verhalten relevante Aspekte: Motivation, Interaktion, Eigentum, Konsumverhalten. Die Forschungsarbeit untersucht weiterhin die zentralen Elemente der kollaborativen Wirtschaft, die die Strukturen der dominanten Marktwirtschaft herausfordert. Die Studie zeigt, wie die kollaborative Wirtschaft kreative Rahmenbedingungen schafft, um individuelle Interessen mit Kooperation und einem Gemeinschaftsgefühl zu vereinbaren und wie sie ein besonderes Narrativ entwickelt, das die soziale Natur von wirtschaftlichen Aktivitäten hervorbringt. Der zweite Teil der Dissertation untersucht die operative Attraktivität eines potenziellen kollaborativen Tourismus-Modells. Dies bezieht sich sowohl auf die Perspektiven der Anbieter (Gastgeber) als auch auf die der Konsumenten (Touristen) der Reiseerlebnisse. Basierend auf Daten, die an je zwei ausgewählten Orten in Rumänien (Hrabusna, Breaza de Sus) und Indien (Bhavikeri, Gokarn) sowie in einer Online-Umfrage erhobenen wurden, weist die Studie eine hohe Akzeptanz der potenziellen Gastgeber und Touristen für ein kollaboratives Tourismus-Modell nach. Schließlich beschreibt die Forschungsarbeit ein neues kollaboratives Modell für die Entwicklung von Kulturtourismus auf lokaler Ebene im ländlichen Raum – *Sharitage*. Die Erkenntnisse dieser Forschungsarbeit bieten eine gute Basis für die Ausarbeitung neuer sozioökonomischer Praktiken, die Entwicklungsmöglichkeiten und transparente Vorteile für schutzbedürftige Gemeinschaften in ländlichen Gebieten generieren, der wachsenden Nachfrage auf Seiten der Touristen für immersive, lokal kontextualisierte Reiseerlebnisse entgegenkommen und zum Schutz traditionellen Wissens und traditioneller Praktiken beitragen könnte.

Stichworte: Welterbe, Kulturtourismus, kollaborative Wirtschaft, Wirtschaftsgeschichte, individuelle und kollektive Werte.

“We are sun and moon, dear friend; we are sea and land. It is not our purpose to become each other; it is to recognize each other, to learn to see the other and honour him for what he is: each the other's opposite and complement.”

Hermann Hesse, *Narcissus and Goldmund* (1930)

**Contents**

**Illustrations** ..... 4

**Abbreviations**..... 9

**INTRODUCTION** ..... 10

**Background** ..... 10

**Research problem** ..... 11

**Research question**..... 13

**Literature review**..... 14

**Paradigms, frameworks and other “ogies”** ..... 15

**Methods**..... 16

**Thesis outline** ..... 18

**CHAPTER ONE: A FUNDAMENTAL COMPLEMENTARITY** ..... 20

**1.1 The individual and the collective** ..... 20

**1.2 The world and us** ..... 21

**1.3 The world within/above us** ..... 22

**1.4 History, national narratives and politics**..... 25

**1.5 Heroes**..... 30

**1.6 Genes and neurons**..... 35

**1.7 Talking about an evolution**..... 38

**1.8 (World) Heritage: My heritage, our heritage**..... 39

**CHAPTER TWO: ECONOMIC DUALITIES**..... 49

**2.1 *Homo economicus***..... 49

**2.2 Economic experiments** ..... 52

**2.2.1 The interests of one** ..... 53

**2.2.2 The interests of all**..... 59

**2.2.3 Visions in between** ..... 63

**2.2.4 Economics redux?** ..... 67

**2.3 Self-interest vs. collective good**..... 69

**2.4 Ownership: mine vs. ours** ..... 79

**2.5 A tale of two purposes: possessing vs. experiencing** ..... 84

<b>CHAPTER THREE: THE COLLABORATIVE ECONOMY .....</b>	<b>89</b>
3.1 What's in a name?.....	90
3.2 Utopian ideals.....	91
3.3 How big, how far?.....	93
3.4 Revolutionary, but not exactly .....	95
3.5 The confusing architecture of sharing.....	97
3.6 The bearable lightness of not owning.....	100
3.7 Networks and the peer-to-peer dynamic.....	103
3.8 Empowerment .....	105
3.9 Community and trust.....	106
3.10 Not everyone's darling, but still a necessity with happiness perks .....	109
3.11 "Neoliberalism on steroids" or "lost in translation"? .....	110
<b>CHAPTER FOUR: HOSTS.....</b>	<b>113</b>
4.1 Background.....	113
4.2 Methods.....	114
4.2.1 Survey format.....	114
4.2.2 Ethical considerations .....	114
4.2.3 Survey questions .....	115
4.2.4 Survey sampling.....	116
4.3 Survey in Romania: Hrabusna and Breaza de Sus.....	117
4.3.1 Context.....	117
4.3.2 Format .....	125
4.3.3 Results.....	125
4.4 Survey in India: Bhavikeri and Gokarn.....	136
4.4.1 Context.....	136
4.4.2 Format .....	146
4.4.3 Results.....	147
4.5 Discussion and conclusions .....	158
<b>CHAPTER FIVE: TOURISTS .....</b>	<b>163</b>
5.1 Background.....	163
5.2 Methods.....	163
5.2.1 Survey format.....	163



<b>5.2.2 Ethical considerations</b> .....	164
<b>5.2.3 Survey questions</b> .....	164
<b>5.2.4 Survey sampling</b> .....	165
<b>5.3 Results</b> .....	166
<b>5.4 Discussion and conclusions</b> .....	190
<b>CONCLUSIONS</b> .....	197
<b>Caveats and limitations</b> .....	198
<i>Sharitage</i> .....	199
<b>Potentialities</b> .....	200
<b>Annexes</b> .....	202
<b>Bibliography</b> .....	229

## Illustrations

Figure 1 The collaborative economy honeycomb developed by Jeremiah Owyang (Owyang, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0) .....	95
Survey Romania	
Figure 2 Administrative map of Romania. The county of Suceava is highlighted. (Creative Commons CC BY-SA 3.0, modified by author) .....	118
Figure 3 Administrative map of Romania displaying the smaller administrative units (communes) within the counties. The communes of Breaza and Izvoarele Sucevei, where the field research was conducted, are highlighted in pink. (Map by Rarelibra, 2007, Creative Commons public domain, modified by author).....	118
Figure 4 Physical map of Romania indicating the location of Hrabusna and Breaza de Sus. (Google Maps, 2022) .....	119
Figure 5 Physical map of the region where Hrabusna and Breaza de Sus are located. (Google Maps, 2022).....	119
Figure 6 Household in Hrabusna. Photo: S. v. Eyb.....	120
Figure 7 Local road leading to Hrabusna. Photo: S. v. Eyb.....	121
Figure 8 Locals turning the hay by hand with traditional tools on the meadows in Hrabusna. Photo: S. v. Eyb. ....	121
Figure 9 Haystack on the alpine meadows in Hrabusna. Photo: S. v. Eyb.....	122
Figure 10 Abandoned house in Hrabusna. Photo: S. v. Eyb. ....	122
Figure 11 Households with private meadows in Breaza de Sus. Photo: S. v. Eyb.....	123
Figure 12 View of the meadow landscape in Breaza de Sus. Photo: S. v. Eyb.....	124
Figure 13 View of the village Breaza de Sus with forests in the background. Photo: S. v. Eyb. ....	124
Figure 14 The researcher talking with locals in Hrabusna. Photo: C. v. Eyb. ....	125
Figure 15 Age of survey participants. ....	126
Figure 16 Number of people in their household.....	126
Figure 17 Current employment status of respondents.....	124
Figure 18 Respondents' main source of income .....	126
Figure 19 Willingness of respondents to host tourists. ....	126
Figure 20 Desired frequency of hosting tourists.....	127
Figure 21 Importance of earning additional income. ....	126
Figure 22 Importance of making new acquaintances.....	127
Figure 23 Importance of sharing knowledge and culture with tourists.....	128
Figure 24 Importance of respondents' ability to continue their traditions without financial concern.....	128
Figure 25 Importance of respondents' ability to start their own business and gain economic independence.....	128
Figure 26 Importance of the additional income from tourism to improve living conditions.....	128

Figure 27 Current availability of space for tourists at the homes of respondents.....	129
Figure 28 Willingness for tourists to assist with chores.....	128
Figure 29 Willingness to teach traditional skills and knowledge .....	129
Figure 30 Preferred tourist profiles for the host.....	130
Figure 31 Expected benefits to be gained from network.....	129
Figure 32 Belief in network easily attracting tourists.....	130
Figure 33 Participants with a computer at home.....	131
Figure 34 Participants with internet access at home.....	131
Figure 35 Expected ease of use of the platform.....	131
Figure 36 Expected ease of learning to use the platform. ....	131
Figure 37 Participants’ trust for such an online platform.....	132
Figure 38 Participants’ trust for an intermediary to facilitate between tourists and the host.....	133
Figure 39 The most important deciding factor in hosting a tourist for respondents. ....	133
Figure 40 Level of concern regarding space in their house for hosting tourists.....	134
Figure 41 Level of concern regarding poor amenities and accommodation standards.....	134
Figure 42 Level of concern regarding technical skills.....	134
Figure 43 Level of concern regarding language barriers. ....	134
Figure 44 Level of concern that many tourists will disturb household.....	135
Figure 45 Level of concern regarding other negative impacts of hosting tourists.....	135
Figure 46 Participants’ requirement of guidance on preparing place for hosting tourists.....	135

## Survey India

Figure 47 Administrative map of India highlighting the state of Karnataka (blue) and the district of Uttara Kanada (pink), where Bhavikeri and Gokarn are located. (Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner of India, Population Census 2011) .....	136
Figure 48 Detailed administrative map of India highlighting the state of Karnataka (blue) and the district of Uttara Kanada (pink), where Bhavikeri and Gokarn are located. (Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner of India, Population Census 2011).....	138
Figure 49 Physical map of the region where Bhavikeri and Gokarn (highlighted) are located. (Google Maps, 2022) .....	139
Figure 50 View of the coastline in Gokarn during a Halakki ceremony to sanctify a spot before the Shiva-Ganga procession. Photo: D. Gouda.....	139
Figure 51 Halakki household in Bhavikeri. Photo: G. Hegde. ....	140
Figure 52 Halakki household in Gokarn. Photo: G. Hegde.....	140
Figure 53 Padmavati, Halakki traditional custodian, known for her songs and stories. Photo: G. Hegde. ....	142
Figure 54 Padmavati and her family in Bhavikeri. Photo: G. Hegde. ....	142
Figure 55 Sukri Bommagouda, also called the “Nightingale of Halakkis”, is a well-known and respected person in the Halakki communities. Photo: G. Hegde.....	143
Figure 56 Sukri’s showcase with the many prizes (including the Padma Award) she has received for her social activism in support of the Halakki communities. Photo: G. Hegde.....	143

Figure 57 Savitri Gouda. Photo: G. Hegde .....	144
Figure 58 Balachandra Rama Gouda. Photo: G. Hegde.....	144
Figure 59 Ganapi Voleyappa Gouda (center) and her family. Photo: G. Hegde. ....	144
Figure 60 Dinesh Gouda (left) and his family. Photo: G. Hegde.....	145
Figure 61 Soma Shivappa Gouda (second left) and her family. Photo: G. Hegde.....	145
Figure 62 Sukri Bommagouda (center) with local partners Gayathri Hegde (left) and Savita Uday (right) who made this research possible in the Halakki communities. Photo: D. Gouda. ....	146
Figure 63 Age of survey participants.....	147
Figure 64 Number of people in their household.....	147
Figure 65 Current employment status of respondents.....	147
Figure 66 Respondents' main source of income. ....	147
Figure 67 Willingness of respondents to host tourists.....	148
Figure 68 Desired frequency of hosting tourists.....	148
Figure 69 Importance of earning additional income. ....	149
Figure 70 Importance of making new acquaintances.....	149
Figure 71 Importance of sharing knowledge and culture with tourists.....	149
Figure 72 Importance of respondents' ability to continue their traditions without financial concern.....	149
Figure 73 Importance of respondents' ability to start their own business and gain economic independence.....	150
Figure 74 Importance of the additional income from tourism to improve living conditions.....	150
Figure 75 Current availability of space for tourists at the homes of respondents.....	150
Figure 76 Willingness for tourists to assist with chores.....	151
Figure 77 Willingness to teach traditional skills and knowledge. ....	151
Figure 78 Preferred tourist profile for hosts.....	151
Figure 79 Expected benefits to be gained from network.....	152
Figure 80 Belief in network easily attracting tourists.....	152
Figure 81 Participants with a computer at home.....	153
Figure 82 Participants with internet access at home.....	153
Figure 83 Expected ease of use of the platform.....	153
Figure 84 Expected ease of learning.....	153
Figure 85 Participants' trust for such an online platform.....	154
Figure 86 Participants' trust for an intermediary to facilitate between tourists and the host.....	155
Figure 87 The most important deciding factor in hosting a tourist for respondents. ....	155
Figure 88 Level of concern respondents have regarding space in their house for hosting tourists ..	156
Figure 89 Level of concern respondents have regarding poor amenities and accommodation standards.....	156
Figure 90 Level of concern regarding technical skills.....	156
Figure 91 Level of concern regarding language barriers. ....	156
Figure 92 Level of concern that many tourists will disturb household.....	157
Figure 93 Level of concern regarding other negative impacts of hosting tourists.....	157
Figure 94 Participants' requirement of guidance on preparing place for hosting tourists.....	157

Online tourist survey

Figure 95 Screenshot displaying the welcome page to the online survey..... 163

Figure 96 Age of respondents to survey. .... 166

Figure 97 Importance of having meaningful, engaging experiences and being immerse in the local culture..... 168

Figure 98 Ease or difficulty in finding tours or holiday packages that offer authentic cultural experiences..... 168

Figure 99 The most important factor that makes it difficult to find offers for authentic cultural experiences..... 169

Figure 100 Willingness to book a trip to a rural location and stay with a local family at their home, experiencing and learning from their way of living. .... 170

Figure 101 Interest in traditional crafts (weaving, jewellery making, carving, pottery, blacksmithing, etc.)..... 170

Figure 102 Interest in traditional food and cooking. .... 171

Figure 103 Interest in traditional knowledge about nature, health and wellbeing..... 171

Figure 104 Interest in traditional ways of using the land (farming and agriculture). .... 171

Figure 105 Traditional arts (dance, song, theatre, calligraphy, etc.)..... 172

Figure 106 Interest in spirituality..... 172

Figure 107 Interest in sports, hiking and outdoor adventures with local guides. .... 172

Figure 108 Interest in traditional events and festivals. .... 173

Figure 109 Interest in simply be part of their daily routine..... 173

Figure 110 Interest in making friends with people in other parts of the world. .... 173

Figure 111 Length of ideal stay. .... 174

Figure 112 Amount respondents would be willing to spend per week per person..... 174

Figure 113 Preferred accommodation arrangements..... 175

Figure 114 Importance of comfort and available amenities at the place where they will be staying. .... 175

Figure 115 Respondents’ intention to book. .... 176

Figure 116 Importance of potential benefits to the host family, as well as the preservation of local traditional practices. .... 176

Figure 117 Perceived uniqueness of the suggested tourism model. .... 176

Figure 118 Willingness of respondents to use a collaborative tourism platform..... 177

Figure 119 Importance of the profile of the host family, including photos of their property. .... 177

Figure 120 Importance of the description of activities available with the host family. .... 177

Figure 121 Importance of the ratings and reviews of former guests. .... 178

Figure 122 Importance of a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) section. .... 178

Figure 123 Importance of information about the social cause supported..... 178

Figure 124 Respondents’ most appreciated feature at the visited locations..... 179

Figure 125 Respondents’ willingness to pay a fee for platform services..... 179

Figure 126 The trust towards the services of a tourism platform..... 180

Figure 127 Importance of the online profile of the host..... 180

Figure 128 Importance of reviews the host received from other tourists.....	181
Figure 129 Importance of the location of the host family, including information on the natural surroundings and property. ....	181
Figure 130 Importance of activities offered during the stay.....	181
Figure 131 Importance of conditions and amenities of the accommodation.....	182
Figure 132 Importance of communication with the host.....	182
Figure 133 Importance of social cause and traditions their stay will support. ....	182
Figure 134 Concern regarding poor amenities and low standards of accommodation.....	183
Figure 135 Concern regarding safety issues (not knowing the host family).....	183
Figure 136 Concern regarding language barriers. ....	184
Figure 137 Concern regarding infrastructure (too difficult to travel to the location of the host family).....	184
Figure 138 Concern regarding quality of the activities offered during their stay. ....	184
Figure 139 Concern regarding online payment security.....	185
Figure 140 Concern regarding total cost of the stay. ....	185
Figure 141 How often respondents usually travel for leisure.....	186
Figure 142 Respondents' main motivation to travel.....	186
Figure 143 Desire to get in touch with the locals and experience their lifestyle in their own environment.....	188
Figure 144 Desire to enjoy the beauty of nature and engage in outdoor activities during travel. ....	188
Figure 145 Desire to spend quality time with family and kids during travel.....	188
Figure 146 Stressful adjustment to unfamiliar places and preference for destinations similar to home. ....	188
Figure 147 Preference to go to famous places and share travel experiences with friends on social media. ....	189
Figure 148 Desire to participate in experiential activities at the destination. ....	189
Figure 149 Respondents just need to get to a destination, after that they prefer to walk around and discover everything on their own. ....	189
Figure 150 Interest in visiting historic sites and cultural attractions at the destination. ....	190
Figure 151 Interest to discover alternative solutions to housing, food, work and enjoyment. ....	190

## **Abbreviations**

INS	Institutul National de Statistica
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OUV	Outstanding Universal Value
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNWTO	United Nations World Tourism Organisation
WTTC	World Travel and Tourism Council

## INTRODUCTION

“In this old lovers’ quarrel between liberty and community, Westerners are those who defend freedom and long for attachment.”

Lewis Hyde, *The Gift* (1983, p. 113)

### Background

We live in a world of rising economic inequality. Travelling with the masses is not so much fun anymore. Traditional knowledge is getting lost too fast. And in these troubling times, many problems exist because we still find it difficult to reconcile our need for individuality with our longing for social attachment. This may appear as not the most optimistic tone for an introduction, but the following chapters do promise to offer some redemption. These apparently disconnected facts form the background of this research and are intertwined in its main argument. Their randomness is deceptive because they are all essentially reflecting the same ideas, principles and structures that form the foundation of our social organisation. They are all connected with the prevailing values and behaviours that define our interactions with others.

As much as the author would have liked, the ambition of this research is not to solve the world’s problems in relation to inequality, mass tourism, or disappearing traditions. The greatest minds of our time, as many other greater minds of the past, are constantly trying to develop solutions to these significant matters. This thesis aims to offer an economic alternative that could tackle these aspects on a small scale, with possible replication on a larger one. It links economics, tourism and the transmission of heritage from the prism of the social interactions that define them. It explores the development of a model of heritage tourism that would make our economic and social exchanges more just and empowering, would bring more meaning in what we do (particularly in travel), and would safeguard what we (or others) consider to be of value.

The starting point of this research and an overarching theme in the evolving arguments is the assumption that the duality of individual and collective values lies at the core of all human behaviour and is reflected in all forms of human interaction. Human beings are constantly balancing between these two dimensions. The need to be unique, the instinct for individual freedom and independent agency co-exists with the need to belong to a community, to cooperate and to share values with others. This duality can be identified in the discourses of moral and political philosophy, religion, ethics, history, politics, popular culture, evolutionary biology, neuroscience and heritage studies, to name only a few examples. The dynamic between individual and collective values and their different prioritisation is also central to the various economic theories that strived to produce an ideal model for economic policy. An analysis of concepts like self-interest and cooperation, ownership, private and common property, motivation and purpose reveals how human behaviour is constantly shaped by this



duality in economic exchanges. Our complementary individual and collective nature may seem evident and banal, but in the economic and political context it has generated highly conflictual debates and sometimes even catastrophic human consequences (think about the capitalist/socialist/communist disputes and experiments in this regard).

A more recent, still developing, but very fast-growing economic model – that of the collaborative economy – presents an alternative of how to address this duality in a more balanced way. Reflecting on larger societal changes that emphasise access and the sharing of resources rather than ownership, as well as decentralised action, connectivity and interaction based on common interest, the collaborative economy focuses on cooperation rather than competition as basis for the pursuit of individual and collective benefits. With the help of the new information and communication technologies, it transfers the network structure and the social character of human interactions into the economic realm. In simple terms, the collaborative economy is a peer-to-peer interaction model that uses internet platforms to match users and providers for the exchange of goods and services. The growing popularity of this autonomous, participatory and interactive model made it represent both a business and a social movement (Slee, 2017, p. 1). Despite its diverse uses in a wide range of sectors, its potential utilisation in the heritage field has not been explored. Even in the tourism field, its applications are restricted mainly to accommodation (homestays) and tour-guiding services.

Continuing this line of argument, this thesis will focus on the different elements through which the collaborative economy responds conceptually and operationally to the individual and collective duality that characterises human interactions. At the same time, it will explore the potential application of a collaborative economic model in heritage tourism and the ways through which this could lead to enhanced travel experiences, more opportunities and transparent benefits for vulnerable communities, as well as more recognition and support for traditional practices struggling to survive.

## **Research problem**

The main hypothesis of this research is that a collaborative economic model could be used to develop a form of small-scale, immersive tourism at cultural landscapes in rural areas, for the benefits indicated above. A cultural landscape is understood, in line with the definition presented in the *The Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention* (Operational Guidelines, 2021, II.A.47), as a place defined by the mutual interaction and interdependence between people and nature.

This study emerged from the observation of the following problems. Many cultural landscapes in rural areas experience financial precariousness (very often extreme poverty) and socio-demographic changes that profoundly threaten their character. An investigation that was conducted at the beginning of this

research<sup>1</sup> on 71 cultural landscapes inscribed on the World Heritage list indicated that 70% of the assessed properties have a local annual income lower than their national annual income, and more than half (55%) have ageing communities. In the European context, the data available on the rural areas indicates similar trends (European Commission, 2021). Remote rural areas are constantly losing population, with 70% of the regions shrinking and 25% regions depopulating (ibid., p. 28). In particular with regard to the elderly people (above 60 years old), loneliness and isolation is an increasing problem (ibid., p. 61). Similar trends are evident on a global scale (World Bank, 2022).

At the same time, these rural areas (particularly the remote ones) are cultural landscapes shaped by a vast traditional knowledge about nature and a rich oral culture. They still rely on traditional practices of using the land, which have been transmitted and perfected through generations, and demonstrate a balanced way to integrate human existence into the environment. The negative socio-demographic trends that are affecting these places are often linked to a lack of economic opportunities for the working age population and indirectly threaten valuable depositories of traditional knowledge and practices with disappearance.

A second problem relates to the current trends in global tourism. On the one hand, mass-tourism places significant threats on the physical and social structure of heritage places and the communities connected with them. It also considerably decreases the quality of the tourist experiences, not only in terms of physical and psychological discomfort, but also with regard to the uniform and impersonal character of what these experiences entail. On the other hand, a vast body of reports and papers (UNWTO, 2022; Skift, 2022; WTTC, 2022; European Travel Commission, 2022; OECD, 2020, etc.) indicate that a strong trend on the tourism market is the preference for meaningful, engaging experiences, which are immersive in the localhood and form a genuine connection to the lived environment where travel occurs. Although many tour operators, agencies and business models are striving to facilitate these “authentic” travel experiences, their authenticity is often restricted to semantics and marketing. Another interesting fact is that the tourist segment that prioritising such experiences is also increasingly selective and perceptive towards the offer that is made. This

---

<sup>1</sup> An investigation was conducted on 71 cultural landscapes inscribed on the World Heritage List. The aim was to ascertain whether there were discrepancies between the socio-economic profiles of the communities located at these cultural landscapes in comparison with their national averages. These sites were analysed in six categories: local annual income per capita compared with national annual income per capita, local poverty rate compared with national poverty rate, local unemployment rate compared with national unemployment rate, local population change over the last thirty years, population age over the last twenty years, and migration patterns in terms of out- and in-migration. The final category concerning migration was later removed from the investigation due to a lack of data across most locations.

Where possible the data collected was associated with a town directly located within or adjacent to the World Heritage Site; however, wider geographic regions, such as municipalities, were considered appropriate when less-targeted information was unavailable. To ensure that the data collected was accurate, the usual resources used were national statistics websites and publications. A range of data presentation methods, both within and between different countries was found, including dedicated webpages to socio-economic data, digital databases, downloadable Excel spreadsheets, annual reports, specialised subject reports, infographics and interactive location maps (GIS-based). When no data could be found, additional reputable sources, such as United Nations Development Reports, World Bank statistics and, occasionally, reputable academic papers with a research focus on socio-economic elements at relevant locations. All efforts were made to collect the most recent data. When making a comparison between local and national data, statistics from the same year were used to ensure an accurate comparison. In many cases, national statistics were available more frequently than the localised data. The local statistics were generally only reported upon in official population census results, carried out at intervals between 3-11 years, depending on the country. As such, despite more recent statistics potentially being available at national level, a marginally older statistic may have been used to ensure the accurate comparison with localised data.

observation indicates that a strong demand exists with regard to this type of experiences and that this demand is still poorly addressed.

The third problem has been anticipated in the introductory lines. It shows the collaborative economy as a new, fast-growing model, which reflects larger societal changes and new consumption preferences, but whose applicability has been little explored in the field of heritage.

The main assumption of this research is that the collaborative economy could offer a solution to these problems. By using this model to develop a new form of immersive heritage tourism, it could connect potential hosts in rural areas to potential tourists interested in this type of travel experiences. Such a model could give people in remote rural areas easy access to economic opportunities, it would respond to the growing tourist demand for genuine, immersive, locally contextualised travel experiences and it would shift focus on the value of traditional practices and their preservation.

Most research on the collaborative economy in the tourism context focuses on the accommodation sector (Airbnb and the like) and examines mainly the negative social and economic impacts (gentrification, work conditions, alteration of social fabric, discrimination, disruption of communities, etc.) resulting from its implementation and connected with the absence of an effective regulatory environment. There is insufficient understanding of how the attractiveness of the collaborative economic model is connected to specific values and patterns that shape human interactions (particularly the duality between the individual and the collective). An unsatisfactory application of this model in the heritage field points to an unexplored potential. There is also little information about the possible acceptance of this collaborative tourism model from both the providers (potential hosts) and the users (potential tourists). The present research aims to respond to this niche.

### **Research question**

There is controversy over what economic systems or models are best suited to organise societies and to provide a just environment in which the welfare of both the individual and the community could be pursued. There is also disagreement on how tourism could contribute to that welfare, or what form of tourism could be most beneficent to both the tourist experience and the places and communities it gives access to.

The present research was inspired by these controversies and aims to contribute to the development of good heritage tourism practices. It addresses the following question: Can the collaborative economy provide a viable model for tourism development in rural areas?

Several other questions have additionally guided this study: What elements constitute the conceptual attractiveness of such a model? How are they supported by concepts and paradigms from other disciplines? What kind of social interactions does this model generate? How does it integrate the individual and collective dimensions of economic behaviour? To what extent is such a model accepted by potential users (both providers and consumers of travel experiences)? What are its advantages and disadvantages? The research strategy and design were developed in response to these lines of inquiry.

## **Literature review**

This study relied on an extensive body of literature connected to the research questions identified above. Concepts and theories from various disciplines will be addressed throughout chapters one, two and three. In order to avoid repetitions, this introduction will provide only a general overview of the scope of the literature that has been consulted to anchor the arguments of this study in a sound theoretical context.

The first part of the literature review focused on how the duality between the individual and the collective is perceived in various academic disciplines. For this purpose, a large number of sources have been consulted from the fields of political and moral philosophy, religious studies, history and political science, mythology, literature, social activism, popular culture, natural sciences, genomics, neuroscience, psychology, evolutionary biology, as well as heritage studies and World Heritage discourses.

The second part of the literature review addressed the discipline of economics. This was in turn divided into two relevant areas. One was concerned with the history of economic thought and aimed to understand how the dichotomy between individual agency and collective welfare played a central role in the different theoretical models and economic systems developed over time. An extensive body of concepts and theories were studied from economic history, classical and modern political economy, and illustrated through the models of capitalism, liberalism, neo-liberalism, meritocratic and technocratic liberalism, Marxism, socialism, communism, Keynesian economics, ordoliberalism, social democratic economies and political capitalism, to name the most significant. Another area of interest here were various theories related to economic behaviour and the duality of individualist and collaborative action. Key concepts including self-interest and cooperation, ownership, private and common property, motivation and purpose were identified in the context of disciplines such as political economy, state theories, ethics, moral philosophy, game theories, evolutionary biology, development psychology, behavioural economics and sociology.

The third part of the literature review focused on the particular model of the collaborative economy. Given the fact that this is an emerging economic model, the available literature was significantly more moderate in scope. Defining traits and characteristics were identified from the prism of the two significant positions towards this model: the enthusiastic views supporting its revolutionary approach to consumption and economic exchanges, and its potential for positive change, as well as the critical views identifying its flaws and practical failures.

All these various insights into the complex nature, dimensions and patterns of manifestation related to economic activities have provided a sound theoretical foundation onto which the proposed collaborative model could be conceptually anchored.

## **Paradigms, frameworks and other “ogies”**

The Heritage field is a child with many parents. What some prefer to describe with the buzzwords of ‘inter-disciplinary’, ‘cross-disciplinary’ or ‘multi-disciplinary’ as a need to make-up for a lack of established disciplinary identity is in fact a basic, logical realisation that all human interactions can only be understood in a holistic context. This is also the approach shared by this study.

Without abusing the academic jargon at the expense of the non-academic reader (who hopefully may be inclined to read some parts of this study), while also not underestimating the importance of rigor in academic research, this section includes a few statements with regard to the considerations behind the chosen research design.

From a disciplinary point of view, this study is situated at the intersection of political economics, tourism and heritage studies.

According to the main paradigm typology proposed by Guba, Lincoln and Lynham (2018, p. 216), this research fits within the traditions of constructivism and critical theory. As all paradigms, this entails a particular view on ontology (what is the nature of reality), epistemology (how the researcher and the known interact) and methodology (how is knowledge produced) (Denzin and Lincoln, 2018, p. 195). The constructivist paradigm adopts a relativist ontology, a transactional epistemology, and a dialectical methodology (Guba, Lincoln and Lynham, 2018, p. 217). The critical theory paradigm reflects a historical ontology, a value-mediated epistemology and a dialectical methodology (ibid.). On the one hand, the study acknowledges that economic exchanges are produced through social interaction, but that they are also in a constant process of adjustment (Bryman, 2008, p. 33). The role of the researcher in the subjective interpretation of the collected data is also recognised (particularly in the first part of the research). On the other hand, the research demonstrates a critical theory paradigm in that it looks at economic exchanges as shaped by certain social, cultural and political values that have evolved in ideologies over time. To a certain extent, it also embraces a radical humanist paradigm, as identified by Ardalan (2019, p. 14) in the context of political economy. This implies an understanding of human actions as influenced by “the ideological superstructures of the social system” and a call to change and emancipation (ibid.). Finally, in the last part of the research, which is mainly dominated by quantitative methods, a positivist paradigm is adopted.

In addition, the research predominantly adopts the framework of cultural studies which focuses on the linkages between the lived experiences, an analysis of discourses and the conjectural investigation of social and economic structures (Saukko, 2018, p. 206). Particularly in the first section, the study alternates between different frameworks, depending on how the research shifts its focus. In retrospect, this is probably a strength of this study. It constantly compares and alternates between different disciplinary frameworks, in order to understand various interpretations of economic behaviour and aiming to identify the duality between the individual and the collective as a recurrent theme across disciplines.

## Methods

The process of collecting and analysing data for this research was a long series of “conversations with the dead and the living” (Ravitch and Riggan, 2017, p. 65). It involved an extensive phase of complex textual analysis, field observations, surveys, informal talks and personal use of collaborative platforms. The study alternated between various methods of data collection; each selected to best serve the specific aspects of the research questions. This is similar to what Norman Denzin called “methodological triangulation”, a combination of various methods in studying the same phenomenon (Denzin, 1978, p. 291).

In the first part, the research adopted mainly interpretive methods that aimed to understand the duality of the individual and the collective in human behaviour and social production in a holistic way and with cross-references among disciplines. For this purpose, a vast body of texts were analysed. In the first chapter, these included original texts of political and moral philosophy, religion, history, myths, literature, memoirs, biographies and popular media productions (films). It also included primary research from the disciplines of genomics, neuroscience, psychology and evolutionary biology. Official documents, studies and policy reports in relation to World Heritage were also examined. In addition, a wide range of secondary sources and critical studies with reference to the above mentioned disciplines were consulted.

Following this broader contextualisation of the duality between the individual and the collective, the research lens zoomed in and focused on the area of economic theories. The approach was similar. An extensive body of original texts of classical and modern economics were consulted in order to understand the evolution of various economic theories and models in a historical context. The selection of sources focused mainly on three predominant and competing paradigms: capitalism (as well as other variants like liberalism, neo-liberalism, meritocratic and technocratic liberalism), socialism (including social utopianism, Marxism and communism), as well as the hybrid variants of a more interventionist nature (Keynesian economics, ordoliberalism, social democratic economies or political capitalism). All these original texts were interpreted from the prism of the relationship between the individual and the community, and the different prioritisation of these dimensions in the economic policies and system resulting from the different theories. Additionally, a wide range of secondary sources from highly regarded intellectuals in this academic field were consulted in order to capture the full spectrum of perspectives and critical voices towards the economic theories above.

The analysis continued from the macro-economic level to the micro-level. Once again, original texts and primary research related to the duality of individualist and collaborative action in economic behaviour were consulted. Key concepts like self-interest and cooperation, ownership, private and common property, motivation and purpose were examined cross-disciplinary. Classical texts, as well as the latest scholarship and research from the disciplines of political economy, state theories, ethics, moral philosophy, game theories, evolutionary biology, development psychology, behavioural economics, or sociology were consulted.

Continuing this line of analysis, the research lens narrowed down even more and focused on one particular economic model – the collaborative economy. The analysis was directed towards the actual examples of this model (various platforms illustrating the collaborative mode of economic exchange and production), as well as secondary sources (most of them very recent publications, given the rather young age of this model) that engaged critically with the collaborative economy. The selection of literature was intentionally directed towards both supportive and critical views, with the goal to understand the full spectrum of issues that such a collaborative model entails.

All these various data and analytical frameworks provided a holistic understanding of the place of the collaborative economy within the larger economic theories and models. This identified different elements of the collaborative model that make it conceptually appealing, as they respond to fundamental structures and principles of human behaviour (as confirmed by various disciplines) and ultimately indicate a balanced way to deal with the duality between the individual and the collective.

The second part of the research complemented the first through the use of quantitative methods. The aim was to understand the readiness of potential users (host communities and tourists) for adopting such a collaborative model in creating and accessing travel experiences. For this purpose, empirical data was collected through several surveys conducted at physical locations in Romania and India, as well as online. Initially, the host readiness was investigated during fieldwork at four different locations in Romania (two) and India (two). These locations were carefully selected because of their shared characteristics and their potential for the development of small-scale, immersive tourism (located in rural contexts, remote, containing rich natural and cultural resources, strong traditional knowledge, land-use through traditional practices, marginalised communities, poor economic prospects and little tourism development). The survey was guided both in content and in practice by an ethical approach to academic research (Bryman, 2012, p. 135). All ethical considerations are explained in detail in chapter four. The collected data was analysed separately, then cross-referenced and compared between the two locations. The information was discussed with reference to the following aspects: people's acceptance of tourism as an alternative income, the perceived usefulness of a collaborative model in tourism, the level of digital literacy and the perceived ease of use, attitudes with regard to trust and the perceived risks of such a model. In terms of design, this part of the research combined the survey as an example of cross-sectional study on the selected population with the comparative study of the data obtained in Romania and India, as well as ethnographic research (enabled through the researcher's visits to the locations, personal observations and informal conversations with the respondents).

A second survey was then conducted online, with the aim to capture attitudes and opinions from potential tourists regarding the possibility of participating in an immersive, small-scale form of heritage tourism and using a collaborative economic model for this purpose. The survey was administered online with the help of the software provided by the service platform Typeform. Similar to the survey of the host communities, the online survey was designed and conducted with full consideration of the principles of ethical research. These ethical considerations are explained in detail in chapter five. The collected data provided insights into the following aspects: the behavioural intention to engage in the proposed type of tourism, the perceived usefulness and key requirements of

a tourism platform, attitudes with regard to trust, as well as the perceived risks associated with participation in this collaborative tourism model.

At the end, the data collected from the analytical and empirical parts was discussed in relation to the main research question. A new model for heritage tourism – *Sharitage* – was proposed for further development in rural locations. Its conceptual appeal (demonstrated by the extensive information collected through various interpretive methods) and its operational attractiveness (demonstrated by the survey results) indicate the potential of such a model and the caveats it must not lose sight of.

### **Thesis outline**

Although the main approach and design of the research has been largely explained, the last part of this section includes a brief overview of the different chapters of this study.

The first chapter aims to put the duality individual-collective in context. It will illustrate the central role this duality plays in human behaviour and in the abstract forms of representation that structure it. Several examples from moral philosophy, religion, history and political narratives, popular culture, neuroscience, evolutionary biology and World Heritage will demonstrate how present this complementarity is in the functional and symbolic aspects of human life, and will identify some of its manifestations.

The second chapter will continue to explore the duality of the individual and the collective dimensions from the perspective of economics. It will look into the factors that contributed to the transformation of the economic act from a necessity to a moral and rational endeavour, ultimately seeking to express the desire for both individual agency and collective welfare. It will closely examine different theoretical models in the history of Western political economy and the respective economic systems they generated. It will demonstrate how the search for an ideal model of economic policy was in fact a constant balancing act between the pursuit of individualist or collective ideals. It will also examine key concepts including self-interest and cooperation, ownership, private and common property, motivation and purpose, aiming to demonstrate how the self and the community co-exist and constantly shape human behaviour in the realm of economic activity.

The third chapter will examine closely the characteristics of the collaborative economy, as an emerging model for consumption and economic exchanges. It will analyse its main features, its scope, values, principles and operational features. It will look into the fundamental changes it has generated across economic organisation, but also across society, and how exactly these further reflect the dynamic between the individual and the collective. Finally, it will address both its potential and flaws.

The purpose of the second part of the research is to provide empirical data with regard to the attitudes and the acceptance of a collaborative tourism model from potential hosts and tourists. The fourth chapter focuses on the host readiness. With the help of data collected from a survey conducted at selected locations in Romania and India, this chapter aims to reflect the attitudes of individuals from



rural communities with regard to the development of an immersive, small-scale form of heritage tourism and their willingness to participate in a collaborative model for this purpose.

The fifth chapter aims to capture the acceptance of a collaborative model for heritage tourism at the users' side, namely tourists. Data collected from an online survey will reflect different attitudes with regard to the conceptual and operational appeal of such a model.

In the final section of the thesis, all data will be articulated in response to the research questions, and a new model for heritage tourism in rural areas based on the collaborative economic model will be proposed.

# CHAPTER ONE: A FUNDAMENTAL COMPLEMENTARITY

## 1.1 The individual and the collective

One of the most important concepts of Chinese philosophy is that of complementarities. The notions of *Yin* and *Yang*, which gained prominence in the Western popular imagination thanks to esoteric groups and teenage necklaces, are the expression of the dualistic thinking that characterises many cultures on the Asian continent. This dualism implies that everything in the natural and human world is shaped by the interaction of these two forces (where *Yang* 阳 means sunshine, light, and *Yin* 阴 the absence of sunshine, darkness). Despite what the literal translation may imply to the Western reader, these forces are not understood as opposites engaging in antagonistic action, but as features that complement each other and can be observed everywhere in the world: activity/passivity, light/darkness, hot/cold, height/depth, hardness/softness, growth/decrease, etc. *Yin* and *Yang* do not fight each other, but represent two equally important principles that are inherently contained in each other. Their complementarity is necessary in order to define the nature of things and put them into perspective.

“When people see some things as beautiful, other things become ugly. When people see some things as good, other things become bad. Being and non-being create each other. Difficult and easy support each other. Long and short define each other. High and low depend on each other. Before and after follow each other.”

(Lao Zi, *Dao De Jing*, chapter 2)

The idea of complementarities seems to be very fitting to describe a fundamental duality that characterises human nature and behaviour: that of simultaneously being one unique individual and part of a community of many others. The need to define our uniqueness through individual choices co-exists with the need to express our social nature, to belong to a community and to share values with others. Not only that these two features are manifest in all aspects of our physiology and behaviour, but they become distinct only in relation to each other. We express who we are, our individuality, only in relation to others, and we are able to understand others, the universality of their needs and aspirations, only in relation to our individual self. These two dimensions (inward and outward, having a unique path that is only ours and sharing a path with others) constantly interact and affect our existence, and are equally important in the process of understanding how humans organise their social, cultural, political and economic lives. Similar to the Roman god Janus, with his two faces being able to see at the same time what was and what will be, we human beings are the middle ground where the inner and the external worlds converge; the gateway through which our individual self communicates with the universal other. Physically and spiritually, we are the expression of the constant interaction between these two mutually reinforcing dimensions in which we anchor our existence.

This chapter aims to put the duality individual-collective in context. It will illustrate the central role this duality plays in human behaviour and in the abstract forms of representation that structure it.

Several examples from moral philosophy, religion, history and political narratives, popular culture, neuroscience, evolutionary biology and (world) heritage will demonstrate how present this complementarity is in the functional and symbolic aspects of human life, and will identify some of its manifestations.

## 1.2 The world and us

In Western moral philosophy, the dispute between utilitarian and liberal views questioned the primary principle that should organise human societies. Utilitarianism favoured “the interest of the community” (Bentham, *Principles of morals and legislation*, chapter 1, p. 4), the welfare of the majority as a whole. Individual preferences are aggregated with equal weight, in order to determine what could provide the maximum utility, or the greatest pleasure or happiness for the community. Libertarianism, on the contrary, emphasised the importance of individual freedom and the right of each person to pursue their own version of happiness. Immanuel Kant argued that the uniqueness of human beings lies in our capacity for reason and for freedom. This is why every human being “exists as an end in itself” (Kant, *Groundwork of the metaphysics of morals*, second section, part 4, p. 428), human dignity requires respect “without any other end of advantage to be attained” (ibid., p. 439), and “the autonomy of the will is the supreme principle of morality” (ibid., p. 440). Kant’s ideas were very influential on Western thought and many of them can be found nowadays in the concept of universal human rights. Interestingly enough, the United Nations 1948 *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UDHR) recognises the dual perspective of human beings, referring in its Preamble to both “the human family” (UDHR, 1948, preamble, par. 1) to whom everyone belongs and “the dignity and worth of the human person” (ibid., preamble, par. 5) which are to be respected.

Confucianism, the moral philosophy that formed the core of many Asian cultures, sees social relationships and responsibilities as the environment where the individual can perfect itself. Serving the state and the society represents the ideal form of achievement. The most important virtue of the individual is that of *ren* 仁, which has been translated in many ways (‘humanity’, ‘human-heartedness’, ‘benevolence’) and refers mainly to “loving others” (Confucius, *The analects*, book XII, 12.22). It is the virtue that extrapolates individual character into the social realm and could be defined as “helping others establish what oneself wishes to establish” (ibid., book VI, 6.30). The Chinese character that expresses the idea of *ren* in fact consists of two parts: one meaning ‘person’ and another one meaning ‘two’, which appears to also point towards the complementarity of the individual and social nature of human beings.

A similar sense of humans acting as both individuals and part of a larger entity is present in the worldview of many non-Western cultures. In this case, the idea of solidarity and belonging goes even beyond the level of human society and refers to the relationship that human beings have with the natural world. Among the diversity of perspectives found in Native American communities, a central theme appears to be that of the indivisibility between nature and humans. Each individual is part of a world which is very much alive and whose elements constantly interact and influence each other. “The

Earth is the mind of the people as we are the mind of the Earth. The land... is a part of our being, dynamic, significant, real” (Gunn Allen, 1979, p. 191). Recognising that nothing happens in isolation, all human beings act in a sense of reciprocity and respect towards the other elements of the universe (Booth, 2010, p. 333). Nature represents the ultimate community. All humans are individual parts of this collective being and influence its balance through their actions.

A similar view can be found in many Aboriginal Australian communities. Human beings are perceived as intimately connected with the land. It seems almost improper to describe the relationship of people with nature as a link. It is more of an extension of the individual being into the land, so that a person can actually “feel” the land, and by this organic connection one defines and remembers one’s existence (Kohen, 2010, p. 229). The idea of “kinship” goes beyond the biological links of the clan, which is the main land-owning unit, and refers to all humankind, as well as all elements of the natural realm (ibid., p. 230). Looking after the land and this large community of the natural world, to which human beings belong, represents therefore an obligation and a social, spiritual and economic necessity.

There is probably no other wording that expresses the interdependence between the individual and the collective as beautifully as the Zulu maxim “umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu” (“I am because we are”, or “one is a person through other people”). This reflects the concept of *Ubuntu*, which could be described as a moral quality, an ethic, a humanistic philosophy or a worldview characterising many African indigenous cultures and emphasising the interconnectedness of all human beings (Gade, 2017, p. 5). *Ubuntu* recognises the fact that our humanity depends on our ability to identify it in others, and that individual uniqueness and kinship co-exist. “A person is a person through other persons or through the otherness of the other” (Eze, 2010, p. 11). This does not imply that there is a certain hierarchy between the individual and the community (that one comes before the other), but rather the fact that they are mutually constitutive (ibid., p. 388). *Ubuntu* emphasises that we can only fully realise our human potential in partnership with others (Ngcoya, 2009, p. 1), and that the interdependence between the one and many is a fundamental ontological principle.

The examples above show how the relation between the individual and the collective represents a central question in the systems of moral philosophy and the worldviews that people in different parts of the world developed as a compass for their social life. A recurrent theme is the impossibility to conceive individual existence outside its natural and social context. This context maintains a strong significance even in more individualistic views, as it becomes a crucial enabler for human agency and freedom.

### **1.3 The world within/above us**

Religion is another domain where the duality between the individual and the collective becomes evident. There are three main aspects in which this can be observed. The first aspect is of a representational nature. It refers to how human beings perceive their place in the order of the universe and their relation to the divinity, and how they connect personal salvation with collective morals or group belonging; the second is of performative nature. It refers to how people worship and actually

experience the relationship with the divinity; and the third is of normative nature. It relates to the unifying role that religion has for a group.

Unique among the world religions, not only because of its longevity, but also because it lacks a single historical founder or a unified system of belief embedded in a declaration of faith (Flood, 1998, p. 6), Hinduism has often been interpreted as being both monotheistic and polytheistic at the same time (Doniger, 2014, p. 20). At its core lies the belief in one absolute, eternal divine entity, which exists in the physical universe and at the same time transcends it. This supreme entity reveals itself in many forms, and similarly, it can be approached and worshipped in many ways (Flood, 1998, p. 10). The immensely rich pantheon of Hindu Gods and countless forms of worship represent in fact different manifestations of the same divine substance: “the One in many ways” (Rig Veda, 1.164.46 quoted in Doniger, 2014, p. 128). A central concept in understanding the divine is that of *dharmā* – the eternal order of things, the law, the code, the socio-cosmic principle that organises the world (Biardeau, 1994, p. 41). Especially in the Vedic period, religion and the performance of rituals represented the way in which human beings could understand the order of things and their place in it. The harmony of the human society and of the natural world could be maintained only if humans comprehend this order and perform the duties associated with the place that each individual has in it. This view recognises the fact that the individual, through the understanding, acceptance and practice of *dharmā*, is directly connected with the functioning of society and the world at large. It also emphasises the importance of individual action over that of belief, which is another particular feature of Hinduism (Flood, 1998, p. 12), as well as the role of the individual religious practice in maintaining the order of the natural and social world.

For many cultures, religion provides the narrative that legitimises the community to which the individuals belong. In Judaism, the collective consciousness is expressed in the idea of the covenant with God. This contract describes the unique relationship between the Israelites and YHWH, the only eternal God, who promised to protect and guide his chosen people in return for their obedience: “If you will obey Me faithfully and keep My covenant, you shall be My treasured possession among all the peoples. Indeed, all the earth is Mine, but you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation” (*Tanakh*, Exodus, 19:5). The laws of the *Torah* (the first five books of the Hebrew Bible) and the *Talmud* (the Oral Law recorded by the Jewish rabbis from the 2<sup>nd</sup> century CE) offer guidance to individual behaviour, but are at the same time a reminder of what binds the Jewish people with God and with each other. This doesn’t imply that religion provides the absolute collective unity, as quite often the various interpretations of the religious texts caused divisions within the Jewish communities. However, it conveys the idea of closeness and connection between individuals who spiritually share the same past and origin story (de Lange, 2002, p. 50). In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the progressive schools of Judaism put more emphasis on the autonomy of the individuals to make their own choices, and discussed personal freedom in relation to the particularism of the collective destiny of the Jewish people and the universalism of the moral principles in Jewish theology.

Yuval Noah Harari referred to religion as “the third great unifier of humankind, alongside money and empires” (Harari, 2011, p. 234). The association with a superhuman authority legitimises the moral

norms in human society and ensures stability (ibid.). As sociologist Émile Durkheim noted in his book *The elementary forms of religious life*, religion represents “a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, which unite into one single moral community” (Durkheim, 1964, p. 44). Religion offers a narrative that appeals to the individual salvation and at the same time defines the collective identity, binding people together in a community defined by certain rules of behaviour. Christianity, for example, relies on the belief that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, sacrificed himself for the salvation of those who believe in him. The story of Jesus’s life provided the set of moral values that should guide Christian life: love, kindness, compassion, humility, forgiveness, unselfishness, generosity. The act of faith and a life lived according to the Christian values would lead to personal salvation. At the same time, the Christian doctrine provided the ethical rules that people embraced in their social life and helped them regulate behaviour in their community. To a certain extent, these moral norms also ensured the survival of the community as a whole, since they functioned as a form of incentive for people to cooperate (Gottschall, 2013, p.122).

In Islam, religion acts as a constant reminder of the indestructible connection between the transcendent, the individual and the society. The core of the Islamic belief is the unity and the universality of the divine, the recognition of an omnipotent God who pervades all aspects of life. Human beings represent God’s viceregents on Earth (Shalabi, 1993, p. 47), empowered to apprehend this unity and to enact the divine law. For this purpose, they need guidance and God offers it through His word, the *Qur’an*, which he revealed to His last messenger, Muhammad. Acting as “both perfect master and perfect servant” (Eton, 1985, p. 34) and through the acceptance of faith, human beings strive to comprehend the divine unity and affirm it in all their actions. Religion is what guides spiritual mindfulness, self-awareness and social organisation. The individual faith is what binds the members of the community together. In this sense, Islam could be understood as “a system of individual and collective life”, in which the sacred and the secular are not separated, as both the world and the human society are manifestations of the divinity (Shalabi, 1993, p. 20). Religion recognises the unity between the individual and the collective, between the inward and the outward (Eaton, 1985, p. 188), between knowledge and action, doctrine and practice (Shalabi, 1993, p. 46).

All the examples above illustrate how various religions conceptually address the individual, social and universal dimension of human beings. This link can also be observed in the various ways in which the relationship with the divinity was imagined. Revolutions in religious thought and practice occurred because of the need to give the individual a more prominent and autonomous place in establishing a relationship with God. In the 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE, Buddha and Mahavira contested the Vedas and the formal worship performed exclusively by the Brahmin class. They proposed a more personal experience of the spiritual, relying on individual devotion and ultimately leading to personal liberation. Later on, starting with the first centuries CE, *bhakti*, “the loving devotion”, would become the most important form of worship for Hinduism. *Bhakti* is based on the idea that no intermediary is needed when honouring the gods, but each individual can, through devotion and daily rituals, develop a personal relationship with the gods. The *pujas* (“offerings”) would be presented to the physical depiction of a god or goddess, with whom the devotee would develop a close emotional bond. In the

European context, Martin Luther and the Protestant Reformation of the 16<sup>th</sup> century revolted against the practices of the Catholic Church and proposed instead a more personal form of salvation. Protestantism emphasised the idea that God could be known directly, without the Church as an intermediary. By translating the Bible into the vernacular language and giving everyone access to the text of the Scriptures (thanks to the developments in the printing press), Protestantism aimed to re-direct people to the original source of Christianity. By reading the Bible directly, each individual would have the possibility to discover God and to gain salvation through personal faith. Progressive Judaism, as mentioned above, also challenged the idea of an authoritative God and re-imagined the relationship with God as a constantly evolving one, in which people can express their individual choices. On the one hand, all these attempts to reform traditional religious thought made evident the dual function of human beings as individuals and parts of the larger order of things; on the other hand, they reflected the tensions arising from these two functions and the efforts to restore the weight of the individual in relation to the collective.

During an address to the Council of State in 1800, Napoléon Bonaparte declared: “Je ne vois pas dans la religion le mystère de l'incarnation mais le mystère de l'ordre social. Elle rattache au ciel une idée d'égalité qui empêche que le riche soit massacré par le pauvre” (“I don't see in religion evidence of the mystery of the incarnation, but rather the mystery of social order. Religion associates heaven with an idea of equality that keeps the rich from being massacred by the poor”) (Clément, 2007). The cynical tone of this statement is most certainly related to Napoléon's persona and his political views, but it also captures the idea that all systems of belief mainly hold a social function. The collective effort that created religion and the associated moral systems is also recognised by development psychologist Michael Tomasello in his book *A history of human morality*. He argued that human morality is in fact a form of cooperation, one that has emerged as humans have adapted to new forms of social interaction and organisation (Tomasello, 2016, p. 2). With the appearance of agriculture and sedentary life, different groups with different norms and practices were brought in close vicinity to each other. In these new circumstances, religion became a form of “supraindividual regulatory device” (ibid., p. 129), the solution that made possible the existence of different (and competing) groups. From this perspective, religion appears as a necessary normative function, one that reinforces social bonds and cooperation within communities.

To summarise, religion provides a symbolic means of understanding the relationship between the individual and the collective. The ontological, performative and normative dimensions of our belief systems illustrate their ability to maintain relevance both to the individual, personal experience, and to the shared identity and organisation of the group.

#### **1.4 History, national narratives and politics**

The development of national histories and narratives illustrates how the individual may be (most often not forcefully, but voluntarily) subordinated to the ideological construct of a larger social and political entity. Because of various strategic interests, communities developed narratives to bind their

members together and to motivate them to act for the public good. Historical events have been written and re-written not necessarily in order to provide the most accurate description of their occurrence, but rather to create a fiction that could serve as the basis of the group identity and at the same time convince the individual to act with a collective purpose. The idea of nation-states relied on this mix of rationalism, the belief that governments could serve the interests of its subjects more effectively and generate shared benefits, and romanticism, the justification of actions by appealing to feelings (Baumann, 2010, p. 18). Emotions and intentional forgetting were often important ingredients in the process of developing powerful national narratives. The emotional attachment to one's people and the appeal to a familial bond between the individual and the community (which is seen as an extended family of brothers, sisters, forefathers, etc.) made possible the consolidation of the group and exerted a very strong influence on its behaviour (Connor, 1993). The nation would become "the terminal community to whom ultimate loyalty is owed" (Young, 1979, p. 71).

In Russia, various narratives attempted to provide a sense of unity within a multi-ethnic and culturally diverse society. Although the idea of nation as an ethnic and civic concept never gained ground (Tuminez, 2000, p. 25), Russian history seems to be marked in the collective discourse by a sense of *greatness* (*величие*), of political and cultural strength. The power of the Russian Empire was reflected in the reigns of Peter the Great and Catherine the Great. Key events in Russian history are described with the same apprehended greatness: the Great Northern War of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the Great Reforms of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Great Revolution of 1917, or the Great Fatherland War/the Great Patriotic War against Nazi Germany (ibid., p. 11). Imagining a common Russian story represented a functional necessity for the Empire, to safeguard its existence. The Panslavism of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, which popularised the belief in the superiority of the Slavic world and Russia's central role in its defence, further accentuated this sense of exceptionalism in the Russian collective consciousness. Pushkin stated in 1830 that "Russia never had anything in common with the rest of Europe. Its history demands a different thought and formula" (Evdokimova, 1999, p. 32). Even during the Soviet era, despite the fact that the communist ideology rejected the idea of nationalism, various national narratives would appear and remain instrumental in defining the political collective. During Stalin's regime, national patriotism selectively glorified the Russian past and culture, offering very good ideological support to the Soviet state. Especially during World War II, the national rhetoric put forward the image of 'Mother Russia' who needed to be defended against the aggressors. The intellectual elite of the 1950s and 1960s (including Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn) popularised a nativist image of Russianness, shaped by the Christian Orthodoxy, idealist rural values and traditional culture. Later in the Soviet and post-Soviet era, another collective narrative emerged, based on the association of the individual with a strong state that is able to manifest its power within the international context. The state represents in this sense the ultimate collective unit. The Cold War, the Space Race, the creation of NATO, or the more recent war in the Ukraine further affirmed the image of Russian exceptionalism and the resistance to any external version of geopolitical representation. All these examples illustrate how different versions of Russianness tempted the individual with the appeal of a collective uniqueness and inspired group action.



In Romania, the past delivered the narrative that formed a strong Romanian consciousness and conveyed a sense of unity and uniqueness that most Romanians still identify with. This collective consciousness relies mainly on the awareness of the Latin heritage and the traditional discourse that describes Romania as “a Latin island in a Slavic sea” (Boia, 2011, p. 127), in addition to a “Romanian sense of being”, as the philosopher Constantin Noica called it (Noica, 1996, p. 11). This distinctiveness is given on the one hand by the connection with the Carpathian territory and the non-expansive, non-colonising character of the Romanian presence here (ibid., p. 7). On the other hand, it relates to a cultural space where the West and the East come together (ibid., p. 8), or rather to a cultural space that is neither the West, nor the East, but formed by its unique character thanks to its openness to these two worlds.

During the Communist regime in Romania, and especially in the 1970s and 1980s, national narratives were promoted in order to convey a sense of unity and grandeur to the population, and to justify the country’s isolation from the rest of Europe (and from the world). History was re-interpreted and even those events that were conceptually against the ideology of the regime became instrumental, in the absence of any other alternatives to justify the existence of the Communist state (Boia, 2011, p. 127). History and children’s books would present a self-glorified version of the Romanian past, stories of national heroes who stood ground and helped their people defeat the foreign invaders, and whose deeds were continued and reflected in the actions of the party leaders: Burebista, the king of the Getae and Dacian tribes, who first brought unity to the ancestral lands of the Romanians; Decebal, the Dacian king who fought against the mighty Romans and refused to surrender even when defeat became imminent; Stephen the Great, the Moldavian prince who fought against the Ottoman Empire and crushed his opponents in legendary battles; Michael the Brave, re-imagined as the first ruler who united the Romanian principalities in 1600; the war of independence from the Ottoman Empire in the 19<sup>th</sup> century; the Great Unification of 1918; and the turn of arms against Nazi Germany in World War II. These were the stories that helped create the glorious national myths and offered the historical links that legitimised the existence of the Communist regime. The individual mattered only in relation to the collective and history would become the means to rationalise the submission of the individual to the authority of the state. As a person who grew up in Communist Romania, I must admit that the inheritance of these stories and histories that dominated every aspect of public education and culture in my childhood is still present and difficult to part with, despite of the liberal environment that I embraced at home.

In China, a similar approach has been used by the Communist Party in its effort to legitimise its role as a unifying force for the nation. The image of China as the country with a 5000-year-old continuous culture, 56 ethnic groups living harmoniously and enjoying the progress that has been achieved through the determination and the hard work of the people – this is the story that most Chinese children learn at school and can reproduce by heart when asked about their country. Even Mao Zedong invoked the image of Qin Shi Huangdi, the first emperor who conquered and unified the Chinese states under one political entity in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BCE, as a symbol for the common history and the sense of kinship that binds the Chinese nation. By analogy, the Communist party used this

narrative in order to legitimise its role as unifying force for the Chinese nation. At the same time, it emphasised the duty that every individual had to support the achievement of a future collective vision: “in order to transform this glorious future into a new China, independent, free, and happy, all our fellow countrymen, every single zealous descendent of Huang-ti must determinedly and relentlessly participate in the concerted struggle” (Brandt, Fairbank and Schwarz, 2005, p. 245).

The ideas that lie at the core of American nationalism offer probably one of the best examples of how a narrative could have an equally significant appeal to both the individual and the collective. The origin story of the American nation relies on a strong sense of exceptionalism, on the belief that America has been “chosen” and is pre-destined for greatness and leadership (Lieven, 2012, p. 32). When the European settlers embarked to America in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, they were determined to be “the city upon the hill” (Winthrop, *Modell of Christian charity*, cited in Bremer, 2003, p. 179). The belief in the manifest destiny, in the mission of the American people to lead by example and advance civilisation, provided the impetus and ideological justification for the expansionism of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It was this ideology that also led to the mass dispossession and removal of the Native American peoples who had inhabited the American lands before they appeared on the European maps. In his book *White-jacket; or the world in a man-of-war*, Herman Melville voiced this political creed of the time:

“And we Americans are the peculiar, chosen people - the Israel of our time; we bear the ark of the liberties of the world. (...) God has predestinated, mankind expects, great things from our race; and great things we feel in our souls. The rest of the nations must soon be in our rear. We are the pioneers of the world. (...) And let us always remember that with ourselves, almost for the first time in the history of earth, national selfishness is unbounded philanthropy; for we can not do a good to America but we give alms to the world.” (Melville, 2011, p. 202)

This sense of exceptionalism and the belief in the American civic and political values as an expression of the highest form of collective development (that should be embraced universally) has been a dominant feature in American history. From the foundation of the American colonies (with the Declaration of Independence (ratified 1776) and the Constitution of the United States (ratified 1788)), through to the involvement in the two World Wars, the politics of the Cold War, the war in Viet Nam, the more recent war on terror and the missions in Iraq in Afghanistan, or even Donald Trump’s electoral campaign to “Make America great again”, the recurring narrative is that of America’s exceptional place in the world and its role to offer moral leadership. It is almost with an “absolutist passion” (Lieven, 2020, p. 50) that this conviction is embraced and even nowadays, displays of patriotism are a common sight across the American society. According to polls conducted in 2021 (Gallup, 2021), 69% of the Americans feel very proud or extremely proud to be Americans (for the population over 55 years old, this rate is of 80%, whereas for the younger population between 18-34 years old, this is of 50%). In 2003, after the September 11 attacks during the Bush administration, this percentage was the highest, with 92% of all US adults saying that they were very proud or extremely proud of being American (ibid., 2021). Paradoxically, this strong adherence to the values of the community is not so much related to the idea of national unity and common heritage, but it reflects in fact another form of individualism. What binds the community together is the deliberate choice of

the individual to adhere to a distinctive way of life, the American way. Not surprisingly, the discourses about the foundation of the American nation are not related to a common ethnicity or a shared cultural tradition, but on the voluntary acceptance of this exceptional way of being – the American one. The American national narrative claims, in this sense, a universal character. “E pluribus unum” (“From many, one”), the motto inscribed on the Great Seal of the United States, describes the commitment of individuals of different backgrounds to embrace the American values and to be united in this conscious choice. Samuel Huntington emphasised the role that the “American creed” and the belief in a set of ideas (mainly of political nature) – liberty, equality, individualism and democratic rule – plays in the American identity (Huntington, 1983, p. 14), and how the “creedal passion” manifested in different periods of American history (ibid., p. 85). This strong attachment to and belief in the collective values which are at the same time exceptional and universal also led some scholars to affirm that this “American messianism is the last imperial ideology left standing in the world” (Ignatieff, 2005, p. 16).

Another equally important narrative that lies at the core of the American identity is that of the “American Dream”. Within the diversity of the American society, this concept has become a kind of “lingua franca, an idiom that everyone – from corporate executives to hip-hop artists – can presumably understand” (Cullen, 2003, p. 6). The American Dream essentially refers to the belief that everyone, regardless of social status or background, has the chance to achieve success through hard work and the use of individual talents. It states each person’s right to “the pursuit of happiness”, as set in the Declaration of Independence. In an address in 1993, President Bill Clinton explained the core of the American Dream: “if you work hard and play by the rules you should be given a chance to go as far as your God-given ability will take you” (Clinton, 1993). From Andrew Carnegie and John D. Rockefeller to Benjamin Franklin, Abraham Lincoln and Barack Obama, Jay-Z and Oprah Winfrey, Bill Gates and Jeff Bezos, America is pervaded with stories and embodiments of the American Dream. Despite the abundant forms of injustices and inequalities that marked the troubled development of the American nation, the idea of the American Dream has prevailed with staggering fortitude across all social groups and ethnic communities within the American society. One example that illustrates “the emotional potency” (Hochschild, 1995, p. 26) of this concept is the fact that most poor African Americans are still very much influenced by their belief in the American Dream, and only the wealthier African Americans regard it sceptically as a myth that was used to cover up the systemic racial discrimination (Hochschild, 1995). In his book *Justice*, American political philosopher and Harvard University Professor Michael Sandel provides a very interesting analysis of the bailout outrage experienced in the USA during the financial crisis of 2008-09 and connects it with the public endorsement of the American Dream (Sandel, 2010, pp. 12-18). In 2008, in a declared attempt to save the national economy, the American government announced their decision to pay 700 billion dollars to bail out the big banks and financial firms that were affected by (but also responsible for) the financial crisis. Shortly afterwards, it was revealed that some of the bailed-out companies continued to pay millions of dollars in bonuses to their executives. This immediately gave rise to a massive wave of protests across America. Sandel notes that this intense anger and sense of injustice did not necessarily arise from a strong sense of morality, but were rather a reaction against the threat to the

American Dream. The problem was not that by paying the executives, companies appeared to reward greed. After all, financial gain, ambition and self-interest are part of the executives' job both in good and bad times, and are not necessarily something to object against. The real problem was that the American public regarded the bonuses as a way to reward failure (ibid., p. 15) and this fundamentally contradicted the American Dream and the belief that rewards are a rightful acknowledgement of individual success. Sandel quotes President Barack Obama's response to the bailout outrage to emphasise his observation: "This is America. We don't disparage wealth. We don't begrudge anybody for achieving success. And we certainly believe that success should be rewarded. But what gets people upset are executives being rewarded for failure" (Obama, 2009, cited in Sandel, 2010, p. 16). It is interesting to see how even in the midst of the financial crisis, the American Dream maintained its paramount status in the public consciousness, and how individual values function almost like a regulatory code for the collective organisation.

The American Dream fits into the larger American narrative described above; it is part of the American creed. Its popularity derives from the central role given to individual choices and the idea of agency (Cullen, 2003, p. 10). The fact that everyone has control over their destiny and can determine their success is very appealing to the individual and at the same time offers a justification for people to come together and be united by the same ideals. By resonating with the individual, the American Dream provides the narrative for the collective.

In conclusion, different histories, national and political narratives have often been powerful instruments in altering the balance between the individual and the collective. They demonstrated the ability to strengthen the awareness of group identity to such an extent that it ultimately annihilates the individual. The group becomes in fact the individual that competes with others for supremacy. The idea of national states represents probably one of the most aberrant forms of collective organisation, as it subordinates humanity to geography and to the illusion of a shared history.

## **1.5 Heroes**

A brief look at how different cultures and communities define their heroes demonstrates the same complementarity of individual and collective values. Almost invariably, imagined or real figures gained heroic status by simultaneously doing two things: on the one hand, they demonstrated extraordinary individual qualities, which distinguished them from the other members of their community. On the other hand, they were determined to help their fellows and their actions have value because of their impact on the community.

When Theseus, "the dearest of heroes to the Athenians" (Hamilton, 1998, p. 209), slew the evil bandits on his way to Athens by doing to them what they did to others, or when he killed the Minotaur in Crete, he displayed extraordinary qualities: courage, intelligence and strength. But above all, his deeds stemmed from compassion, they were meant to help the Athenians and end their sorrows. Theseus represented the ideal ruler who faced dangers in order to protect those who could not defend themselves. Even Heracles, the greatest hero in Greek mythology, who was the embodiment of

physical strength, bravery and self-confidence, completed the impossible twelve labours in service of King Eurystheus, as a form of atonement for his sins.

Rustam, a central figure of *Shahnama* (the Persian Book of Kings written by Firdawsi) and one of the most loved characters in the Iranian culture, offers a similar example of a hero's duality. He represents the personification of many ideal values: strength, courage, cunningness, benevolence and moral fortitude. Stories about his legendary deeds show him defeating the demons of Mazanderan, combating with lions and witches, killing the White Demon and the dragon, or fighting victorious against his fearsome enemies; however, Rustam's other equally important trait is his loyalty to the Persian kings. He completes the seven labours in order to save his captured ruler. He consciously undertakes these extraordinary trials as an act of voluntary service to the Persian monarchy, in order to defend its country and its people. All his actions reflect the constant tension between his independence, his desire to excel individually, and his loyalty to the others, his desire to serve (Davies, 2009, p.11).

King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table illustrated through their deeds not only the individual virtues of honour, chivalry and bravery, but mostly an ideal way of behaviour towards others. Defeating monsters and outlaws displayed their individual abilities, but the aim of these extraordinary endeavours was to help those in need and to ensure a just rule. The quest for the Holy Grail (the cup from which Jesus Christ is believed to have drunk during his last supper) is probably one of the most popular stories related to King Arthur and his knights. It is not a journey about individual discovery and personal gain, but an attempt to restore Britain's prosperity and to put an end to the long period of desolation that started when the Holy Grail was lost.

The myths and stories of various Western and Central African cultures revolves around the image of the hero who is characterised by extraordinary abilities and, most importantly, conveys gifts to his people, such as skills and technology (Wilkinson, 2009, p. 249). In the region of the Congo basin, Lonkundo, the founder of the Mongo-Nkundo people, taught his people how to hunt. Shamba Bolongongo, the ruler of the Bushongo people, brought from his travels many skills to his people, such as how to weave ropes and textiles out of raffia fibres, how to make palm oil or use tobacco. Ture, the trickster hero, brought the secret of fire to the Zande people.

In *Bhagavad-Gita*, the philosophical poem that forms part of the Hindu epic *Mahabharata*, the dialogue between the warrior prince Arjuna and the god Krishna is a reflection on the idea of selfless duty that the righteous ruler should embrace. When Arjuna realises on the battlefield that the people he is about to fight against are his relatives and friends, he is overwhelmed by a profound inner dilemma. Should he perform his duty as warrior and continue to fight, or should he follow his moral duty towards his family and choose not to kill the ones he loves? Krishna's response to Arjuna's uncertainty is a series of arguments that explain the concept of duty and its importance to maintain the universal order of things. "Look to your own duty; do not tremble before it; nothing is better for a warrior than a battle of sacred duty" (*Bhagavad-Gita*, 2.31), advises Krishna. Personal emotions, individual motives or social values are all surpassed by selfless duty, which relies on disciplined action

and devotion. Only by pursuing one's duty, even if this includes killing, the higher cosmic order can be ensured. Arjuna's duty as warrior is to fight a righteous war and this surpasses all other familial or individual obligations. The teachings of *Bhagavad-Gita* are pervaded with many essential concepts for Hindu beliefs, but they also depict a certain ideal of hero defined by the renunciation of individual interests and the acceptance of duty.

The idea of duty, of individual commitment to the collective interests, was also central in the heroisation of many historical figures who have captured the admiration of the masses in different national and cultural contexts. From kings and emperors, to revolutionaries and civil rights activists, all these real heroes are united by their determination to contribute to the public good, to make a positive change in the lives of the communities they represent. Similar to the heroes in mythological stories, they are characterised by exceptional individual talents, and at the same time are remembered and loved because of their dedication and impact on the collective well-being. Every country and every community in every corner of the world have their own heroes who justify their hero-status because they epitomise the service of the collective by the individual.

Simón Bolívar is probably the most popular hero in many Latin American countries. He was above all the thinker whose ideas provided the political philosophy and the social ideals of many governments and national constitutions on the continent, from democracies to dictatorships alike (which is the reason why they have been so contested). But Bolívar is remembered by most people as *El Libertador* – the Liberator who successfully led many South American countries to their independence from the Spanish colonial rule in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. He is the rebel and the revolutionary who commanded the armies across the South American continent and freed its people from the Spanish rule, founding new nations and giving them a sense of unity. He is a hero because his individual ideas and deeds have relevance for the collective history. He exemplifies action in service of the collective goals and provides “the animating spiritual force who speaks to the compelling values of unity and purpose” (Langley, 2009, xiii); and this is what explains the emotional, almost cult-like intensity with which people continue to refer to Bolívar even nowadays.

Taytu Betul, the Ethiopian Empress who founded Addis Ababa, is remembered as the one who helped her nation resist the European colonisation. Her strategies and determined action to oppose Italy's expansionism at all cost, including war, conferred her the hero status in modern Ethiopian history. In the legendary Battle of Adwa in 1896, she fought on the front line and helped defeat the Italian armies, a crucial victory which continues to be celebrated today as a public holiday in Ethiopia. She is a hero not simply because of her individual intelligence and strategic skills, but mostly because she provided leadership and served for the benefit of her people. Ironically, towards the end of her life, she was removed from power because she was accused of concentrating too much political authority around her own person. When the individual prevailed, the hero status was lost.

The leading figures of various liberation and civil rights movements around the world are heroes because the value of their individual actions comes from the fact that they have shaped their communities. Sojourner Truth and Martin Luther King Jr., Henri Dunant and Florence Nightingale, Eleanor Roosevelt and Hin-mah-too-yah-lat-kekt, Emmeline Pankhurst and Malala Yousafzai,

Harvey Milk and Billie Jean King, Liu Xiaobo and Amanda Gorman, and all those many other heroes whose names are cherished in communities large or small, they all have in essence the same path in common. Not only that they demonstrated exceptional individual abilities, determination and courage, but they were above all loyal to their community and generated positive collective changes. The strength and defiance of Sojourner Truth, the woman who came out of slavery and triumphed over her fate, are universally admirable qualities. But her individual story became a powerful collective voice in the fight against slavery and for the recognition of the rights of women and African Americans. All the other names mentioned above are the names of heroes because they connect a personal struggle with a collective cause, and because their committed actions made it possible for many to enjoy human rights and better lives nowadays. In his lectures, Thomas Carlyle called heroes “the great ones; the modellers, patterns, and in a wide sense creators, of whatsoever the general mass of men contrived to attain” (Carlyle, 2013, p. 26).

The whole idea of progress, regardless of whether this is considered to be linear, cyclic, in waves or other patterns, relies on the idea that individual achievements contributed to collective development. On the most basic level, joining the group and subordinating the individual interests to those of the community was a means to increase the chances of survival. Recognising the co-existence of individual self-love and collective interests in the historical development of human beings, Rabindranath Tagore mentioned in one of his essays that “only those peoples have survived and achieved civilisation who have this spirit of co-operation strong in them”, whereas those “who cannot combine in fellowship with one another must perish or live in a state of degradation” (Tagore, 2004, pp. 238-239). But if we are to look at all the heroes in the international hall of fame of science and technology, they gained their place there not only in recognition of their extraordinary capacities and accomplishments, but mostly for their contribution to the advancement of human society. Albert Einstein is not a hero simply because his exceptional intellectual abilities produced the theory of relativity or the law of the photoelectric effect, but because his ideas generated a more profound change in how people in the Western world think about space, time and motion (Friedman, 2008, p. 205). As Bertrand Russell mentioned in his analysis of the theory of relativity, Einstein fundamentally transformed “our imaginative picture of the world” (Russell, 2009, p. 1). He demonstrated that time, space and motion are indissolubly interlinked, that they are not absolute entities, but rather relative and differently perceived and experienced by human beings. The scientific formulas extended their relevance beyond the sphere of the lab and academic journals, and were appreciated in light of the larger social and cultural changes they generated. I instantly recalled an incident that was mentioned in a biography of Einstein, which described an exchange of words between Einstein and film maker Charlie Chaplin. At the premiere of the film *City lights* in 1931, the scientist apparently told Chaplin: “What I most admire about your art is your universality. You don’t say a word, yet the world understands you!” To which Chaplin replied: “True. But your glory is even greater! The whole world admires you, even though they don’t understand a word of what you say” (Seelig, 1956, pp. 193-194). The opacity of Einstein’s scientific contributions was surpassed by the extensive benefits of their technological application, and even more so by an appreciation for the changes they generated in how people perceive and anchor their existence in space and time. Einstein’s popularity was most certainly linked

to the fact that he consistently expressed his opinions on a wide range of topics of universal human concern. He constantly tried to emphasise the connection between science and morality. As a matter of fact, he often presented to the public an image of the world in which individual endeavours are very much connected to other human beings: “One exists for other people. ... A hundred times every day I remind myself that my inner and outer life are based on the labors of other men, living and dead, and that I must exert myself in order to give in the same measure as I have received and am still receiving” (Einstein, 1954, p. 8). Richard Crockatt noted in his study of Einstein’s political and moral thought that his personal opinions often illustrated a paradoxical duality: “He was a professed socialist who embraced individualism, a fervent critic of capitalism who hated Soviet communism, a man of ‘cosmic religious belief’ who had no time for organized religion, a professed Zionist who had deep qualms about the establishment of the political state of Israel, and a loner who was committed to a range of social causes” (Crockatt, 2016, p. 8). This duality reflects perfectly the co-existence of individual and collective ideals in the thoughts and actions of this popular hero of science.

Similarly, Nikola Tesla is not a hero because he invented the alternating-current motor and hundreds of patents in his laboratory, but mainly because his work directly changed the lives of so many people, from providing homes with electricity, to wireless communication or remote control robotics. Many of these technologies are still relevant nowadays. Tesla himself often referred to the direct connection between his scientific work and the progress of humanity – “the onward movement of man” (Tesla, 2019, p. 5). He understood his achievements almost as an act of cosmic relevance, aimed at the advancement of humanity as a whole: “If I would be fortunate to achieve some of my ideals, it would be on the behalf of the whole humanity”, he declared (Tesla, 1892, cited in Carlson, xvi). This reflects Tesla’s understanding of science in relation to the society, but also the unity that he saw in humanity. “Can anyone doubt today that all the millions of individuals and all the innumerable types and characters constitute and entity, a unit? Though free to think and act, we are held together, like the stars in the firmament, with ties inseparable” (Tesla, 2019, p. 6). The heroic act of science becomes a recognition of the individual’s role to influence the fate of the collective unity.

Wilhelm Röntgen, Marie and Pierre Currie, Alexander Fleming, Max Theiler, Francis Crick and James Watson, Joseph Murray and Donnal Thomas, Satoshi Omura and Tu Youyou, Syukuro Manabe and Klaus Hasselmann are names associated with key words like x-rays, radiation penicillin, yellow fever, DNA, organ and cell transplantation, malaria, or global warming; but they are heroes because their individual achievements improved human life globally and contributed to the collective well-being.

Even the contemporary imaginary promoted by the entertainment industry nowadays defines heroes by a similar duality. They are heroes not only because they display remarkable individual skills, but because their ultimate mission is to defend a greater cause which concerns the lives of many. James Bond, the ultimate action hero of Hollywood movies, is exceptionally skilled in all forms of combat, looks dashing in his tailored suits, always has a high-tech gadget ready to use and impresses with his Aston Martin; but the main reason he has managed to fascinate millions of fans worldwide is the fact that the missions that he undertakes always go beyond self-interest. He fights villains in order to avoid



catastrophic consequences for people who do not have any help, sometimes even for the entire humanity. He is “the avenging angel of the free world” (Miller, 2011, xiii). The difficult tasks to stop Le Chiffre, Dr. Julius No or Raoul Silva are not individual trials that the hero must pass in order to prove his abilities, but they are essential acts to prevent abuses like terrorism, nuclear disasters or cyberattacks and to save the fate of many who are threatened by these mischievous minds. All superheroes – Spiderman, Superman, Batman, Iron Man, Wonder Woman, you name it – are by definition heroes because they use their superpowers to fight injustices against the helpless and to do good for their communities. And this interdependence between the individual and the collective is the universal pattern that defines heroes at all levels – mythology, history, science or entertainment alike.

## **1.6 Genes and neurons**

Science offers additional insights into how human beings are determined by their structure and physiology to build their system of reference in relation to these two poles: their individuality and their resemblance with others. Research in genomics, neuroscience or psychology further support the fact that we are similar and different at the same time.

From a biological point a view, each person is unique because of two things. The first is our DNA – the molecule that encodes the biological information about how to grow, function and survive, and is passed on by all living organisms to their offspring. The human genome, our total genetic material, includes 3 billion DNA molecules that transmit different codes and functioning patterns to the 50 trillion cells in our bodies; however, the genetic language is in principle the same for all organisms (Hartwell, 2006, p. 3). The DNA molecule stores information in small units called nucleotides, which are arranged in double strands (the double helix form identified by Watson and Crick). Depending on the type of their nitrogenous base, there are four different nucleotides that provide the basic letters of the DNA code: A (adenine), T (thymine), G (guanine) and C (cytosine). The different sequence of these bases in the nucleotide chain represents the information content of the DNA (ibid., p. 168). The different combinations of these four letters (A, T, G, C) is what gives our genetic code a total length of approximately a 130-volume-book (Garnier, 2012) in which the uniqueness of each individual is encoded. Despite of the fact that the letters are the same and only four in number, the form and length in which they can be combined, as well as when and where this information is expressed, is what makes organisms different and unique (Hartwell, 2006, p. 3).

In 2003, the *Human Genome Project* managed to document for the first time the sequence of the entire human genome, producing “an incredibly detailed blueprint for building every human cell” (Collins, 2001). Despite this detailed record of the human textbook, it is still very difficult to make sense of this enormous amount of information, to decipher the code that our DNA provides and to interpret the instructions that the DNA molecules provide. For a long time, it was believed that only a small part of the DNA has a coding function. Our genes, the DNA regions that encode the proteins (the molecules that determine the properties and functions of organisms) represent actually only 1%

of the human genome (Maher, 2012, p. 1). More recent research, such as the *ENCODE* project of Stanford University, has managed to prove exactly the opposite, namely that 80% of our genome includes functional DNA sequences that tell our cells what to do and regulate their activity (ibid.). What the actual functions assigned with the difference sequences within the DNA code are and when they are activated is still a vast, open research area.

So according to genomics, each human being is a massive unique code defined by the combinations of our 3 billion DNA molecules, still waiting to be deciphered in its entirety. While we share with others the composition of the DNA molecules, what makes us unique is the pattern of their arrangement. The genetic material that we are born with is ours alone and never changes throughout our lives, but it is also shared with our species. Our genetic code makes us unique and different from any other person, but at the same time binds us with all other human beings. We are all different messages written in the same language.

The second scientific aspect that gives the uniqueness of each individual is related to how our brain is wired to function. We are who we are because of the so-called connectome (Seung, 2013), or the total amount of connections between the neurons in our nervous system.

The human brain, a piece of matter weighing between 1.2 and 1.4 kilograms, is an ultra-sophisticated control centre that tells every part of our body what to do in order to ensure our survival. All the functions in our body, from movement, breathing or digestion, to emotions, communication and thinking are coordinated by the brain. Its role is so complex, that many scientists described it as several organs in one. At the basis of this complex work are the neurons. Our human brain contains around one hundred billion of them. Each neuron contains neurites, or branches through which it connects with other neurons in order to transmit information. Millions of kilometres of neurites form a complex interconnected network that resembles the image of entangled spaghetti (ibid., p. 40). At the point where one neuron touches another neuron, a junction is formed called synapse, and it is through these junctions that communication happens. Each neuron can have over 10,000 synapses with other neurons, which means that our brain relies on the simultaneous work of 1000 trillion synapses. Neurons transmit information in two ways: through electrical signals that are passed on from one neuron to another at the point where synapses occur, and through the release of chemical messengers (neurotransmitters) which activate the receptors of the neurons and enable the electrical signals to travel faster (ibid., p. 44).

Every time when we experience something, our senses translate this information into electrical charges that travel through neural pathways and are transmitted to different parts of the brain (more than 300 regions, as a matter of fact). Each experience activates a different neural pathway. Electricity flows through the connected neurons and the brain codifies the external information we receive and our responses through these patterns of neural connections. The more used certain neural pathways are, the faster they will transmit the information and the more likely it is that they will continue to be used in the future. Similarly, the less used they are, the more difficult it is to activate them and the more likely it is that they will disappear. Depending on our evolving experiences, neurons can reconnect or disconnect, produce new patterns of connections, or eliminate obsolete ones (ibid., xv).

Each human being is unique because the connection patterns between our neurons are different. “We are our connectome” (ibid.), our individuality is determined by the totality of pathways between our neurons. All our thoughts, feelings and sensorial experiences are defined by the channels along which our neurons communicate and generate responses. Each of us has different experiences that lead to the formation of different patterns of neural activity. Unlike DNA, we are not born with pre-established neural pathways, but we develop them throughout our life and adjust them according to our individual experiences. Our connectome is not only uniquely ours, but it is also dynamic and changes with any new experience we have in life.

Despite the unquestionable uniqueness that characterises our neural activity, neuroscientists have identified another phenomenon that confirms the fact that our brains are not only wired to function in individual ways, but they are also wired to resonate with others. 30 years ago, neuroscientists Giacomo Rizzolatti and his team from the University of Parma discovered a special kind of cell called mirror neurons. Although their research initially focused on primates, they noticed that certain areas in the human brain become active both when we perform an action and when we see somebody else performing that action. This explains in particular our ability to understand and react to the emotions of others even though we do not directly experience them. According to Rizzolatti, the mirror neuron system demonstrates how human beings are able to share experiences with others, “which is at the root of our capacity to act as individuals but also as members of a society” (Rizzolatti, 2008, xii). When we observe the actions of others, our brain mimics the responses of those directly involved in those actions and we activate the same neural structures as if we were experiencing those actions ourselves (Keyers and Gazzola, 2009, p. 3). This explains why we are able to manifest empathy; to feel and intuitively understand another person’s emotions and reactions.

Neuroscientist Uri Hasson from Princeton University has demonstrated through functional magnetic resonance imaging how storytelling, for example, triggers brain-to-brain connections and shared responses between speakers and listeners (Hasson, 2019). Similarly, in good communication, when the listener clearly understands what the speaker is saying, their brains are coupling and the listener’s brain activity mirrors the speaker’s brain activity (Hasson, 2010). Although this research implicitly points out to a rather frightening scenario in which communicators may induce automatic responses across audiences through brain wiring, it also indicates the neural basis of our social experiences.

Neuroscience provides in this sense evidence that human beings are unique because of the distinctive neural pathways that are developed in our brain as we discover and experience the world. At the same time, we have the unique capacity to mirror the experiences of others, to share responses and actions, even without being direct participants. Our brains are designed to wire individually and in response to the others at the same time.

## 1.7 Talking about an evolution

Within the framework of various evolutionary theories, the relationship between the individual and the community/group has often been at the centre of investigation and generated interesting insights regarding this complex duality that characterises human beings.

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, the French Jesuit priest who attempted to unify religion and science in his philosophical writings (and, unfortunately, ended up being criticised by both the Catholic Church and the scientific community), recognised in his book *The phenomenon of man* that reflection, the ability to turn inwards, to consciously think about ourselves as “an object endowed with its own consistence and value”, to personalise ourselves, represents the highest quality of human beings, which places them at the highest end of evolution (Teilhard de Chardin 2002, p. 164). For Teilhard de Chardin, evolution represents nothing else than “an ascent towards consciousness” (ibid., p. 258), towards the realisation of an ultimate collective human consciousness that unites the universal with the personal (ibid., p. 260).

More recently, many evolutionary biologists described the conscious subordination of the individual to the group as a refined survival skill. At the most basic level, our need to connect with others is justified as a sine qua non condition for the continuation of life. We cannot perpetuate our species as individuals, but only together with another member of our group. At a more complex level, our entire social organisation could be understood as the pragmatic choice of individuals to collaborate and shape their group in order to create an optimal environment for survival. We choose to be part of a community and contribute to it, because this brings us advantages as individuals. Frans de Waal referred to the “community concern” (de Waal 1997, p. 207) as the active participation of the individual in endorsing those group values that would increase the benefits obtained by the individual. In this sense, de Waal identifies morality as the highest form of community concern and the ability to translate egocentric interests into collective values as “one of humanity’s chief accomplishments” (ibid.). From an evolutionary point of view, the moral values that we develop as guiding principles for our community are in fact an insurance for our survival.

Collaboration between individuals and the synergies this generates has been recognised as a fundamental process for the development of more complex organisms. Harvard biologist Martin Nowak referred to cooperation as “the master architect of evolution” (Nowak, 2011, xviii). In his book *SuperCooperators*, he provides scientific evidence that cooperation, and not competition, is the determinant force for innovation and increased complexity in the evolution of life. He also considered that many of the problems experienced nowadays are caused by the fundamental conflict between the good of the individual and the good of the society and could only be solved by the training of our cooperative instinct (ibid.). In *Evolution, games, and God*, he further pursues the analysis of the principles of cooperation together with scientists from a wide range of disciplines (evolutionary biology, history, mathematics, psychology, neuroscience, biology, cultural and religious studies, ethics and metaphysics, etc.). The recurrent theme is that only when a high level of cooperation between individuals is achieved, an evolutionary change of major significance, an emergence of more complex

evolutionary units, is possible (Nowak, 2013, p. 2). Similar evidence is demonstrated in the work of evolutionary biologist Richard Michod, who develops a “philosophy of fitness” based on the concept of cooperation (Michod, 1999, p. 161). He argues that complex levels of organisation emerge only when individuals cooperate to such a high extent that the group itself becomes and acts as an individual (ibid., p. 4). A large body of research in evolutionary biology demonstrate that all major transitions occurred because individual elements started to function as a unified group: from one molecule to a group of molecules forming a cell, from independent replicators to chromosomes, from asexual clones to sexual populations, from single cells to multi-cellular organisms, from solitary individuals to social groups like colonies, or primate and human societies (Smith and Szathmáry, 1997, p. 6). Questions have been raised regarding what will be the next transition in the evolution of life on earth, the next more complex form of organisation that will emerge in the Anthropocene (a term proposed by Dutch scientist Paul Crutzen), the age of man. The relationship between the individual and the community depicts a very interesting, indispensable dynamic in light of evolutionary theories. The individual joins the group in order to better its chances for survival, but at the same time, it loses its own fitness in order to gain other benefits and survive as a group.

From an evolutionary point of view, the uniqueness of each person is in fact the result of group cooperation, of a long series of transitions from simple to more complex forms of life that were made possible only through the association of single individuals into unified groups. In other words, the individual appears to be “a product of all social interactions down the scale of evolution” (Wilson, 2020, p. 146).

### **1.8 (World) Heritage: My heritage, our heritage**

The concept of World Heritage and the international programme that emerged together with the adoption of the *World Heritage Convention* by the General Conference of UNESCO in 1972 provides an interesting outlook on the duality analysed in this chapter. World Heritage revolves around the idea that heritage places and practices are both unique and universal at the same time, that they are important to both national identities and all humanity, that their safeguarding is the shared responsibility of both individual groups and the global community.

It is not my purpose to discuss here the concept of heritage and how its meaning has changed in the international discourse in the last decades, but rather to reflect on how the idea of World Heritage reveals an interesting dynamic between the individual and the collective, the particular and the universal.

Firstly, the declared mission of the *World Heritage Convention* to safeguard cultural and natural heritage of outstanding interest and transmit it to future generations is connected with the idea of a familial bond between individuals, groups and nations. The etymology of the words describing heritage in various languages indicates a reference to something that is transmitted through family ties (e.g. in English *heritage* = a property that is inherited by a successor, deriving from Latin *heres* = heir;

in Romance languages *patrimoine/patrimonio/patrimoniu*, deriving from Latin *patrimonium* = an estate inherited from a father; in Chinese 遗产 *yichan* = property that is left behind at one's death; in Arabic التراث = that which is passed on to an heir). Although an inheritance suggests that the transmission is directed to one or a few individuals, it also implies a certain line of succession, a bond that could theoretically be traced back to the first humans who ever existed on this planet. Heritage is intrinsically related with the idea of kinship and family ties, which dominates all aspects of human psychology. As cognitive scientist Steven Pinker put it, "*homo sapiens* is obsessed with kinship" (Pinker, 1997, p. 430). The awareness of this familial connection determines us to behave differently towards those we are connected with. "Once we know how we are related to other people, (...) we feel a measure of solidarity, sympathy, tolerance, and trust toward our relatives, added on to whatever other feelings we may have for them" (ibid., p. 431). The idea of World Heritage is appealing because it feeds into that of universal human bondage and unity of human origin. This reference is evident in the text of the *World Heritage Convention*, which emphasises "the World Heritage of mankind as a whole" (*World Heritage Convention*, preamble, par. 7), or in its *Operational Guidelines*, which describe World Heritage as the heritage "not only of each nation, but of humanity as a whole" (*Operational Guidelines*, 2021, I.B.4). The contextualisation of World Heritage in this larger social narrative that places us in a big human family to which all individuals belong has a strong psychological allure and it strongly influences the way we relate to heritage. It activates our social consciousness, it makes us feel more attached and more loyal to heritage, it increases our sense of responsibility for what has been inherited and what will be passed on. It emphasises "the importance, for all the peoples of the world, of safeguarding this unique and irreplaceable property, to whatever people it may belong" (*World Heritage Convention*, 1972, preamble, par. 6).

A second reflection relates to a central concept of the World Heritage programme, namely that of Outstanding Universal Value (OUV). All properties that are inscribed on the World Heritage list must demonstrate their Outstanding Universal Value through the application of ten specific criteria. Despite its prominent place within the *World Heritage Convention*, the concept of OUV has remained rather elusive and raised constant debates among heritage theorists and professionals worldwide. I remember one of my former students telling me that she actually dreamt about OUV, or another one sharing with me the fact that he actually talked to his psychotherapist about OUV during their sessions. I am not sure whether this is proof that OUV can intensely preoccupy or drive someone mad. Between fascination and obsession, there is still little agreement on how to define Outstanding Universal Value. Without denying the various forms and values that heritage may have in different parts of the world and within different communities, the *World Heritage Convention* does not aim to safeguard ALL heritage of humanity, but only those places demonstrating Outstanding Universal Value. This value is defined in the *Operational Guidelines* as "cultural and/or natural significance which is so exceptional as to transcend national boundaries and to be of common importance for present and future generations of all humanity" (*Operational Guidelines*, II.A.49). The best way I could explain the concept of Outstanding Universal Value is to refer to it as an outstanding (particular!) response to a universal need experienced by all human beings. The underlying

assumption is, as psychologist Steven Pinker explained and as confirmed by rich empirical evidence, that “humans everywhere on the planet see, talk, and think about objects and people in the same basic way” (Pinker, 1997, p. 34). But universalist norms are, as political scientist Seyla Benhabib noted, always mediated with the self-understanding of local communities (Benhabib, 2006, p. 71). Following this line of argument, it could be said that we all need to build a shelter, to find food or to express our spirituality. The Medina of Fez, the Rice Terraces of the Philippine Cordilleras, or the Osun-Osogbo Sacred Grove are outstanding examples of human endeavours in response to these universal needs.

It is, of course, questionable, how this exceptionalism and hierarchy of significance could be defined in specific terms, or whether this is at all possible. Properties inscribed on the World Heritage List refer to a common denominator – that they are mainly superlatives of their kind: the oldest, the largest, the biggest, the first of its type, the last one standing, etc. OUV acknowledges uniqueness, originality, exceptional qualities, historical importance or typological representativeness, based on evidence provided by a specialised field of scientific expertise. As a result of the increased technical character of the Convention, the meaning of OUV has been connected with the conditions of integrity and authenticity, as well as the protection and management systems in place (*Operational Guidelines*, 2021, II.D.78), transforming from an independent qualification to an administrative requirement (Jokilehto, 2008, p. 14). It is interesting to notice that whereas the nomination process has become almost entirely focused on the technical justification of the outstanding character of properties and on how exactly they meet the nomination criteria, the value of universality has remained in the shadow.

Despite of the fact that the United Nations narrative revolves around the idea that all humans are part of one big family, talking about universals in the context of World Heritage is generally frowned upon. On the one hand, this deliberate avoidance of universals could be explained as a response against the increased accusations of Eurocentrism. The valid claims that the World Heritage standards, as well as those promoted by UNESCO in education, science and culture, have represented for a long time a one-sided approach “from the West to the rest” (Meskell, 2018, xvi), generating an extreme sensitivity towards the affirmation of universals and an overall fear of generalisations. The models of conservation and management that were proposed as standard tools, as well as the body of expertise that authorised what is heritage and what are the ‘right’ ways to conserve it proved out to be the repository of a mainly Western view that ignored approaches and methods in other parts of the world. Similar to what Immanuel Wallerstein observed in his book on European universalism, these appeared to be “a set of doctrines and views that derive from a European context and are presented as global universal values” (Wallerstein, 2006, p. 27). Far from demonstrating a “universal universalism” (ibid., xiv), the original heritage rhetoric was the result of power structures which allowed certain actors to impose their views as universal. This is related to another debate concerning the intrinsic and extrinsic values of heritage (Labadi, 2012, p. 11). The question was whether heritage has value per se, which is usually the value endorsed by the professional heritage expertise and the “authorised heritage discourse” (Smith, 2006, pp. 29-34), or, on the contrary, this value is external and dynamic, and depends not so much on the heritage expertise, but rather on the function that heritage has for the people and

communities who relate to it. In this context, the universal value of heritage has often been interpreted as an intrinsic one, endorsing the dominant Eurocentric view (Labadi, 2012, p. 13).

In an attempt to “undo” the biased way of dealing with heritage, which constituted the norm in the first years of the Convention, the initial universalist discourse was reconsidered in the 1990s. Efforts shifted towards emphasising particularism, diversity and inclusion, while generalisations and universals remained more of a taboo. In 1994, the World Heritage Committee adopted the *Global Strategy for a Representative, Balanced and Credible World Heritage List*. The declared goals were (and still are) to provide a more inclusive understanding of heritage (away from the elitist, static view, to more dynamic forms of heritage, recognising the interaction between humans and nature), to integrate non-European methods and frameworks of heritage conservation and management, to balance the recognition of cultural and natural heritage, as well as to give underrepresented States Parties more opportunities to inscribe their heritage on the World Heritage List. Currently, one of the five strategic objectives of the *World Heritage Convention* is credibility, namely to ensure that the World Heritage List is “a representative and geographically balanced testimony of cultural and natural properties of outstanding universal value” (World Heritage Centre, n.d.b). There is still a lot of criticism about how much (or how little) has been achieved in relation to the *Global Strategy*, but this does not represent the object of the current analysis. The *Global Strategy* echoes, in the context of this argument, the growing oversensitivity to address the issue of universals and the conscious commitment to move away from general models that were associated with a history of biases. More recently, global protest movements against systemic injustices and established colonial narratives, or the obsession with political correctness in public discourses, have further accentuated the cautiousness with which the concept of universality is addressed. Going back to Wallerstein’s analysis, there is a constant tension between the need to universalise our perceptions - “to universalise our particulars” - and the need to defend our particular identity - “to particularise our universals” (Wallerstein, 2006, pp. 48-49). And whereas this by no means denies the existence of universals, it emphasises the importance of an egalitarian structure in which they could be formulated and understood (ibid., p. 28).

The unpopularity of universals could also be linked to the increased technocracy characterising the World Heritage programme (Meskell, 2018, pp. 59-89). Not only the Convention, its Operational Guidelines, Secretariat and Advisory Bodies, but also the vast amount of technical knowledge produced in the last decades sought to elaborate specific frameworks and criteria to safeguard and manage heritage, as well as methodologies and indicators to identify its values. The effort to define the outstanding and the universal in measurable terms could be interpreted as an effort to ensure the scientific credibility of the nomination process (in which the evaluation is to be conducted based on objective, quantifiable criteria), and to further demonstrate the impartiality in the procedures of the Convention. By contrast, the reference to universal values without defining them in specific terms may seem too general and not scientific enough, and may present the risk of appearing subjective or biased in the decision-making processes. From this point of view, universalism would be acceptable only in the form of the technical tools developed in order to ensure the impartiality and objectivity of



the World Heritage programme. Despite this fear to embrace the idea of universals, the World Heritage List does not reward the individual, but the collective genius. The nomination criteria explicitly recognise the universality of the values that characterise the properties inscribed on the World Heritage List and their collective authorship. They refer to qualities like the human creative genius (criterion i), interchanges of human values (criterion ii), testimonies to a cultural tradition or civilisation (criterion iii), types of structures or landscapes illustrating (a) significant stage(s) in human history (iv), settlements representative of cultures or human interaction with the environment (v), or associations with living traditions (vi). They do not acknowledge the creative work of one individual, but the collective one. Even in those few cases in which the names of individual artists appear in the World Heritage List (e.g. the works of Antoni Gaudí, Le Corbusier or Frank Lloyd Wright), they are seen in the larger context of human development, as expressions of particular architectural movements (e.g. Modernism) that were possible because of collective effort.

Another paradox is that although the criteria are formulated in general terms and described mainly universals, they must be demonstrated through the particular attributes of heritage properties and rely on the exceptional qualities of particular national contexts. This has often been a cause for conflict and disagreement among States Parties, as it will be explained later in this chapter. Somehow, the universality of nature appears much easier to defend. It is easier to build international consensus on the universal value of the Virunga National Park or the Great Barrier Reef. A certain global consciousness towards the undisputed value of nature subdues other national and competitive sentiments. Perhaps there is less emotional weight involved when evaluating natural properties. After all, the scientific method used in this evaluation relies on objective laws and empirical evidence (disregarding the cultural, emotional dimension in the evaluation of nature has actually been rather detrimental, but this would form the basis of another argument). Perhaps this is also connected to the perception that nature exists as a supra-entity and self-regulatory system. It is not something created by humans, therefore there is no need to seek acknowledgement towards the genius of its human creators. Human beings are part of it, but the natural capital is shaped by processes beyond human control (not so much anymore, in the age of the Anthropocene), and these processes can be understood objectively. Or perhaps this explains how the nature/culture divide is in fact related to an equally flawed conceptual framework that attributes the idea of universalism and unity exclusively to nature (this is where we are all the same), and that of relativism and diversity exclusively to culture (this is where we are all different). A reconciliation between the universal and the particulars and the acceptance of their co-existence both in nature and in culture would be needed in order to create a more holistic way to understand heritage.

This idea is connected with a wider debate within the field of anthropology, which places the particularistic, relativist view of culture at one end and that of human universals at the other. Franz Boas (1858 – 1942) popularised the relativist method that would dominate modern anthropology, recognising the particularity and plurality of cultures. Each culture should be analysed and examined in its own context and on its own terms, as “we cannot explain individuality in the form of laws” (Boas, 1940, p. 257). Since “physiological and psychological processes cannot be reduced to an absolute

standard that is free of environmental elements” (Boas, 1938, p. 196), the analysis should focus on the particular characteristics of cultures and societies. This emphasis on differences, diversity and the particularity of context, and away from generalisations continues to be the predominant approach in social sciences today. Voices arguing in favour of our commonalities and their empirical study have been rather the exception in the context of anthropology, and the topic of universals started to gain more acceptance only from the mid twentieth century onwards. In his book *Human universals*, anthropologist Donald Brown gives an overview of the historical development of this concept over time: from Bronislaw Malinowski’s set of institutional responses to universal human needs, to George Murdock’s inventory of seventy three universals (in *The common denominator of cultures*), Clyde Kluckhohn’s universal categories of culture, War Goodenough’s cross-culturally valid and universal etc concepts, or Maurice Bloch’s universals produced in practical interaction with nature (Brown, 2017, pp. 70-89). Brown affirms that universals can be found in the individual, society, culture and language (ibid., p. 42). He describes a set of aspects that characterise all humans, “the universal people” as he calls them (ibid., p.133) and include: language, symbolic communication, concept of self, sexual attraction, tool-making, shelter, preparation for birth, living in groups, family, patterns of socialisation, sexual regulation, division in social categories, recognition of social personhood and collective identity, prestige, division of labour, customs of cooperative labour, planning for the future, governments, leaders, law, conflicts, distinguishing between right and wrong, reciprocity, etiquette, hospitality, religious and supernatural beliefs, rituals, worldviews, sense of property, aesthetic standards, dance and music, play and fight (ibid. pp., 133-144). In general, theories on universals have represented a minority in the field of anthropological research and have been received with a certain degree of scepticism, as they were considered to express more the dreams of the authors rather than rely on scientific evidence (Antweiler, 2016, p. 53).

Although the academic tradition of cultural anthropology has often presented the particularity and the universality of culture as opposing stands, these notions are in fact not exclusive. Boas himself, a defendant of cultural relativism, affirmed that the task of the discipline was “to discover among all the varieties of human behaviour those that are common to all humanity”, because “a study of the universality and variety of cultures anthropology may help us to shape the future course of mankind” (Boas, 1940, p. 259). Far from signifying uniformity or attempting to simplify the complexity of cultural expressions, universals recognise that there are certain common patterns and shared characteristics of human existence that take different shapes in particular contexts, contributing to diversity and not undermining it. This explanation is closely related to the fundamental meaning of the World Heritage concept, which could be understood both in terms of universals and particulars. As Claes Ryn observed in his study of universality and particularity in our contemporary world, “unique particularity is potentially a manifestation of universality itself, a source of its richness, strength, and adaptability” (Ryn, 2003, p. 1) and the reconciliation between universality and particularity represents an immense potential for a peaceful coexistence of nations and cultures (ibid., p. 10). This reconciliation depends also on the ability to recognise the fact that nowadays cultures are not at all holistic and coherent, but rather hybrid, polyvocal and multi-layered (Benhabib, 2002, p.

25), and that cultural uniqueness is therefore not an opposing alternative to, but a natural result of universality (ibid., p. 25).

In his book *The blank state – the modern denial of human nature*, psychologist Steven Pinker provides a very insightful analysis of the ethical, emotional and political associations that have wrongfully created the image of human nature (associated with that of universals) as a dangerous and extremist idea (Pinker, 2002, viii). Through his arguments, he emphasises how the denial of this concept has distorted “our science and scholarship, our public discourse, and our day-to-day lives” (ibid.) The lack of credibility given to the concept of universals and the traditional perception of anthropology as a field focusing on particulars and diversity have generated a certain hesitation to talk about culture in universal terms; and World Heritage is a field that has been strongly influenced by anthropological concepts and methods. A similar fear of generalisations and the deliberate avoidance of the concept of universals have represented the norm in international World Heritage discourses in the last decades. As Chris Antweiler observed, “our fascination with the complexity of cultural variants has overshadowed our ability to see the commonalities between cultures”, as this extreme focus on specific particularities and differences “tend to blind us to similarities” (Antweiler, 2016, p. 2).

However, it is interesting to notice that in the recent years, universals have been more and more frequently invoked on the international agenda. Some examples include discussions on current global issues that cannot be tackled individually or nationally, climate change, human rights, global economy, inequality, new technologies and communication networks, or sustainable development goals. At the latest meeting of the world leaders in Davos (2022), one phrase is being circulated in almost all areas of discussion: “Societies need to work together to overcome global risks” (Zahidi, 2022). The need for a model that “simultaneously affirms cultural uniqueness and pan-cultural unity” (Ryn, 2003, p. 21) appears to be often invoked in an interconnected world impacted by globalisation. In this context, a rediscovery of the universals in the narrative of the *World Heritage Convention* could represent a shift of focus and the recognition of World Heritage as one of the common grounds on which international cooperation could occur and collective solutions could be developed.

One last reflection concerns the origin story of UNESCO and of the World Heritage programme, as well as the governance of the *World Heritage Convention*. The duality of the individual and the collective can be observed in the relationship between the sovereignty and particularity of the National States on the one hand, and the narrative of universalism and collective action on the other. When UNESCO was founded in 1945, only two months after the end of World War II, its declared mission was to use education, science and culture for peace and international rapprochement, so that the destruction of the past would not be repeated. As an international government organisation encouraging collaboration between nations, UNESCO assumed the role of establishing the conditions of peace, world community, world government and world law (Sathyamurthy, 1964, p. 234). These “utopian elements of one-worldism” (Meskell, 2018, p. 32) also pervaded the origin story of UNESCO’s World Heritage programme in 1972. The starting point was the international campaign to save the monuments of Nubia in Egypt. When the Egyptian government decided to build the Aswan High Dam on the River Nile, in order to provide the country with energy, water and a

narrative of national development, the Nubian monuments were threatened with disappearance. As a result, a major international mass-media campaign was launched to raise financial support for an intervention that would rescue these monuments. This was combined with the appeal of the Director-General of UNESCO to the Member States in 1960, which generated additional support for this initiative. In a collective effort to save these places of significance, the international community raised millions of dollars (which came not only from official contributions of governments and important private donors, but also from average people who offered their modest donations) and mobilised people, knowledge and technical support to intervene. Hundreds of sites and objects were dismantled and put together again on a safe higher ground. This event and success story of culture bringing the nations of the world together is credited with being the catalyst for the World Heritage programme. The story has been over-romanticised, not only at the time of its occurrence, but also in the years that followed. Very little is mentioned about the context in which this happened, which was far from being conflict-free. In 1956, Britain, France and Israel had invaded Egypt. In 1967, seven years after the Nubian campaign started, the Six-Day War marked the peak of confrontations between Israel and Egypt. The 1960s were a time marked by many international conflicts, the Cold War, the independent movements against the colonial powers, or the Arab-Israeli conflicts, to name just a few. So, there was an acute need for a success story proving that international cooperation was possible despite all clashes. With military conflict as background, the Nubian campaign provided an alternative narrative: that of heritage and culture as a unifying force, bringing humanity together and promoting collaboration and understanding between nations. The same narrative and vision of internationalism provided the justification for the *World Heritage Convention*, which was signed in 1972. The Convention acknowledges the universal importance of heritage places and it reflects the global commitment to act collectively and protect these places from disappearing. The protection of World Heritage represents “the duty of the international community as a whole to co-operate” (*World Heritage Convention*, 1972, art. 6, par. 1). It implies a sense of shared responsibility towards a common past and a common future of humanity as a whole. The origin story of the *World Heritage Convention* is strongly connected with the idea of universalism. It reveals the idealistic vision of 193 States Parties who ratified the Convention forming a collective unity, with heritage as the common denominator.

In practice, this narrative struggled to gain acceptance and maintain credibility when confronted with the bureaucratic mechanisms established for the implementation of the *World Heritage Convention*. Political scientist Vincenzo Pavone identified two forms of international cooperation that co-exist within UNESCO: the global model based on scientific humanism and the utopian ideals of a common morality, and the intergovernmental model, based on functionalism and the pursuit of a common practical ground that would solve conflicts (Pavone, 2007, pp. 81-82). When the idealistic narrative that called the World Heritage programme into being was confronted and gradually replaced by this second more pragmatic, technocratic vision, the reality exposed a conceptual and structural fallacy.

On the one hand, the concept of World Heritage remains an abstract, symbolic form to describe the ideal of a common heritage of humanity. It is a metaphor and an ideal vision of world governance. In reality, the emphasis on the exceptional and the obsession with its recognition through the

establishment of the World Heritage List had the opposite effect and increased the competition between States Parties. Who has the most sites inscribed on the World Heritage List? At the moment (2021), Italy leads the race with 58 properties inscribed on the list, followed by China with 56 properties and Germany with 51 properties. 27 States Parties, on the contrary, have no properties inscribed on the list. For many of those directly involved in the listing process, the World Heritage Committee and the Advisory Bodies have transformed their roles from beacons of conservation, to judges in a global heritage pageant. With a certain vanity reminiscent of the queen in the well-known fairy tale, the participating countries seem to have forgotten their original pledge to save places that matter and instead are now more driven by the question: “Mirror, mirror on the wall, who’s the most outstanding of them all?” As Lynn Meskell noted, “the List creates a competitive arena for nationalist aspirations where conservation priorities are increasingly outstripped by the potential developments that accompany the World Heritage brand” (Meskell, 2018, p. 94). Not only that the nomination process reflects a silent rivalry between States Parties, but it also appears to acerbate their divide by emphasising their uniqueness and differences. Similar to how globalisation generated a revival of localism or the development of new “politics of identity” (Smith, 2010, p. 147), often reinforcing nationalism rather than superseding it (ibid., p. 146), the World Heritage listing process resulted in a more conscious affirmation of national identities and demonstrated how little resonance the concept of universalism had in practice. The strive for the legitimation of the outstanding, as an expression of extraordinary qualities and uniqueness, has revealed its conceptual incompatibility with the universality of World Heritage.

The mechanisms for the implementation of the *World Heritage Convention* exposed another challenge of a structural nature, which relates to the incompatibility between the concept of World Heritage and the legal framework established by the Convention. At the basis of the *World Heritage Convention* lies the doctrine of national self-determination, which is also the basic principle of the *United Nations Charter*. As stated in Article 4 of the Convention, “the duty of ensuring the identification, protection, conservation, presentation and transmission to future generations of the cultural and natural heritage situated on its territory belongs primarily to that State” (*World Heritage Convention*, 1972, art. 4). Although States Parties acknowledge their collective responsibility to safeguard World Heritage, they maintain sovereignty in deciding how this goal is to be pursued, depending on the available resources and capacities. This interaction between domestic law based on the principle of sovereignty and international law recognising World Heritage as the object of interest of humanity has often been identified as the reason behind the success of the *World Heritage Convention* (Francioni, 2013, p. 15). Paradoxically, it is also the reason behind some of its malfunctions. In theory, this system acknowledges the collective responsibility towards the heritage “of mankind as a whole” (*World Heritage Convention*, 1972, preamble), but in reality, it removes any specific individual obligation from the States Parties. “The law of State responsibility is, in practice, an ill-adapted mechanism for compelling a State to preserve heritage situated on its territory” (O’Keefe, 2004, p. 207). If a State Party fails to act in relation to World Heritage, the other States Parties may protest or call on that State Party, but may not compel it to do so (ibid.). World Heritage

represents in theory a common cause, but its management and protection depend on the goodwill of the individual State Party on whose territory the World Heritage properties may be found. In other words, everyone commits to play the game, but the rules of the game are left up to the individual players and differ all the time. This, of course, inevitably leads to conflicts and tensions between the players, as the implementation of the Convention has often demonstrated. The structural framework of the *World Heritage Convention* questions per se its effectiveness as a global legal instrument, since it relies on very different national enforcement mechanisms. The difficulty to harmonise collective awareness with individual commitment towards World Heritage reflects another essential challenge that the Convention may face in the future, namely that of reconciling a universal concept (World Heritage) and the common concern toward the safeguarding of heritage with the different national interests pursued by each State Party. As Bernard Kouchner, the co-founder of Médecins Sans Frontières and Médecins du Monde, remarked in his Morgenthau Lecture on the future of humanitarianism, “the international community must strive to resolve this inherent contradiction: how can we maintain state sovereignty yet also find a way to make common decisions on common issues and problems?” (Kouchner, 2004). It would be interesting to see whether the current context of globalisation will push for more cooperation and the affirmation of collective values, or will rather increase polarisation and particularism within the processes of the *World Heritage Convention*. Or perhaps the current framework will be adjusted in a way that will accept the duality of individual and universal values, and will integrate it into a coherent mechanism. Despite its flaws, the World Heritage programme continues to play an immensely important role in safeguarding heritage places around the world, in integrating diverse perspectives and elaborating standards, in providing guidance and mobilising assistance, and ultimately in reminding individual nations of their commitment towards the collective heritage of humankind.

## CHAPTER TWO: ECONOMIC DUALITIES

This chapter will continue to explore the duality of the individual and the collective dimensions from the perspective of economics. It will look into the factors that contributed to the transformation of the economic act from a necessity to a moral and rational endeavour, ultimately seeking to express the desire for both individual agency and collective welfare. It will closely examine different theoretical models in the history of Western political economy and the respective economic systems they generated. It will demonstrate how the search for an ideal model of economic policy was in fact a constant balancing act between the pursuit of individualist or collective ideals. It will also examine key concepts like self-interest and cooperation, ownership, private and common property, motivation and purpose, aiming to demonstrate how the self and the community co-exist and constantly shape human behaviour in the realm of economic activity.

A good way to proceed this analysis is by reflecting on the basic meaning of economic activity. When trading at the Wall Street Stock Exchange, investing in the development of a new manufacture facility or ordering the latest model of Nike sneakers on Amazon, people make choices and with their choices, they become agents that keep in motion the wheels of the economic system. With this more recent perspective in mind, it may be somewhat difficult to step back and recognise the primordial force behind economics. At the core of all economic activities lies our basic wish to survive and prosper. Securing our livelihoods and ensuring our well-being represents the engine of economic life. The entire dynamic of the human interactions and forms of organisations arising in response to this necessity forms the subject of economics. As economist Robert Heilbroner explained, “in its simplest terms, economics is the study of how humankind secures its daily bread” (Heilbroner, 2011, p. 1). Of course, as our societies evolved and our lifestyles changed, the meaning of our daily bread, the scope of our basic necessities and the understanding of what defines our well-being have also changed. In this sense, economic activity is no longer simply about what we do in order to stay alive, but how we establish a well-functioning system in which human beings interact in order to accommodate their different needs and secure a good life. At the micro level, this implies giving everyone opportunities to fulfil their individual material needs. At the macro level, the aim is to guide individual actions in order to secure the prosperity of the society and humankind as a whole. This balancing act between individual and collective gains in a sustained way remains a fundamental concern of economics.

### *2.1 Homo economicus*

It is important to understand that the role and social acceptance of economic activities have changed in time. Engaging in any form of trade and pursuing wealth for personal gain may be the dominant aspect of contemporary life in most parts of the world, but this has not always been the case.

The fact that people exchanged goods or pursued their self-interest has existed since time immemorial. This was originally a necessity, a response in adaptation to the pressures of the natural and human environment. But the social sanctioning and liberalisation of economic activity for private gain occurred rather late in the course of human history. This fundamental shift reflected the changes in the relationship between property rights, power and the ideological narratives that justified and sustained a certain type of social organisation.

In the European context, economic life was for a long time part of a world strongly infused with religious, moral and political attributes. It represented a necessity, but not a virtue, and most certainly not an ideal. Humanities professor Eugene McCarragher explained in his monumental work *The enchantments of Mammon* that the moral economy of the medieval times reflected a strong belief in the constant presence of God and the sacredness of all life (McCarragher, 2019, p. 23). For this reason, economic activities were subordinated to a strong religious and moral awareness, and the idea of profit or the right to pursue private gain were not the social norm. Christian theological texts considered “greed” (covetousness, love of money) as one of the seven deadly sins. In *Summa theologica*, Thomas d’Aquinas condemned “the immoderate love of possessing” and the desire “to have external riches” beyond what is “necessary in keeping the condition of life” (d’Aquinas, *Summa theologica*, part II-II, *Treatise on the cardinal virtues*, question 118), considering greed “a sin against God, inasmuch as man contemns things eternal for the sake of temporal things” (ibid.). At the Council of Vienne in 1311, the Catholic Church officially declared usury (money lending for profit) and the defending of any form of usury as heresy, and usurers were denied the basic Christian rites (Heilbroner, 2011, p. 27). In general, those who engaged in economic activities were regarded as outcasts of the society. A similar look can be identified in India’s rigid caste system, which placed traders and merchants (*Vaishyas*) and labourers (*Shudras*) on a lower level of the society, nevertheless one that was essential for its functioning and the maintenance of a harmonious order in the natural and human affairs.

This perception was connected with the distribution of property and power and the ideology that legitimised it. In his work *Capital and ideology*, Thomas Piketty explains that many pre-modern societies had an authoritarian tripartite structure. These “ternary societies” consisted of three different social groups and the division was justified by the indispensable role that each group performed in the community: the clergy responsible for spiritual leadership, the nobility responsible for military protection and security, and the third estate, the common people who did the work (Piketty, 2020, p. 51). Property and power belonged only to the two ruling classes, the clergy and the nobility. The Church as an institution and the nobility as private individuals owned lands and enjoyed property rights, whereas the other people did not. Wealth was in this sense a consequence of power, a reward for status and not for economic activity (Heilbroner, 2012, p. 18).

A few important factors contributed to the shift in how economic life and the accumulation of wealth were perceived. In the European context, one of the most significant influences came from the Protestant ethic that started to gain considerable ground from the 16<sup>th</sup> century onwards. This new interpretation of the Christian doctrine facilitated the (previously lacking) legitimisation of religious



economic enterprises. According to Max Webber, the Reformation and the Protestant doctrine introduced two important concepts that opened the path to a wider social sanction of economic activity. The first was the idea of “calling”, which provided “the moral justification of worldly activity” (Webber, 2001, p. 41) and spoke about the obligation of each individual not to transcend the mundane world, but to translate religious behaviour in everyday life, recognising that “the fulfilment of worldly duties is the only way to live acceptably to God” (ibid.). Economic activity and self-disciplined labour would thus become a way to express this calling and search for recognition from God. The second important idea was that of rationalism in the basic problems of life and, by extension into the economic realm. Economic activity would become a calculated act consisting in “the rational organisation of free labour” (ibid., xxxiv) and the investment of capital for profit.

The rising significance of economic activities came also as a natural consequence of the constant growth of the cities, starting with the Renaissance and later propelled by the land reforms and the industrial revolution of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Unlike the feudal manor that used to function as a self-sufficient unit where trade activities were an added value to the life necessities, the new cities were entirely dependent on resources that they could not produce themselves. This practical consideration led to the effect that markets and economic activities started to have an increasingly important role in organising the urban society. It was also Max Webber who noted that “the separation of business from the household” was an important factor in the development of Western capitalism (Webber, 2001, xxxv). Similarly, it could be argued that at a larger scale, economic enterprises were transformed from a household activity (that could provide the bare necessities), to a specialised business (that was needed in order to support the urban environment).

Another major shift that led to a larger acceptance of economic activities occurred with the French Revolution and the revolutionary waves in the first half of the nineteenth century. Thomas Piketty argued that these revolutionary movements restructured society around the idea of private property ownership and the centralised state (Piketty, 2020, p. 107). On the one hand, these changes eliminated the *raison d'être* of the ruling classes, the role of the clergy in spiritual guidance and education being taken over by the new civil institutions (schools and universities), and that of the nobility to provide order and security being transferred to the centralised state and its public administration (ibid., p. 55). On the other hand, as Rafe Blaufarb examined in his book *The great demarcation*, one of the most profound changes caused by the French Revolution (and by extrapolation, the other revolutionary movements it inspired) was related to the status of property. The political and legal transformations introduced a clear demarcation between private property and public power (Blaufarb, 2016, p. 10) and recognised the individual rights for the ownership of property. The “invention of modern property”, as Blaufarb calls it, established a system in which the political and the social, the state and the society were separated and property could be fully and independently owned by an individual (ibid., p. 3). This new structure implied that the state (the public level) would provide laws and ensure the legal protection of property, whereas individuals (the private level) were free to decide how to use and valorise their property.

The emphasis placed on property, the social sanctioning of economic activities and the acquisition of wealth, as well as the empowerment of the individual through ownership rights were also strongly connected with the gradual disappearance of religiosity from the political and public space. The ideological changes generated by the Enlightenment, the belief in scientific progress and the intellectual rationalisation of all aspects of life triggered what Max Webber called “the disenchantment of the world” (Webber, 2004, p. 13), the de-sacralisation of social and political life. The growth of industrial capitalism and the rational planning of economic activities certainly added to the process of secularisation. Philosopher Charles Taylor claims that the rise of modernity and of the secular age did not actually remove religion, but rather shifted the understanding of peoples’ highest spiritual and moral aspirations, introducing a plurality of personal options (Taylor, 2007, p. 26). A similar claim is elaborately discussed by Eugene McCarragher, who explains that “the world was never disenchanted in the first place”, but that capitalism actually became “a form of enchantment, a misenchantment, a parody of our longing for a sacramental way of being in the world” (McCarragher, 2019, p. 5). By analogy with the Christian religion, McCarragher examines the different elements through which capitalism manifests its seductive power: its theology is expressed by economics; commodities and the consumerism culture represent its sacramental; management and business theories provide its liturgy; the economists, executives and managers are its clergy; the new iconography is spread through advertising, public relations and marketing; and finally, “its gospel is that of Mammonism, the attribution of ontological power to money and of existential sublimity to its possessors” (ibid.). McCarragher’s argument is ingeniously and poetically formulated, and it captures perfectly the ability of the capitalist ideology to provide an equally convincing alternative to religion. It replaced the religious content, but maintained the religious function.

The growing importance of private property and the general endorsement of the individual rights to make use of that property independently and in pursuit of profit would become the central element of a new way of thinking towards economic activities and a new economic system - capitalism. This system, which emerged in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, although not without flaw, would become the most widespread and enduring form of economic organisation in the contemporary world.

## **2.2 Economic experiments**

With the expansion and specialisation of economic activities came the necessity to find a mechanism that would ensure their proper functioning and continuity. This implied a systematic way of thinking about production (resources, labour and capital) and distribution (of goods), based on the understanding of the markets, and with the purpose of accumulating private wealth. The pattern of economic maximisation and the profit motive (Heilbroner, 2012, p. 46) became the widely accepted model for economic enterprises. The new capitalist system popularised a set of economic principles according to which the private owners of capital goods would hire labour to produce goods and services for the sale on markets with the intent of making a profit (CORE, 2021, p. 105). The acquisition of capital, understood as the total amount of assets or property that can be owned and

used for exchanges or investments on the market, and the distribution of wealth would form the main concern of economic analysis (Piketty, 2014, p. 16).

Within the course of time, various economic models rationalised the organisation of economic life and attempted to find an ideal foundation for social development. Although capitalism succeeded in imposing itself as the mainstream economic system, its failures led to many counter-movements that contested its logic. When examining these models, the dynamic between individual and collective values becomes a central factor for differentiation. The contrasting positions with regard to property and capital, rights, labour and skills, access to resources and technology, or regulating mechanisms could be explained by the different weight they conferred to individual or collective interests.

In a very simplistic way, which by no means aims to deny their underlying complexity, there are two main competing economic ideologies: capitalism and socialism. At one end, models like capitalism, liberalism and the more recent versions of neo-liberalism, meritocratic and technocratic liberalism claim the primacy of individual values and the self-regulatory function of the free markets. At the other end, socialism and its variants, including one of its extreme versions - communism, place the collective good and an equalitarian government interventionism at the core. A few other models like those based on Keynesian economics, ordoliberalism, social democratic economies or political/social capitalism tried to balance both individual and collective interests through a mix of free market mechanisms and government interventionism.

### **2.2.1 The interests of one**

In *The wealth of nations*, Scottish economist and philosopher Adam Smith systematically reflected on the nature of economic activity in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and put forward the main principles of classical capitalism. According to Smith, free individual actions, untampered by the intervention of political authority, are the source of collective prosperity. The mechanism that promotes the welfare of both the individual and the society is kept in motion by two basic human tendencies. The first is “the propensity to exchange one thing for another” (Smith, *The wealth of nations*, book I, chapter II). A natural consequence of this predisposition is the division of labour, which leads to improved productivity and more diversified skills, and finally to the necessary accumulation of stock. The specialisation of work and the accumulation of capital for the maximisation of profit and economic growth represents the first fundamental characteristic of the capitalist economic model. The second equally important human feature identified by Smith is that of self-interest (ibid.). Smith claims that every individual pursues his/her own interests when engaging in economic activities. This is, however, not a negative trait, but quite the opposite. Each individual benefits from the fact that everyone seeks their own gain on the market because in doing so, their competition generates an invisible mechanism of self-regulation. Since “consumption is the sole end and purpose of all production” (ibid., book IV, chapter VIII), the demand of the market spontaneously regulates the competing producers who rationally pursue the profit of their activities. “Without any intervention of law, the private interests and passions of men naturals lead them (...) to the interest of the whole society” (ibid., book IV,

chapter VII, part 4). Smith claims that the markets should be left free of interference, the role of the government being only to ensure defence against foreign invasions, order and justice, as well as the development of public works and institutions (ibid., book V). The argument is that by staying away from the market mechanisms, the government enables individuals to pursue their interests on the competitive market and with this promotes the general wealth of a nation. The idea of a free market or liberal position supported by the spontaneous order theory represents the second important feature of classical capitalism (White, 2012, p. 230).

The capitalist model proved to be extremely successful in establishing itself as the dominant form of economic organisation and expanded in almost all parts of the world. The colonial system established by the European countries between the 16<sup>th</sup> and the 20<sup>th</sup> century contributed undoubtedly to its export. Economists like John Hobson considered that imperialism was a desperate attempt of capitalism to ensure its survival. Since the accumulation of wealth and savings on the domestic markets threatened with overproduction and stagnation, imperialism represented the economic solution to re-channel surplus wealth on the foreign markets and to redistribute the goods and capital that could not be sold at home (Hobson, 2005, p. 85).

Another factor that contributed to the endurance of the capitalist model was its ideological partnership with the core values of liberalism. The fact that these two terms are sometimes used synonymously in the economic context speaks for the strong similarities in place. As a political philosophy, liberalism rests on the ideas of individual freedom and autonomy from all forms of constraint. Philosopher John Dewey identified three enduring values of liberalism: liberty, individuality and intelligence. He considered that these values “led to a conception of individuality as something ready-made, already possessed, and needing only the removal of certain legal restrictions to come into full play” (Dewey, 1963, p. 39). The idea of human beings embracing their talents and making full expression of their abilities and choices in a free environment that supports individual initiative has always been very appealing. Political economist Francis Fukuyama noted in his book *The end of history and the last man* that the development of freedom has been the central issue in the history of humankind (Fukuyama, 1992, p. 51). The liberal idea has emerged victorious in competition with other ideologies and forms of government because of its universality (ibid., p. 45) and its adequacy to satisfy the needs of the human nature seen in a trans-historical perspective (ibid., p. 138). In contrast, political theorist Patrick Deneen considers liberalism to be the first political architecture that succeeded to transform all aspects of human life in the image of an ideology, while maintaining an ideological invisibility and claiming its neutrality through the allure of freedom and wealth (Deneen, 2019, p. 5). He connects the foundations of liberalism with the introduction of a new understanding of liberty: as individualism and voluntarism (the belief in the unfettered and autonomous choice of individuals), and as human separation from nature (the belief in the liberation from and the conquering of nature as expansion of choices and search for prosperity) (ibid., p. 31). Translated in the economic field, liberalism meant the recognition of individual freedom of choice in economic activity and free trade, with the autonomous use of private property, individual skills and labour on the markets. In addition to the universal appeal of liberalism, the material prosperity triggered by the

capitalist economy also demonstrated that such an ideology could successfully work in practice. This strengthened its force of persuasion.

Although challenged by various socialist experiments, egalitarian ideologies and interventionist policies throughout most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, capitalism managed to endure. In the aftermath of World War II and in response to the rise of collectivism and authoritarian regimes (particularly communist and fascist ones), a group of intellectuals formed in 1947 the Mont Pelerin Society. Their joint effort was to revive classical liberalism and to rescue the values of the free society. The economic thought initiated by this movement and continued through the theories of Friedrich Hayek, George Stigler and Milton Friedman provided the intellectual foundation of a revived form of liberalism – neoliberalism. This will become the dominant model for economic policies and practices in almost all parts of the world in the contemporary era. While embracing the classical liberal belief in individual freedom and free markets, what neoliberalism introduced was the deliberate intervention of the state in creating the adequate institutional framework for liberal practices and expanding these liberal practices in all aspects of society. Instead of a separation between the state and the market (which was the spirit of classical liberalism), neoliberalism subordinated the state to the free market (Achterhuis, cited in Verhaeghe, 2016, p. 114). The concept of individual freedom remained central and this alluring ideal it continued to play an important role in the acceptance of neoliberal policies by the larger public. Neoliberalism presented itself as the only alternative to defend the value of freedom, to avoid the formation of oppressive regimes that would harm this value and ultimately to lead to the betterment and progress of human society. The main theoretical argument of neoliberalism rested on the role played by individualism in the economic order. As Friedrich Hayek observed, “individualism is primarily a theory of society” (Hayek, 1948, p. 6) which recognises that “the spontaneous collaboration of free men often creates things which are greater than their individual minds can ever fully comprehend” (ibid., p. 7). The premise that no individual or group of individuals can possess all knowledge in order to be able to foresee the results of social actions and comprehend what is best for the society as a whole implies that all forms of collective planning will be limited to the vision or interests of a few individuals. For this reason, “society is greater than the individual only in so far as it is free” (ibid., p. 32). The “demand for a strict limitation of all coercive power” and the conviction that greater collective benefits could be generated by “spontaneous collaboration of individuals” (ibid.) represent the original core of neoliberal thought. In practice, neoliberalism translated into a political economic model that claimed that “human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterised by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade” (Harvey, 2005, p. 2). The state would create the ideal institutional framework for these practices, but would not interfere in the dynamics of the markets, leaving them absolute freedom. Because markets, competition and individual actions on the markets can deliver greater benefits than central planning. Neoliberal policies started to gain attention on the international scene starting from the late 1970s, as they appeared to offer an alternative to the economic failures of the more interventionist approaches that had been the implemented before. The brutal experiments in Chile and Argentina, or the democratic versions supported by the policies of Ronald Regan and Margaret Thatcher in the US and UK, as well as internationally through

institutions like the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, or the World Trade Organisation pursued the principles of neoliberal practice. This meant deregulation, privatisation of the public services, major cuts in public spending and a systematic dissolution of the welfare state. This “market fundamentalism”, as investor George Soros described the religious-like conviction in the free market mechanisms (Soros, 1998), quickly became the dominant policy approach in the global economy, subordinating all aspects of social life to the system of self-regulating markets and embedding institutional mechanisms with the neoliberal ideology (Block and Somers, 2014, pp. 150-155). As economist David Harvey noted, the most important achievement of neoliberalism was “the construction of consent” towards neoliberal ideas, its transformation from a minority position into the mainstream (Harvey, 2005, p. 62).

In an early critique of the liberalist practices (*The great transformation*, 1944), political economist Karl Polanyi recognised a fundamental change of mentality that the market society introduced. He observed that the separation of labour (and of economic activity in general) from the context of human life and its subordination to the laws of the market led to the destruction of the social structures, which are essential for any economic system. They were replaced “by a different type of organisation, an atomistic and individualistic one” (Polanyi, 2001, p. 171). Polanyi noted that “the non-contractual organisations of kinship, neighbourhood, profession, and creed were liquidated since they claimed the allegiance of the individual and thus restrained his freedom” (ibid.). The liberal mentality conceived individual freedom as being threatened by any form of planning and control, and sustained only by free enterprise and private ownership. “No society built on other foundations is said to deserve to be called free. The freedom that regulations creates is denounced as unfreedom; the justice, liberty and welfare it offers are decried as a camouflage of slavery” (ibid., p. 265). Polanyi concluded that the utopic construct of free enterprise in fact favoured only the economic elites, which used it in order to consolidate their power (ibid.).

This narrative of individualism and freedom contributed to the formation of a different, more recent type of capitalism – that based on meritocratic liberalism. Meritocratic thinking, which is widely embraced in all parts of the world nowadays and fundamentally shapes our contemporary life, relates to a particular perception of individual talent and human agency. At its core lies the belief in a society that promotes liberty and rewards people for their merit. In an environment that guarantees absolute freedom and removes all forms of collective coercion, individuals can fully use their talents and efforts, achieve success and deserve their rise on the social hierarchy. We are responsible for our fate and success is our own making. “The rhetoric of rising”, as American philosopher Michael Sandel called the meritocratic ethic, views success as deserving and virtuous, and upward mobility as the personal responsibility of each individual (Sandel, 2020, p. 59). In principle a very appealing idea, this proved to have dysfunctional effects when integrated in the larger neo-liberal narrative. In *Capitalism and ideology*, Thomas Piketty examined various forms of economic organisation demonstrating that “each inequality regime is associated with a corresponding theory of justice”, that “inequalities (always) need to be justified and rest on a plausible vision of political and social organisation” (Piketty, 2020, p. 719). He considers that the extreme form of meritocratic ideology is the distinctive feature of today’s

inequality regime (ibid., p. 710). In an earlier work *Capital in the 21<sup>st</sup> century*, Piketty provides a staggering picture of inequality and the distribution of wealth globally. Data revealed that in the early 2010s, the richest 10% owned around 60% of national wealth in most European countries, while the poorest 50% owned less than 10% of national wealth, often less than 5%. A similar situation could be found in the US, where the richest 10% owned 72% of America's wealth, while the bottom 50% owned just 2% (Piketty, 2014, p. 257). Piketty observes that the unprecedented level of inequality and high concentration of wealth is endorsed and perpetuated by the meritocratic ideology (ibid., p. 265).

Translated in the economic sphere, meritocratic liberalism ascertains that the free market will reward individual merit with material wealth and success. If according to this dynamic everyone gets what they deserve, this implies that the wealthiest individuals are most talented and industrious and are considered winners, whereas the poorest are less capable and not enough enterprising and represent the losers. This logic automatically raises a few fundamental problems. Firstly, it recognises inequality as something morally acceptable. It gives a naturalistic explanation of social and economic injustices, based on an illusory concept of freedom and equality of opportunity. Secondly, it leads to the consolidation of the economic elites that will use this narrative for the legitimisation of their own social and political power. Belgian psychologist Paul Verhaeghe noted that the neo-liberal meritocrats created a very narrow version of reality, by claiming to promote the natural winners. They managed to preserve this reality by keeping these winners on top and thus proving the validity of their reality (Verhaeghe, 2016, p. 120). The hypermeritocratic society becomes "a society of superstars" (Piketty, 2014, p. 265) who are defined by their economic success and rewarded not only with enormous wealth, but most importantly with the highest social recognition. It is easy to understand the meritocratic logic by thinking of the general fascination that people have for billionaires and entrepreneurs nowadays. These are admired not simply for owning exorbitant amounts of wealth, but because their wealth represents the narrative of earned, self-made success (in contrast with other significantly wealthy individuals in the Gulf states, Russia or Africa, who do not fit into this meritocratic logic, as their fortunes have been inherited or come from other non-sanctioned sources). Another illustration of meritocratic liberalism is the recognition given to the class of supermanagers in terms of employment retribution. The fact that hedge funds managers and CEOs are rewarded with exorbitant wages for their work - 50 to 100 times more than the average income in the US (ibid., p. 417) - is an example of how meritocratic capitalism defines the management of money as the most valuable type of work in the economic system. The consolidation of the economic elites reflects, in turn, two other significant effects that meritocratic ideology in the general understanding of economic activities. On the one hand, this mentality caused a deep "eroding in the dignity of work" (Sandel, 2020, p. 198), a sense that the work of the (economic) elites is much worthier and deserving of economic compensation than the work of more basic professions (especially manual ones, which paradoxically used to represent the highest level of skill and knowledge). On the other hand, it led to the consolidation of technocratic liberalism, the conviction that technical expertise (in particular the economic technical expertise on the free market) is the most important feature of good governance. This technical expertise, reserved exclusively to the meritocratic elites and recognising that value is

determined solely by the mechanisms of the market, became a central theme in public discourse and generated a strong sense of alienation among those who did not feel represented by it.

Finally, meritocratic liberalism legitimises a faulty picture of the society, which leads to strong social discontent, as noted in many parts of the world nowadays. In his brilliant analysis *The tyranny of merit*, Harvard University professor Michael Sandel discusses the moral implications of the meritocratic ethic. According to Sandel, the meritocratic ideal gives winners the false belief that their success is due to their own talent and effort alone, ignoring many other circumstantial aspects such as luck or the advantage of a better social start in life. At the same time, it gives those who are not so well off a deep feeling of humiliation, failure and insult, which becomes the central source of social discord and ultimately populist resentment (ibid., p. 25). Moreover, it eliminates the feeling of empathy and the social bonds that are necessary for a well-functioning society and a strong sense of what common good represents. From a moral point of view, even the perfect meritocracy would still be a questionable construct, since it recognises natural talent as a pre-condition of merit and failure as personal blame, without providing a social framework in which all kinds of talent could have equal worth. Francis Fukuyama talked about the inability of capitalism to satisfy the human desire for equal recognition, despite the amount of wealth it manages to generate. This intrinsic conflict between liberty and equality will continue to manifest itself in all liberal societies (Fukuyama, 1992, p. 292). He noted that “as long as the distinction between rich and poor remains, as long as some occupations are regarded as prestigious while others are seen as degrading, then no absolute level of material prosperity will ever correct this situation or overcome the daily damage done to the dignity of those less well-off” (ibid.).

Despite its inherent conceptual conflicts, capitalism is still the model that has survived the longest and has reached the most people. This is also the opinion of economist Branko Milanovic in his book *Capitalism, alone*. He considers that “the absolute triumph of capitalism” and the global acceptance of its economic principles derive from its success to persuade individuals to adopt and manifest in their private lives values that are crucial for the enforcement of the capitalist system (Milanovic, 2019, p. 5). The values of money and profit provide a communication mechanism that is universally understood, takes most part of people’s actions and concerns, and has profoundly transformed human nature, instilling it with the capitalist spirit (ibid., p. 195). Milanovic’s view pervades a strong pragmatism and acknowledges the undisputed supremacy of capitalism. His argument emphasises the reasons why capitalism is working and the possibilities to improve it, and rejects any alternative system as unrealistic. The categorical affirmation that self-interest will remain the main driver for economic success in human society underestimates perhaps the possibility of social and cultural change. An economic system that is fuelled by an ideology is very much dependent on an environment that makes that ideology flourish. And, as often the case in human history, ideologies change and with them established social frameworks, including economic ones.

At its core, the capitalist ideology is very appealing to individualistic values. At the most basic level, it recognises private property as a universal right protected by law and it sanctions self-interest and the pursuit of material affluence. At the more abstract level, it promotes the ideals of human agency, individual empowerment and freedom to decide how to make use of one’s possessions and skills.



While conveying a sense of autonomy and independence, it evokes the absence of privilege and the belief in the unfettered realisation of human potentialities. The evolutionary fitness of capitalism demonstrates well-designed structural features that make this system work both at the individual and the collective level. It would be interesting to see, particularly in view of the growing moral concerns of the past decades, if those features will remain long-lived, or will be re-assessed, even re-invented in response to changing social ideals.

### **2.2.2 The interests of all**

The counter argument and challenge to capitalism came from a political and economic model that envisaged human development based on social justice, equal access to opportunities and the right to self-realisation, a strong collective consciousness and solidarity with others, as well as the belief in the ability of people to cooperate in order to achieve both individual and common interests. This model is recognised under the name of socialism, although the term itself reflects a large number of different, sometimes even contradicting, views about the practical materialisation of these principles.

At the core of the socialist model lies the commitment to the creation of an egalitarian society (Newman, 2005, p. 2). The Enlightenment movement popularised the ideals of equality and the recognition of natural human rights, as well as the belief in rationality as means of individual empowerment. Similarly, the French Revolution at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century had generated radical political changes and disseminated inspiring ideals for a society that is based on equality and rejects privilege. The classical theories of Socialism in the 19<sup>th</sup> century came as a reaction against the growing inequalities and sentiment of injustice associated with the effects of the capitalist economy during industrialisation. At a simple observational level, the dejected living and working conditions of those who were hired in the production facilities provided alarming views in the public discourse and denoted a sharp contrast with those who owned the facilities. At the level of economic analysis, capitalism represented a model in which the means of production were privately owned by the capitalists, whereas the workers were forced to sell their labour for wages in order to earn a living, had no control over the output of their labour and no claim on the wealth accumulated from selling that output on the market. The antagonistic image of these two classes – workers and capitalists – was instrumental in formulating the main socialist charges against capitalism, which concerned exploitation (of workers), domination (of capitalists) and alienation (of people from their abilities and potential for self-realisation) (Gilabert, 2017, p. 566). Socialist theories emerged indeed as a critical reaction against the manifest inequalities within the capitalist system and the intrinsic injustice identified in its foundational structure. Their main aim was to search for a more balanced model that would systematically counteract inequalities of all kind and would offer truly equal opportunities for individual realisation within a community.

Many utopian socialists in the 19<sup>th</sup> century challenged the mainstream capitalist model and attempted to develop new planned communities that were based on these ideals. In Europe and North America, experiments like Étienne Cabet's Icarian society, the communities based on the ideas of Henri Saint-

Simon or Robert Owen's ideal community at New Lanark introduced reforms in social organisation that were meant to enhance the human potential for economic activity and development. Although idealistic in nature, these social experiments were also driven by a very pragmatic conviction, namely that the improvement of social conditions would automatically lead to improved productivity and indirectly to the benefit of the capital owner. In particular Robert Owen, the Scottish textile manufacturer turned social reformer, proposed a new principle of organising communities, which relied on the assumption that people's behaviour can be influenced and perfected by changes in their living environment. "Any general character, from the best to the worst, from the most ignorant to the most enlightened, may be given to any community, even to the world at large, by the application of proper means; which means are to a great extent at the command and under the control of those who have influence in the affairs of men" (Owen, 2007, p. 49). The village at New Lanark functioned as such an experiment, where improved living conditions were meant to form character from an early age and create a better workforce for the nearby factories. At the same time, Owen acknowledged the interdependency between the individual and the collective happiness: "the happiness of the self can only be attained by conduct that must promote the happiness of the community" (ibid, p. 51), "individual happiness can be increased and extended only in proportion as he actively endeavours to increase and extend the happiness of all around him" (ibid.). These social experiments, which sometimes included extreme measures like the abolition of money, had occasional successes, but were short-lived and did not manage to imposed themselves as a model of organisation for the larger society.

The most important theories of socialism were formulated by Karl Marx in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. Interestingly enough, the book in which they were presented is called *Capital (Das Kapital)* and is in principle, as its title indicates, a critique of the capitalist political economy and pattern of economic organisation. A work of monumental proportions, which took eighteen years to finish and most of which was published posthumously, *Capital* represented Marx's attempt to provide a scientific foundation of socialism by proving that the capitalist model had a flawed foundation and was heading towards an immanent end (Mandel, 1990, p. 17). At the core of Marx's theory lie two fundamental concepts. The first one recognises that the social relations that determine a specific economic model of production are the foundation of the larger legal and political superstructures of a society. "The mode of production in material life determines the general character of the social, political and spiritual processes of life. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but, on the contrary, their social existence determines their consciousness" (Marx, *A contribution to the critique of political economy*, preface). The second concept is that of dialectical materialism. Human history is characterised by constant change and each social form of economic organisation is eventually superseded by a more advanced one, building on the accumulation of past experiences and determined by the particular circumstances of the present. According to Marx, social changes were to be found in changes in the economic mode of production of a specific time. Following this logic of dynamics, capitalism will eventually be replaced by a superior form of organisation – the socialist one. Marx's analysis of the capitalist mode of production exposes an intrinsic incompatibility between the character of economic production in capitalism (which relies on cooperation and interdependency, as

result of the division and specialisation of labour) and the superstructure guiding it (which is defined by a strong individualism and the importance of private property). As a result, there is a twofold process at work, “on the one hand a social labour process for the creation of a product, and on the other hand capital’s process of valorisation, which in form is purely despotic” (Marx, *Capital*, book I, part 4, chapter 13). This structural conflict between the social organisation of economic production and the individualistic ideology of ownership would ultimately lead to the replacement of the latter with a new superstructure that harmoniously corresponds with the social nature of production. Another antagonistic process identified by Marx was related to the development of the workers’ class and their future role in the demise of capitalism. The need to accumulate capital and increase output automatically leads to an increased amount of labour needed in the production. This, in turn, determines the formation of a cooperating working class that will gradually increase their resistance towards the capital owners and will ultimately revolt. “Along with the constant decrease in the number of capitalist magnates, who usurp and monopolise all the advantages of this process of transformation, the mass of misery, oppression, slavery, degradation and exploitation grows; but with this there also grows the revolt of the working class, a class constantly increasing in numbers, and trained, united and organised by the very mechanism of the capitalist process of production” (ibid., book I, part 8, chapter 32). The rationally planned production and organisation of labour will provide the technical foundation of socialism, while the growing workers’ class, trained, organised and united by the principle of cooperation, will provide the agents of socialism and the engine of social revolution.

Many of the theories presented in *Capital* have been criticised by numerous economics and political scientists, but they continued to fascinate mainly because of their prophetic character. Marx’s predictions for the long term development of the capitalist model may sound extremely familiar nowadays: the accumulation of capital as a necessity resulting from the competition among capital owners, who need to stay ahead on the market; the inability of small entrepreneurs to compete and their inevitably being taken over by larger producers; the necessity to increase profits and expand leading to rising wages, then to the substitution of labour by new technologies, and finally to a decrease in profits and a decline in consumption, as less people will be hired and the consumption power will be less than the production output. Only the most important part of Marx’s argument, the inevitable collapse of capitalism, has so far proven to be wrong. Quite the opposite, capitalism appears to have achieved “the master of the world” (Milanovic, 2019, p. 5); however, the growing inequalities and the sentiment of discontent strongly emerging in large parts of the contemporary society will most probably not leave the capitalist model without challenge or need for restructuring in the near future.

Marx’s theories provided a view of history in which individuals become agents of change only through their solidarity and collaboration with others. At the same time, the capitalist model displayed several dynamic contradictions, which made it unsustainable in the long-term. Nevertheless, capitalism was perceived as a necessary step in the gradual evolution of the modes of production, one that would eventually collapse and be replaced by a superior form in the natural process of economic development – the socialist one. The unjust exploitation of private property (and of free labour, as an expression of private property) in the capitalist model will intensify the class struggle and will increase the ability of

the working class for collective action. This will eventually lead to the creation of a new social and institutional superstructure that would better reflect the collaborative system of economic production. In the prophetic tone of *The Communist manifesto* of 1848, “in place of the old bourgeois society with its classes and class conflicts, there will be an association in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all” (Marx, *The Communist manifesto*, section II). The socialist model, based on egalitarian principles and a collectively owned system of production, would organically evolve into a communist one. The communist ideal of economic organisation would emerge as the increased solidarity within the community and the removal of material inequality would generate a system of natural cooperation among individuals, making any form of coercion from an authority or a regulatory framework superfluous.

Socialist ideas took many different, often contradictory shapes in the post-Marxist era, which makes it sometimes difficult to find a consistent central theme that unifies them. However, when attempting to identify a core principle of socialism, this would probably be related to what sociologist Erik Olin Wright called “a radical democratic understanding of justice” (Wright, 2010, p. 12). This ideal rests on the condition of social justice, translated into equal access to the necessary material and social means to live a good life, and on that of political justice, namely equal access to meaningful participation in the decisions that may influence their individual life and those of the broader community (ibid.). Economist and political scientist John Roemer placed the equality of opportunity for self-realisation and welfare, political influence and social status at the core of all socialist theories (Roemer, 1994, p. 11). The ideals of individual freedom and self-realisation are integrated in this egalitarian framework that aims to correct all forms of injustices and recognises the interdependency between collective and individual welfare. Another important principle is the belief in the possibility to achieve an egalitarian system through solidarity and cooperation (Newman, 2005, p. 3). The principle of community, reciprocity and commitment to our fellow human beings, and the central requirement that “people care about, and where necessary and possible, care for, one another” has also been identified by philosopher G.A. Cohen as one of the defining characteristics of socialism (Cohen, 2009, p. 34). Finally, the most controversial socialist principle is the one concerning the idea of ownership. In classical socialism, private property and the private ownership of the means of production, which are fundamental in the capitalist model, are replaced by collective ownership and regulated by egalitarian institutions (Wright, 2010, p. 97). The idea of collective ownership has in turn been interpreted as public property (ownership shared by a social group, small or large), state property (ownership by the state, like in the communist model), or more recently mixed forms of property based on egalitarian principles (which in principle do not deny private property, but subordinate it to a system of collective management).

Socialism inspired many economic and political experiments throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, ranging from authoritarian to democratic ones, and generating extremely different impacts in their specific cultural context. The utopian communities sought a non-hierarchical system based on self-reliance and collective welfare. The Revolution of 1917 and the Bolshevik seizure of power in Russia were inspired by Marxist ideals, but despite the revolutionary changes they wanted to achieve, they ended

up breaking up with many of the socialist principles. The communist regime of the Bolsheviks and its continuation in the Soviet experiments during the Stalinist era created an authoritarian model in which private property was completely abolished, and the state and the authoritarian exercise of its power owned and organised economic resources. A similar model was realised during the revolution of 1949 and the Communist rule of Mao Ze Dong in China. Similarly, the fascist regimes in Europe imposed a model of collectivism that still recognised private property, but set the rules of economic organisation and development in the authority of the state. Political philosopher Hannah Arendt referred to the similarity of the German Nazi regime and the Soviet one in their promise “to level all social and property differences” (Arendt, 1973, p. 361), the only difference being that in the classless communist society everyone would ultimately become a factory worker, whereas in the Nazi *Volksgemeinschaft* (the national community that was to be globally expanded), everyone would become a factory owner (ibid.). In the aftermath of de-colonisation and the independent movements, many Arab and African states experimented with socialist models in the 1950s and 1960s. In the late 1950s, many countries in Eastern Europe, formerly under Soviet control, developed local models of socialist and communist regimes; and after the revolution of 1959, Cuba produced one of the longest communist experiments in history.

### **2.2.3 Visions in between**

Democratic states in Europe and North America also experimented with different versions of socialism in a democratic framework. Thomas Piketty noted that “the great transformation of the 20<sup>th</sup> century” consisted in a profound change in the attitudes towards private property and a general disbelief in the ability of the proprietary system to bring prosperity and protection (Piketty, 2020, p. 417). As Piketty observed, the deconcentration of property represented the most significant cause for the reduction of income inequality in Europe in the 20<sup>th</sup> century (ibid., p. 427). In practice, this triggered the popularisation of a series of interventionist policies in states with a strong capitalist tradition. These policies proposed mixed economic models, which combined forms of private and public property, as well as the principles of the market economy with public regulation and social reforms.

The most important economic theorist of this new kind of economics was British economist John Maynard Keynes. His ideas formed the foundation of the so-called Keynesian economics, a model that was extensively used between 1930s and 1970s. This was a social and moral economy supported through the policies and actions of an interventionist state (Harvey, 2005, p. 11). From a purely economic point of view, the Keynesian model recognised that the capitalist economy is unable to sustain its growth continuously, for which reason it needs state intervention to correct its systemic failures. Keynes was the first one to reject the classical theories which claimed that the free market economy is able to regulate itself in an optimal way (towards full employment and maximum output). He argued that a decline in demand and consumption may lead to high levels of unemployment and losses for the productive industries, as well as to an overall economic stagnation. An increased level of savings would have a similar effect, since it would automatically remove funds from economic

circulation and limit investment. The solution consisted in the government's intervention to supplement spending, increase demand and bring employment to equilibrium. This macroeconomic approach would allow governments to manage aggregate demand and supply, and counteract the negative fluctuations of the markets. As Keynes noted, "a somewhat comprehensive socialisation of investment will prove the only means of securing an approximation to full employment" (Keynes, 2016, p. 377). This economic model did not imply total state planning, but an increased and occasional interventionism from the government, which was meant to perfect the functionality of the capitalist model and realise its full economic potential. The second justification of the Keynesian model relied on a particular social philosophy. Keynes argued against the principle of laissez-faire and emphasised the frequent contradiction between individual and collective interests, as well as the inability of free markets to find a balance that is beneficent for both.

"The world is not so governed from above that private and social interest always coincide. It is not so managed here below that in practice they coincide. It is not a correct deduction from the principles of economics that enlightened self-interest always operates in the public interest. Nor is it true that self-interest generally is enlightened; more often individuals acting separately to promote their own ends are too ignorant or too weak to attain even these. Experience does not show that individuals, when they make a social unit, are always less clear-sighted than when they act separately. " (Keynes, 2016, p. 287)

Keynes emphasised the need for a central institution that would take deliberate control in the economic system and act against the disadvantages generated by risk, uncertainty and ignorance. The social guidance of economic action would not obstruct individual enterprise, but will lead to "possible improvements in the technique of modern capitalism by the agency of collective action" (ibid., p. 292).

The popularisation of the Keynesian economics and a growing discontent with the economic and social crisis prompted by capitalism encouraged the development of many experiments that re-imagined the role of the state in the economy and demanded a higher level of interventionism on its behalf. Throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, mixed economic models infused capitalist principles with social purpose, in the hope of securing both material and social prosperity. "The golden age of social democracy" of 1950-1980 saw many capitalist countries adopt interventionist policies in the form of nationalisations, investments in public education, health and pension reforms, as well as progressive taxation on income and capital (Piketty, 2020, p. 486).

In the 1930s, Franklin D. Roosevelt initiated the *New Deal* in the US, an extensive set of interventionist policies that were meant to counteract the devastating effects of the Great Depression. The reforms introduced extensive federal control and regulatory codes in almost all aspects of the economy, with the aim of protecting competitive practices and encourage economic growth. Public works projects and targeted welfare programmes were meant to bring relief to the most disadvantaged in the society and to guarantee social security in the long term. Many of the changes initiated by the *New Deal* would be continued in the following decades, especially those related to the social legislation.

Harry Truman's *Fair Deal* in the late 1940s and early 1950s and Lyndon B. Johnson's *Great Society* in the 1960s pursued, with various degrees of success, the social vision of the *New Deal*.

Similarly, starting with the 1950s, Jawaharlal Nehru would shape the economy of independent India based on a mixed model that blended strong governmental planning with elements of the market economy. His plans of nationalisation and strong public investment in industries, as well as excessive regulatory controls over businesses emphasised the social foundation of economic development and the role of the state in providing direction.

In the German context, a particular form of liberalism and state interventionism was developed in the 1930s and started to be implemented after World War II by the government of Konrad Adenauer and through the economic policies of Ludwig Erhard. This model was labelled as ordoliberalism and represents a specific "German heritage in economic thought" (Atkins, 2015) that continues to shape the character of German economy to the present day. Without advocating a welfare state, ordoliberalism (from Latin *ordo* = order) emphasised the crucial importance of a legal framework that would ensure the functioning of competition on the markets. Unlike the laissez-faire doctrine, which affirmed the spontaneous, self-regulatory ability of the markets, ordoliberalism recognised that the state should provide an adequate legal foundation that would create the ideal conditions for competition and market economy, and at the same time would ensure social justice. Unlike Keynesianism, ordoliberalism did not endorse the direct intervention of the state in the markets, rather only in the framework that defines the operability of the markets. Recognising the importance of "the politics of order" (*Ordnungspolitik*) and in general that of "order" as a structural principle manifested in all aspects of society, ordoliberals emphasised the necessity of the state to establish and enforce a competitive order in the economic policy (Biebricher and Vogelmann, 2017, p. 5). On the one hand, the ordoliberal model asserted the "formative force" of law and political economy (the idea was expressed originally in the *Ordo Manifesto* of 1936) (Peacock and Willgerodt, 1989, p. 15). On the other hand, it rested on a strong belief in the normative function of economics and the ethical foundation of the markets (Hien and Joerges, 2020, pp. 4-5). Economic policy was meant to guide and form moral behaviour on the market at both the individual and the collective level, and at the same time to provide the conditions for social justice, so that everyone could enjoy equal starting conditions (ibid., p. 6). The state and its instruments, law and policy, would assume collective responsibility and establish an economic system that was socially just and in which every individual could freely engage in economic competition and be rewarded based on their performance.

The Nordic countries also experimented with mixed economic models that gave both capitalism and socialism a unique twist. Sweden in particular produced one of the most successful examples of social democracy, starting in the 1930s and continuing until the late 1970s. Central to this model was the concept of "people's home" (*Folkhemmet*), which, transposed in the political and socio-economic sphere, envisaged the state and the society as a place where individuals would enjoy equality and cooperation. Per Albin Hansson, the social democrat Prime Minister of Sweden who popularised the concept in the 1930s and 1940s, strongly used the ideological appeal of *Folkhemmet* in support of the

social and economic reforms that his government initiated. “The basis of the home is togetherness and common feeling. There no one looks down upon anyone else, there no one tries to gain advantage at another’s expense, and the stronger do not suppress and plunder the weaker. In the good home equality, consideration, co-operation and helpfulness prevail” (Hansson, cited in Newman, 2005, p. 53). The gradual reforms proposed by the social-democratic model were presented as part of a strategy for a fundamental transformation of the society, in which the political power could interfere to correct the flaws of capitalism and create a stable economic environment for all people (Berman, 1998, p. 217). Without denying private property and ownership, the Swedish model opted for the consolidation of a strong welfare state. A mechanism relying on high taxes and high public spending directed economic activity towards social reform through two main channels: through strengthening the forces that in the long time empower individuals and reduce inequality (such as the massive funding of education and health care) and through building collective risk mechanisms that could control the negative effects of crises (such as the funding of social security programmes and the establishment of labour market institutions like trade unions). This balance between collective and individual freedoms and responsibility transformed Sweden into one of the most egalitarian countries in the world. For example, in the 1980s, Sweden reached the lowest income inequality, with the income of the top decile representing only 23% of the total income, in comparison with 38% in the US in the same decade. A similar comparison in the 2010s displayed a similar picture, with the share being close to 30% in Sweden and close to 50% in the US (Piketty, 2017, p. 317).

Finally, one the most interesting mixed models emerged in China in the late 1970s and has been often described as an economic miracle, a success story that has produced the world’s second largest economy (World Bank, 2022). In this case, two apparently incompatible partners, communism and capitalism, were brought together in a very unusual association. The result represented a new form of capitalism, the so-called state or political capitalism. Mao Zedong’s policies had proven disastrous. In the 1950s, the *Great Leap Forward* saw private property dissolved, while forced agricultural collectivisation and industrialisation efforts lead to the massive starvation of the population. In the 1960s, the Cultural Revolution aimed to remove all elements of traditional and capitalist nature in the society, leaving a long-lasting trauma in the collective consciousness. It is believed that these two programmes caused the death of more than 70 million people in peacetime (Chuang, 2005, p. 3). After Mao Zedong’s death, the new government of Deng Xiaoping embraced reforms with a certain pragmatism that was determined to re-install stability and prosperity. Even if that meant using the mechanisms of an ideologically rival economic model – the capitalist one. In his famous phrase “it doesn’t matter if the cat is black or white, as long as it catches the mouse”/“不管黑猫白猫，捉到老鼠就是好猫” (Deng, cited in Vogel, 2013, p. 164), Deng expressed his pragmatism and his conscious opening towards more efficient economic models. Starting with the late 1970s, Deng’s government developed and gradually implemented a new mixed model that integrated communist, socialist and capitalist elements. The *socialism with Chinese characteristics* (中国特色社会主义), as he called it, integrated two ideologies that were in principle incompatible. The rationale behind it was that only a strong state (under the rule of the Chinese Communist Party) could direct the changes towards a



capitalist economy and could correct the errors of the market. Economist Branko Milanovic argued that communism (and communist revolutions) had an instrumental role for underdeveloped and colonised societies to abolish the feudalism system, gain economic independence and develop their own indigenous form of capitalism (Brankovic, 2021, p. 75). Fifty years later, under the rule of Xi Jinping and the same Chinese Communist Party, this model is still in place and has been credited with the country's impressive economic growth in the past decades. In this mixed structure, the economy is in principle capitalist, with a large percentage of the property still private. But the state still owns more than 30% of the property (public property) and around 50% of the total capital of firms and industrial production (as of 2010), having a large potential for economic intervention and great influence over the economic sectors that will be favoured for development (Piketty, 2017, p. 607). A strong bureaucratic apparatus, the discretionary application or even the absence of the rule of law and the autonomy of the state to control both national interests and the private sector are the main characteristics of political capitalism (Brankovic, 2021, p. 95).

The emphasis on economic growth and efficiency, and the ability to actually provide them, represented the most important argument to legitimise an autocratic political leadership. In addition to that, the Confucian tradition continues to be present through a strong culturally embedded awareness of the common good, the role of the state and the belief in the ability of leaders to provide good governance. Finally, a certain degree of decentralisation at the local level of governance offered individuals a feeling of autonomy, independent enterprise and direct access to the benefits of the market economy. The image of a strong state that makes material wealth evident and accessible to the masses and at the same time guides the development of the society as a whole has successfully managed to legitimise the autocratic character of its political power. Despite its numerous critiques and growing internal tensions, China's political capitalism has proved to be a model with long endurance and continuity, leading to successful growth through a mix of political centralisation and economic openness, strong state interventionism and adaptation to the market system.

#### **2.2.4 Economics redux?**

The quest for the perfect economic model has not ended. Quite the opposite, it has never been more challenging and more present in the public discourse as it is nowadays. Despite capitalism's apparent triumph, the extreme inequalities it generated and the effects of its proprietary ideology have made its sustainability and acceptance questionable for many. Despite socialism's appeal through its egalitarian ideology, its failure to provide a practical vision for economic organisation has made its applicability doubtful to many. There are still intense debates about the necessity to transform economics in the future and what the new economic models will look like. Many terms have been proposed: participatory socialism and a social state for the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Piketty, 2020), people's capitalism, egalitarian capitalism (Milanovic, 2021), a democratic economy (Kelly and Howard, 2022), democratic socialism (Adler, 2019), a better monitored and regulated capitalism (Case and Deaton, 2020), etc. And whereas the terminology differs, all these propositions are mainly inspired by the same goal: how to build a more just economic system, one that would truly give people equal access

to economic opportunities, eliminate inequalities and contribute to a more holistic kind of welfare. As economists Anne Case and Angus Deaton observed in their take on capitalism (*Deaths of despair and the future of capitalism*), although justice may represent many, often conflicting, ideas, much progress can be achieved by tackling the more evident injustices on which most people agree (ibid., p. 245) so that ultimately capitalism will “serve people and not have people serve it” (ibid., p. 262).

A recurrent argument is that socialism succeeded in gaining such a large support mainly because of its ideological appeal, which was essentially missing from the capitalist model. This perspective is not necessarily convincing. Capitalism rested on a very strong ideology, which universally appealed to the individual and removed the contextual boundaries of communities and social belonging. It is a model that emphasises human agency, freedom and the rights for self-development in the economic sphere. It does indeed lack a collective ideology, as this would have been against its core values that place the individual outside any form (even symbolic) of social coercion. The question of justice and inequality is, however, a social question. It implies the acceptance of such a collective ideology and a sense of shared morality with other human beings. A paradox emerges again, because the capitalist/liberalist model is hesitant to invoke morality in economic life. Not only that the markets and the right to private enterprise are seen as a form to remove prejudice or privilege, but morality itself is regarded as something which belongs entirely to the individual sphere (what is right and what is good may vary from person to person, a universal standard for that is conceptually impossible). The ideological disengagement and “the moral vacancy of contemporary politics” is also something that philosopher Michael Sandel examines in his book *What money can't buy – the moral limits of markets* (Sandel, 2013, p. 13). His argument is that markets and market reasoning have created a moral and civic void and that a fundamental re-assessment of the role that markets play in our society is necessary (ibid., p. 203). If the ideas of justice, equality and welfare of humanity as a whole are central in the re-evaluation of the capitalist model, avoiding moral and social issue appears as an unfeasible way to produce positive changes.

Amidst all these economic debates, the question that Friedrich Hayek addressed in 1948 remains valid: “whether there still exists a body of principles capable of general application which we could follow if we wished” (Hayek, 1948, p. 2). The examination of the various economic models that emerged and were implemented in the course of time demonstrates a fundamental concern for the duality of the individual and the collective and a constant balancing act between these two dimensions. Capitalist models shifted the balance in favour of the individual and saw collective good as a product of spontaneous regulation between self-interested individuals. The economic realm was understood as an unfettered environment in which individual freedom can be manifested and human potential achieved. In doing that, it automatically dislocated many social institutions and affected the social character of communities. In his analysis “Why Liberalism Failed”, Patrick Deneen claims that the failure of the liberal ideology lies in its contradictory logic, which is evidently materialised in the operating system of the contemporary society. Paradoxically, “liberalism has failed – not because it fell short, but because it was true to itself. It has failed because it has succeeded” (Deneen, 2019, p. 3). In search of individual liberation, the expanded state architecture and the global economic market have

created two massive structures that homogenised the world and undermine individual autonomy. They also generated a sense of depersonalisation and abstraction, eliminating the cultural norms and the shared social practices and relationships that are necessary for the construction of the self (ibid., p. 17). At the other end of the spectrum, socialist models shifted the balance in favour of the collective. The economic realm became pervaded with moral meaning and a sense of social justice, as individual self-interest was subdued to the principles of reciprocity and solidarity. A strong collective consciousness and awareness of the common good, as well as the belief in an egalitarian vision of welfare rejected the individualism and proprietary ideology of the capitalist model; however, by doing so, it raised the fear of external coercion upon the free development of the individual. The lessons of failed political experiments only accentuated these fears. The resurgence of hypercapitalism in the 1980s re-shifted again the balance towards a neoliberal ideal of the individual. At the moment, anti-capitalist movements are gaining momentum and profess the rediscovery of our social nature and the role of collaboration in economic activity. Political philosopher John Dewey reflected on the dynamic between individual and collective values: “Earlier liberalism regarded the separate and competing economic action of individuals as the means to social well-being as the end. We must reverse the perspective and see that socialised economy is the means of free individual development as the end” (Dewey, 1963, p. 90). Although the secret recipe to what set of values and mechanisms would best guide our economic (and indirectly, our social) life, the fundamental flaw of most previous experiments was the separation of the individual and the collective, the assumption that individual and collective actions are incompatible. Accepting that both of these are intrinsic parts of our human (economic) nature, that they actually support and do not compete with each other, would be essential for the success of future economic models.

### **2.3 Self-interest vs. collective good**

Are we guided solely by self-interest in our actions, or does our social nature determine us to instinctively cooperate and pursue the collective good? Is cooperation itself a form of self-interest, resulting from the realisation that we cannot survive alone, or do we have a genuine need for togetherness and partnership? Do we have a selfish, or an altruistic gene? These questions are relevant to human behaviour in general, but are particularly important with regard to the motivations of economic activity. Once again, the duality between the interests of the individual and those of the group offer an interesting dynamic to be examined.

According to classical liberalism, it is our self-interest that motivates economic activity. Individual actions have, thanks to competition, a self-regulatory function and their aggregation ultimately leads to greater benefits for all. In *The wealth of nations*, Adam Smith defined the principle of self-interest as the main engine of the free markets:

“Man has almost constant occasion for the help of his brethren, and it is in vain for him to expect it from their benevolence only. He will be more likely to prevail if he can interest their self-love in his favour, and shew them that it is for their own advantage to do for him what he

requires of them. Whoever offers to another a bargain of any kind, proposes to do this. Give me that which I want, and you shall have this which you want, is the meaning of every such offer; and it is in this manner that we obtain from one another the far greater part of those good offices which we stand in need of. It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker, that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own interest. We address ourselves, not to their humanity but to their self-love, and never talk to them of our own necessities but of their advantages.” (Smith, *The wealth of nations*, book I, chapter 2)

While recognising that economic activity is a rational act based on the acceptance of the human tendency to engage in exchanges in order to pursue self-interest, Smith also acknowledged that the objectives of political economy are “to enable people to provide revenue and subsistence for themselves and to supply revenue for the public services” (Smith, *The wealth of nations*, book IV, chapter 1). In *The theory of moral sentiments*, a less prominent book that he published 17 years before *The wealth of nations*, Adam Smith argued that individuals, quite the opposite, have a wide range of motivations when they interact with others. These motivations reflect two sides of our affections and morality - “the selfish and the benevolent” (Smith, *The theory of moral sentiments*, part VII, section II). At the beginning of this work, Smith writes: “How selfish soever man may be supposed, there are evidently some principles in his nature, which interest him in the fortune of others, and render their happiness necessary to him, though he derives nothing from it except the pleasure of seeing it” (ibid., part I, section I). The character of the individual, according to Smith, is always considered from two different aspects: “first, as it may affect his own happiness; and secondly, as it may affect that of other people” (ibid., part VI, introduction). Self-love co-exists with sympathy towards others in human behaviour. The nature of virtue is in fact ascribed to three different classes: propriety (control of all our affections, either good or bad), prudence (the use of reason and self-command to pursue our own private interest and happiness) and disinterested benevolence (which aims at the happiness of others) (ibid., part VII). Often, social systems intend to encourage a balanced mix of all virtues, related to both individual and collective happiness, and bring out the best in human behaviour. While aiming to improve their condition and pursuing their well-being, human beings act not only for their own interest, but also for the interests of others. Benevolence, the disposition to benefit others, is a trait naturally manifested in human behaviour. It is most strongly expressed towards those with whom people feel most connected (our own self, close and distant family, friends, etc.), and it diminishes its intensity as the personal connection moves further and further away. This is a rather unusual view from the thinker credited with the elaboration of the concept of self-interest that has been the dominant principle of economics since the 18th century.

Earlier, in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, Machiavelli had recommended a realistic approach to politics, based on the understanding of human behaviour as it is, and not as it should be. Since people “are ungrateful, fickle, simulators and deceivers, avoiders of danger, and greedy for gain” (Machiavelli, *The prince*, chapter XVII) and always driven by self-interest and ambition, it is important for the ruler to take a pragmatic, not a moralist stand. Machiavelli writes:

“Many writers have imagined republics and principalities that have never been seen nor known to exist in reality. For there is such a distance between how one lives and how one ought to live, that anyone who abandons what is done for what ought to be done achieves his downfall rather than his preservation. A man who wishes to profess goodness at all times will come to ruin among so many who are not good. Therefore, it is necessary for a prince who wishes to maintain himself to learn how not to be good, and to use this knowledge or not to use it according to necessity.” (Machiavelli, *The prince*, chapter XV)

Rather than aiming to correct people’s immoral behaviour, a better strategy to achieve common good and the security of the state would be to manipulate immoral behaviour towards the desired goal. A realistic understanding of human nature as selfish suggests that the ruler “should not depart from the good if it is possible to do so, but he should know how to enter into evil when forced by necessity” (ibid., chapter XVIII). Machiavelli’s ideas depicted self-interest not only as a common denominator for all human beings, but also as a necessary, pragmatic skill that may compromise morality in order to achieve success.

In his work *Leviathan*, Thomas Hobbes pictured the natural state of human beings as mainly belligerent, “solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short” (Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chapter XIII). Since human beings are by nature relatively equal in their physical and intellectual ability, and since they all may desire similar things and anticipate the same desire from the others, they automatically end up in a state of conflict and aggression towards each other. In the absence of any power to control them, people are in the condition of “war of every man against every man”, in which “every man has a right to everything” (ibid.). According to Hobbes, the natural state of isolated individuals fighting each other and using, in the absence of morality, whatever means they must for self-preservation, is counteracted by two fundamental laws of nature: to seek peace and to enter into a contractual agreement with other people for the preservation of peace. “That a man be willing, when others are so too, as far-forth, as for peace, and defence of himself he shall think it necessary, to lay down the right to all things, and to be contented with as much liberty against other men, as he would allow other men against himself” (ibid., XIV). Only an external power – the sovereign, and ultimately the state and the law – could control this covenant between people and restrain the self-interested individuals against their mutual destruction. Political scientist C.B. Macpherson suggested that Hobbes’ political theory provided the characteristics of the possessive market society, which corresponds to modern market societies (Macpherson, 1990, p. 53).

The idea of a contract that people consciously agree into for their well-being was also put forward by philosophers like John Locke and Jean Jacques Rousseau. John Locke spoke about the natural rights of life, liberty and possessions that people have in the state of nature, and the law of nature (and reason) which obliges them not to harm others in these rights (Locke, *Two treatises of government*, part II, section 6). Being in a state of freedom and equality, “everyone is bound to preserve himself ... and to preserve the rest of mankind” (ibid.). Social and political frameworks were built through the conscious agreement of individuals in order to secure their own rights (including the preservation of property) and at the same time to guarantee the rights of others. This transpires a theory that is both

individualistic and communitarian at the same time, in which the natural rights of the individual are presented as collective goals (Kramer, 1997, p. 91). Jean Jacques Rousseau, while having a different view on human nature as essentially good, recognised the necessity of social association for self-preservation when this becomes impossible in the state of nature: “This act of association produces a moral and collective body, composed of as many members as the assembly has voices, and which receives from this same act its unity, its common self (*moi*), its life, and its will” (Rousseau, *The social contract*, book I, chapter VI). The social contract cannot be governed by an external authority, but only by the general will and for the benefit of all who consent to it. The solution is therefore “to find a form of association that may defend and protect with the whole force of the community the person and property of every associate, and by means of which each, joining together with all, may nevertheless obey only himself, and remain as free as before” (ibid.). The model that Rousseau offers is that of a society in which individuals agree to pursue the common good and be guided by the collective will, which outweighs the individual interests, but at the same time ensures the realisation of their personal freedom and potential.

As economist Albert Hirschmann observed in his book *The passions and the interests*, the idea of self-interest was originally developed in the context of theories about state and government and not in relation to individual ethics or economics, but has been rapidly extended to characterise all aspects of human behaviour (Hirschmann, 2013, p. 42). Some of the theories mentioned above emerged in the context of political philosophy, but also provided central concepts for the development of later economic models. In the context of political economy, it was Adam Smith who gave the concept of self-interest a prominent place in his theory of the self-regulated market. As explained earlier in this chapter, self-interest manifested in the economic activities initially coincided with greed and was perceived, in a context strongly embedded with religious belief, as sinful, degrading behaviour. In the 16th century, Protestantism slightly changed the perception of individual endeavours for economic gains and invested them with both religious purpose and rationality. In the 16th and 17th centuries, the European colonialist expansion translated the concept of self-interest into that of state-interest and, in the context of mercantilism, connected it to the economic ways in which a nation-state could consolidate its power globally. The social acceptance of individual interest and free enterprise were further consolidated thanks to the ideology of the Enlightenment in the 17th and 18th centuries. But the theories of Adam Smith were the first ones to give the concept of self-interest a positive stand and a convincing, rational integration in the economic theories. As economist Steven Medema observed, what distinguished Adam Smith was not the fact that he placed self-interest at the core of economic activities, but his argument that “the individual pursuit of self-interest serves the best interest of society as a whole, that self-interest and the social interest are partners rather than enemies” (Medema, 2009, p. 19). The concept of selfishness as a positive value was also popularised by influential writer and philosopher Ayn Rand in the 1960s. In her essays published under the title *The virtue of selfishness – a new concept of egoism*, Rand developed the idea of “the objectivist ethics”. She considered the negative connotation of selfishness “a devastating intellectual ‘package-deal’ which is responsible, more than any other single factor, for the arrested moral development of mankind” (Rand, 1964, p.

5). Instead, Rand emphasised the imperative need for the individual “to act for his own rational interest” and develop a “morality of rational selfishness” (ibid., p. 6). The idea that “every human being is an end in himself, not the means to the ends or the welfare of others” (ibid., p. 23) recognises therefore the rational pursuit of one’s own interest as the ultimate source of happiness and moral purpose for the individual. Selfishness becomes in this sense a positive value associated with individualism. Rand’s ideas were extremely popular during her life and continue to exert a strong fascination with large audiences even nowadays.

The divergence of individual and collective interests, the fact that what serves the self-interest may not necessarily serve the greater social interest, represents in fact the main reason of dispute between the economic models and theories that have been emerged since the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Liberal, capitalist models consider self-interest and the unfettered freedom of the individual to engage on the competitive market as the most important principle that must be secured in economic mechanisms. Socialist models consider, quite the opposite, that the common good cannot be spontaneously achieved on the free market and that egalitarian structures for ownership and wealth distribution are necessary. Mixed models emphasised a middle path between capitalism and socialism and argued that self-interest on the free market is of capital importance, but the dynamic between individual actors must be guided by an interventionist state that regulates economic activities and remedies the market failures, mediating between private and social interests. Neoliberal models argued that when trying to protect the individual and collective interests by interfering with the markets, it is actually the individual interests of those who interfere and govern the economic structures that may negatively impact the dynamic of the markets, therefore total non-interference is of greater benefit. In his extensive analysis of the dynamic between self-interest, market and the state (*The hesitant hand – taming self-interest in the history of economic ideas*), Steven Medema concludes that understanding how to best direct self-interest towards social benefits remains a central concern (often rewarded with Nobel prizes) of contemporary economics (Medema, 2009, p. 4).

At the microeconomic level, various other theories contrasted the idea of isolated self-interest and emphasised, quite the opposite, the importance that cooperation and human interaction play in understanding economic behaviour. For example, variants of the game theory (non-cooperative or cooperative forms) were applied in the context of economics in order to explain and predict behaviour with the help of strategic reasoning and mathematical calculation. The basic assumption was that economic decisions are always interdependent. Each individual (as an economic agent) attempts to obtain the best possible outcome and takes a decision towards that goal by considering the potential decisions, strategies and payoffs of all the other players involved. The so-called *Nash equilibrium*, a concept developed by mathematician John Nash, describes an economic situation in which all players choose a strategy that is a best reply to the strategies chosen by the other players (Binmore, 2007, p. 32) and the highest amount of subjective utility is achieved. Although the game theory is based on the assumption that the players are rational individuals, it provides a tool to predict, explain and prescribe types of economic action in real life (Camerer, 2003, p. 5). Its applicability in the field of economics is quite popular, from the development of market strategies for firms in relation to their competitors,

to behavioural economics, or mergers and acquisitions. In an interesting take on the game theory (which he calls *Kantian optimisation*, as it rests on the interpretation of Kant's categorical imperatives), economist Roemer argues that this model focuses primarily on the concept of competition, whereas a shift towards a cooperation approach would produce more benefits for the players. He suggests that when players act competitively, they produce a different kind of economic optimisation than when they cooperate. Utility could be improved if players would guide their behaviour and decisions based on the question "what is the strategy I would like all of us to play?" (Roemer, 2019, viii). In this way, the strategy that is best for one player, is the strategy that is best for all players at the same time (ibid., p. 13). Roemer proposes several potential applications of such a game theory model optimised through cooperation, such as a method for international collaboration to reduce global carbon emissions, models of a semimarket economy or market socialism, or a concept of worker ownership of firms. To summarise, the framework of the game theory provides a way to understand economic behaviour not in isolation, but as constant anticipation, evaluation and negotiation of gain, and in constant interdependence (through either competition or cooperation) with the behaviour and the decisions of others.

Studies in evolutionary biology or development psychology continue the debate on the duality of our nature. Are we by design selfish, or social and altruistic? Do both these intrinsic pre-dispositions co-exist and shape our behaviour in economic life?

Evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins claimed in his influential book *The selfish gene* that selfishness is a fundamental characteristic of individual behaviour. Since human beings are the carriers of their genes, constantly under their influence, and since "ruthless selfishness" is the necessary feature of a successful gene, it is natural that this quality is manifested in individual behaviour. The evolutionary process compels the individual to strive for self-preservation, and not act for the good of his species, and this assumption makes the ideas of universal love the collective welfare appear incompatible with the purpose of evolution (Dawkins, 2006, p. 2). Even altruism towards kin could be explained as a form of selfish behaviour: individual genes are actually shared with close relatives, so when we care for our kin it is actually the same genes that recognise each other and behave in a way that strengthens their replication and perpetuation. Dawkins emphasises that our biological nature does not encourage cooperation and collaborative action towards a common good, and that all these principles of behaviour need to be taught if a society based on these values is to be realised (ibid., p. 3). He also compares the survival of cultural ideas to that of the genes. These appear to follow a similar selection process: only the ideas that are psychologically most appealing (like the idea of God, for example) will replicate into the next generations (ibid., p. 192). Following this line of argument, the long survival of capitalism could be explained not only because of its ideological value per se, but mostly because the consequences that it generated (the institutional framework, the social organisation and values it built around it) created an environment favourable for its proliferation. From this evolutionary perspective, it appears that the principles of capitalist economy were successful in controlling and changing the social environment of human beings in order to ensure their continuation. But Dawkins mentions in his evolutionary theory another unique characteristic of



human beings: that of conscious foresight. He considers this ability and the behaviour it generates as the way to:

“...counteract the selfish tendencies of our genetic material. We can rationally ponder the long-term benefits of altruistic and cooperative behaviour over the short-term selfish one. We have the power to defy the selfish genes of our birth and, if necessary, the selfish memes of our indoctrination. We can even discuss ways of deliberately cultivating and nurturing pure, disinterested altruism— something that has no place in nature, something that has never existed before in the whole history of the world. We are built as gene machines and cultured as meme machines, but we have the power to turn against our creators. We, alone on earth, can rebel against the tyranny of the selfish replicators.” (Dawkins, 2006, p. 200)

From an economic perspective, this means that individualistic, self-interest behaviour, which is natural and innate, could be counteracted by our ability to consciously understand the long-term benefits of economic collaboration and act in an altruistic way that may appear to harm the short-term individual benefits.

Alternative viewpoints demonstrate, on the contrary, the importance of altruism from an evolutionary perspective. Such is the work of evolutionary biologist David Sloan Wilson, who argued that altruism exists in groups with a highly-functional organisation (like human society), so that the natural selection at group-level becomes the primary force and dominates selection at individual-level (Wilson, 2015, p. 29). Altruism, understood as action for the benefit of others without consideration of personal interests or even with the deliberate acceptance of personal losses, becomes a form of self-preservation for the group, which is considered an organism in its own right. Wilson considers this transition from groups of organisms to groups as organisms a unique characteristic of our species, which makes human beings appear as “evolution’s latest major transition” (ibid., p. 49).

Development psychologist Michael Tomasello considered that “*Homo sapiens* is an ultra-cooperative primate, and presumably the only moral one” (Tomasello, 2016, p. 2). In his two seminal books, *A natural history of human thinking* and *A natural history of human morality*, he argued that both our cognitive development (seen from an evolutionary perspective) and our sense of morality were strongly connected with the emergence of new forms of cooperation and social organisation among humans. Cooperation, manifested as altruistic behaviour towards others (helping others without regard for our own benefits) and as collaborative action (working with others for the mutual benefit of all involved), generates, according to Tomasello, two different forms of morality. The first is the morality of sympathy, which is quite straightforward. It entails helping other human beings and goes back to our primal instinct to care for our offspring. The second is the morality of fairness, which is more difficult to grasp. This is determined by complex interactions between people, judgements that they make about justice, deservingness or resentments, as well as a general obligation towards what ought to be fair for everyone (ibid.). Both types of morality resulted as an organic evolution of human cooperation, as the degree of interdependence with others increased and determined the conscious association into new models of social organisation. This process of growing interdependence between

human beings occurred in two phases. The first was a response to changing ecological conditions that would have not allowed individuals to survive alone and made cooperation a necessity for self-preservation. Tomasello calls this “joint intentionality”, as each individual assumed a specific task to ensure the success of collaborative activities within the group and normative standards of behaviour evolved (ibid., p. 4). The second phase occurred with the population growth, when groups started to compete with each other and specific loyalties consolidated for each group. Tomasello refers to this as “collective intentionality”, the formation of cultural common norms that were able to coordinate the group cognitively and socially. Access to these cultural norms would give group members an understanding of the code of practice that individuals should embrace for the successful existence of the group (ibid., p. 5). Furthermore, Tomasello observes that modern humans were born into social and cultural norms that they did not create, and this interdependence between individual and assumed group identity determined eventually an additional kind of morality – an impersonal collective set of cultural norms that place equal value on all members of the respective cultural group (ibid. p. 6). If we are to assume, as in Tomasello’s theory, that the interdependence and cooperation between humans resulted in a moral identity that is shared and inherited by individuals of a group, the question remains whether any social act (including economic ones) could ever be devoid of morality. By extrapolation, an economic transaction will never be just a rational utilitarian decision (a matter of pure calculation of benefits and profit), but also a moral decision. Our moral sense, which is the evolutionary result of interaction and cooperation, constantly puts our individual interests in relation to those of others. On the larger scale of human evolution, cooperation (and morality as one of its manifestations) represents a fundamental behaviour that intrinsically characterises all forms of social interaction, including economic activities. Since we are biologically built for cooperation, it is natural that this behaviour will expend onto our economic life as well, and with this the tendency to consider the welfare of others and consciously act towards it.

A similar conclusion draws mathematical biologist Martin Nowak. In his book *SuperCooperators: altruism, evolution and why we need each other to succeed*, Nowak calls cooperation “the master architect of evolution” (Nowak, 2011, xviii). Natural selection sees individual fitness as a condition for survival and preservation in competition with other individuals. In this sense, natural selection actually appears to weaken our ability to work together (by helping others, we lower our own fitness and increase theirs), so that in the long run those who cooperate (individually less fit) will be eliminated (ibid., p. 10); however, the highest individual fitness does not equal to the highest collective fitness. In fact, it is quite the opposite. It is cooperation that determines larger benefits for the group and, against the dynamic of natural selection, produces what is best collectively. Nowak claims that natural selection needs help in the form of various mechanisms that will encourage cooperation and ultimately lead to higher forms of life: direct reciprocity (responding with the same behaviour), indirect reciprocity (reputation), spatial selection (networks of mutual help), multilevel selection (among groups) and kin selection (ibid., pp. 269-272). By realising that through cooperative behaviour we stand to gain more than through individual competitive behaviour, cooperation naturally evolves from competition and is collectively pursued by individuals. Nowak concludes that for human beings, as a species of “*SuperCooperators*”, it will be extremely important to realise the full

potential of these mechanisms of cooperation in tackling global problems, including economic ones (ibid, p. 281).

Harvard University professor Yochai Benkler argues in *The penguin and the leviathan* that the systems that organise our society (and particularly the capitalist economic system that governs business life nowadays) have been constructed around the idea of self-interest, and constantly encourage our selfish tendencies through the mechanisms of incentives and rewards (Benkler, 2011, pp. 2-26). However, rich evidence from a wide range of disciplines proves that human beings often behave cooperatively with very successful results. Benkler suggests that it is imperative to move away from the idea of selfishness and re-design our social organisation by giving more recognition to and harnessing the full potential of our capacity to collaborate. Only a more balanced view of the self can allow the co-existence of self-interest and cooperation in human action (ibid., pp. 22-28). This is an extremely important argument, which acknowledges the duality of the individual and the collective as inherent to human nature and behaviour. The acceptance of these two dimensions as co-existent not only provides a more holistic understanding of who we are and what motivates our behaviour, but is also crucial in any attempt to improve the systems that organise our social life. A slightly similar observation pervades the insightful analysis on cooperation that sociologist Richard Sennett conducts in his book *Togetherness: the rituals, pleasures and politics of cooperation*. He considers that “modern society is ‘de-skilling’ people in practicing cooperation” (Sennett, 2012, p. 8). This occurs mainly through three channels: material inequality (which isolates the elites from the mass), the new character of labour (which is short-term and leads to superficial social relations) and anxiety (which determines individuals to withdraw and be reluctant to social engagement) (ibid., p. 9). As antidote, Sennett believes that many significant social skills could be acquired by the practice of crafts, the making and repairing of physical things (not only through the rhythm of skill development, but also through the experience of working with resistance which could be extrapolated into the social realm), by working with people we don’t understand (and learning to practice ‘everyday diplomacy’ and conflict management), as well as by practicing various forms of commitment. This is certainly an interesting approach of how connecting the skills we need in human interactions and economic activities with the individual act of learning and performing a craft.

Sennett’s argument in relation to the importance of crafts for the development of social skills is a good opportunity to reflect on how the duality of self-interest and cooperation is reflected in the changing character of labour itself. Originally, work was centralised in a singular workshop. One person alone had to possess all the knowledge and necessary skills in order to produce an object of desired quality. The guilds brought together a restricted number of artisans and merchants who established the codes of practice and rules of trade for their specific craft (weavers, painters, masons, carpenters, glassworkers, leatherworkers, bookbinders, etc.) and guarded the transmission of traditional expertise. The guilds disappeared with the establishment of industrial production and distribution of labour within the capitalist enterprise. This model, which is still organising work in enterprises nowadays, led to the uniformisation of individual skills (as one person became more specialised in the particular task he/she had to fulfil) and the transfer of collaborative skills to an external agent (the enterprise

would assume the management of all different tasks in the production or distribution process). Paradoxically, the collaborative skills needed for the realisation of individual products were replaced with individual skills needed for the realisation of collaborative products.

In his analysis of economic development through evolutionary lenses (*The company of strangers: a natural history of economic life*), economist Paul Seabright argues that one of the most fascinating achievements of modern society is the taming of our natural instinct of violence and fear towards strangers and its replacement with the principle of trust. Cooperation based on such complex mutual dependence on strangers is unique to human beings and found nowhere else in nature among members of the same species (Seabright, 2010, p. 5). Seabright considers that this achievement was possible because we have established social institutions and enforced rules of social behaviour that convinced us to trust strangers and treat them as “honorary friends” (ibid., p. 12). This, in turn, could occur because it built on our natural instincts of being able to rationally calculate the costs and benefits of cooperation (such as risk-sharing, specialisation and accumulation of knowledge) and to express strong reciprocity towards other human beings (ibid., p. 33). The effects of this successful interdependence among strangers can be seen nowadays in all spheres of life, from the global character of economic production and distribution, to the establishment of corporations and multinational companies, the economic structure of urban settlements, or the spread of information technologies. And the same interdependence among strangers is probably what holds the solution to many current problems that are increasingly recognised as being global in nature: climate change and the environmental crisis, inequality, poverty, racism and discrimination, etc.

Philosopher and linguist Noam Chomsky also considered that individuals are biologically and cognitively built for cooperation and constantly need collaboration with others in order to thrive. Not only the development of language, but everything else that human beings engage in depends on the relationship with others and their being part of a community. Chomsky noted a strong conflict between the values promoted by the capitalist economy and those that intrinsically characterise our social life: “The principles of this society, namely consumption oriented, etc., just have to be confronted with better principles which will be more appealing to people. Plainly people have other needs. People in their daily lives do not really live as maximisers of consumption. It’s not true, let’s say, in a family that everyone has to get as much as food as he can away from other members of the family. The official values of society are very remote, I think, from most of our life with other people” (Chomsky, 1988, p. 172). Chomsky’s observation emphasises the fundamental discrepancy that exists between the principles that organise economic life and those characterising the natural environment in which we act both as individuals and as social beings. This suggests the necessity to re-align the values that are institutionalised at the larger social level with those that define our social interactions at the micro, more intimate level.

Regardless of the disciplinary approach chosen (economics, political and moral philosophy, evolutionary biology, psychology, behavioural economics, or social sciences), the dynamic between self-interest and the pursuit of the common good further illustrates the duality of the individual and the collective, and raises the imperative of understanding these two dimensions in reciprocal action.

## 2.4 Ownership: mine vs. ours

An interesting perspective on the dynamic between the individual and the community presents the closer examination of a central economic concept: that of ownership.

The *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* enshrines the ownership of property as a fundamental human right of the individual. Article 17 recognises that “everyone has the right to own property alone as well as in association with others” (UDHR, art. 17, par. 1) and that “no one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property” (ibid., art. 17, par. 2). The recognition of private property and the guarantee of individual ownership rights through legal instruments enforced by the state represent a fundamental characteristic of modern capitalist economy. This resonates with the political philosophy of John Locke, who observed in the 17<sup>th</sup> century that governments are instituted with the main purpose to protect the natural rights of the individual, including that of property. Locke’s concept of property included the right over our own person, our own labour and over the results of our own labour (Locke, *Second treatise of government*, part V, section 27). This understanding of property and ownership has evolved from simple forms of economic organisation, where labour and the products of labour were owned and assigned value to by the individual, to more complex models, in which the relationship and influence over the products of labour became more limited. In the capitalist model, individuals have renounced any claim on the products resulting from their labour in return for a financial reward (wages) that they receive from an employer through contractual agreements. In this structure, individuals are free to sell their labour and give up ownership over the products of their labour, but use the monetary gain resulting from this transaction to acquire other products and services that are of value to them. Employers and owners of capital, on the other hand, assume ownership over the objects and services produced by the labour of the employees, as well as over the profits that will arise from trading these products and services on the market. This dynamic between the private property of employees (labour) and that of employers (products, profits, capital), and the resulting accumulation of wealth in disproportionate shares, is often at the core of current debates about economic inequality. The concentration of capital and wealth (with the richest 10% owning around 60% of national wealth in most European countries and 72% of national wealth in the US in 2010 (Piketty, 2014, p. 257)) represents one of the most important issues of concern for economic analysts. Models for a more egalitarian ownership of capital and distribution of the profits arising from it have been suggested (Olson, 1971; Axelrod, 1995; Piketty, 2014; Roemer, 2019) and implemented with various degrees of success (e.g. the co-management models in Germany and Sweden, in which companies are required to reserve up to half of the seats in the board of directors for representatives of the employees); but the debate on the functionality of a more balanced model and the willingness to implement it continues.

The concepts of ownership and property have been essential in the development of economic theories. Earlier in this chapter, it was explained how different economic systems attempted to place ownership and property either in the hands of the individual, of the community, or of the state. In the course of

history, the inviolable status that private property holds within the capitalist economic ideology was defended with such intensity, that it sometimes ended up in situations which nowadays appear utterly absurd. Such are many episodes that occurred during the abolition of slavery in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. For example, in the UK, the *Slavery Abolition Act 1833* led to the payment of large sums of money from public funds (taxes contributions from citizens) to the former slave owners (Piketty, 2020, p. 208). The injustice and sufferance inflicted on the enslaved population were dwarfed by the sacredness of property rights (and the power of those who demanded them) and the claim that losses resulting from the liberation of former slaves had to be compensated by the state. An even more bizarre case was the recognition of Haiti's independence in 1825. France agreed to the independence of its former colony and refrained from a military intervention only on the condition that the Haitian government would pay an immense sum of money (150 million gold francs, equalling 300% of Haiti's national income at the time) to compensate former slave owners for their property losses (ibid., p. 217), a debt from which the Haitian state has never recovered. At the other extreme, communist regimes abolished private ownership and saw collective property as the only true expression of humans' social nature. Political scientist Crawford B. Macpherson remarked that property is both an institution (man-made for a specific purpose) and a concept (how people perceive it), always changing and influencing one another (Macpherson, 1978, p. 1). More importantly, property represents a right, a claim that can be applied over something, and inherently a political relationship between persons (ibid., p. 4). Based on this assumption, Macpherson distinguishes between three types of property: private property (which entitles to individual rights for private use and to the exclusion of others), common property (which entitles to individuals rights for common use, such as public spaces or common lands, but not to the exclusion of others) and state property (which entitles the state to its own rights, but does not offer any individual rights) (ibid., p. 5).

Particularly the dynamic of economic activities on private and common property, as two different forms in which individuals can exercise their rights, generated further debates on the sustainability of use and the ability of people to self-organise with common interests in mind. In 1968, ecologist Garrett Hardin proposed the theory known as *the tragedy of the commons*. By using the example of a common pasture which herders can access to graze their cattle, Hardin argues that the carrying capacity of the land begins to be threatened once social stability is achieved and other regulatory factors like wars or disease are eliminated. The rational tendency of each herder will be to maximise his personal utility and consequently to add more animals to the pasture. This will increase his individual benefits, but will lead to overgrazing the pasture and cause the tragedy of the common resources. Hardin concludes that there is no technical solution to avoid the disaster of overusing natural resources by a growing population, thus the problem can only be tackled by a system of coercion and mutually agreed on social action (Hardin, 1968). In contrast with this theory, economist Elinor Ostrom argued in her book *Governing the commons* that neither the state (through top-down coercive approaches) nor the market (through the prospect of privatisation) offer suitable governance mechanisms for common-pool resources (Ostrom, 2015, p. 1). Ostrom emphasises and demonstrates through her extensive research that success comes from an alternative model that rests on the self-organisation and self-governance of communities (ibid., p. 15). Individuals commit themselves to a

cooperative strategy and set their own rules and institutions to control the use of resources, relying on the social capital in place and integrating the knowledge and experience accumulated and perfected over a long period of time (ibid., p. 58). This approach revealed the structure of a functional model for collective action when pursuing common goals, which could be applied not only in resource management, but also in the development of alternative economic mechanisms that encourage cooperation and balance the interaction between private and common interests. Contrary to the theoretical assumption that individuals will only pursue their personal economic interests by extracting the maximum utility from common resources, many real-life examples give evidence of the opposite. Particularly in small communities that live in harsh natural environments (e.g. in Andean regions, rice terraces in Asia, desert nomads or other pastoralists, etc.), the ability to cooperate and establish internal rules for the use of resources becomes not only a matter of survival, but also a mechanism to ensure social safety. These rules have been developed based on close knowledge of the natural conditions and the consolidation of family and social bonds over generations. Individuals act with common interests in mind not because this deprives their private well-being, but because this behaviour reinforces it in a more holistic way that includes both economic and social benefits.

A similar mentality is slowly emerging nowadays in the public discourse on various issues that may influence our long-term development as human beings. The earth is pictured as common property of humankind, not as a collection of private properties (although this may actually be the reality). The environmental crisis and the threats of a changing climate are presented as problems that can only be tackled collectively, by developing both the mind frame for conscious change in individual behaviour and the mechanisms to enable these changes collectively. The measures proposed so far are the classical ones echoing the tragedy of the commons approach: either coercion from the government (e.g. legal requirement for a limit to CO<sub>2</sub> emissions), or spontaneous regulation of the market (e.g. the increasing demand in “green” products and services will eventually lead to a reduction of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions). Perhaps mechanisms of self-governance and self-regulation like those suggested by Elinor Ostrom could be imagined and enabled within communities at a smaller scale, and their cumulative effect could lead to collective benefits at the larger scale. A similar situation appears when describing the global economy and the use of resources. Globalisation generated fluidity and the disappearance of borders in terms of economic production and distribution, or the circulation of capital. None of these are now anchored in national contexts, but are part of a common global economy. The only essential piece that is not part of this framework is labour and human capital, which have not yet been opened to free movement across borders and continue to provide rich material for populist discourses. But the global economy, despite being dominated by private corporations that concentrate immense amounts of wealth and economic power, is framed in the larger narrative of collective action for common welfare, eradication of poverty and the realisation of a more egalitarian world. The question is once again whether a shift is indeed possible through the re-discovery of our personal connection with work and the development of self-governing mechanisms in an economic model where private and common ownership are combined, generating a more balanced share of benefits and responsibilities. Economist Thomas Piketty examined “the conditions of just ownership” and proposed a new form of “participatory socialism for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, based on social ownership,

education, and shared knowledge and power” (Piketty, 2020, p. 967). Without equating a just society with uniformity and equality, he acknowledges the central role that private property will continue to play in the future, but suggests the development of institutional mechanisms that will be more focused on collective interests and prevent the concentration of ownership. Piketty outlines two important changes for this purpose: the establishment of true social ownership of capital by sharing decision-making power and voting rights within firms (*ibid.*, p. 972), and the temporary ownership and circulation of capital by the introduction of a progressive income tax (*ibid.*, p. 979). The latter would return a significant part of the accumulated wealth to the community and would finance a universal capital endowment within the framework of a transnational democracy that makes the free circulation of capital possible, just and reliable (*ibid.*, pp. 1026-1031).

In the context of World Heritage, ownership and property could offer an interesting perspective for further analysis of the dynamic between the individual and the collective. A quick reflection on how cultural properties inscribed on the World Heritage List came into being indicates a strong connection with the idea of ownership. A large percentage of cultural properties (especially those inscribed prior to the 1990s) are of monumental nature. These are the product of a social system in which the political and economic powers coincided, and the property rights were reserved exclusively to the ruling classes (nobility or clergy). The profit and surplus resulted from privilege and power was invested in massive public works that were meant to awe and legitimate political rule. These monuments, from the pyramids of Egypt to the Great Wall of China or St. Peter’s Cathedral in Italy, continue to have a central place in the general perception of heritage and manifest a strong force of attraction to visitors, thanks to a public discourse that has reinforced this particular vision of heritage and its place within a hierarchy of values. But big scale projects of that monumental nature would not be possible to realise in the capitalistic economy nowadays. Public funding simply doesn’t have the resources for these kind of projects (perhaps with few exceptions in the Gulf States, China or other countries where economic markets are still strongly controlled by the state and national narratives still play a significant role in the funding of cultural projects). From the point of view of market economy, such projects would equal sheer loss, unable to justify the investment. The rationale of economic utility will render them unworthy of consideration, despite the collateral benefits they may generate for the local communities or other references to a more holistic understanding of human development and the common good. It is also very unlikely that collective action could be nowadays mobilised across communities in order to initiate the realisation of such projects. Quite often, these projects were born to express the vision of one individual, but in time that particular vision has been assimilated by the larger group and transformed into a symbol of collective significance. Nowadays, not only that communities are more heterogeneous and prone to disagree that one single vision could represent them, but also the forms of expressing this cultural diversity have moved away from the idea of monumentalism. Or perhaps the unappealing character of such projects is also related to what sociologist Richard Sennett called “the fall of public man” (Sennett, 2017). The phenomenon of “personal dissociation from public life”, wonderfully examined by Sennett in his work, reflects a larger social shift that transferred value from the public space into the private home (especially with the



development of the city) and was fuelled by an increasing self-absorption and disengagement from civic matters.

Other types of cultural properties on the World Heritage List do reflect the enormous power of the individual and the collective engaged in joint action. These are human settlements, cultural landscapes, agricultural and pastoral landscapes, places where ownership and property are intertwined with the reality of finding shelter, food and a sense of togetherness. Those places that reflect, in a way that echoes the voice of J.B. Jackson, “the human landscape as a temporary product of much sweat and hardship and earnest thought” (Jackson, 1997, p. 343). Ownership and property may be guaranteed in written form and laws, or orally through stories, informal self-organisation or reiterated social practice over time. The individual and the community function in this context like a unified social organism, with a strong awareness of both private and common property. Perhaps the key to success is related to the small scale of these communities, which enables the functionality of this self-regulatory, interdependent system of ownership.

On the website of the World Heritage Centre, the question “who owns a site once it’s inscribed on the World Heritage List?” is answered with reference to geography and the principle of national sovereignty that was explained in chapter one: “The site is the property of the country on whose territory it is located, but it is considered in the interest of the international community to protect the site for future generations. Its protection and preservation becomes a concern of the international World Heritage community as a whole” (World Heritage Centre, n.d.a). The question “who owns (World) Heritage?” is a very pertinent one. While we symbolically frame heritage within the narrative of universal values and responsibilities, its ownership is far from being universal. It is in fact a mixed system of private, common and state property. It is not the purpose of this inquiry to look into the various property frameworks in place. A very interesting line of research would be to determine whether the type of ownership rights manifested over heritage places alters our relationship to heritage. Do we care more if we privately own heritage as individuals? Do we care more if we collectively own it as nation? In Venice, 25% of residential properties belong to foreigners who are attracted to the city and prefer to have a second home there (Venning, 2011). This is certainly not the only problem that Venice is currently confronting with, but certainly one that strongly affects the perception of people’s relationship with heritage. Perhaps, as Adam Smith noted in relation to our propensity for care and attention (Smith, 2009, p. 259), the closer we are to heritage (the more the experience of heritage is part of our daily existence), the more we care for it. By reverse, the more distant we are (the more our understanding of ownership and property excludes heritage), the less engaged we become with its safeguarding.

The role that ownership will play in future economic models remains unquestionably a central concern. Aaron Perzanowski and Jason Schultz argue in their book *The end of ownership* that recent developments in law, technology and economics have undermined our sense of ownership (Perzanowski and Schultz, 2016, p. 169). Disruptive models like the collaborative economy (which will be analysed in detail in the next chapter) have expanded incredibly fast in the past decades and replaced ownership with temporary access, reflecting “a broader and deeper cultural shift away from

ownership” (ibid.). Even when we look at the form of wealth that is being increasingly favoured nowadays, we discover that this is rather non-material and fluid. For example, for the richest 10% of the global economy, wealth no longer consists in the ownership of land and real estate, but mainly in financial and business assets (Piketty, 2014, p. 260). The larger the monetary fortune, the more predominant non-material wealth (financial and business assets) becomes. How people relate to ownership and how they perceive the dynamic between private, public and state property will significantly influence how they engage in economic activities and balance private and collective interests.

## **2.5 A tale of two purposes: possessing vs. experiencing**

One last line of inquiry will focus on economic activity from the perspective of two conditions it enables: that of possessing and that of experiencing. Economic activity and the pursuit of wealth (through income or accumulation of capital) are often directed towards these two basic purposes. The monetary rewards that individuals are striving to obtain do not represent a goal per se, but rather the means to acquire access to what they consider valuable. So is ownership, the possession of things, valuable in itself? What are the benefits that control over materiality creates for the individual? Or is economic activity rather directed towards acquiring the freedom to access experiences?

Sociologist Erich Fromm talked about *having* and *being* as two fundamental modes of existence and potentialities of human nature (Fromm, 2015). The *having* mode is closely related to the idea of private property (which is understood as a natural right) and places importance on the acquisition of property, the unlimited right to keep it and to exclude others from using it (ibid., p. 65). This “characterological having”, as Fromm names it, describes our intentional strive for possessions and differs from the “existential having”, which represents the necessity to have things (food, clothes, shelter) in order to survive (ibid., p. 73). Since individuals define themselves through their possessions (I am what I have; if I don’t have anything, I am nothing), the accumulation of things becomes a way to look for security and self-reassurance. The natural outcome of this mode is that in relation to others people are driven by competition, antagonism and fear (ibid., p. 97). On the other hand, the *being* mode is related to the idea of experience, which is very difficult to describe, as it depends on each person’s individuality, and can be understood (to a limited extent) only through sharing it with others. The *being* mode has fundamentally an active character, it implies giving full expression to one’s faculties and talents, and enabling “the productive use of our human powers” (ibid., p. 76). It entails the experience of enjoying something without owning it, which, unlike things, has an a-temporal character. Since everyone can enjoy the same things without possessing them, this creates “one of the deepest forms of human happiness: shared enjoyment” (ibid.). Solidarity, love and sharing are therefore the behaviour inspired by the *being* mode. Fromm considers that the contemporary society created by the capitalist economic system embraces primarily the *having* mode of existence. This is sustained by “the Great Promise of Unlimited Progress – the promise of domination of nature, of material abundance, of the greatest happiness for the greatest number, and of unimpeded personal

freedom” (ibid., p. 1). Fromm identifies the process of industrialisation in the 18<sup>th</sup> century as having caused a fundamental change in our social life. It separated economics from ethics, and transformed the economic system into an independent entity in which the growth of the system became more important than the growth of the human being (ibid., p. 6). This rationale, reinforced through a socio-economic system designed explicitly for this purpose, transformed the character of both private and social life. The unlimited consumption of material things was offered as the solution to satisfy unlimited needs and ultimately to reach unlimited happiness. Economic growth became equivalent to human growth and happiness. Fromm concludes that the only way in which humans could avoid a catastrophic development scenario is to encourage the existence of a New Man that embraces the *being* mode, so that this new character of the individual will ultimately transform the character of the socio-economic system that we belong to (ibid., p. 147). Fromm’s argument emphasises many valid characteristics and judgement flaws that are intrinsically built in the modern market economy and the proprietary ideology that dominates the contemporary context.

The fact that we are obsessed with materiality is not difficult to demonstrate. The top earning US corporations according to Fortune 500 (in 2021) are Walmart, Amazon and Apple. The success of their business models and rapid growth in the last decades is directly related to their ability to feed into our increasing appetite for commodities. It also suffices to consider how often, sometimes even like an addiction, we engage in or think about purchasing things. Quite seldom because of the experiential pleasures that we derive from using these things, but almost invariably because we believe that their materiality fulfils our needs. These needs, in return, are the product of an effective system of branding, advertising and marketing, which convinces us firstly that our life is a long list of problems and secondly, that these problems could be solved by the acquisition of things. Things promise us a shortcut, a miracle, money, social success, safety, ego, fun, pleasure and belonging, and ultimately convince us that we can be popular, healthy, wealthy and wise (Godin, 2009, pp. 148-149). Earlier in this chapter it was mentioned how the success of the capitalist principles was connected to their ability to infiltrate almost all aspects of life and convince us that they are in fact reflect the natural disposition of human beings. By extrapolation, consumerism and the fascination with possessing material things has in a way become a universal language that people in most parts of the world understand and relate to nowadays. It is also a language that helps us relate to others and define our social place and identity through materiality. Economist Karl Polanyi noted that “man’s economy, as a rule, is submerged in his social relationships. He does not act so as to safeguard his individual interest in the possession of material goods; he acts so as to safeguard his social standing, his social claims, his social assets. He values material goods only in so far as they serve this end” (Polanyi, 2001, p. 48). In a similar manner, economist Thorstein Veblen argued in *The theory of the leisure class* that “conspicuous consumption”, together with “conspicuous leisure”, is consciously embraced “as an evidence of pecuniary strength” (Veblen, 2007, p. 49) and as “a means of reputability” (ibid., p. 53). In *The theory of moral sentiments*, Adam Smith noted that “it is chiefly from this regard to the sentiments of mankind, that we pursue riches and avoid poverty” (Smith, *The theory of moral sentiments*, part I, chapter II). The pursuit of wealth and the betterment of our condition is ultimately an act of vanity, as Smith noted: “to be

observed, to be attended to, to be taken notice of with sympathy, complacency, and approbation, are all the advantages which we can proposed to derive from it” (ibid., chapter II). Our fondness not only to own, but also to display our possessions and receive social recognition, is often the reason that justifies ownership in the first place.

The desire to acquire material things has often been at the core of economic debates. In classical theories, it represents above all the engine behind all economic activities. Production is only justified by demand, the people’s need for and willingness to purchase things. At the same time, employment is also a mechanism to stimulate consumption, since people use the income earned from their labour in order to purchase things and further add to market demand. But ultimately, consuming things was an expression of prosperity, choice and individual freedom. At the other end of the debate, critics of classical economics emphasised the systemic attempt to submit people to artificially created desires. Karl Marx talked in *Capital* about “the fetishism attached to the world of commodities” (Marx, *Capital*, book I, part 1, chapter 1.4). When discussing the main characteristics of capitalism, Max Webber observed that this economic model is defined by the fact that “man is dominated by the making of money, by acquisition as the ultimate purpose of his life” (Webber, 2001, p. 18). It has profoundly changed the balance of power, as economic acquisition no longer represents simply a means to secure our basic material needs. In his extensive study *Empire of things*, historian Frank Trentmann documents the growth of consumerism from the 15<sup>th</sup> century onwards and the channels through which acquisition and use of things has become a defining feature of our lives. Trentmann demonstrates how consumption was shaped by institutions and ideas over time (especially by the advancement of capitalism), and how it, in return, transformed our social relations and value systems (Trentmann, 2016, p. 6). The rise of consumption originated before the industrial revolution in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, but was particularly intensified by the post-World War II politics, which laid very strong emphasis on economic growth. Some of the trends that originated in this politics, led to the establishment of the consumer society that we experience nowadays: “the rise in domestic comfort, fashion and novelty; shopping for pleasure; a taste for articles from faraway lands; the cult of domestic possessions and hobbies; urban entertainment and pleasure; credit and debt; and the notion of the ‘material self’, which recognised that things are an inextricable part of what makes us human” (ibid., p. 678). Trentmann concludes that in the future it will be imperative to re-consider our lifestyles and particularly our relationship to materiality, aiming to develop deeper connections with fewer things.

There is, however, a phenomenon that has been gaining momentum in the last few years and could be interpreted as a counter-reaction to mainstream consumerism. On the one hand, the growing awareness of the destructive impacts that extreme consumerism has generated on the environment has determined people to embrace more sustainable lifestyles and move away from overconsumption. An increased consciousness of how resources are used or the amount of pollution generated in the production has increased people’s willingness to recycle and adopt innovative forms of the circular economy. Traditionally, consumption was augmented by the dissemination of the throwaway culture, which encouraged people to regularly dispose of things (think about how often we are tempted to replace our smart phone with an even smarter phone, or our big TV screen with an even bigger TV

screen). However, there is also a growing tendency to move towards more responsible forms of consumption, favouring things that are more durable and looking for more meaningful attachments with materiality. In addition to that, alternative lifestyles like minimalism are emerging among the younger generation. The pursuit of simplicity, seen both as a moral message and as an aesthetic based on the principle that *less is more* (Chayka, 2020, p. 11), becomes increasingly appealing for a demographic overwhelmed by consumerism. Minimalism is another evidence of the social change that is embraced by more and more people in response to the extreme commodification of all aspects of life (ibid., p. 16). The whole concept of ownership is being challenged and re-assessed (earlier in this chapter we discussed the so-called “end of ownership”), and trends in consumer preferences indicate a move towards sustainability, affordability and meaning. As economist Juliet Schor noted in her book *Plenitude: the new economics of true wealth*, “the era of bigger is better may have finally ended” (Schor, 2010, p. 135), as more and more people are transiting towards an economics where affluence is defined by getting more from less.

Echoing Fromm’s concept of the *being* modus, the concept of *the experience economy* has been popularised since the 2000s. The term was coined by economists B. Joseph Pine II and James H. Gilmore, who considered experiences to be the basis of economic activity (Pine and Gilmore, 2011, xix). They argued that this type of economy is the next step in the natural progression of economic output from commodities (raw materials, agricultural products), to goods (manufactured, industrial products), services and ultimately to experiences. Pine and Gilmore analysed the experience economy mainly from the perspective of businesses (as experience stagers) and the potential of experiences to generate value; however, they also emphasised the growing propensity of customers to spend money for the enjoyment of memorable events, rather than the acquisition of material things (ibid., p. 3). Pine and Gilmore argue that the experience economy goes even further than simply offering memories for consumption (which could, by repetition, lose their value). By realising that the customer is in fact the product, this economic model aims to offer people the possibility of a transformation, of something that goes beyond the experience itself and has a transformative power on those partaking in the experience (ibid., p. 242). This is achieved through customisation and guiding the personal transformation of customers, which are by now concepts widely used across all business sectors.

It would be interesting to see whether our attitudes towards possessions and experiences will change in the future. Will we still be afraid to let go of materiality and renounce the physical and psychological security this provides? Will we be forced by necessity to embrace less materiality in order to avoid environmental disaster? Or will we consciously shift towards more meaningful way to interact with materiality and subordinate it to values that we consider more important in our individual and social life?

This chapter illustrated the central role that the duality of the individual and the collective has in economic thought. By examining various economic models and ideologies that rationalised the organisation of economic life, it demonstrated how the pursuit of an ideal framework for social

development was mainly an act of balancing between these dimensions and the conceptual principles they represent. A closer look at fundamental concepts in economic activity, such as self-interest and common good, ownership, private and common property, or the motivation and purpose of economic behaviour, further illustrated that despite the diversity of perspective, the theme of this duality is recurrent.

Political philosopher Gerald Alan Cohen talked about the inability of economics to develop a larger system that would integrate personal choice with equality and a sense of community (Cohen, 2009, p. 75). “Our problem is that, while we know how to make an economic system work on the basis of the development of selfishness, we do not know how to make it work by developing and exploiting human generosity”, he noted (*ibid.*, p. 58). It is most certain that the future economic and social frameworks will need to explore further the inherent instinct and creative potential of human cooperation, without linking it to state authority (or any form of authority, as a matter of fact). In principle, all economic systems have pursued the same ideal: an environment in which the human nature could flourish free of coercion and humanity has a better life as a whole. But this requires to accept that human nature is both individualistic and social, so favouring one side would mean raising discontent from the other.

The next chapter will explain how an emerging model, that of the collaborative economy, proposes to address this duality in a more balanced way, moving away from the interventionist approach and relying instead on the cooperative instinct of the individuals.

## CHAPTER THREE: THE COLLABORATIVE ECONOMY

In his theory about the evolution of economic systems, political economist Joseph Schumpeter talked about “creative destruction” as a fundamental feature of capitalism (Schumpeter, 1994, p. 83). The process of constant change, which comes from the permanent need to develop new goods, new markets and new methods of economic organisation, “incessantly revolutionises the economic structure from within”, regularly altering the old forms and leading to the creation of new ones (ibid.). Collaborative economy could be understood as such a form of creative destruction, one that is currently altering the dominant economic model of industrial production, ownership and consumption, and giving shape to a new one based on social production, access and use.

Ancient as a form of human behaviour, but recent as a form of economic organisation of global scale, collaboration is challenging many structural principles of the market economy and offers the promise of betterment. It appears to rehabilitate the social nature of economic activity, by engaging our disposition to share, cooperate and create networks of trust. It reflects a new understanding of ownership and how this is perceived in relation to our identity and social persona. It reveals a new consciousness about what and how we consume, and questions our attachment towards material things and the consumer culture. Its partnership with technology creates new models for participation in economic activity that are more democratic and egalitarian, but at the same time, this new openness conveys a stronger sense of empowerment. It transforms passive consumers into active enterprisers. It generates new values through more emphasis on use, accessibility, diversity and social production. It activates a deep longing to find meaning in our interactions with others and to create a more balanced relationship with material welfare, both within and among ourselves. It is in fact a long pedigree newly re-discovered, with many potentialities for application (including in the heritage field) and already changing manifesting its creative destruction within our contemporary economic system. At the same time, this model is not without failure. Its practical realisation has often led to results that appear to contradict its utopian goals and promises. This has attracted many critics, both from academia and from regular citizens whose lives have been affected by the side-effects of these types of economic activities. Perhaps these first experiments can also provide the key to how the collaborative model could be re-adjusted and better align its functionality to the values it aims to achieve.

The previous chapters have attempted to illustrate how the individual and the collective represent a duality that intrinsically characterises human behaviour and how this duality is expressed in all spheres of human activity. This is evident particularly in economic activities, as demonstrated by the analysis of various economic systems and several key concepts around which participation in economic life is structured. The purpose of this chapter will be to examine the alternative model offered by the collaborative economy, what constitute its main features, what are the fundamental changes it has generated across economic organisation and society, and how exactly this concept further reflects the dynamic between the individual and the collective.

### 3.1 What's in a name?

There is a rich terminology referring to this emerging economic model: sharing economy, collaborative economy (Botsman and Rogers, 2011), gig economy (Friedman, 2014; Schor, 2020), peer-to-peer economy (Bauwens, 2019), access economy (Eckhardt and Bardhi, 2015), crowd-based capitalism (Sundararajan, 2016), on-demand economy, mesh economy (Gansky, 2012), or we-economy (Stephany, 2015), to name a few most widely used names. There are also voices (Slee, 2015) who claim that the right word to describe this economic model is yet to be invented, as none of the existing terms accurately reflect its character. The sharing economy and the collaborative economy appear to have the wider usage among audiences.

Economist Arun Sundararajan called the new collaborative economic model “an interesting middle ground between capitalism and socialism” (Sundararajan, 2016, p. 44). While inspired by the desire to revolutionise the ‘business as usual’ modus of engaging in economic activities, the term collaborative economy navigates between the negative legacies of these two words: socialism and capitalism. The failed experiments of socialism and communism had generated a common aversion towards everything that is supposed to be shared, while the idea of a collective, communal way of structuring economic activity automatically revives the image of totalitarian regimes that crush individual freedom. On the other hand, the term capitalism, particularly through Marx’s theories, but also in view of the rising criticism on the inequality and the unbalanced distribution of wealth this system has generated, has a strong association with the negative social impacts triggered by the proprietary ideology of individual freedom and unlimited growth. While conceptually borrowing elements from both the socialist and the capitalist models, the collaborative economy is performing a balancing act between the errors of the past. It is no wonder that those who are strong supporters of this new model emphasise its social, egalitarian character (which is perceived as having been lost in the capitalist system), The critics, instead, focus more on the capitalist elements embedded in its social façade (which is perceived as a way to continue the capitalist model with other means and to reinforce its destructive mechanisms).

Putting linguistics aside, the first question to ask is what exactly does collaborative economy mean? At its core, it is a model that shifts focus from production to access and shared use. With the help of new technologies that enable the realisation of a global digital infrastructure for collaboration, networks and platforms connect providers with users, or users among each other, in order to gain direct and easy access to goods and services. Instead of being purchased every time, these goods and services are shared between individuals, and the monetary value is transferred from acquisition and ownership, to access and use. While traditional economic providers (understood as producers or capital owners that make their assets available to rent or share) are not excluded from the economic exchanges, this model practically enables every individual to transform his/her possessions and skills into capital that can be shared with others and can generate revenues. Among the most attractive features of this model are the easiness of shared access and individual enterprise, as well as the fact that it apparently eliminates the intermediary, the middle-man in the exchange process (in fact, there is



always a middle-man, namely the platform itself and the entity that controls it, but this will be explained later).

Arun Sundararajan described the collaborative economic system with reference to the following characteristics: its reliance on markets (that expand the level of potential economic activity unlimitedly); the high impact of capital (it integrates idle assets and skills, valorising their full economic capacity); the regulation of economic activity through crowd-based networks (rather than through the mediation of centralised institutions); the blurring lines between the personal and the professional, as well as between independent and dependent employment (Sundararajan, 2016, p. 27). His analysis focuses mainly on the economic significance of the collaborative model; how it relates to other existing models, what specific economic mechanisms, institutions and frameworks are generated, and how it impacts economic, regulatory and workforce issues. Sharing economy entrepreneur Alex Stephany defined the collaborative model as “the value in taking underutilised assets and making them accessible online to a community, leading to a reduced need for ownership of those assets” (Stephany, 2015, p. 59). He considers that the sharing economy rests on five basic elements: the creation of reciprocal economic value, the use of underutilised assets, online accessibility, the creation of community (which goes beyond economic exchanges and includes other social aspects, trust, interests, or reliability through reviews), and the reduced need for ownership (ibid.). Another insider of the industry, entrepreneur Lisa Gansky, spoke about *the Mesh* as “a new model in which consumers have more choices, more tools, more information, and more power to guide those choices” (Gansky, 2012, p.5). Based on the analogy with a material that is not easily definable, she emphasised the ecosystem character of the collaborative model and its main reliance on digital technologies. Gansky considered that the Mesh business is characterised by five features: the central role of sharing (within a community, market, or value chain), the use of web and mobile information networks (that connect those involved in the economic exchanges), the fast access to economic transactions, the role of social network services in engaging with customers, and, finally, its global applicability. Both Stephany’s and Gansky’s insights refer to the functionality of the collaborative model and its potential to create new forms of economic organisation that will replace the traditional ones. All these various characteristics and their implications from the point of view of the consumer will be explained below.

### **3.2 Utopian ideals**

It is important to put the emergence of the collaborative economy in historical perspective. Although sharing platforms existed in the 1990s, the collaborative model started to gain impetus in the late 2000s. This was mainly due to three developments that marked a deeper societal and cultural change. The first development was the global financial crisis of 2008. On the one hand, the financial difficulties that many individuals experienced made sharing a necessity and a preferred way to still access goods rather than purchasing them. On the other hand, the crisis amplified the general distrust towards the capitalist model that had been re-endorsed by the neoliberal policies starting with the 1980s. This event intensified the resentment towards the big corporations, who were seen as the main

actors having caused the crisis, and re-opened large debates and protests about economic monopolies, unjust concentration of wealth and the systemic inequalities that the capitalist economy had created. At the same time, these strong reactions showed that a large part of the society was open to consider alternative economic systems that would adopt more democratic, egalitarian and transparent principles. It also questioned the idea of self-interest (a fundamental value in the individualistic ideology of liberal economy) which, seen as the guiding principle behind the destructive behaviour of the corporations, had dissolved many social values and alienated people from the sense of community. A counter-reaction towards a more socially conscious way of living emerged as a result.

Another important development was the consolidation in the public discourse of climate change as a major crisis of our time. This growing awareness about the environmental threats amplified by economic activities indicated the necessity of adjustment in many aspects of life. This included a re-evaluation of our pattern of consumption and the reliance on the idea of unlimited growth as the defining character of economic behaviour. More and more people started to search for alternative, responsible economic models, moving away from the acquisition and continuous replacement of things, and embracing a more sustainable and efficient use of resources.

Finally, one of the biggest changes was introduced by the development of digital technologies and collaborative software that made it possible, in a very short period of time, for everyone to be connected with everyone. The accessibility and extensive use of the world wide web, as well as the growing popularity of social media networks revealed a society of individuals willing to reconnect and find a sense of community online.

The collaborative economy appeared as a viable alternative that responded to all these developments. It presented a set of utopian ideals that were alluring and irresistible for many. It promised a way in which economic activity would no longer be controlled by the 'usual (big) suspects', but by the users themselves. It invited to a fundamental change in the balance of economic power; a system in which economic exchanges were no longer influenced by controlled marketing and branding, but by the users themselves, as they could provide a de-centralised rating of the products and services they used, and build more credible networks of trust. The collaborative model also allowed anyone to become an entrepreneur and benefit from their assets and skills, by accessing both local and global markets. And more importantly, the benefits resulting from the economic exchanges would not be shared with an intermediary, but would go directly to the providers. From an environmental point of view, the collaborative economy meant, in principle, a shift against consumerism and towards a more effective use of resources. Instead of purchasing things, people would rather share them and access them only when needed, thus increasing their life cycle and utility, and reducing the overall ecological footprint (it will be explained later how the idea of environmental sustainability is in many cases an illusion, as proven by several studies). Ultimately, the collaborative model promised to rediscover the social nature of economic activities, by developing social connections and trust, instilling a sense of reciprocity and giving people back the possibility to re-build communities. All these ideals appeared like a perfect recipe to combine individual interests with the collective good and find a balanced way in which both could be pursued. As sociologist Juliet Schor noticed, "part of the attraction of sharing

was to build a better world” (Schor, 2021, p. 8). This utopian rhetoric is strongly connected with the origin story of the collaborative economic model. Its conceptual appeal is one of the most important factors that explains its rapid rise and popularity across such a large part of society.

### 3.3 How big, how far?

Before we proceed with a closer analysis of the collaborative model, it is equally important to explain the relevance of this sector in a larger economic perspective. In 2011, Time Magazine referred to the sharing economy as one of the 10 ideas that will change the world (Walsh, 2011). I recall reading an issue of *The Economist* in 2013 whose cover story focused on the sharing economy and emphasised not only the growing place this model has in our everyday life, but also its immense potential for future businesses (*The Economist*, 2013). I recall the sudden realisation I had at the time that the sharing economy had finally arrived on the international business scene and was likely to stay with us for a while, particularly because of its scope and the fast pace with which it was becoming part of our life. Many of the predictions expressed at the beginning of the 2010s have certainly been realised in economic terms, although not without serious issues of concern.

A study by PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) showed that in 2013, the sharing economy in the five most significant sectors (hospitality, transportation, entertainment, crowdfunding and on demand work) earned sales revenue of 15 billion dollars, with the prediction that by 2025 this will rise to 335 billion dollars. The revenue of companies with a sharing economy model would equal the amount earned by traditional operating models in the same sectors (PwC, 2015, p. 14). This shows an extremely fast growth of more than 2000% in 12 years, with actors in each individual sector displaying spectacular financial growth in a very short period of time. Airbnb, one of the companies most frequently associated with the collaborative model, reached a market value (according to [companiesmarketcap.com](http://companiesmarketcap.com)) of 87.70 billion dollars this year, which is an immense growth since its foundation in 2008. Its value is almost the same as top earners Marriott International (56.46 billion dollars) and Hilton (41.79 billion dollars) together. Another big name in the collaborative economy, Uber, has also reached a value of 51.19 billion dollars, close to that of other traditional automobile manufacturers like General Motors (57.71 billion dollars), Ford (57.12 billion dollars), or BMW (54.59 billion dollars). Udacity, the online educational platform launched in 2012 by Stanford researchers and aiming to democratise higher education through the offer of massive open online courses, reached in only three years a market valuation of 1 billion dollars (*The Wall Street Journal*, 2022). After the COVID-19 pandemic, its valuation is estimated at over 10 billion dollars (Crunchbase, 2022).

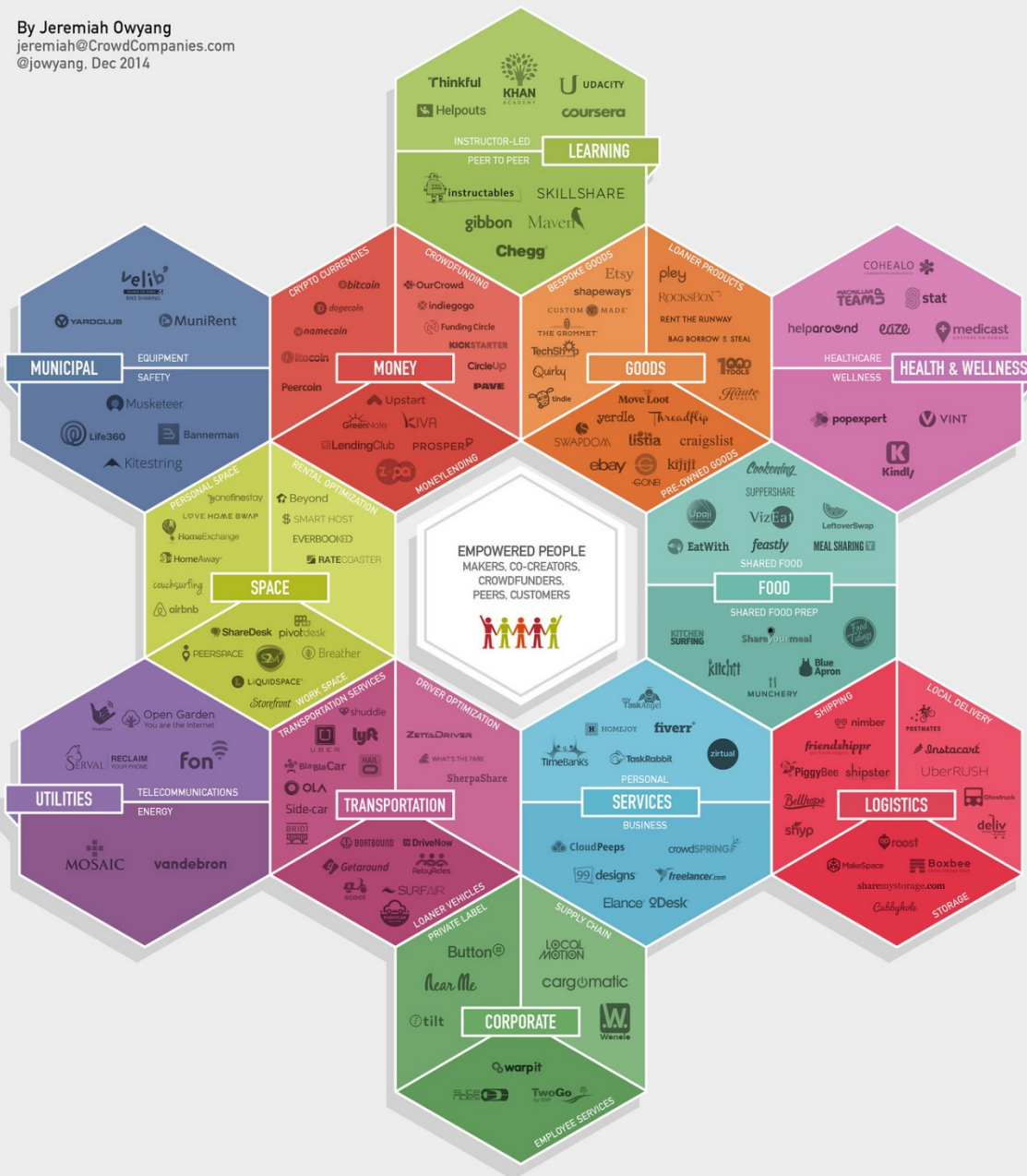
The growth of the collaborative economy sector is determining many companies to re-assess their businesses, recognise the impact of the collaborative model and integrate it into their portfolios. The collaborative economy is also receiving the growing attention of investors. According to PricewaterhouseCoopers, between 2010 and 2015, more than 200 start-ups designed on the collaborative model received investment totalling 11.5 billion dollars (PwC, 2015, p. 14). The novelty

of the model took many by surprise and, despite of the unclear regulatory climate that is yet in the making, the collaborative sector remains a darling for financial investments. The start-up sector is very dynamic and fast evolving, but a recurrent trend in those companies that make it into the unicorn club (start-up companies that have a valuation of 1 billion dollars without going to public capital markets) is that a very large percentage the model of the collaborative economy (according to the online database provided by The Wall Street Journal and Dow Jones Venture Source, or CB Insights).

At the other end, many voices consider that the rising involvement of venture capitalists in the development of collaborative platforms and businesses is detrimental, and that this is actually killing the spirit of the collaborative model, transforming it more into a form of “platform capitalism” (Srnicsek, 2020).

It is nevertheless overwhelming to notice the scope and level of diversification that the collaborative economic model has reached. There are examples of successful and constantly emerging business that provide a solution to almost all aspects of life. Sometimes the easiest way to explain a new collaborative business is by referring to it as “the Airbnb” or “the Uber” of something. A quick search on the internet will reveal, indeed, that there is an Airbnb for almost everything. Instead of purchasing goods and services, you can access them with the help of thematic networks and temporarily use/swap/rent them. You can share (against a fee, of course, the term demonstrates again its ability to mislead) personal space with others (Airbnb is the classical example for that), but also work space. Even dogs have their own networks for swapping homes and companionship (DogVacay or Rover, valued at 1.3 billion dollars in 2021). You can share means of transportation (cars, bicycles, scooters, etc.) or simply find people who are willing to offer transportation services in real time. You can share food and drinks, or find people who are offering their cooking services in your private dining room. You can access goods of all kinds, from the most basic (clothes, tools, toys for your children, art to hang on your walls, etc.) to the most luxurious (you can rent yachts, expensive sport cars, jewellery, designer clothes, or even castles), or specialised ones for business purposes (medical equipment, industrial equipment, etc.). Similarly, you can access services ranging from personal ones (cleaning, repairing, gardening, babysitting, etc.) to professional ones. You can learn any subject and any skill by accessing online courses led by instructors or simply by other users who are willing to share their knowledge (School of Everything, Udacity, Coursera, Skillshare, etc.). You can secure funding for your business more easily and at lower interest rates with the help of crowdfunding and other lending schemes that allow private individuals to support projects that reflect values they cherish. The financial sector has quickly adapted the collaborative model, including in one of its most successful recent developments, that of cryptocurrency. An overview of the ‘collaborative economy honeycomb’ was produced by entrepreneur Jeremiah Owyang and is offered for reference in Figure 1 below.

By Jeremiah Owyang  
jeremiah@CrowdCompanies.com  
@jowyang, Dec 2014



With input from:  
Lisa Gansky (@instigating), Neal Gorenflo (@gorenflo), Shervin Pishevar (@sherpa), Mike Walsh (@mwalsh), Brian Solis (@briansolis), Alexandra Samuel (@awsamuel), Bill Johnston (@biljohnston), Angus Nelson (@angusnelson), Augie Ray (@augieray), Jeff Rodman (@jeffreYRODman), John Sheldon (@jsheldon), Jamie Sandford (@jsandford), Arun Sundararajan (@digitalarun), Jonathan Wichmann (@JonathanWich) and Vision Critical (@visioncritical).  
Design by Vladimir Mirkovic www.transartdesign.com Creative Commons license: Attribution-NonCommercial.



Figure 1 The collaborative economy honeycomb developed by Jeremiah Owyang (Owyang, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

### 3.4 Revolutionary, but not exactly

What are the characteristics of the collaborative economic model that make it so appealing to an increasing number of people? What constitutes its attractiveness from the point of view of the user (who may act as both provider and consumer)?

The idea of sharing and collaboration is not new. Quite the opposite, it may appear as old as human history. Sharing is a fundamental trait of human psychology, connected with our preoccupation for

family, kinship and the solidarity we instinctively express towards those we are (or feel) related to (Pinker, 1997, p. 431). If we think about our behaviour towards the members of our family or towards our closest friends, it is evident that sharing plays a very important part in it. We share food, shelter, objects, time and advice on a regular basis with those we are close to, without monetising our actions. Similarly, economic activity was originally an act of sharing, as people exchanged goods, work and favours in a spirit of reciprocity that would help their subsistence and improve their welfare. Many self-reliant communities still practice sharing as a basis for their collective life.

If sharing appears to be in human DNA, it is also part of the internet's DNA, as Alex Stephany suggested (Stephany, 2015, p. 21). Not only was the development of the internet strongly connected with the ideas of open source and peer production that enabled its technical foundation and made it accessible to everyone, but it also popularised a culture of sharing and collaboration. In a sense, it was a fortunate combination when our social instincts for sharing met the technology that encouraged their re-discovery and activation at a global scale.

What the collaborative economy succeeded in doing was not necessarily inventing a new model for economic organisation, but rather rediscovering an old one and expanding it to a global scale. Brian Chesky, the founder of Airbnb, mentioned in an interview that Airbnb is not a modern invention, but that the hotels are, as staying at other people's houses used to be the common way to travel prior to the 1950s (Chesky, cited in Botsman and Rogers, 2011, xiii). With the help of the new communication technologies, the typical form of behaviour that characterises human interactions at a small social scale (that of family, friends and neighbourhood) was transposed to the larger economic scale. The local community or circle of acquaintances was augmented to the global level, so that formerly unknown strangers became part of a community of interest, necessity or ideals. It was, in a sense, a way of re-shaping social and economic relations according to the principles of the smallest cell of social organisation, the family. This had social implications, but also functional ones. By borrowing the same micro-social approach, this model also provided a more efficient, coordinated way to use resources and labour. Besides the issues of scale, familiarity and efficiency, the collaborative model had another psychological impact on its users: namely that it made economic exchanges visible and personal, responding to a growing resentment against the opacity and incredulity towards the traditional economic mechanisms and players. As economist Arun Sundararajan noted, the new markets generated by technology have dramatically scaled the sharing behaviour, shifting value from traditional corporations and towards a crowd of entrepreneurs, which is also the reason why he refers to the collaborative model as crowd-based capitalism (Sundararajan, 2016, p. 6).

Even prior to the boom of the collaborative economy, law professor Yochai Benkler referred to social sharing as a new way of organising economic life that will most likely play an influential role in the future. In his essay *Sharing nicely* he explained that "social sharing and exchange is becoming a common modality of producing valuable desiderata at the very core of the most advanced economies – in information, culture, education, computation and communications sector" (Benkler, 2004, p. 278). He observed that social practices are not restricted to small communities, in which there is a high degree of familiarity between members, but also among individuals who do not necessarily know

each other and consciously agree to “form large-scale and effective systems for provisioning and resources” (ibid., p. 276). The collaborative model relies on sharing as a re-discovered form of economic organisation. Its success results mainly from combining our social and psychological predisposition for sharing (as manifested in our common behaviour when placed in the intimate social microcosm of family and friends) with technologies that were designed to encourage a culture of collaboration, and investing them with the rationality and functionality of economic action.

### **3.5 The confusing architecture of sharing**

One of the first lessons that children learn in the playground (not without opposition) is that they should share with others their toys, cookies or unicorn books. Being a mother of two, I have a very vivid image in my mind of all the strains this learning process entails, both from the parent’s and the children’s perspective, I also know the sheer satisfaction on the children’s faces when they realise and directly experience the benefits of successful sharing. Despite of the fact that we lay so much emphasis on learning how to share in the development of our children, we somehow tend to become more distanced from this practice as adults. On a subconscious level we incorporate the sharing mind-set in most of our social relations, as this enables us to cooperate, compromise or solve conflicts when dealing with others. But the actual practice of sharing rarely occurs and is frequently restricted to our closest circle of family and friends. The collaborative model has succeeded in infusing our lives with different versions of sharing. As Nicholas John observed, we find ourselves in “the age of sharing”, since most of our practices in social media, economic activity and communicating emotions are structured around the idea of sharing (John, 2017, p. 4). Reflecting both a way of interaction with others and a moral value, sharing represents the foundation of the collaborative model.

Although the semantics might be misleading, sharing in the sharing/collaborative economy does not always mean exchanging or giving away for free (as sharing in the context of family and friends normally implies). The collaborative economy may be fuelled by many utopian ideals that flatter the users’ consciousness, but it is above all a model that emphasises gain and efficiency in economic exchanges. By taking idle assets and offering them for use on the markets created through digital networks, the collaborative model proposes new ways to maximise the economic value and generate income from what otherwise may be not be utilised. By offering services that combine the skills, time and passions of each individual, this model opens new possibilities for entrepreneurship. By enabling fast and convenient access to the assets and skills possessed by other individuals, it emphasises economic efficiency and presents opportunities to achieve similar results with lower costs than in the traditional economic model (in which purchasing products and services would be significantly more expensive). From this point of view, the collaborative economy denotes a clear sense of individual pragmatism, rather than an ideal humanistic ethic. This is also the argument of Alex Stephany, who claims that the collaborative economy works exactly because it is still embossed with the idea of self-interest and the free market principles (Stephany, 2015, p. 37), and represents a form of “capitalism distilled” (ibid., p. 14).

It is true that the collaborative model has been 'shared' by both non-profit and for-profit businesses. Many of the original experiments came from the non-profit sector. They were local initiatives from small communities, aiming to better organise communal life, reduce waste (e.g. food swap) and offer mutual help (e.g. in the form of time and services). Sociologist Juliet Schor argues that these non-profit experiments in the collaborative economy attracted users mainly because of their ideological appeal, but they failed to offer a 'value proposition', which is the main reason why most of them have disappeared by now. The collaborative economy is currently dominated by for-profit businesses, as these have successfully managed to articulate their financial advantage - more income opportunities and lower costs (Schor, 2020, p. 124).

A recurrent argument in economic history is that the spread of the market ideology and the subsequent rationalisation of economic activity has separated economics from ethics. The moral character which prevailed in all aspects of life in the pre-industrial era was removed from the economic activity with the dominance of the capitalist ideology. Later on, socialist models re-introduced moral concepts like that of equality in the economic context, giving social hierarchy an equal importance to that of the market's regulatory force. State interventionist and social democratic experiments further endorsed the mixed image of economics as having both a pragmatic and a social goal. The collaborative economy makes a similar attempt to connect economic benefits with social ideals, but in a decentralised form, as something pursued by individuals, rather than as imposed by institutional frameworks. In this sense, sharing represents an appealing mix of economic gain (with evident advantages to the individual) and other benefits of social nature (with impact both on the individuals and the others), which reflect a more holistic understanding of what contributes to human well-being.

Rachel Botsman and Roo Rogers identified three main categories of sharing models in the collaborative economy: product service systems, redistribution markets and collaborative lifestyles (Botsman and Rogers, 2011, p. 71). Product service systems developed in response to people's growing preference to use products and pay for use only when they need them, rather than owning them. This type of system can be developed by businesses (companies own products and offer them for shared use), or by private individuals (who offer their own products for shared use). Redistribution markets focus on used or pre-owned goods, and mainly connect those who no longer need them with those who do. Such goods could be exchanged for free, in return of other value tokens (points, time), or of cash. Finally, the collaborative lifestyles refer to ways of sharing intangible assets like time, skills, or money. Typical examples of this system are networks that enable people to exchange, most often at the local level, a wide range of services, from gardening, work spaces, cooking or running errands, to money or other financial services (ibid., pp. 71-75). This classification focuses on what is consumed (tangible and intangible assets and services), how it is consumed (shared use or transfer of ownership) and what potential actors may be involved (businesses-to-business, business-to-peer, peer-to-peer). But the complexity of the collaborative model increases significantly when the motivations behind the act of sharing are analysed.

In general, there is a rather fluid architecture of sharing in the collaborative model, with very heterogeneous forms of expression. The distinction between the market-driven and non-market-



driven character is not always evident, certainly not in the terminology. There are collaborative models that function as free exchanges of goods and services (e.g. CouchSurfing, Airbnb's predecessor, was originally such a network where people would host other people for free, based on the conviction that their service would be reciprocated when they would travel themselves; there are also many local networks in which neighbours exchange goods and services without any payment). But the majority of practices have a commercial purpose, and the sharing architecture is determined by completely different motivations. Russell Belk used the term *pseudo-sharing* to discuss the growing phenomenon of "a business relationship masquerading as communal sharing" (Belk, 2014, p. 11). Belk argues that a large number of businesses (he takes the example of long-term and short-term renting, data sharing and barter platforms) are misusing the sharing vocabulary and in fact these pseudo-sharing practices are driven by profit motives, lack a sense of community and expectations of reciprocity (ibid., p. 7). Similarly, economists Giana Eckhardt and Fleura Bardhi argued that when 'sharing' is market-mediated, it ceases to be sharing at all (Eckhardt and Bardhi, 2015). Based on the assumption that sharing is fundamentally a social exchange with familiar others and doesn't involve any profit, they conclude that "the sharing economy isn't really a 'sharing' economy at all; it's an access economy" (ibid.). Their conclusion is paradoxical: success in collaborative business is achieved by emphasising not the social values of this model (which represent its ideological essence), but rather the convenience and financial advantages of access over ownership (ibid.). Although this argument has a certain validity, it does not necessarily exclude the fact that people appreciate the collateral benefits (especially the social and ethical ones), but it confirms a recurrent result of empirical research, namely that the economic benefits are often perceived as a priority.

Besides this unclear, sometimes conflictual understanding of what sharing represents, the great diversity of applications that the collaborative model has is another aspect that adds to the confusion. Peter Evans and Annabelle Gawer consider platforms as the defining element of this emerging model. They distinguished mainly between four typologies of enterprises: transaction (facilitate exchanges and transactions between users, buyers and sellers), innovation (facilitate the collaborative development of technologies, products and services), integrated (a mix of the first two models) and investment platforms (develop a platform portfolio strategy) (Evans and Gawer, 2016). These typologies can be found in a wide range of sectors, from commerce to internet software, fintech, gaming, social media, entertainment, transportation, travel, etc. Moreover, the collaborative model has been successfully implemented even in areas outside of economics, leading to extraordinary results in generating new knowledge or technologies. Some of these examples will be explained later in this chapter.

To summarise, it is important to understand the complexity and vast potential applications that the collaborative model has across sectors. The ecology of the collaborative economy resembles a multidimensional grid, in which the act of sharing can be interpreted in many ways, and various interests (both market and non-market directed), types of goods and services, providers and users, sectors, forms of ownership and exchanges intertwine. Its extreme malleability and diversity represent an advantage, but also blur its conceptual and normative status.

### 3.6 The bearable lightness of not owning

According to the data provided by the World Bank, 73% of the world's GDP in 2020 resulted from the consumption of goods and services (World Bank, 2022). This percentage varies from country to country, but in general, it maintains a very high value. The fact that we are a consumer society is not a ground-breaking revelation. In fact, when we think about our living environment or look around us, there is probably not one single element in it that is not related to consumption and economic activities. The central role of consumption reflects our relationship to two other important concepts: ownership and use.

The reasons why we like to possess and consume so much are diverse. Of course, there is a functional dimension attached to the acquisition of things. We need to get from A to B, therefore we may consider purchasing a means of transportation (car, bicycle, moped, etc.) to make this possible and convenient. But if functionality were the main rationale of buying things, our life would certainly look much different. If we simply wanted to quench our thirst, we would drink tap water and not spend more than one hundred dollars for a litre of water from the Norwegian icebergs or the Amazonian forests (Fiji water is by far more affordable, for only 50 dollars per litre). Ownership implies a certain relationship with material things. Sometimes we own things because of the enjoyment and pleasure we derive from them, but this is, again, rather exceptional. I most surely enjoy writing with a nicely crafted fountain pen, wearing a nice cashmere sweater or listening to Paul Kalkbrenner on a good sound system. But most of the time people like things because of other reasons related to more subtle kinds of psychological pleasure we derive from ownership. We tend to think that things may help solve some of our problems, which they don't always do, but rather they distract us from the real problems. What they often succeed is to satisfy our wishes and needs, which may be inherent to our personality or induced by the "new branded world", as Naomi Klein called our economic and social context (Klein, 2010, p. 3). They help us define who we are in relation with our own, subjectively constructed version of ourselves. At the same time, they help us define who we are in relation with others, by aligning the image of our persona with the ideals circulated in our social milieu or propagated by branding and marketing. Quite often the accumulation of things is understood as measure and representation of welfare, which is the professed goal of all economic activity.

In *The future of consumer society*, Maurie Cohen identifies four significant processes that have contributed to the consolidation of consumption as a dominant mode of the social life: disembedding (from local context into global economy, transferring social interactions into the domain of the market), social atomisation (of a larger community into smaller and distinct units), pseudo-individualisation (the narrative of measuring individuality and uniqueness through purchased goods) and commodification (for the declared goal of economic growth) (Cohen, 2017, p. 21). Without claiming the disintegration of the consumer society, Cohen emphasises a few growing trends that are likely to impact social organisation in the future. Such are the trends observed in the consumer patterns of the younger generation (the Millennials or Generation Y born in the 1980s and 1990s), who exhibits much less interest in material possessions and traditional employment formats, and

embrace increased flexibility in managing activities, especially with the help of social media (ibid., p. 31). There are many generational studies that confirm this radical transformation of the younger generation from a hyperconsumer to a more rational and, to a certain extent, ethical consumer. The sustainable development discourse, which gained momentum in recent years, has also contributed to a re-assessment of the consumerist mode. The central role that consumption plays in the current environmental crisis is surprisingly little addressed in the context of the sustainability debate (Princen et al., 2002). Political economist Thomas Princen argues that one of the main reasons for this occurrence is the fact that economics traditionally focuses on production (producing goods as the main purpose of economic activity), and not so much on consumption (ibid., p. 24). His argument is that a “consumption angle” would be more helpful in finding effective environmental solutions. For example, identifying why people choose *not* to consume/purchase certain things, or what motivates them to opt for non-material solutions to their needs could be crucial in designing more sustainable economic patterns (ibid., p. 27). Princen’s perspective implies that a better understanding of consumption could lead not only to the re-structuring of production, but also to the development of new economic models that encourage economic exchanges that are not so resource-intensive. The logic “we produce more because we increase people’s appetite to consume more” would thus need to be replaced by that of “we develop new consumption mechanisms that maximise the utilisation of the produced goods”.

This approach emphasises another aspect of consumption which is extremely important in the collaborative economy - that of use. One of the driving forces of consumerism is the idea that the ownership of material goods is a measure of value. But does this mean that if we own less, we are automatically of less value? Does people’s willingness to own less mean that their lives have become less worthy? Quite the opposite, it indicates a re-assessment of the relationship between value and materiality, a shift of balance from ownership to use, from object to action. This does not necessarily imply a fundamental reconsideration of our value system (although this may be the ideal in the long run). Although the association of identity with economic agency has not disappeared, new economic models have made it possible that people do not necessarily define themselves through what they own, but rather through how they use things. From this perspective, it can be argued that the collaborative economy has introduced a certain kind of lightness that people experience in not owning things.

At a very basic level, this lightness emerges from the rational consideration of the financial advantages that the collaborative model presents. We use goods and services with much less financial investment, since we do not purchase them, but only pay for temporary access. Sharing things also implies less responsibilities (and costs) with regard to their physical maintenance or replacement once their life cycle has ended. The accessibility of a wide range of goods and services that we can constantly choose from and substitute according to new needs and desires conveys a certain lightness too, as it removes financial pressures related to the potential acquisition of those goods. All of sudden, people do not necessarily feel the burden of having to save enough in order to obtain something, but have much easier access to everything they may desire. You don’t have to save enough to buy an Aston Martin, but you can pay a much smaller amount in order to be able to ride in it. Of course, the debate whether

the psychological effects of owning an Aston Martin might be different than those of renting an Aston Martin, but this is another line of discussion.

At a more abstract level, the collaborative model offers a certain lightness in how we define ourselves and our relationships with others. The new kind of access enabled by the collaborative model provides the basis of a more fluid kind of ownership. Instead of owning only some things for some time, the new model of “owning” all things at all times give people the possibility to explore and express different sides of their individuality. Personal identity thus becomes more fluid and less dependent on material choices or brands associated with certain lifestyles. Economists Giana Eckhardt and Fleura Bardhi argued that by having constant access to a variety of brands, consumers no longer identify with them as closely as in the ownership model: “They would rather sample a variety of identities which they can discard when they want” (Eckhardt and Bardhi, 2015). An indirect consequence of this is the fact the people experience less pressure from their peers about acquiring certain products whose ownership would make them part of a specific community of users.

By emphasising the smartness of use as the most important feature that defines the modern consumer, the collaborative economy induces the lightness of reassurance that people have made a smart choice. When choosing to use a product rather than own it, users of the collaborative model adopt in fact one of the fundamental principles of the market economy – to minimise costs and maximise value. However, framing this principle in the social narrative of sharing completely changes the focus in how economic exchanges are perceived: from an act in which the pursuit of self-interest in competition with others leads to what’s best for the individual to one in which self-interest in collaboration with others determines what’s best for everyone in the group.

Smart consumption in the collaborative model also offers users a lightness of consciousness. This refers to the perception that this new type of consumption has an ethical implication, mainly because it encourages more sustainable economic practices. If people use goods instead of buying them, less goods will be needed on the markets overall and less resources will be used in their production. Moreover, their intensified use implies that producers should be conscious about the durability of goods, so that they can last longer and satisfy more customers. Generational studies emphasise invariably that climate change and environmental issues represent a topic that the young generation is most passionate about and that strongly influences their choices in consumption, work or education (Center for Generational Kinetics, 2020, p. 27). Sociologist Manuel Castells described the impact of the environmental movement on individual behaviour as “the greening of the self” (Castells, 2010, p. 168). The collaborative economy feeds into these changing preferences and ideological convictions that animate an increasing number of people to be more reflective and selective in their economic choices.

Finally, not owning things instils a certain lightness of inclusion. In his political theory of property, philosopher C.B. Macpherson described private property as “the right of an individual to exclude others from some use or benefit of something” (Macpherson, 1973, p. 123). If we reverse Macpherson’s theory, the collaborative economy and its non-proprietary mode of consumption could be interpreted as a way to make individuals feel included, not excluded by others. Sharing private

property with others gives people a new perspective on what they own, and makes them re-assess what is considered private and what is common. At the same time, it gives the opportunity to open and include, rather than enclose and exclude.

### 3.7 Networks and the peer-to-peer dynamic

Physicist Fritjof Capra recognised that the common pattern of all forms of life is the network. “Wherever we see life, we see networks”, he wrote (Capra, 2002, p. 9). His systemic approach recognised the presence and importance of networks in all biological, cognitive and social aspects of life. Networks provide the structural foundation of the collaborative economy. The peer-to-peer dynamic represents its *modus operandi*. Networks, easily developed with the help of digital technologies, enable people to connect, interact, exchange or produce goods and services in a way that is non-hierarchical, unlimited in scope and extremely efficient in terms of matching users and providers. This network architecture supports the development of a gigantic market that guarantees instant access to highly diversified, personalised and affordable goods and services.

In a slightly prophetic tone reminiscent of Marx’s impactful ideas from two hundred years ago, Michel Bauwens, Vasilis Kostakis and Alex Pazaitis proposed in their *Commons manifesto* a theory of the peer-to-peer dynamic, which they considered to have a highly influential role in human society in the future. They argue that peer-to-peer represents a type of social relations (where participants can connect freely), a technological infrastructure (which enables the extension of these relations), a new mode of production and property (based on the first two aspects) and the potential transition to a more sustainable economy (Bauwens, Kostakis and Pazaitis, 2019, p. 1). Based on this assumption, they propose a value model for this new ecosystem which enables communities to self-determine their values and pursue them with similarly self-determined practices (ibid., p. 15). This theory emphasises the democratic, participatory and autonomous character that networks and peer-to-peer interaction models could instil in economic activity.

In his acclaimed book, *The wealth of networks*, Yonchai Benkler discusses the emergence of “a new modality of organising production: radically decentralised, collaborative, and non-proprietary; based on sharing resources and outputs among widely distributed, loosely connected individuals who cooperate with each other without relying on either market signals or managerial commands” (Benkler, 2006, p. 60). Benkler considers that these peer production systems contradict the common theories regarding economic behaviour, as they demonstrate a high degree of effectiveness of collective, uncoordinated action between individuals. He observes the rise of such forms of successful cooperative practices “that are decentralised but do not rely on either the price system or a managerial structure for coordination” (ibid., p. 63). Benkler offers various examples from different industries to show the impressive results that the collaborative, non-market-oriented work of volunteering individuals achieved: the development of free and open-source software (which forms the basis of many internet technologies like web or email servers), LINUX (the operating system rivalling

Microsoft's products), SETI@home (the world's fastest supercomputer), Wikipedia, or the extremely popular massive multiplayer online games (in which people get the tools to create their own game scenario which they would like to play). Benkler observes that peer production is not simply a means to enable social interaction, but one of effective and successful organisation of economic production (ibid., p. 92). For this reason, the potential application of collaborative production could be explored not only in the business environment, but also in a wide range of sectors, including the heritage one.

Sociologist Manuel Castells referred to the new social structure that is increasingly dominating contemporary life as *the network society* (Castells, 2010). His thesis is that the revolution caused by the information and communication technologies has played the most important role in transforming human interactions based on the network model. In *The rise of the network society*, he conducts an extensive analysis of how the network structure emerged and expanded in different aspects of the economy. Particularly interesting is his observation that the network society generates a large number of highly specialised virtual communities sustained by a new kind of high social interaction based on shared interest and reciprocity (ibid., p. 389). This peer-to-peer dynamic is what constitutes the immense power of the networks. By definition, a network represents a system of elements that are connected to each other and operate together (*Oxford advanced learner's dictionary of current English, 2020*). Its value is not given by the individual qualities of the elements that are connected, but by their ability to function together in support of the network's purpose. The collaborative model uses its decentralised architecture not only to expand the scope of economic activity among diverse communities of interest, but also to enhance the effect of the interactions within and among networks. Strategy expert and entrepreneur Joachimsthaler considered that the interaction between various actors and groups can generate a kind of velocity – “multidimensional, constantly accelerating, explosive and smart growth” (Joachimsthaler, 2020, p. 3). He calls this “the interaction field model” and describes it as the best way to generate value in today's economic environment. Joachimsthaler suggests that businesses that are structured along the interaction field model intentionally generate and expand interactions between various actors (from partners to competitors, suppliers, analysts, regulators, researchers, etc.) in order to create value that surpasses that of financial profit (ibid., p. 12). His argument is that such a model is perpetuated by the gravitational pull created by the built velocity, as participants voluntarily join this network of interactions because they realise this has values for themselves, but also for larger issues, as the value creation increases with the number of participants (ibid., p.14).

The network architecture and the peer-to-peer dynamic of the collaborative model transfer this decentralised approach into the realm of economic activity, using the effects of the interactions between a very large number of economic actors to generate value both at the individual and the collective levels.

### 3.8 Empowerment

It is very interesting to notice that the collaborative economy is not a model that was developed by economists or theorists, and implemented as a coordinated effort of institutional structures. In a sense, it is a model that emerged almost on its own, with a fascinating autonomy and ability for self-perpetuation. Technology, financial necessity and other societal changes most certainly created an enabling environment for its appearance, but it was mainly the result of spontaneous, collaborative efforts of networked individuals. Therefore, the appearance of the collaborative model could itself be interpreted as an act of empowerment. The fact that it wasn't the calculated, coordinated and market-based decision of a central economic institution makes it appear more authentic and credible, as a spontaneous act of a multitude of individuals. The absence of an authority in its design augments the power that collective action could have for larger transformations.

Our need for empowerment is related to a certain illusion of independence that most people have nowadays. In urban communities, social relations tend to be shaped by a particular emphasis on personal freedom, independence and appreciation of the private space. However, this is a rather illusory ideal. In fact, urban communities are very much dependent on cooperation with others. Cooperation makes it possible that we can get our food at the supermarket, renders our houses functional through the provision of water, energy and sewage treatment, enables us to move within cities through the transport infrastructure or integrates our work within a larger system of specialised tasks. On the contrary, in smaller (often rural) communities, social capital and the relations with the other community members are of the utmost importance (as they guarantee a certain social safety), but individuals and households are in fact independent and self-reliant. This paradoxically shows that large urban communities are dominated by the ideology of independence and individuality, whereas in fact their existence is possible only through the cooperation of various actors that create the environment in which they function. On the other hand, small communities place an extremely high value on collaboration and social networks (the physical, not the digital ones), whereas the subsistence patterns of the individuals display a high degree of independence and self-reliance.

The collaborative economy emerged in urban communities, where the information technologies were more widely spread. But with the increased coverage of internet and the use of smart phone in literally every corner of the world, the collaborative model expanded beyond the urban environment and exponentially increased the opportunities for participation. The collaborative economy responds to different needs of empowerment. For the urban population, it offers a way to express individuality and to access personalised goods and services that better respond to changing consumer preferences. Consumer studies emphasise that especially the Millennials and Generation Z demand a high degree of personal interaction and customisation. They tend to look for community-based experiences rather than transaction-based experiences (Watts and Thomson, 2022), which is exactly what the collaborative model offers. For users from non-urban contexts, the collaborative economy has a particularly strong appeal in relation with empowerment. It offers every individual, even in the most remote corners or most disadvantaged regions of the world, the opportunity to access large markets in which they could use their resources and skills to generate income. An unemployed woman in a

Peruvian village could become an entrepreneur and gain financially from selling self-made woollen blankets to an IT engineer in Berlin. The collaborative model is, from this perspective, very close to the ideal of economics as democratic, inclusive and truly egalitarian. Finally, empowerment is conveyed by the network and peer-to-peer dynamic of this model. The fact that people participating in the collaborative economy do not perceive any intermediary or control in the economic exchanges increases the confidence in their agency and the credibility of the mode. Economist Arun Sundararajan describes the de-centralised, non-hierarchical character of the collaborative model as illustrative for a fundamental transition from managerial capitalism to crowd-based capitalism that occurred in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Sundararajan, 2016, p. 69). His argument emphasises the power of individuals in the collaborative networks to generate and mediate economic exchanges outside of other market-based organisations. As the collaborative model becomes more dependent on the platform and technologies that enable its functionality, and the increased financial investments shift focus on the profitability of the platform, the empowerment effect becomes somewhat overshadowed and doubtful.

As Yochai Benkler noted, the collaborative economy empowers and enhances autonomy in mainly three directions: individuals can do more for themselves; they can do more in relation with others (loose association as opposed to a centralised form of organisation or long-term relationships); and they can do more in organisations that are independent from the markets (as explained in the examples of collaboration projects outside the economic sphere) (Benkler, 2007, p. 8). These various facets of perceived empowerment make the collaborative model particularly appealing to the individual, as it facilitates economic agency and removes the control of external actors or contracts. The individual is empowered because it becomes part of an autonomous collective.

### **3.9 Community and trust**

One of the most discussed features of the collaborative model is its ability to appeal to our social nature and to enhance our social behaviour. With the help of digital technologies, it demonstrates the extraordinary capacity that communities, both local and global, have to organise themselves and build coherent units around highly diverse interests. In addition to that, it transposes the model of social relations into the economic realm and re-defines economic activity from the prism of collaboration, reciprocity and trust. Indirectly, it creates a sense of community between users, as they perceive their individual interests to co-exist with collective ones, as an expression of common purpose and support for larger causes.

A recurrent observation with regard to the changes of social and economic behaviour across generations is that we are experiencing a transition from the *Me, me, me generation* (Stein, 2013) to the *We generation* (Botsman, 2011, p. 51). After all, it is only an inverted letter that makes the difference between Me and We. Following the generation of the Millennials (those born between 1981-1996), often characterised as narcissistic (Stein, 2013), the new Generation Z (born 1997-2010) is, as AnneMarie Hayek noted, “all about unity, collaboration, and bold action” (Hayek, 2021, p. 15).



The importance that collective action has for this young generation of users, combined with the popularisation of information and communication technologies reflect the potential that the collaborative model has to generate powerful communities and to influence the development of future economic behaviour.

But its social strength goes beyond the generational appeal. Many studies have demonstrated that the large majority of participants in the collaborative economy agree with the fact that it builds a stronger community (PwC, 2015, p. 9). The strong interactive nature of the collaborative model often increases the potential for social engagement between users. These perceived social benefits resulting from the collaborative economy are actually the most difficult to measure. It can be argued, of course, that the nature of the social relations developed digitally on platforms is rather superficial. Political scientist Robert Putnam provides in *Bowling alone* an insightful analysis of the recent changes in American society which indicate a growing disconnection between individuals, disengagement from community life and fragmentation of social structures (Putnam, 2000). The result of this social disintegration and increased sense of isolation are often seen in relation with the increasing popularity of online communities. This is also the argument of media professor Edward Castronova, who claims that we have commenced probably the greatest mass migration in human history – the “exodus to the virtual world” (Castronova, 2007). His observation is related to the growth of the gaming industry, and suggests that one of the most important reasons why millions of people are attracted to online games is because they offer a sense of community, purpose and individual worth. The virtual world entices with the opportunity to be part of a community where physical differences between individuals cannot be noticed and discrimination is practically non-existent, where people must team up with others to achieve specific goals, where specific traditions and cultural values are replaced by universal quests in which every individual can become a hero (ibid., p. 67). Castronova’s argument emphasises the strong sense of community that digital technologies facilitate in the virtual space, and contradicts the widely spread idea that our engagements in the virtual space is what leads to isolation in real life.

It is, of course, unrealistic to claim that participation in the collaborative economy will automatically make stronger communities or more engaged individuals, but it certainly reflects a mind-set that is inherently collective and feeds into our instinctual need for social connection. In a 1987 interview, Margaret Thatcher notoriously declared: “Who is society? There is no such thing! There are individual men and women and there are families and no government can do anything except through people and people look to themselves first” (Thatcher, 1987). The collaborative model offers an alternative to Margaret Thatcher’s vision of sole individualism. It shows how people can act in their own interest and simultaneously as a community with shared purpose, and how the dynamic of collaboration could immensely increase the results of individual actions. The growing influence and power of communities has been identified not only in the context of economics, but in a wide range of sectors. The emerging paradigm of building communities of shared values and purpose, as an alternative to the free market model has been described as a “Renaissance of the commons” (Clippinger and Bollier, 2005, p. 263). The *New Yorker* columnist James Surowiecki talked about “the

wisdom of crowds” (Surowiecki, 2005, p. 3) as the new kind of collective intelligence. He claimed that collective organisation is often a more valuable asset for innovation than the actual expertise of individuals (ibid., p. 32). A similar view is shared by economists Dariusz Jemielniak and Aleksandra Przegalinska, who argue that the most impactful force on the transformation of economies does not come from the results of collaboration, but from the collective action itself (Jemielniak and Przegalinska, 2020, p. 10). They identified the “highly cooperative collective” as the foundation of the new age of “networked individualism fostered by perpetual online connectedness” (ibid.). Jemielniak and Przegalinska use the umbrella term of “collaborative society” in order to describe the larger phenomenon of “emergent and enduring cooperative groups, whose members have developed particular patterns of relationships through technology-mediated cooperation” (ibid., p. 11). This more inclusive approach recognises the role that communities and collaborative action can have even beyond the economic sphere, and points out to a more radical transformation affecting our social organisation. Similarly, economist Jeremy Rifkin observed a significant paradigm shift from market capitalism to the collaborative commons (Rifkin, 2015, p. 1). He calls this *the third industrial revolution* and argues with confidence that it will become the dominant economic order of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Rifkin recognises that the new sharing culture, which is inspired by collaborative interests and the desire to connect with others, creates a new economic pattern that values social capital more than the accumulation of market capital (ibid., p. 25). From this point of view, the economic success of the individuals will depend on their ability to expand their social capital and to use the dynamic of networks to derive value and benefits.

In the collaborative economy, communities are also important because they create a self-regulating mechanism to ensure reliability and credibility. Economist Arun Sundararajan talked about “the digitisation of trust”, as a phenomenon that illustrates the ability of platforms to transfer our real-world social capital into the digital space (Sundararajan, 2016, p. 63). For this reason, Sundararajan considers that these platforms (especially social media networks) will play an extremely important role in the future marketplaces. The credibility that the digitised social capital provides (and the networks where this is accessed) will influence people’s decision to engage in peer-to-peer interactions or not. Communities act as a system of trust. They collect the experiences of individuals and make them available to other users. The rating systems established by communities become the most reliable form of reference for goods and services and a highly influential factor for economic behaviour. A user with good ratings is highly likely to attract more users in the future, whereas a bad rating is fatal most of the time. This internal peer rating system replaces the credibility that in the traditional market model was provided by economic institution or brands.

Finally, communities give economic activity a face. The transparent character of the collaborative architecture makes it possible for users to get to know some things about each other before engaging in an economic exchange. Quite often, they can access the profile of those offering a good or a service and this personal information creates a sense of familiarity between them. The sheer fact that individuals are at both ends of the economic exchange conveys a much more personal form of engagement than the anonymous facade of a company or corporation.

Community is important in the context of the collaborative economy in manifold aspects. From the point of view of individual users, it adds value to the actual economic exchanges by conferring a sense of togetherness, unity of purpose and social engagement. From a macroeconomic point of view, it provides a powerful design which demonstrates the capacity of collective action for growth and innovation. From a structural point of view, community is what offers trust and credibility in the interactions between individuals.

### **3.10 Not everyone's darling, but still a necessity with happiness perks**

Despite the optimistic predictions of many economists, it would be unreasonable to suggest that sharing everything with everyone is an option that all people are willing to embrace. On the one hand, our predisposition to attach meaning to the things that surround us may naturally make us more inclined to keep them in our personal space. Memories are often embedded in materiality, and we generally tend to hold on to those things that are important to us. The right to exclude others from accessing them becomes a right to own our emotional heritage. On the other hand, this observation suggests that there is probably a personal hierarchy or categorisation of things that can be shared and things that cannot. It is difficult to make generalisations in this regard, as each person has her/his own subjective way to assign value or shareability to objects and actions.

Another interesting aspect is the generational perspective. As explained earlier in this chapter, the younger generations (both the Millennials and Generation Z) are more open to the collaborative economy, as they prefer access over ownership. They appreciate the convenience, flexibility and high degree of personalisation this model offers. In contrast, the older generations that lived through conflicts and material scarcity are still focused on material possessions as a form of security. A study conducted by PricewaterhouseCoopers on the American market in 2015 revealed that the large majority of users in the collaborative economy are between 18 and 44 years old, with much lower representation from other age groups (PwC, 2015, p. 10).

Remarkable differences appear if participation in the collaborative economy is a necessity or a hobby. The perceptions are very different if people participate in this model as an essential way to earn an income (when they otherwise would not be able to earn in the traditional economic model), or if they do it as a means to express their creativity or conviction to certain causes. Research conducted by Juliet Schor with regard to the perceived quality of work on collaborative platforms revealed that supplemental earners are generally very satisfied with their experience, whereas dependent earners show a contrasting picture, as precarity, financial worry and insecurity dominate (Schor, 2020, pp. 40-81).

Finally, differences in income also impact the propensity to participate in the collaborative economy. Research conducted by Arun Sundararajan revealed that most users (both as consumers and as providers) on peer-to-peer rental markets are of lower income. The higher-income groups often do not participate in this model, either because they still prefer to own things rather than share, or because

the perceived hassle of being a provider is not seen as being worth the earnings resulting from the exchange (Sundararajan, 2016, p. 129).

Despite of the fact that the collaborative economy is not everyone's darling and strong differences emerge when the participants' profiles and experiences are examined, it is a model embedded in profound social transformations that are emerging and will likely manifest more strongly in the future. The mix of financial benefits and many other perceived values are enticing prospects for many participants in this model, but its mechanisms must go, as any collective organism, through a process of maturing and betterment.

### **3.11 “Neoliberalism on steroids” or “lost in translation”?**

The increasing popularity of the collaborative economy and the consequent interest it raised to financial markets and venture capitalists has generated growing criticism from both practice and academia. The co-existence of the collaborative model with the more established patterns and mechanisms of the capitalist economy resulted in frictions that have added to the debate. In essence, critical positions point out a discrepancy between what collaborative economy claims to be and what it really is. Many consider it to be a disguised form to use the emerging social transformations in support of the same old model of the market economy. In an article published in *The Financial Times*, political analyst Evgeny Morozov attacked the rhetoric of the sharing economy and argued that this actually augments the negative effects of the dominant economic model, becoming a form of “neoliberalism on steroids” (Morozov, 2013). A very ingenious and appropriate phrase to approach the arguments below.

One of the recurrent themes in the critique against the collaborative economy is that it has been hijacked by capitalism. When under scrutiny, many of the most successful businesses in this sector reveal practices that speak against the ideological foundation of the collaborative model. Above all, the immense amount of venture capital funding flowing (most often from Silicon Valley) into these businesses is regarded as corrupting the very essence of the collaborative ideals. The financial interests and profit orientation of the investors who support these businesses generates disbelief in their rhetoric of community, connection and de-centralised action against the power of big corporations. Digital economy expert Nick Srnicek talked about platform capitalism as the new, re-structured model of classical capitalism. He argues that in response to the declined profitability of manufacturing, capitalism has created a new business model to ensure competitiveness and growth, and re-oriented towards a new resource – data – and a new environment to obtain, analyse and use data – platforms (Srnicek, 2017, p. 6). Srnicek sees the big economic players in this new business model as those who manage to own the infrastructures of society (ibid., p. 92). He refers to companies in the collaborative economy as “lean platforms” and considers that despite their frequent statements that they do not own anything and function only as a tool for collaborative action, their biggest asset is in fact the platform, its software and data analytics (ibid., p. 76). With regard to the practices of these companies, Srnicek provides an equally gloomy picture. He considers that they “function through a hyper-

outsourced model”, in which labour, fixed capital, maintenance costs and training are outsourced and which is nothing else than the continuation of the general tendencies of companies from the traditional market model (ibid., p. 78).

A very insightful analysis of the collaborative/sharing economy is offered by Tom Slee in his book *What's yours is mine*. He confronts many of the declared values of the sharing economy (he uses this term in his analysis) with the actual practices of the most successful companies from this sector and their impacts on the ground. From Airbnb to Uber, work generated by on-demand service platforms, trust, openness and the internet, reliance on technology, or the tension between the commons and capital, Slee's observations reveal profound contradictions. Despite the talk of empowering local people and providing an alternative to an economy dominated by corporations, Airbnb, Uber and the like have a strong commercial basis, using the ideals of collective action for private financial gains, and acting in the interest of their financial investors by pushing for economic deregulation (Slee, 2017, p. 19). Instead of building community and localhood, they appear to erode it, by causing gentrification through mass tourism or altering the social character of neighbourhoods. On-demand services reveal instead a “concierge economy” (ibid., p. 87), with poor working conditions, insecurity and the consolidation of an elitist class of consumers who can afford the services of those who have no other option for employment. The reputation systems are not really effective in providing trust and reliability, as rating others negatively alters the nature of our relationship with them and becomes a form of surveillance and a climate of fear (ibid., pp. 89-106). Even the idea of using the internet and other open-source software as a way of building a more democratic community of consumers appears to have simply transferred power from corporations to platform owners. Slee concludes that “what started as an appeal to community, person-to-person connections, sustainability, and sharing, has become the playground of billionaires, Wall Street, and venture capitalists extending their free market values ever further into our personal lives. The promise of a more personal alternative to a corporate world is instead driving a harsher form of capitalism: deregulation, new forms of entitled consumerism, and a new world of precarious work” (ibid., p. 160). Slee's critique is directed not so much against the values and principles of the collaborative economy per se, but rather at individual actors who, backed by the interests of financial investors, have used them for contradictory purposes. He emphasises the deceptive power that this model has to mask its functional flaws from the ideologically motivated users who are supporting it.

Another strong argument against the collaborative economy is the absence of regulatory mechanisms that would avoid the potential negative effects triggered by its practical realisation. There is also disagreement about who should provide these regulatory mechanisms. Is it the role of the state to interfere and make the new business abide to state-designed regulations? Some governments have already initiated action to address this issue and impose regulations at various levels (EU, France, Barcelona, etc.). In general, the novelty of this model and the difficulty to determine what forms the collaborative economy, or how this type of exchanges should be categorised increase the complexity of this endeavour. The lack of clarity also affects what is being taxed and how the more physical commons could benefit from taxes imposed on transactions resulting in the collaborative model.

The debates about the precariousness of work in the collaborative economy have also raised questions about the credibility of the claim that this model empowers and gives everyone the possibility to become an entrepreneur. Studies conducted on participants in collaborative economy business reveal that while there are general perceived benefits (especially with regard to new opportunities for income), there is also a strong discontent regarding the abusive, sometimes even discriminatory character of their work. Regardless of how grateful I am for having the possibility to order food online for those situations in which I simply cannot do the cooking myself, I always have a sense of modern slavery when seeing the migrant workers on their bikes carrying boxes of food that will end on somebody's table. On the platforms' side, their refusal to assume any liability for the participants' work or potential abuses in the economic exchanges raises concerns about who should be legally held responsible for that (Murillo et al., 2017, p. 71).

Critical voices have also questioned one of the most alluring claims of the collaborative economy, namely that it lowers environmental impacts. Sharing goods instead of owning them may reduce demand and the amount of resources needed for their production. But it may actually increase the use of many services that when aggregated have a more harmful impact on the environment. Using this logic, more affordable accommodation offered via Airbnb may inspire more people to book a flight and travel, which overall adds to the ecological footprint. Research has also demonstrated that the availability of shared transportation has made people use public transportation less and increase the number of cars on the streets (Schor, 2020, p. 117).

It is evident that many things can go wrong. For almost every idea that forms the foundation of the collaborative economy, there are examples of both positive and negative experiences in practice. The novelty of this model demonstrates that it still needs to fine-tune some of its structural elements, if it is to live up to the social goals it promises. The rapid pace and the nature of the social transformations that inspired the collaborative model also made it difficult to find a form of expression within the more established market economy and at the same time function independently of it. As always, criticism is good because it indicates what can be fixed. Despite its flaws, even the most ardent critics recognise the unbeatable appeal of the ideals of the collaborative economy. And if there is so much agreement on that, this is a strong indication that its potential is worth pursuing through trial-and-error and continuous betterment.

As explained in this chapter, the collaborative economy is conceptually very fitting to respond to our inherent duality to pursue both self-interest and cooperation, it reflects larger changes in our contemporary social and economic organisation, and has a strong potential for use in a wide range of sectors. In the next chapter, the potential application of the collaborative model in the field of heritage tourism will be suggested and examined from the perspective of both providers and users.

## CHAPTER FOUR: HOSTS

The previous chapter examined the collaborative economy from a theoretical perspective and explored its potential to better integrate individual and collective interests in economic activity. The use of such a model to develop small-scale, immersive tourism at cultural landscapes in rural areas has been suggested as a possible application with benefits for both hosts and tourists, and will further be explained in the final chapter. The purpose of the second part of the research is to provide empirical data with regard to this hypothesis, which would reflect the attitudes and the acceptance of a collaborative tourism model from potential hosts and tourists.

### 4.1 Background

To understand the individual readiness for collaborative economic models in local tourism, a survey was conducted in selected locations in Romania and India. The main goal of this survey was to capture the attitude of locals towards the possibility of developing an immersive, small-scale form of heritage tourism and participation in a collaborative model for this purpose. More exactly, the information collected from the survey was intended to reflect the following aspects: people's acceptance of tourism as an alternative income, the perceived usefulness of a collaborative model in tourism, the level of digital literacy and the perceived ease of use, the attitudes with regard to trust and the perceived risks of such a model.

The locations in Romania (Hrabusna and Breaza de Sus) and India (Bijjuru Gokarna and Belekeri) were carefully selected for this research based on their geographic, socio-economic and demographic profile, as well as their exposure to tourism development. Although situated in different geographical and cultural contexts, all locations are in a rural setting, with rich natural resources and agriculture as the main form of land-use. The populations are predominantly self-sufficient and practice small-scale, traditional agriculture. Poverty is relatively high, with infrastructure and basic facilities lacking. The traditional agricultural practices are often associated with intense physical effort and do not necessarily provide financial security, which makes them less and less popular with the young generation. The allure of urban opportunities puts further pressures on their continuation. A sense of isolation and despair prevails, although people are still very proud of and connected with their way of living with the land. These places have a vibrant community life, with rich oral and handicraft traditions. With relation to tourism, all locations have not been exposed to tourism development yet. Whereas they are perceived to have high potential in attracting visitors (particularly in view of their living traditions), they have not been engaged in the conventional, market-oriented type of tourism development. Neither should they, as the current thesis will later on suggest. The geographical context of these locations makes them rather difficult to access. However, they are still within reasonable distance to other tourist attractions, which may be perceived as an additional benefit.

Identifying these locations was itself a long process of research. Personal travel experiences, combined with the consultation of literature, reports, articles and videos from mass-media, as well as discussions with friends connected with these regions guided the process. In a sense, this felt somewhat similar to a detective work, attempting to identify relevant clues and narrowing down the selection range with every step of the research, until the ideal four locations were identified.

## **4.2 Methods**

### **4.2.1 Survey format**

The survey was conducted in person at all locations. Sometimes this involved many hours of extreme driving on country roads in mountainous regions or on no roads at all, in search of places that are not listed on any map (yes, there are locations where Google maps have not arrived yet). But the determination to reach these locations came from a strong conviction that personal discussions and not digital communication are the best way to understand how people live and feel about their environment, community and hospitality towards others.

In all cases, contacts from within the communities facilitated the individual talks and ensured a sense of familiarity with the interviewer. Quite often, people from small traditional communities are hesitant to open up to outsiders, so having a local contact was regarded as an important element in the process. Before approaching the survey, a significant amount of time was invested in informal talks with the people who accepted to take part in the survey. This contributed to a better mutual acquaintance between the interviewer and the respondents. It also made the respondents more familiar with the context of the survey and it helped the interviewer better understand the realities of the places, or aspects that were not necessarily mentioned in the questionnaire.

The survey was conducted in the native language of the respondents: Romanian (the interviewer is a native speaker) and Kannada (a local interpreter assisted in the process).

### **4.2.2 Ethical considerations**

The survey was guided both in content and in practice by an ethical approach to academic research (Bryman, 2012, p. 135). No contents perceived harmful to the participants or invading their privacy were included. Particularly for questions related to socio-economic and demographic aspects (age, gender, family status, education, employment and income), which could be interpreted as sensitive by some respondents, an option out (“prefer not to answer”) was included in the questionnaire. Participants were given detailed information about the context of the research and the use and significance of the survey results, so that they could make an informed decision whether or not they wanted to respond. The possibility of withdrawing from the survey at any time was also presented to the respondents. It was also explained that the participation in the survey is voluntary, and that all individual responses will be used for research purposes in a way that maintains their anonymity and



confidentiality. The independence of this research and the absence of any other biased economic or tourism-related interests was made clear and explicitly communicated. It was also explained that at the end of the survey, the anonymised research data will be archived at BTU Cottbus-Senftenberg in order to make it available to other researchers in line with current academic data-sharing practices.

All participants received a research information sheet. This was read and orally explained before the survey questions were asked. The full content of this informative document is available in English in Annex 1 and in Romanian in Annex 2. An interview consent form was obtained from everyone who participated in the survey. The full content of this form is available in English in Annex 3 and in Romanian in Annex 4.

#### 4.2.3 Survey questions

The survey included 38 questions and aimed to convey detailed information regarding three main aspects: the willingness of the participants from the selected locations to engage in small-scale heritage tourism, their acceptance and readiness to adopt a collaborative economic model for this purpose, and the perceived barriers and risks for the implementation of such a model. The questions can be divided into six categories, which will be presented and explained below.

- **Demographic and socio-economic data.** Information about the age, gender, marital status, household size, highest degree of education, employment status, annual income and main source of income was collected. The purpose of this section was to understand the demographic profile of the respondents and to identify potential socio-economic considerations of their attitude towards the potential development of heritage tourism.
- **Acceptance of heritage tourism as an alternative income.** Some questions focused on the willingness of the respondents to host a limited number of tourists, as well as the preferred frequency of hosting tourists. The motivation behind the potential acceptance of heritage tourism was also explored. Respondents were invited to prioritise various aspects that could play an important role for them in this regard: earning an additional income, getting to know people from other countries, sharing their knowledge and local culture with others, using the additional income from tourism as a form of financial security that would allow the continuation of traditional practices, the prospect of individual entrepreneurship, or the improvement of the current living conditions. Respondents were also invited to estimate a minimum monetary value that would make tourist hosting attractive from a financial point a view. The logistical aspects were also explored, in terms of available space and rooms to rent for tourism purposes, or the consideration of alternative hosting models (tourists taking accommodation at a different location, but still spending the day with the respondents). A very important aspect was that of the willingness to involve tourists in daily routines in the field and around the household, as well as to take additional time to share with tourists traditional skills and knowledge during their stay. Finally, preferences for certain types of

tourists (young tourists, families, middle-aged couples, senior tourists, etc.) were examined, as well as the openness towards international tourists.

- **Perceived usefulness.** This section explored the respondents' perception of whether a collaborative tourism platform could be useful to them or not, both in generating benefits, but also in attracting tourists. Their willingness to consider joining such a platform was also questioned.
- **Digital literacy and perceived ease of use.** This section collected information about the basic technical skills of the respondents and the digital infrastructure (availability of computer, smart phone, internet, bank account) at the place where they live. Some questions aimed to understand how difficult the respondents perceive the implementation of a collaborative model from a technical point of view, as well as their readiness to learn the required skills in order to participate in this model.
- **Trust.** This section aimed to understand how the respondents perceive the reliability of a potential platform that would facilitate between hosts and tourists and which would facilitate the development of a collaborative tourism model. Aspects like the preference for an intermediary or a local partner in the process were also explored. Trust was also explored from the perspective of potential tourists and the ways in which this could best be established (online profiles, reviews, communication with tourists, communication with other hosts, etc.).
- **Perceived risks.** A set of questions focused on the perceived risks associated with the respondents' participation in a collaborative model for heritage tourism. Concerns regarding available space, amenities and standards of accommodation, tourist expectations, or language barriers were addressed. Technical concerns regarding the access and use of a tourism platform were also examined. Finally, this section explores the perceived risks in relation to the potential effects of tourism development in the private and communal life.
- **Other concerns.** The last part of the questionnaire is an open-end question inviting respondents to refer to other barriers or concerns that would influence their willingness to participate in this model of heritage tourism.

The full version of the questionnaire is available in English in Annex 5 and in Romanian in Annex 6.

#### 4.2.4 Survey sampling

The purpose of this survey was explorative in nature. It aimed to understand the local attitudes and opinions with relation to the potential development of heritage tourism through a collaborative economic model, rather than to claim the representativeness of results for the studied locations. The attitudes identified in the results could be further researched with more rigorous random sampling methods.

All selected locations have small populations (in Romania, Hrabusna has 15 inhabitants and Breaza de Sus 319 inhabitants, whereas in India, Bhavikeri has 8,160 inhabitants and Gokarn has 13,539 – still very low numbers in relation to India's total population). In Romania, the population of interest

for the survey consisted of all adults residing at the two selected locations. In India, the population of interest was restricted to the Halakki Indigenous communities living at the two selected locations. There is no available data regarding the exact size of the Halakki communities in relation to the total population in Bhavikeri and Gokarn, but the number is significantly smaller. Based on these circumstances, the sampling frame could only be devised in the field, as it included the total households of the targeted population. Given the exploratory character of the survey, no specific sample size was established from the beginning. This was adjusted depending on the availability and willingness of the respondents to participate (all the interviewed people are spending the entire day in the fields or taking care of house chores, so the fact that they took the time to listen to a stranger talking about tourism development and collaborative models – the jargon was actually spared during the talks – was really a privilege for the interviewer). Although convenience and time limitations did play a role in conducting the survey, the research did not undertake convenience sampling. The used method was that of simple random sample. Respondents were selected randomly at the site, through visits conducted in person by the interviewer in the communities of the targeted population. The sampling method was undertaken relying on the physical presence at the site, in a situation where data could not have been obtained in advance and digital communication counterproductive to the results. As explained earlier, representativeness was not the main goal of the survey, but rather the confirmation of a tentative hypothesis – that residents of these locations may be open to participate in a collaborative model for heritage tourism.

### **4.3 Survey in Romania: Hrabusna and Breaza de Sus**

#### **4.3.1 Context**

The first survey was conducted at two locations in Romania: Hrabusna and Breaza de Sus, two villages situated in Suceava County, in the Northern part of Romania. Hrabusna is located in the Izvoarele Sucevei commune. Breaza de Sus is located in the Breaza commune. They are situated close to the border with Ukraine, in the historical region of Bucovina. People from Bucovina have a strong sense of their collective identity and a deep attachment to their traditions, which continue to represent an integral part of their life. These include not only distinct traditional clothing and a rich oral culture, but also various crafts (intricate decoration of Easter eggs, wood carving, weaving, etc.) and vast traditional knowledge about nature. This is reflected in the traditional ways of using the land, especially in the complex techniques of tending to the mountainous pastures and meadows, which have one of the highest biodiversity indices in Europe. Even within a larger national context, all Romanians consider Bucovina to be a region associated with rich traditions and natural beauty. This image has often been used by the National Agency for Tourism in attracting visitors from Romania and abroad.



Figure 2 Administrative map of Romania. The county of Suceava is highlighted. (Creative Commons CC BY-SA 3.0, modified by author)



Figure 3 Administrative map of Romania displaying the smaller administrative units (communes) within the counties. The communes of Breaza and Izvoarele Sucevei, where the field research was conducted, are highlighted in pink. (Map by Rarelibra, 2007, Creative Commons public domain, modified by author)

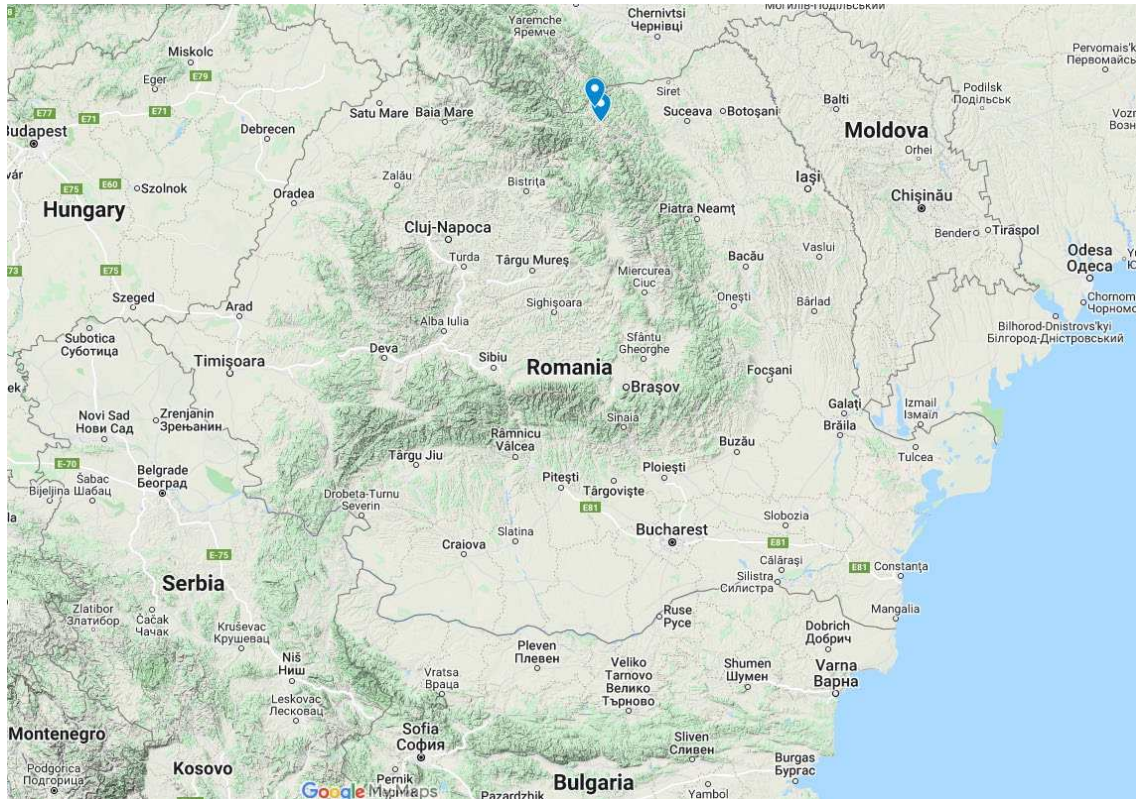


Figure 4 Physical map of Romania indicating the location of Hrabusna and Breaza de Sus. (Google Maps, 2022)

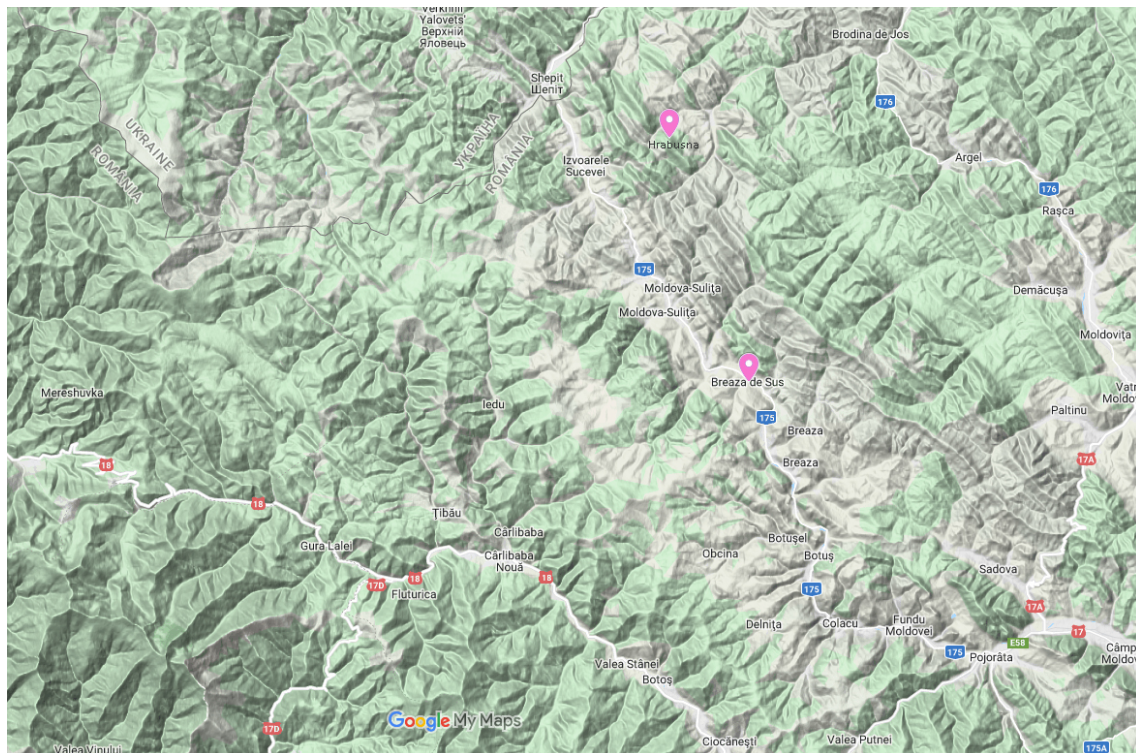


Figure 5 Physical map of the region where Hrabusna and Breaza de Sus are located. (Google Maps, 2022)

The Izvoarele Sucevei commune has a total area of 13,270 ha, out of which 8,896 ha is covered with forests and 4,247 ha is used for agriculture, including large areas with pastures and meadows that are still tended to in a traditional, manual manner (Guvernul Romaniei, 2022). Izvoarele Sucevei has a

total population of 2,306 inhabitants, a large percentage (around 57%) being Ukrainians, particularly the ethnic group of Hutsuls (Consiliul Local Izvoarele Sucevei, 2020). More than 60% of the population is self-sufficient working in their own household and adjacent fields (Consiliul Local Izvoarele Sucevei, 2020). Geographically, the commune is located in the Bukovinian Subcarpathians, to the Northeast of the Eastern Carpathian Mountains, at an altitude between 790 metres and 1,506 metres. Hrabusna, the location where part of the survey was conducted, is situated in the northern part of the commune Izvoarele Sucevei. Hrabusna is a so-called “catun” (a hamlet), and is representative for this type of small rural settlements in which only a few families live together and which do not constitute an administrative unit in themselves. Frequently, people in these catuns live in isolation without any access to basic facilities. Children must often walk kilometres on mountainous terrain in order to go to the nearest school, while medical facilities are also hours away. People are self-reliant and live from what they gain from the land and the animals they have. They demonstrate an extraordinary strength and an extensive knowledge of nature. Conversations that I personally held or witness in other circumstances show a profound modesty, wisdom and character that life in these secluded places imprinted on their inhabitants. In Hrabusna, there are only 6 families left, totalling around 15 inhabitants (data provided from conversations with locals).



*Figure 6 Household in Hrabusna. Photo: S. v. Eyb.*



*Figure 7 Local road leading to Hrabusna. Photo: S. v. Eyb.*



*Figure 8 Locals turning the hay by hand with traditional tools on the meadows in Hrabusna. Photo: S. v. Eyb.*



*Figure 9 Haystack on the alpine meadows in Hrabusna. Photo: S. v. Eyb.*



*Figure 10 Abandoned house in Hrabusna. Photo: S. v. Eyb.*



The Breaza commune has a total area of 8,464 ha, out of which 4,615 ha is covered with forests and 3,490 ha is used for agriculture, here too with large areas of traditional pastures and meadows (Guvernul Romaniei, 2022). Breaza has a total population of 1,622 inhabitants, with the majority of inhabitants being self-sufficient and engaged in domestic agriculture (Grup de Acțiune Locală Bucovina de Munte, 2015, p. 47). The commune presents similar geographical features to Izvoarele Sucevei, being located in the Bukovinian Subcarpathians, at an altitude between 840 metres and 1,358 metres. A high diversity of flora and fauna characterises the region, including the brown bear, the lynx, the wolf or the Carpathian stag. There are only three accommodation guesthouses available on the territory of the commune, with a total maximum capacity of 6 beds (ibid., 2015, p. 46).

Breaza de Sus, the second location where the survey was conducted, is situated in the northern part of the Breaza commune. It is a village with a total of 319 inhabitants (INS, 2011), considerably larger than Hrabusna, but still small for a typical rural settlement. Its infrastructure is more developed than in Hrabusna, with access to an important county road. Basic facilities are poor or inexistent. The households are spread in the hilly and mountainous areas on both sides of the county road.



*Figure 11 Households with private meadows in Breaza de Sus. Photo: S. v. Eyb.*



*Figure 12 View of the meadow landscape in Breaza de Sus. Photo: S. v. Eyb.*



*Figure 13 View of the village Breaza de Sus with forests in the background. Photo: S. v. Eyb.*

#### 4.3.2 Format

The survey was conducted for the duration of three weeks in August 2021. The researcher engaged in conversations with the respondents which went beyond the scope of the questionnaire contents. The goal was to gain an accurate sense of the attitudes of the locals in relation to the potential development of tourism, as well as their current concerns and the realities of their socio-economic environment. A total of fifteen people from different households were interviewed (two from Hrabusna and thirteen from Breaza de Sus).



*Figure 14 The researcher talking with locals on the alpine meadows in Hrabusna. Photo: C. v. Eyb.*

#### 4.3.3 Results

##### *Demographic data*

Seven out of the fifteen respondents were between the age of 35-44 years, four were between the age of 45-54 years, three were between the age of 18-24 years old and one was between 55-64 years old. Respondents over 65 years old were willing to talk to the researcher informally, but they were hesitant to officially take part in the survey. A potential explanation could be their reluctance to appear in anything that they consider “official” and is not related to their familiar surroundings, as well as a feeling of intimidation coming from their low level of education. Surprisingly, no respondents between the age of 25-34 years were identified. This could be related to the fact that a large percentage of the population in this age group has migrated to the cities in the region in search of opportunities.

Another large wave of migration contained many people in this age group who left for other European countries in search of economic opportunities, a phenomenon widely experienced by many rural locations in Romania.

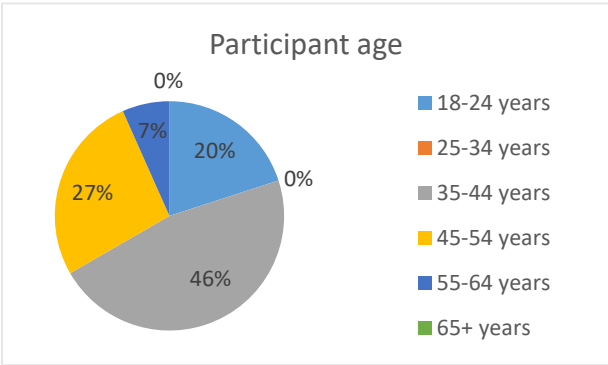


Figure 15 Age of survey participants.

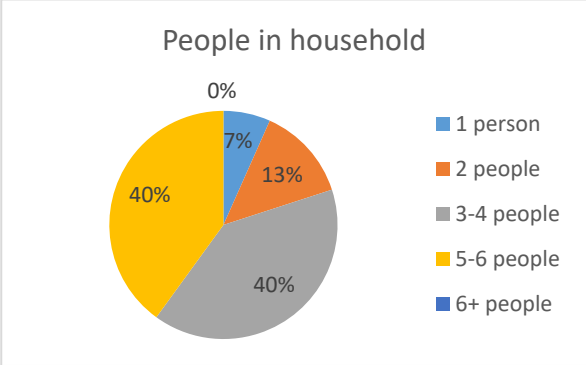


Figure 16 Number of people in their household.

The majority of respondents were female (eleven) and a smaller number (four) were male. This could be explained by a higher degree of perceived familiarity of the female respondents with the researcher. An additional factor was the fact that male respondents found it more difficult to take time off from their regular work on the land. The period of the survey coincided with an important time in the traditional calendar, in which the hay on the meadows had to be cut, turned, gathered and hung on the wooden resting structures on the meadows. The majority of respondents (eleven) are married, living in medium to large households. Six respondents indicated that they live in a household of 5-6 people, while six live in a 3-4 people household. A further two respondents listed that they live in a household with 2 people and one respondent lives alone. The average level of education of the respondents is rather low. The majority (seven) had completed secondary school, five had completed high school, one vocational school and one had obtained a Bachelor’s degree.

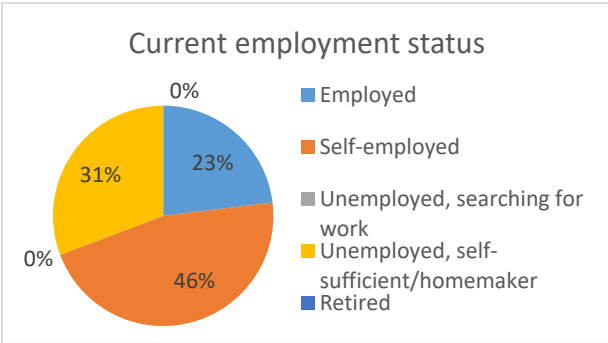


Figure 17 Current employment status of respondents.

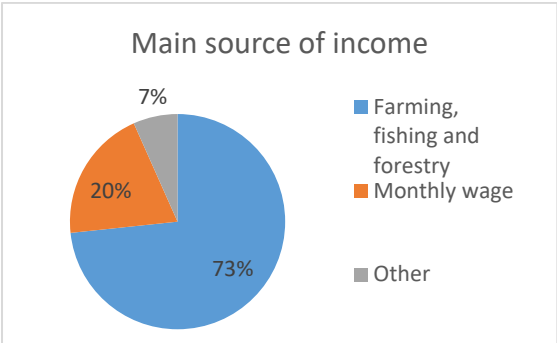


Figure 18 Respondents’ main source of income.

The majority of respondents are either self-employed (six) or unemployed, but self-sufficient/homemaker (four) which confirms the overall profile of the region. Only three respondents are employed, while two other respondents preferred not to answer. The main source of income for most respondents (eleven) is farming, fishing and forestry. Only three respondents receive monthly wages and one is active in the construction field.

### *Acceptance of tourism as an alternative income*

When asked whether they would be willing to host a limited number of tourists (for example, two people or one family per stay) at their home every year if this brought them additional income, eight respondents indicated that they definitely would. Three respondents indicated that they would be interested in hosting, but with some concerns. Four other respondents indicated that they may consider hosting tourists, but would need more time to carefully think about this prospect. The large majority of respondents (eleven) expressed their intention to host tourists whenever they desire to come. One respondent would prefer to host every month, one only half a year and two respondents only three months a year.

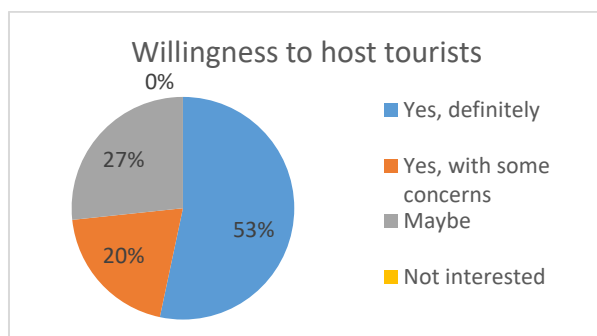


Figure 19 Willingness of respondents to host tourists.

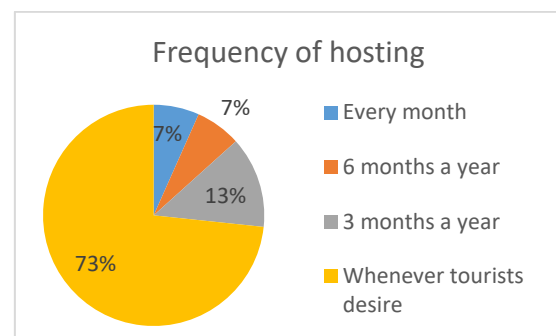


Figure 20 Desired frequency of hosting tourists.

Respondents were asked a series of questions to determine the main reasons that would convince them to host tourists at their place, rating these factors on a scale of very important, important, somewhat important and not important. Regarding the potential to earn additional income, six out of the fifteen respondents indicated that this would be an important factor in deciding to host tourists at their place. Five respondents considered it very important, three somewhat important. Only one person stated that it would not be important.

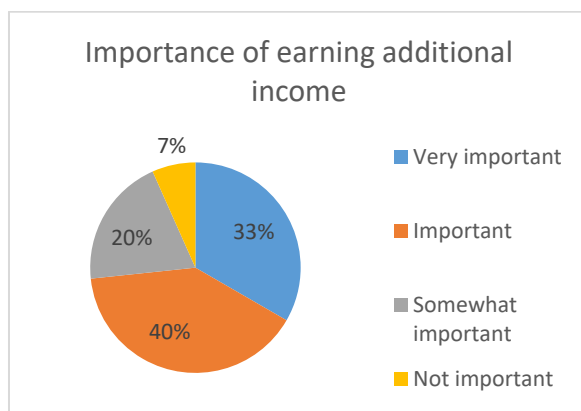


Figure 21 Importance of earning additional income.

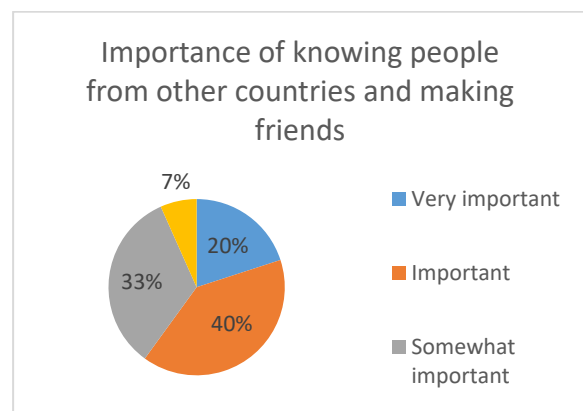


Figure 22 Importance of making new acquaintances.

Getting to know people from other countries and making friends as a main reason for hosting tourists was considered important by six respondents, very important by three respondents and somewhat important by five. Only by one respondent did not consider this an important factor.

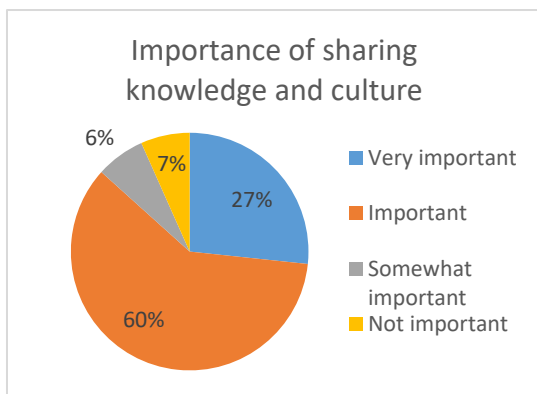


Figure 23 Importance of sharing their knowledge and culture with tourists.

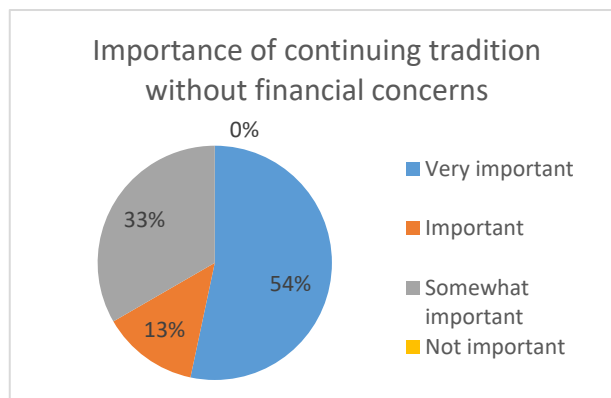


Figure 24 Importance of respondents' ability to continue their traditions without financial concern.

Sharing their knowledge and culture with other people was considered by the majority of respondents (nine) important for hosting tourists. Four respondents considered it to be very important. One other stated that it was somewhat important and one that it was not important. When considering the potential for additional income from tourists to help respondents continue their traditions and the way in which they live, without having to worry about their financial security, eight out of fifteen respondents indicated that this was a very important reason for hosting tourists at their place. Two others stated that this was an important factor and five indicated that it was somewhat important.

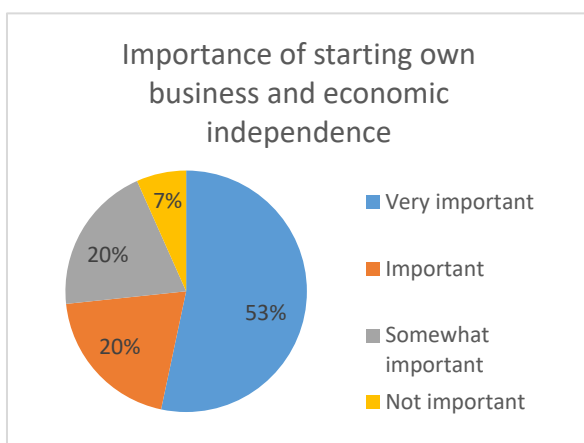


Figure 25 Importance of respondents' ability to start their own business and gain economic independence.

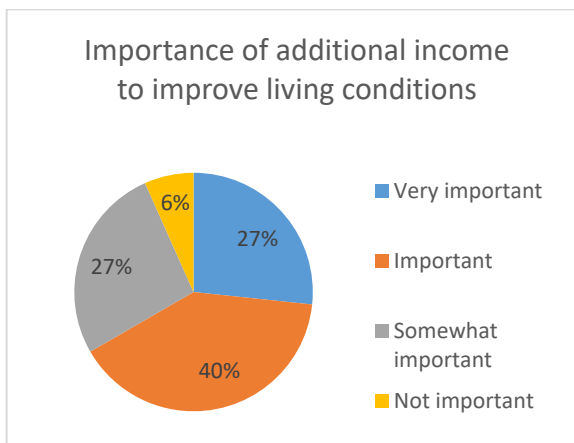


Figure 26 Importance of the additional income from tourism to improve living conditions.

The majority of respondents (eight) considered that the opportunity to start their own business and not depend on others for income was a very important factor that would convince them to host tourists at their place. Three suggested that this was an important reason for hosting and three considered this as somewhat important. Only one did not consider this to be important. Additional income improving living conditions was considered by the majority of respondents (six) to be an important for hosting tourists and by four very important. Four indicated that they felt that this was a somewhat important factor and one stated that it was not an important factor in convincing them to host tourists at their place.

When asked to indicate an acceptable after-tax income per stay for which they would be willing to host tourists at their place, respondents were given the options of 850 RON (ca. 175 EUR) per week, 1,700 RON (ca. 350 EUR) per week, 3,400 RON (ca. 700 EUR) per week, 4,500 RON (ca. 910 EUR) or above per week, or I don't know yet. The majority of respondents (seven) opted for the lowest option of 175 EUR per week. Four respondents indicated that they would prefer 350 EUR per week. In the higher category of earnings, one responded stated that 700 EUR would be an acceptable amount and one 910 EUR per week or above. Two other respondents were not sure what would be the appropriate amount to charge tourists.

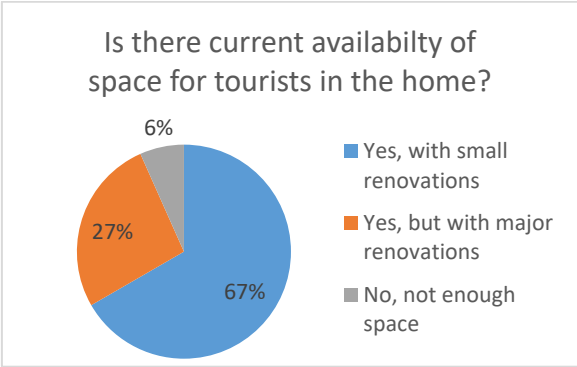


Figure 27 Current availability of space for tourists at the homes of respondents.

Participants were asked whether they currently have a space or room in their home that could be rented out to tourists. The majority of respondents (ten) stated that they do have a room that could be rented out to tourists if small renovations were undertaken. Four respondents indicated that they do have the room, but to be suitable it would require major renovations and more amenities, while one stated that he/she does not have enough space at their home currently. When asked whether they would prefer that tourists stayed at a different location, but would visit the hosts during the day, the opinions were more divided. Six respondents indicated that they would be comfortable with this arrangement. Seven respondents stated that they would prefer tourists to stay at their place. Two indicated that they would be okay with either option.

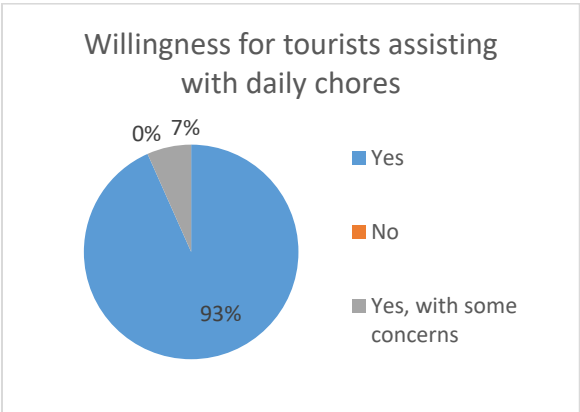


Figure 28 Willingness for tourists to assist with chores.

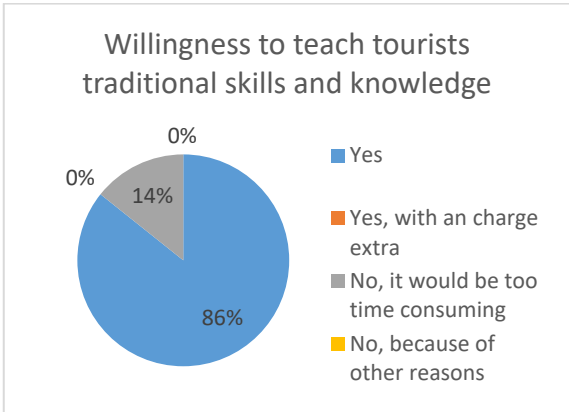


Figure 29 Willingness to teach their traditional skills

All respondents indicated that they would allow tourists to help with their daily chores, such as working the field, harvesting, and taking care of the animals. One respondent was concerned that he/she may not have enough time to spend with tourists or to explain to them in detail how to conduct

the different chores in a way that is also helpful. For many in this region, working the fields or attending the different chores around the household requires a lot of time and effectiveness. In some cases, being too late with a certain task in the field could mean that the entire harvest is compromised. When asked whether they would be willing to teach tourists some of their traditional skills and knowledge, such as weaving, wood carving, Easter egg decoration, pottery, medicinal plants, cooking, during their stay, the majority of respondents (twelve) indicated that they would. Similar to the previous question, two respondents stated that they would not be willing to do this because it would be too time consuming.

Participants were asked whether they would prefer to host different types of tourists, including young tourists (18-30 years old), families, middle-aged couples (30-45 years old), senior tourists (50 years old and above), or if they had no preference. Four respondents to this question indicated that they would prefer to host families, two would prefer middle-aged couples and one would prefer to host young tourists. Four respondents stated that they did not have a preference for which type of tourist they hosted.

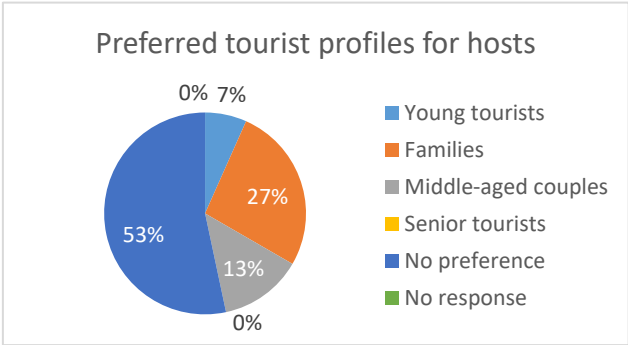


Figure 30 Preferred tourist profiles for the host.

All respondents indicated that they were willing to host international tourists. In fact, there was overall a strong enthusiasm perceived with regard to this aspect. Three respondents indicated that the language barrier was of great concern.

*Perceived usefulness of the collaborative model*

When asked whether participants would be willing to register on an international online network that puts tourists in contact with hosts, all fifteen respondents answered yes.

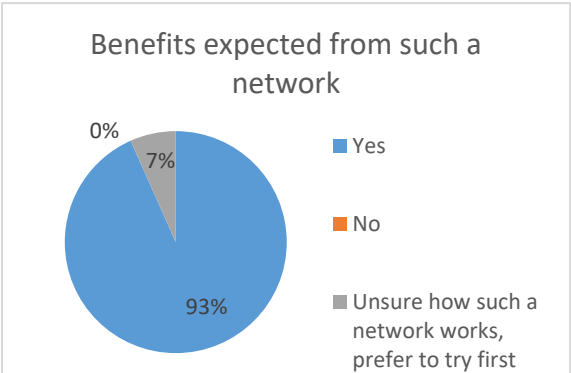


Figure 31 Expected benefits to be gained from network.

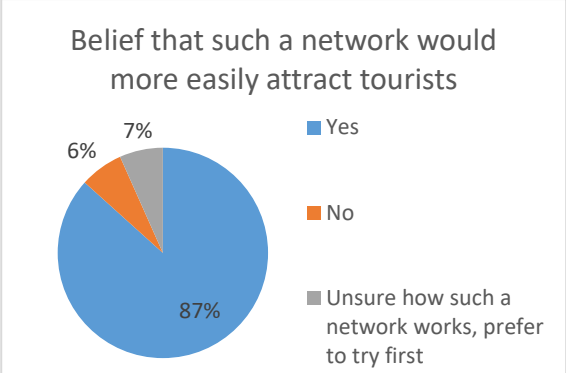


Figure 32 Belief in network easily attracting tourists.



Fourteen respondents indicated that they believed that using this network would help them gain direct benefits (and income) from hosting tourists. One stated that they were unsure of how such a network works and therefore they would have to try it first to form an opinion. Thirteen out of fifteen respondents believed that using this network would make it easier for them to attract tourists, one was unsure, while one did not believe this would be the case.

*Digital literacy and perceived ease of use*

When asked whether they could use a computer, ten out of fifteen respondents stated that they can use a computer easily. Five respondents indicated that they cannot use a computer, but that they were willing to learn the basics in order to be able to access the above-mentioned network. Twelve respondents stated that have a computer at home, while three did not.

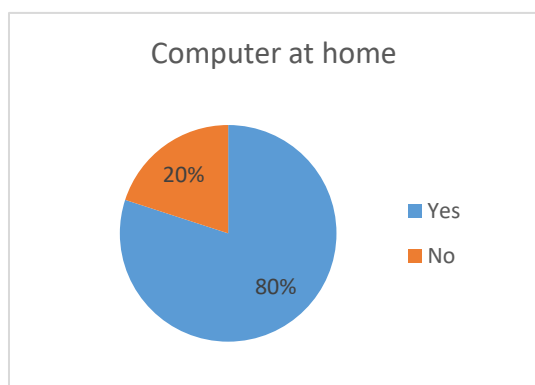


Figure 33 Participants with a computer at home.

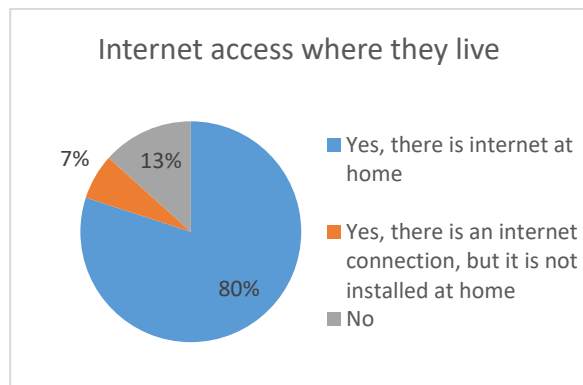


Figure 34 Participants with internet access at home.

Fourteen respondents stated that at least one member of their family has a smart phone, while one respondent does not have a family member with a smart phone. Twelve respondents stated that they have internet access where they live. One respondent indicated that an internet connection is available at home, but not installed yet, while there was no internet access at the home of one of the respondents. When asked if they would be willing to invest in buying a computer or a smart phone, all three respondents who did not own a computer or a smartphone stated they would do.

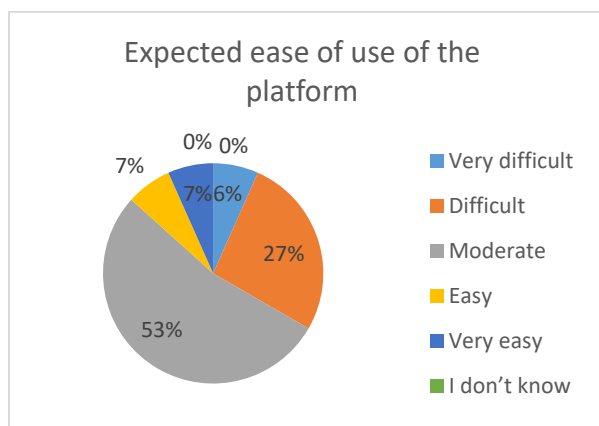


Figure 35 Expected ease of use of the platform connecting tourists and hosts.

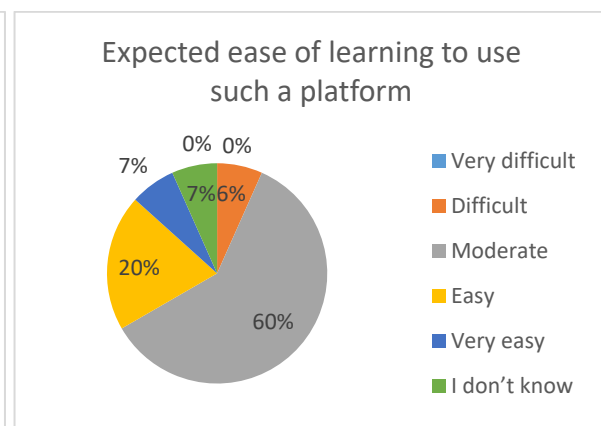


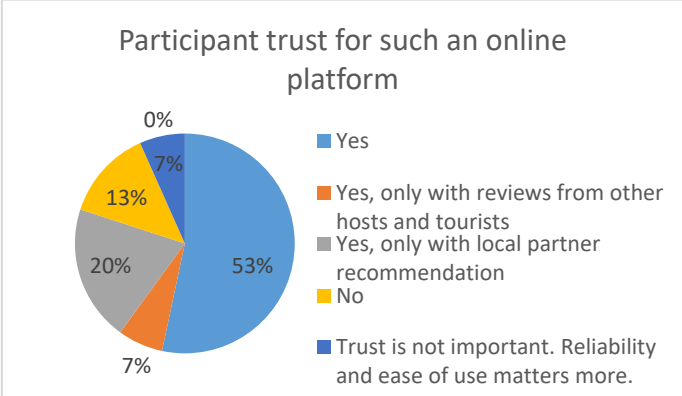
Figure 36 Expected ease of learning to use the platform.

On a scale from very difficult to very easy, eight out of fifteen respondents indicated that it would be moderately easy to use an online platform that connects tourists from around the world with hosts. Four suggested that it would be difficult to use the platform and one that it would be very difficult. One respondent considered it would be easy to use such a platform and another one considered it very easy. On a scale from very difficult to very easy, the majority of respondents (nine) indicated that it would be moderately easy to learn how use this online platform. Three respondents suggested that it would be easy to learn how to use the platform and one considered it to be very easy. Only one respondent stated that learning would be difficult. One respondent did not know what learning to use such a platform would entail.

When asked their preference for another person or company to take care of the technical details and communication with the tourists who wish to stay at their place, in return of a small fee deducted from the returns, most of the respondents (nine) indicated they would prefer to undertake this task themselves. Six other respondents indicated that they would prefer a third party to help them deal with these aspects.

*Trust*

The majority of respondents indicated that they would trust the services of such an online platform. Eight respondents stated that would trust it without reservation, three respondents considered their trust should be reinforced by a local partner who could recommend the platform, while one respondent stated that the review from other hosts and tourists would also strengthen the trust for such a platform. Two respondents expressed their reservations and mentioned that they would not trust such a platform. One responded considered that trust is not important in this context, but rather the platform’s technical reliability and ease of use.



*Figure 37 Participants’ trust for such an online platform.*

When asked whether they would trust an intermediary to facilitate between themselves and interested tourists, most of the participants responded that they would. Seven respondents considered their trust dependent on whether the person or company is competent and professional, and explains clearly how the partnership will work. Five respondents indicated that they would trust an intermediary, but it would be better if the person or company had a local contact point that they could talk to in case of questions or if problems arise. One respondent emphasised that trust depended on whether the

intermediary showed seriousness and would delivered their services as promised. Two respondents indicated that they would not trust an intermediary at all. One responded indicated that they would manage everything on their own, rather than through an intermediary.

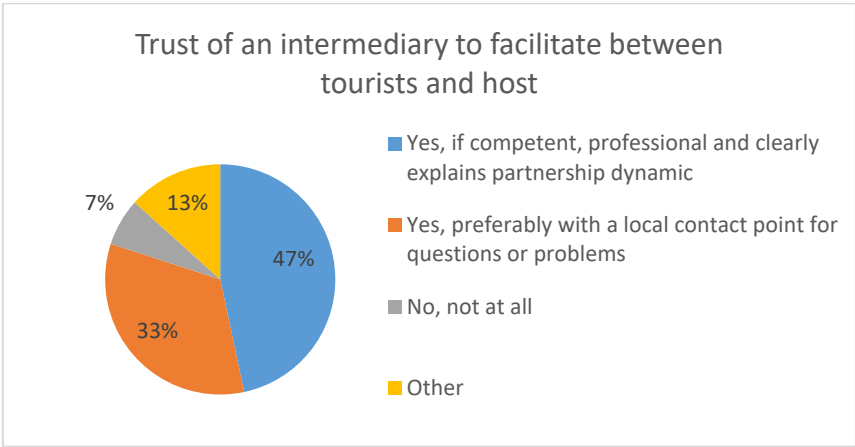


Figure 38 Participants’ trust for an intermediary to facilitate between tourists and the host.

Participants were asked to indicate the most important aspect in deciding whether they would host a tourist at their place. Most respondents (eight) indicated that they did not care about this aspect and would accept all tourists, as long as they pay for their stay. No respondents indicated that the tourist’s online profile would be the most important factor. However, six respondents indicated that the reviews the tourist received from other hosts would be important. Two participants stated that communication with the tourist would be the most important deciding factor in hosting at their place.

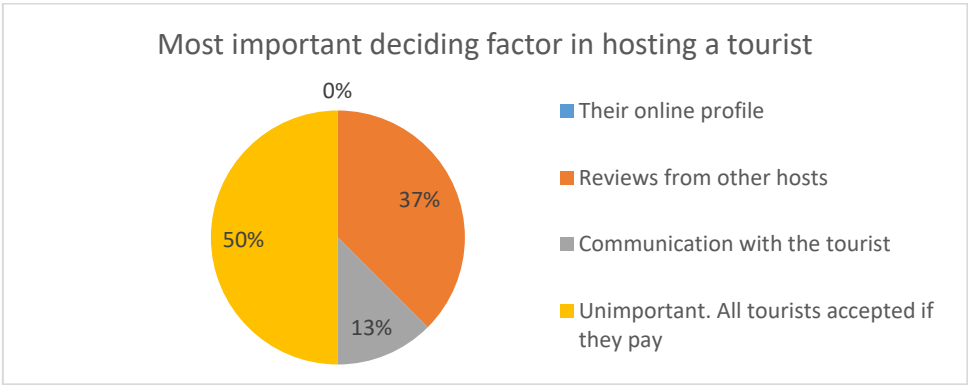


Figure 39 The most important deciding factor in hosting a tourist for respondents.

When asked whether they think it is important to communicate with other hosts and exchange experiences, seven participants stated that it was absolutely important. Six respondents indicated that it was important, but not necessary and two others stated that it was not important.

*Perceived risks*

Participants were asked to assess a series of concerns regarding hosting tourists at their place. These concerns were rated on a scale from very high to very low. Most of the participants (eight) responded that they had moderate concern regarding whether they had enough space in their house to host tourists. One respondent indicated that they had very high concern on this matter. Four respondents

indicated they had low concern over space for hosting and two others considered these concerns to be very low. Regarding the poor amenities and low standards of accommodation at their place making them unable to fulfil tourists’ expectations, five respondents indicated they had a high level of concern. Five other respondents had moderate concerns in this regard. Four respondents stated that they had low concern and a further two indicated that they had very low concern regarding the standard of amenities and accommodation that they would offer tourists.

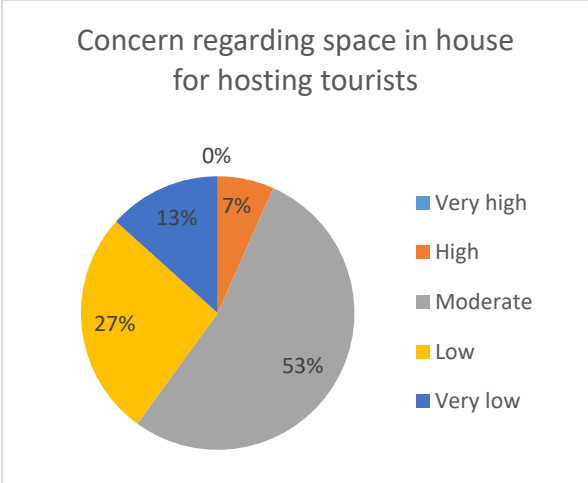


Figure 40 Level of concern regarding space in their house for hosting tourists.

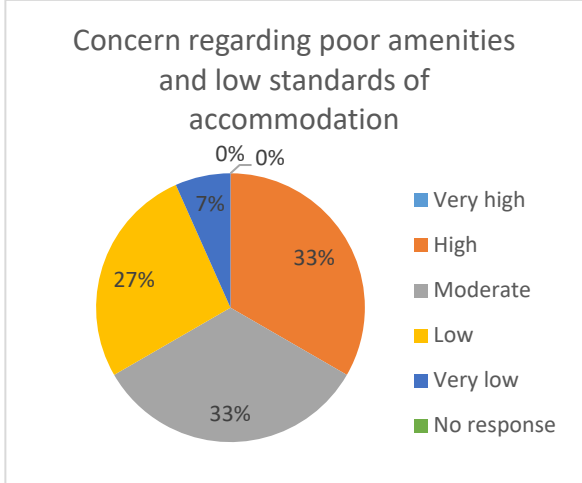


Figure 41 Level of concern regarding poor amenities and accommodation standards.

Regarding the technical elements of using the computer and dealing with the reservations online, most of the respondents (nine) had moderate concern and two very high concern. Two respondents indicated that they had low concern regarding the use of technology and two other very low concern.

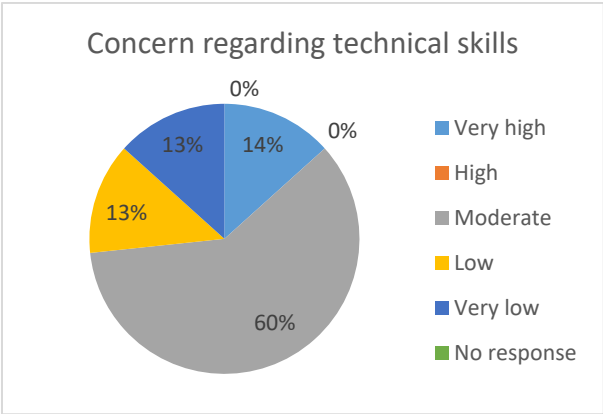


Figure 42 Level of concern regarding technical skills.

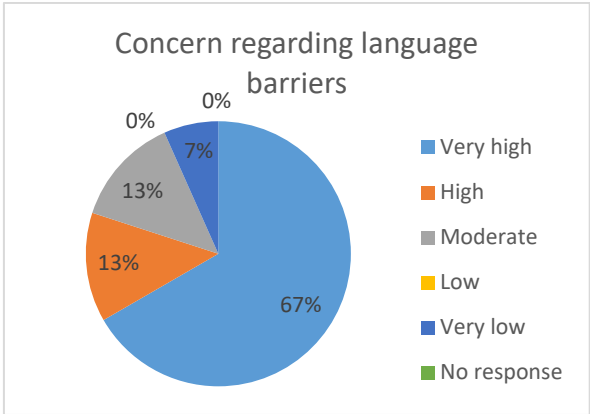


Figure 43 Level of concern regarding language barriers.

The concern regarding language barriers when communicating with tourists was perceived by most of the respondents (ten) as very high. Two participants indicated a high level of concern regarding language barriers, while a further two respondents stated that they had moderate concern. Only one respondent indicated that they had very low concern in this regard.

Regarding the prospect of too many tourists disturbing their household and the place where they live, most of the respondents (seven) had very low concern, while six other respondents had low concern about this aspect. Two respondents stated that they had moderate concerns in this regard. No

respondents expressed high or very high concerned about potential disturbances generated by tourists. When asked whether they had concerns regarding other negative impacts that hosting tourists could bring to the place where they live, eight participants respondent that they have a few concerns and one that they have a lot of concerns.

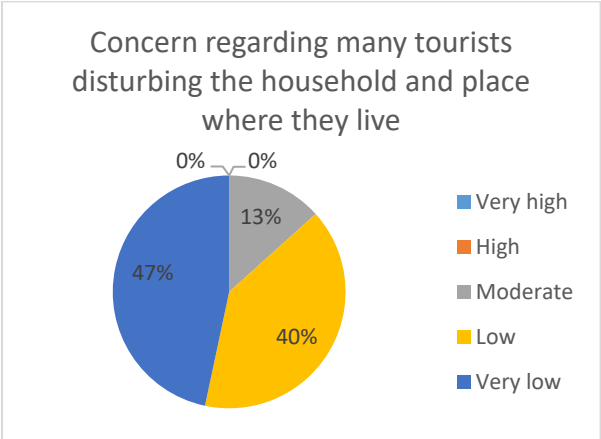


Figure 44 Level of concern that many tourists will disturb their household and place where they live.

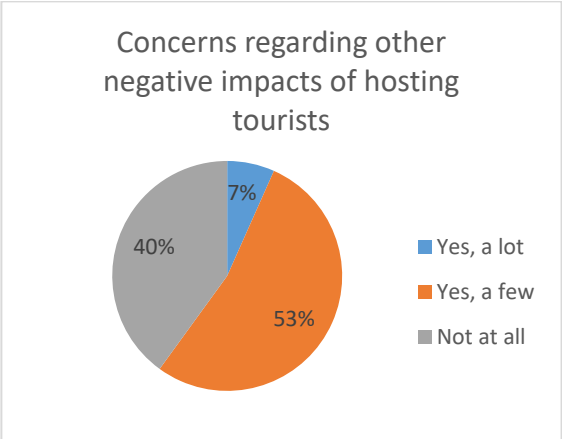


Figure 45 Level of concern regarding other negative impacts of hosting tourists.

For many, time seemed to be a very important aspect, as they worried that hosting tourists might prevent them from completing their chores around the household and work in the field. Lack of time was addressed also from the perspective of tourists, as the respondents felt obliged to make their stay as pleasant as possible and this would require time on their part. Language barrier concerns in communicating with tourists have been mentioned. Other concerns included the condition of the existent accommodation, the loud noise from tourists or potential thefts from their visit. However, six respondents indicated that they did not have any concerns at all regarding potential negative impacts of hosting tourists. Concerning the distribution of revenues from hosting tourists, eleven respondents expressed moderate concern and one high concern. Two respondents stated that they had low concern and one very low concern in this regard.

Finally, when asked whether they may require additional guidance to prepare their place for hosting tourists, six participants stated that they would need some guidance to prepare their place for hosting, while two mentioned that they would need a lot of guidance. Seven participants indicated that they would require no guidance at all in preparing their place for hosting tourists.

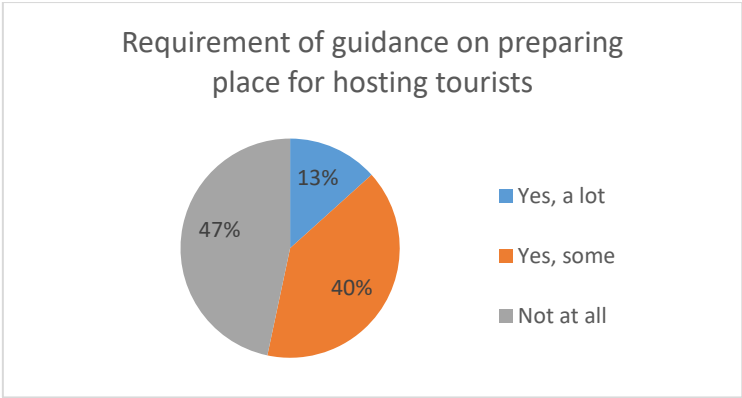


Figure 46 Participants' requirement of guidance on preparing place for hosting tourists.

## 4.4 Survey in India: Bhavikeri and Gokarn

### 4.4.1 Context

In India, the survey locations were selected based on their association with the Halakki Indigenous communities. Bhavikeri and Gokarn are two villages located in the district Uttara Kanada in the state of Karnataka, in the south-western part of India.

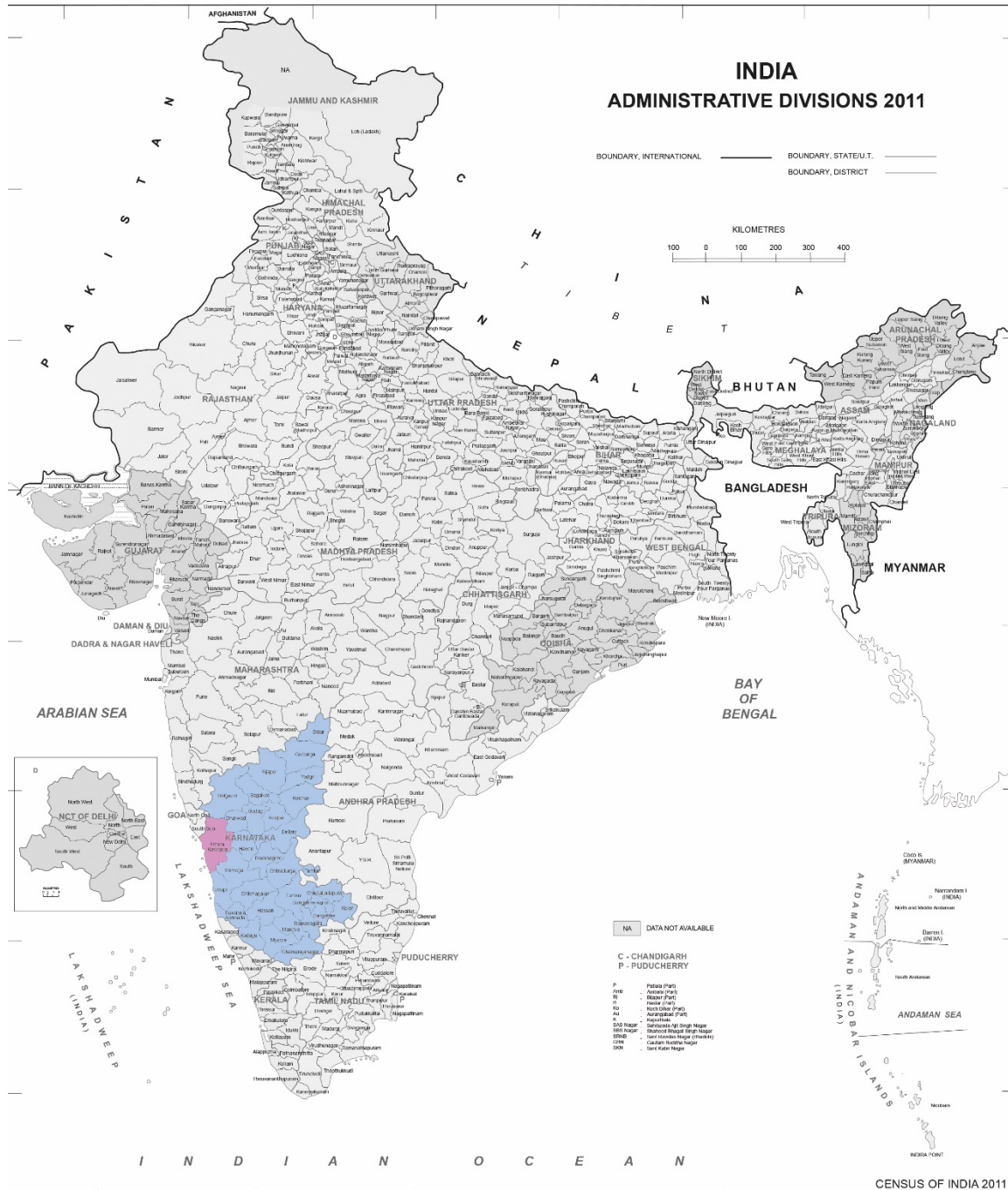
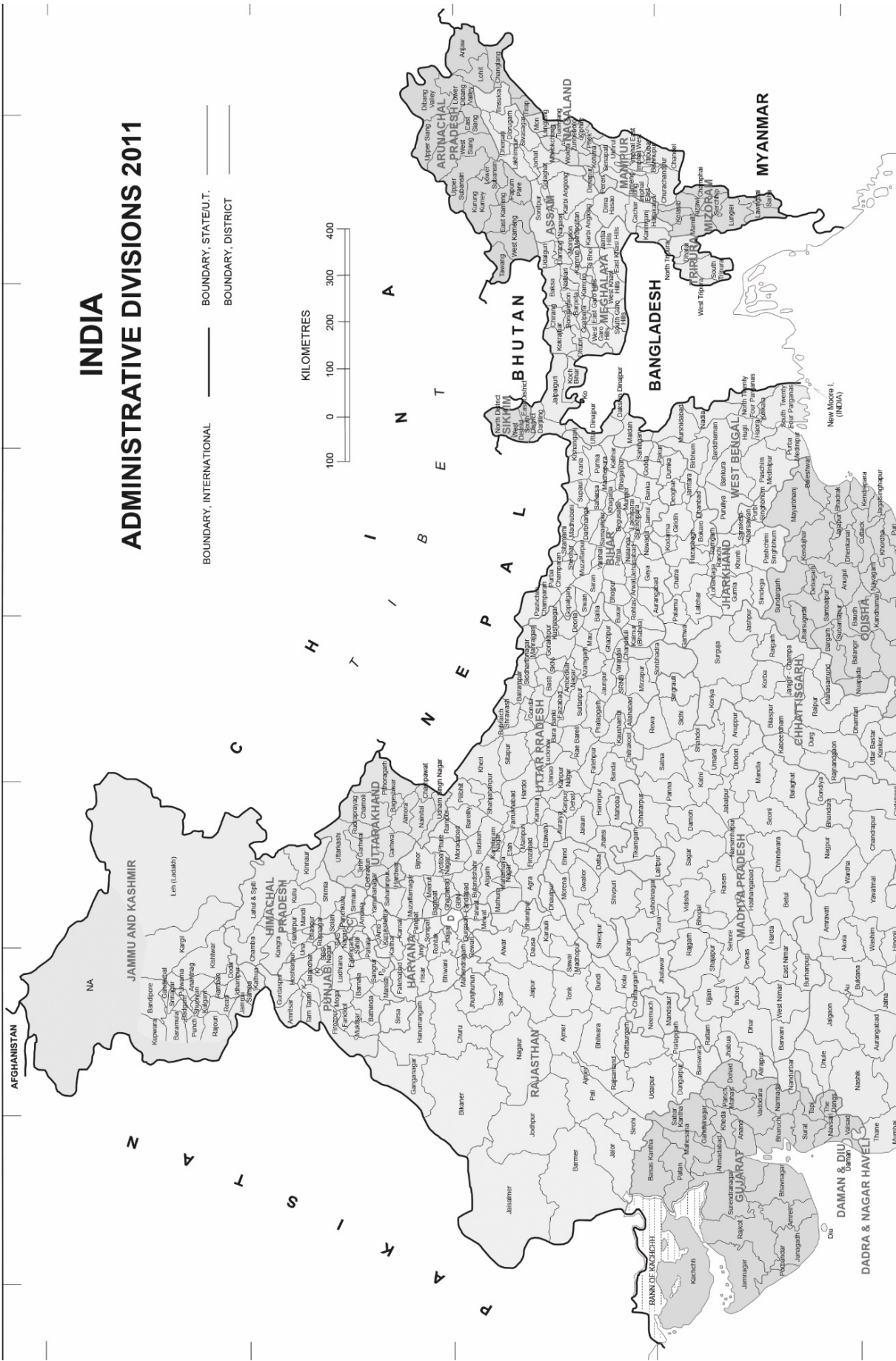


Figure 47 Administrative map of India highlighting the state of Karnataka (blue) and the district of Uttara Kanada (pink), where Bhavikeri and Gokarn are located. (Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner of India, Population Census 2011)

# INDIA

## ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISIONS 2011







The villages are located in the western part of Uttara Kanada, along the Arabian Sea coastline. Topographically, the area consists of long stretches of coastal strips and hilly regions with dense forests (nearly 80% of the district are covered with forests), at an altitude ranging from 10 to 650 metres (Census of India, 2011, pp. 1-5). Further to the East, the mountain range of the Western Ghats stretches from North to South, parallel to the coast.

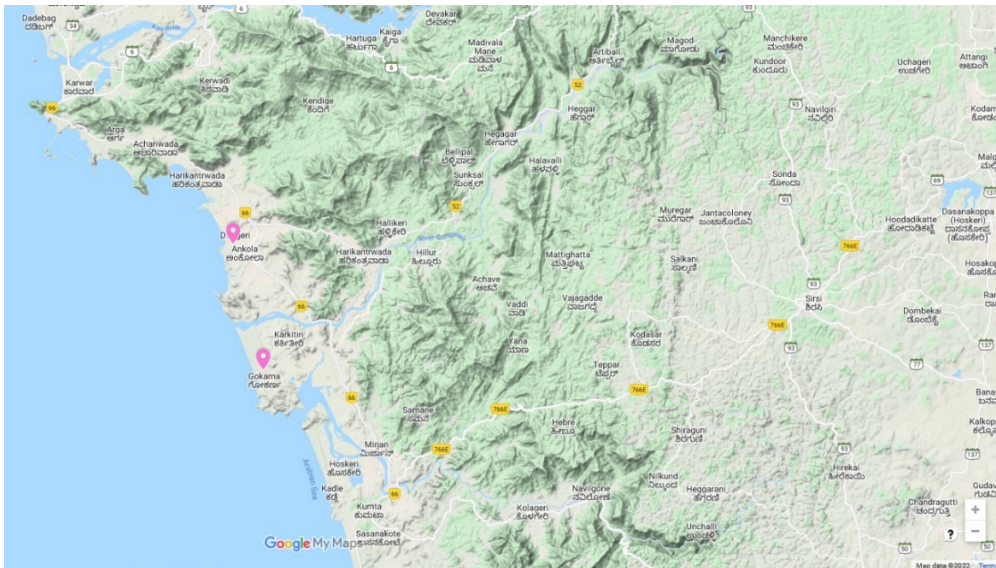


Figure 49 Physical map of the region where Bhavikeri and Gokarn (highlighted) are located. (Google Maps, 2022)

The village of Bhavikeri in the Ankola taluk has a total area of 494.3 ha, with a total population of 8,160 inhabitants and 1,911 households (Census of India, 2011, p. 460). The village of Gokarna in the Kumta taluk has a total area of 1,700.1 ha, with a total population of 13,539 inhabitants and 3,038 households (ibid.). In both villages, agriculture is the predominant economic activity, with paddy as the main crop (ibid., p. 5).



Figure 50 View of the coastline in Gokarn during a Halakki ceremony to sanctify a spot before the Shiva-Ganga procession. Photo: D. Gouda.

In addition to having access to the beaches of the Arabian Sea, both villages are situated in areas with mainly semi-ever green and moist forests.



*Figure 51 Halakki household in Bhavikeri. Photo: G. Hegde.*



*Figure 52 Halakki household in Gokarn. Photo: G. Hegde.*

The two villages were selected for the survey because they are the home of several Halakki communities. Originally leading a nomadic life at the foothills of the Western Ghats, due to various land and forest reforms, the Hallaki communities were forced to migrate and eventually settled in the coastal areas (Lakshmanan, 2011, p. 1), maintaining a strong cultural distinctiveness (Naik, 2017). The Halakkis are one of the Indigenous Peoples in the Karnataka State. They are officially classified as “Other Backward Classes” by the Government of India (Government of India, Resolution No. 12011/68/93-BCC(C)), a term used to refer to socially disadvantaged groups in the country. At the state level, the Hallakis are considered a “Category I Backward Class”, according to the Government of Karnataka, Order No. SWD 225 BCA 2000 of 2002 (Backward Classes Welfare Department, 2021, p. 13). As strange as the semantics may appear, there is a National Commission for Backward Classes looking after the interests of these communities. In addition to that, in Karnataka, there is a Backward Classes Welfare Department responsible for the affairs of 797 communities categorised as Backward Classes at the state level. Although their recognition as “Backward Class” entitles them to certain automatic benefits (e.g. a certain percentage of positions in public administration) and the Government is obliged by constitution to promote their welfare, the Hallaki communities remain, as many others sharing this status, significantly marginalised. Their economic condition is poor, being often employed as daily labourers for landlords on plantations in the region. From various conversations with the respondents in the survey, it was evident that their openness, friendliness and deep humanity contradicts with the social stigma that has been assigned to these communities, and which is still strongly perceived by their members. The name “Backward Class” certainly does not favour its removal.

The Halakki communities maintained a strong sense of identity and have a rich cultural life, closely connected with the rhythms of nature and their spiritual pantheon. Women have an important role in the community, particularly their singing traditions and oral stories (like *Pandavara kami* and *Seethekami*, the Hallaki version of the *Mahabharatha* and *Ramayana*) are a repository of vast traditional knowledge reflecting the Halakki history and spirituality (Uday, 2010). A few portraits from the interviewed community are presented below. The photographs were obtained with the full agreement of their subjects and full understanding of their use in this research.



*Figure 53 Padmavati, Halakki traditional custodian, known for her songs and stories. Photo: G. Hegde.*



*Figure 54 Padmavati and her family in Bhavikeri. Photo: G. Hegde.*



*Figure 55 Sukri Bommagouda, also called the “Nightingale of Halakkis”, is a well-known and respected person in the Halakki communities. Photo: G. Hegde.*



*Figure 56 Sukri’s showcase with the many prizes (including the Padma Award) she has received for her social activism in support of the Halakki communities. Photo: G. Hegde.*



*Figure 57 Savitri Gouda.  
Photo: G. Hegde.*



*Figure 58 Balachandra Rama Gouda.  
Photo: G. Hegde.*



*Figure 59 Ganapi Voleyappa Gouda (center) and her family. Photo: G. Hegde.*



*Figure 60 Dinesh Gouda (left) and his family. Photo: G. Hegde.*



*Figure 61 Soma Shivappa Gouda (second left) and her family. Photo: G. Hegde.*

#### 4.4.2 Format

The survey was conducted for the duration of three weeks in September 2021. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it was impossible for the researcher to personally travel to the selected locations, as originally planned at the beginning of the research. The survey was therefore re-organised in a hybrid format. This was possible with the support of two local partners: Gayathri Hegde, a young heritage professional from Karnataka and traditional knowledge enthusiast, and Savita Uday, a folklorist engaged with a non-profit organisation BuDa folklore who works closely with the Halakki communities in Uttara Kannada. Savita facilitated the contacts and entry into the Halakki communities in Bhavikeri and Gokarn, whereas Gayathri collected the information in person from the respondents. The researcher was able to follow live each conversation with the respondents, via a live-cam that was carried at the locations. Similar as in Romania, the survey questions were complemented by informal talks that aimed to better understand the socio-economic realities of the place and to capture the general attitudes towards the potential development of tourism. A total of eight households were interviewed (two from Bhavikeri and six from Gokarn).



*Figure 62 Sukri Bommagouda (center) with the wonderful local partners Gayathri Hegde (left) and Savita Uday (right) who made this research possible in the Halakki communities. Photo: D. Gouda.*



### 4.4.3 Results

#### Demographic data

Three out of the eight respondents were 65 years or older, two were between the age of 55-64 years and one participant was recorded for each of the age groupings 18-24, 25-34 and 35-44 years. No participant between the age of 45-54 years responded to the survey. Half of the participants (four) were male and half (four) female. Six out of the eight respondents listed themselves as married and two were single.

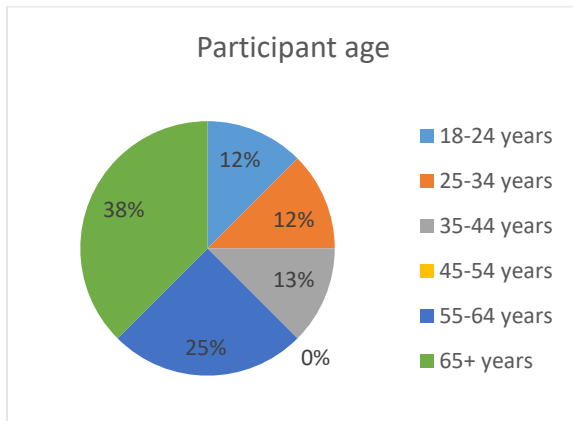


Figure 63 Age of survey participants.

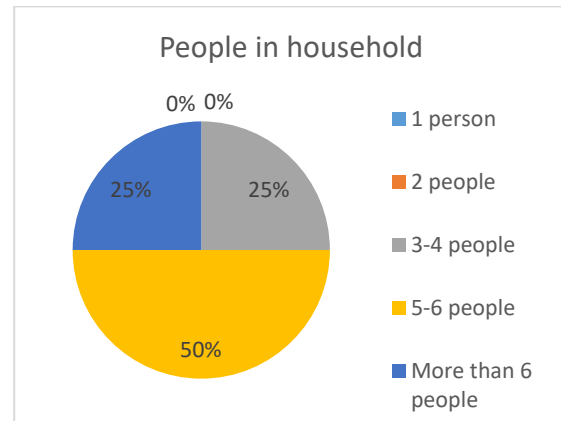


Figure 64 Number of people in their household.

When asked how many people live in their household, including themselves, four out of the eight respondents indicated that they live in a household of 5-6 people, while two live in a 3-4 people household. A further two respondents listed that they live in a household with more than 6 people. When asked about the highest degree or level of school completed, five out of the eight respondents indicated that they had completed no schooling. One had completed high school and one other had completed secondary school. One had obtained a Master's degree.

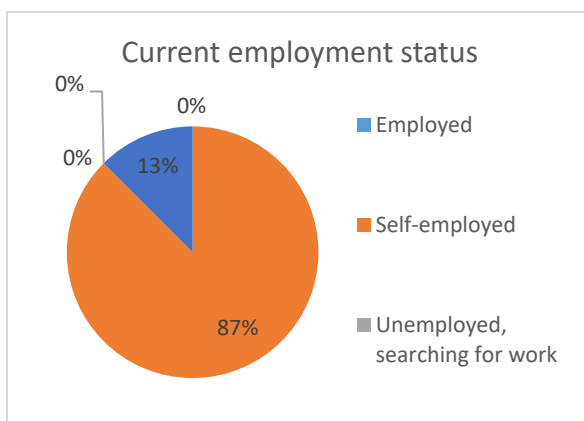


Figure 65 Current employment status of respondents.

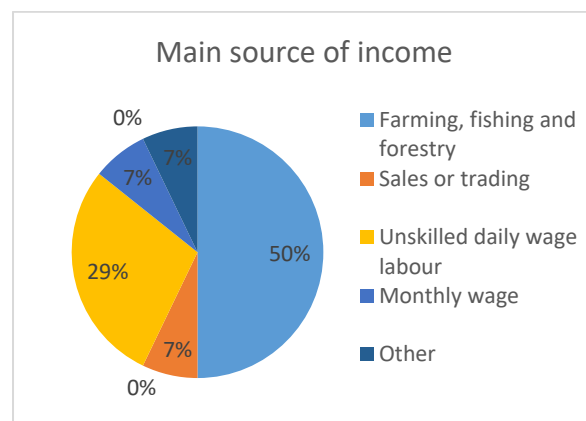


Figure 66 Respondents' main source of income.

Seven out of eight respondents listed their current employment status as self-employed and one indicated that they were retired. When asked about their main source of income, some respondents indicated multiple key sources. Seven out of the eight respondents gain their income from farming, fishing and forestry. Sales or trading was indicated by one participant as a main source of income and

one person received their main income through a monthly wage. Four respondents stated that unskilled daily wage labour was a main source of income and one stated that they had another main source of income, which was art sales. Two respondents commented that their livelihoods had been impacted by COVID-19 and that they had previously grown and sold vegetables.

Participants were asked about their annual household income. Five out of eight respondents listed an annual household income between 26,000 - 100,000 Rupees (320 - 1230 EUR) and three respondents listed an annual household income of 101,000 – 200,000 Rupees (1231 – 2500 EUR). One person commented that it is difficult to provide an accurate estimate due to unstable employment situation (regular search for work).

*Acceptance of tourism as an alternative income*

When asked whether they would be willing to host a limited number of tourists (for example, two people or one family per stay) at their home every year if this brought them additional income, six out of eight respondents indicated that they definitely would. One person commented that it is not culturally appropriate to say no to any potential guest. One respondent indicated that they would be interested in hosting, but with some concerns. One other respondent indicated that they were not interested in such a concept, specifically on the grounds of belonging to the ‘gouda’ family of the village, whose house is home to many gods and deities who require strict maintenance of religious sanctity. As such, hosting people who might not have an understanding of these cultural practices is not preferred.

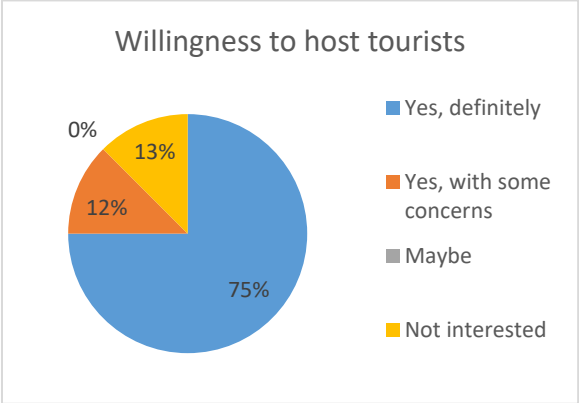


Figure 67 Willingness of respondents to host tourists.

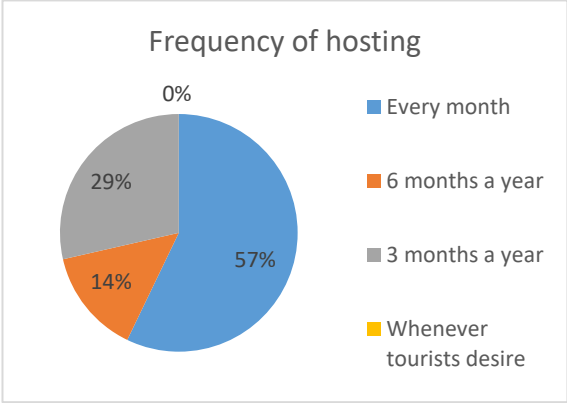


Figure 68 Desired frequency of hosting tourists.

Of the seven respondents willing to host tourists, four indicated that they were willing to host every month. One person indicated that they were willing to host tourists for six months of the year and two respondents stated that they would be willing to host tourist for only three months of the year. No respondents indicated they would be open to hosting whenever tourists were interested in coming.

Respondents were asked a series of questions to determine the main reasons that would convince them to host tourists at their place, rating these factors on a scale of very important, important, somewhat important and not important. Regarding the potential to earn additional income, six out of the eight respondents indicated that this would be an important factor in deciding to host tourists at their place.

One person stated that it would be somewhat important and another stated that it would not be important.

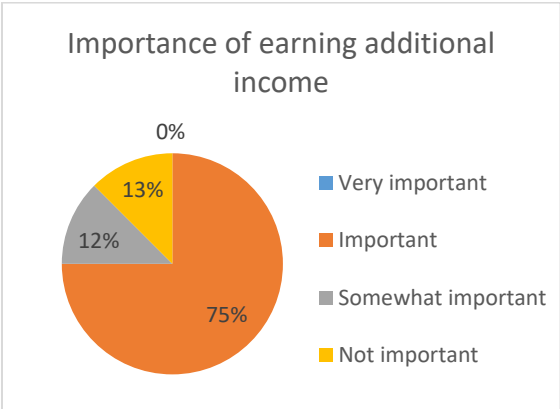


Figure 69 Importance of earning additional income.

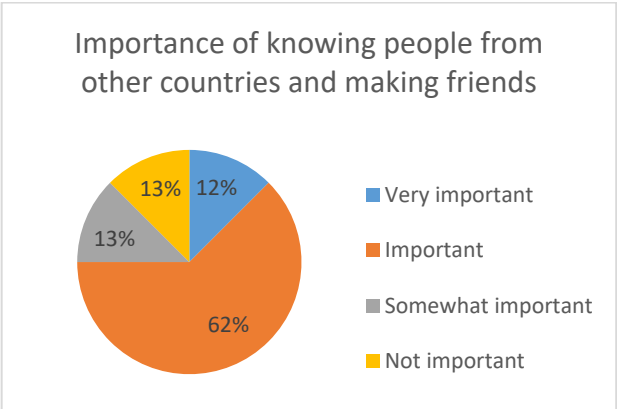


Figure 70 Importance of making new acquaintances.

Getting to know people from other countries and making friends as a main reason for hosting tourists was considered very important by one of the eight respondents. It was considered an important factor by five respondents, somewhat important by one respondent and not important by one other.

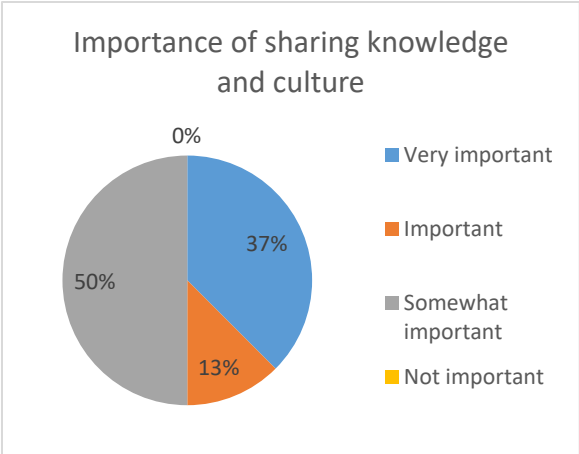


Figure 71 Importance of sharing knowledge and culture with tourists.

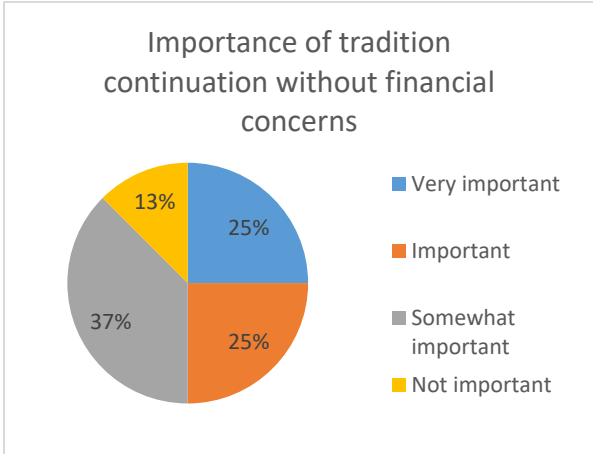


Figure 72 Importance of respondents' ability to continue their traditions without financial concern.

Sharing their knowledge and culture with other people was considered a very important reason for hosting tourists by three out of the eight respondents. One other stated that this was an important factor, while four others indicated it was somewhat important. When considering the potential for additional income from tourists to help respondents continue their traditions and the way in which they live, without having to worry about their financial security, two of the eight respondents indicated that this was a very important reason for hosting tourists at their place. Two others stated that this was an important factor, while three indicated that it was somewhat important and one stated that it was not important.

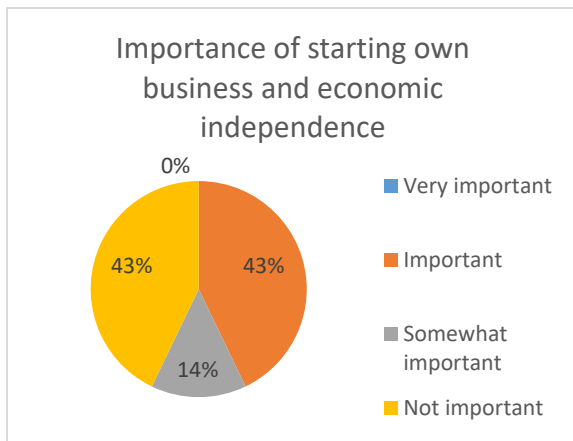


Figure 73 Importance of respondents' ability to start their own business and gain economic independence.

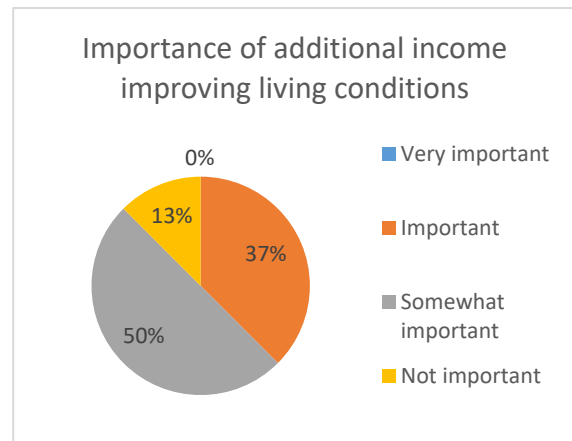


Figure 74 Importance of the additional income from tourism improving their living conditions.

As a main reason for convincing the respondents to host tourists at their place, none thought that starting their own business and not feeling excluded or depending on others for income was a very important factor. Three suggested that this was an important reason for hosting, one considered this as somewhat important, three considered it unimportant and one did not respond. Additional income improving living conditions was not considered a very important reason for hosting tourists by any of the eight respondents. Three indicated that they felt that this was an important factor, four considered it somewhat important, and one stated that it was not an important factor in convincing them to host tourists at their place.

When asked to indicate an acceptable after-tax income per stay for which they would be willing to host tourists at their place, respondents were given the options of 15,000 Rupees (ca. 185 EUR) per week, 30,000 Rupees (ca. 370 EUR) per week, 60,000 Rupees (ca. 740 EUR) per week, 80,000 Rupees (ca. 980 EUR) or above per week, or I don't know yet. Two respondents indicated that 15,000 Rupees per week would be an acceptable amount; three stated that they did not know yet; one did not respond; and three alternative figures were suggested. These alternate figures were: 1,000 Rupees (ca. 15 EUR) per day and 18,000 Rupees (ca. 225 EUR) per week. One respondent commented that they were unsure of the sum to request, stating that they would accept any sum that a visitor gives willingly.

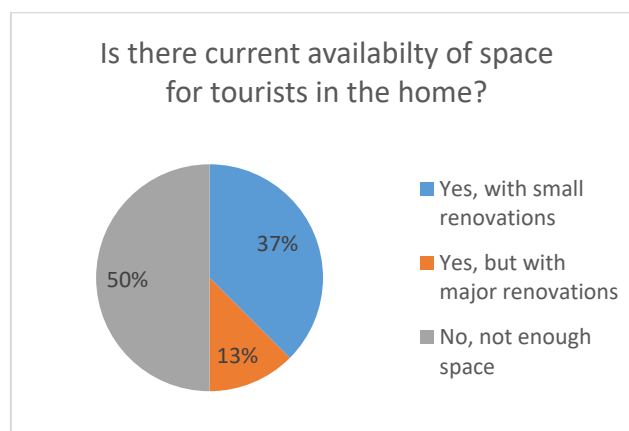


Figure 75 Current availability of space for tourists at the homes of respondents.

Participants were asked whether they currently have a space or room in their home that could be rented out to tourists. Three out of the eight respondents stated that they do have a room that could be rented out to tourists if small renovations were undertaken; one indicated that they do have the room, but to be suitable it would require major renovations and more amenities, while four responded that they do not have enough space at their home currently. Three participants commented that, although they did not have suitable space for hosting tourists, they would be willing to make arrangements for guests to be appropriately accommodated. When asked whether they would prefer if tourists stayed at a different location, but would visit the hosts during the day, two respondents indicated that they would be comfortable with this arrangement and one stated that they would not prefer such an arrangement. Three indicated that they would be okay with either option and two of the eight participants did not respond.

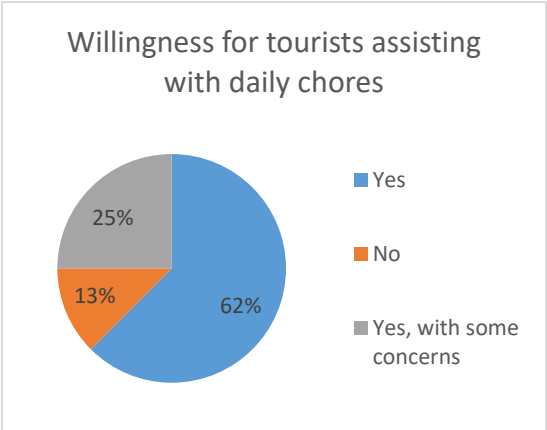


Figure 76 Willingness for tourists to assist with chores.

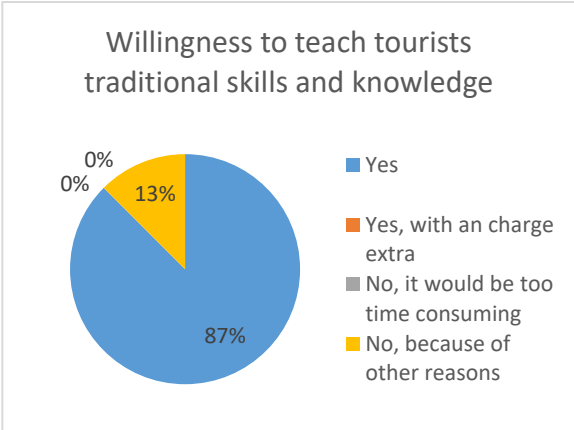


Figure 77 Willingness to teach traditional skills and knowledge.

Five out of eight respondents indicated that they would allow tourists to help with their daily chores, such as working the field, harvesting, and taking care of the animals. One respondent stated that they would not be willing for such an arrangement and two stated they would be willing for tourist to assist in this capacity, but with some concerns, such as communication issues. When asked whether they would be willing to teach tourists some of their traditional skills and knowledge, such as weaving, jewellery making, medicinal plants, cooking and spices during their stay, seven out of eight respondents indicated that they would. One respondent stated that they would not be willing to do this due to concerns regarding caste and religious practice barriers.

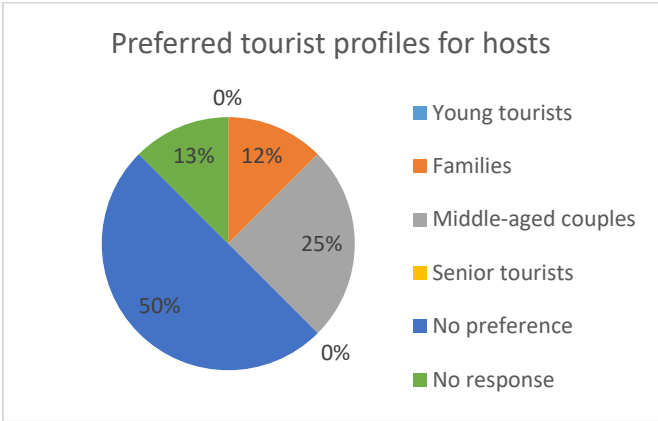


Figure 78 Preferred tourist profiles for hosts.

Participants were asked whether they would prefer to host different types of tourists, including young tourists (18-30 years old), families, middle-aged couples (30-45 years old), senior tourists (50 years old and above), or if they had no preference. Four out of the seven respondents to this question indicated that they did not have a preference for which type of tourist they hosted. Two respondents stated that they would prefer middle-aged couples and one other suggested that they would prefer to host families. Additional comments were provided by respondents regarding the tourist profiles, including concerns over the health of visitors and the willingness of tourists to adapt to traditional values while visiting in terms of lifestyle, dress and alcohol consumption, as well as the desire to host people who share a similar interest in art.

Three out of the eight respondents indicated that they were willing to host international tourists, while four stated that they would host international tourists, but that they had some concerns. Multiple respondents indicated that the language barrier was of concern, while others listed the tourist adherence to cultural practices, concern over the opinions of their neighbours and COVID-19 as additional considerations.

*Perceived usefulness*

When asked whether participants would be willing to register on an international online network that puts tourists in contact with hosts, six out of eight respondents answered yes. One further respondent stated that they would, but with some reservations. This concern was over language barriers. One respondent indicated that they would not be willing to register on such a platform.

Six out of eight respondents indicated that they believed that using this network would help them gain direct benefits (and income) from hosting tourists. One stated that they did not believe this would be the case, and one other indicated that they were unsure of how such a network works and therefore they would have to try it first to form an opinion.

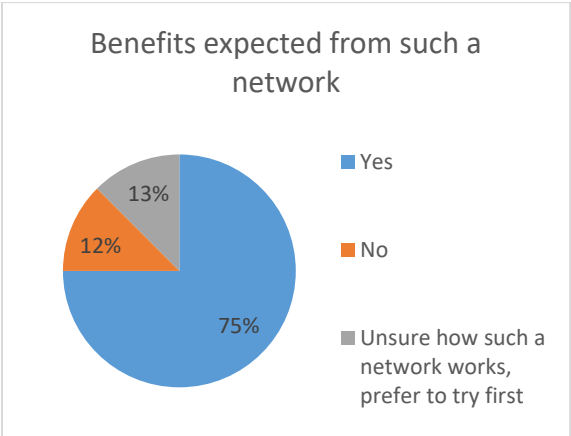


Figure 79 Expected benefits to be gained from network.

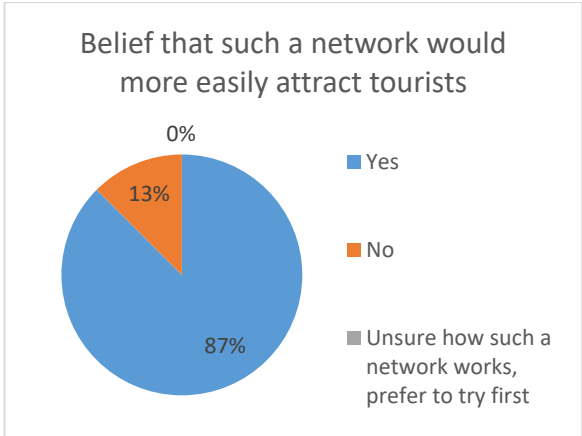


Figure 80 Belief in network easily attracting tourists.

Seven out of eight respondents believed that using this network would make it easier for them to attract tourists, while one did not believe this would be the case.

### Digital literacy and perceived ease of use

When asked whether they could use a computer, five out of eight respondents stated that they have basic skills, but that they find it rather difficult to use a computer – three of whom additionally commented that they have family members who can use computers. One further person stated that they can use a computer easily, while two respondents indicated that they cannot use computers and do not like them. Seven out of eight respondents stated that they do not have a computer at home and one respondent indicated that they have a computer at home.

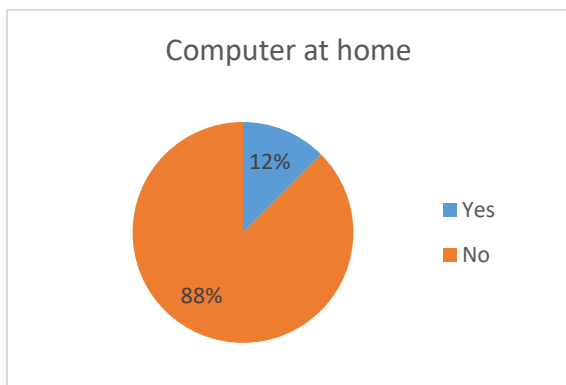


Figure 81 Participants with a computer at home.

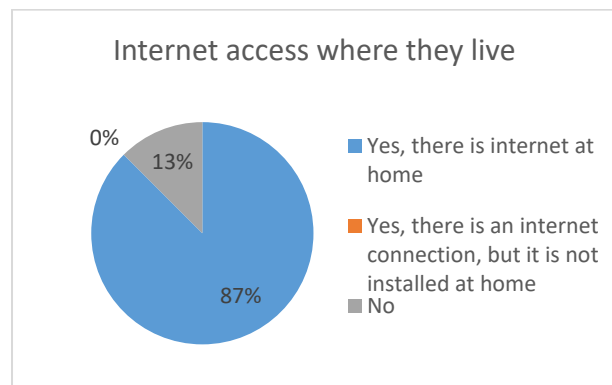


Figure 82 Participants with internet access at home.

Seven out of eight respondents stated that at least one member of their family has a smart phone, while one respondent does not have family members with a smart phone. Seven out of eight respondents stated that they have internet access where they live, while there was no internet access at the home of one of the respondents. When asked if they would be willing to invest in buying a computer or a smart phone, if they did not own one already, to deal with the planning process for tourist stays themselves, seven out of eight respondents stated they would not. One respondent indicated that they would be willing to invest, however, additional support would be required (perhaps a micro-credit).

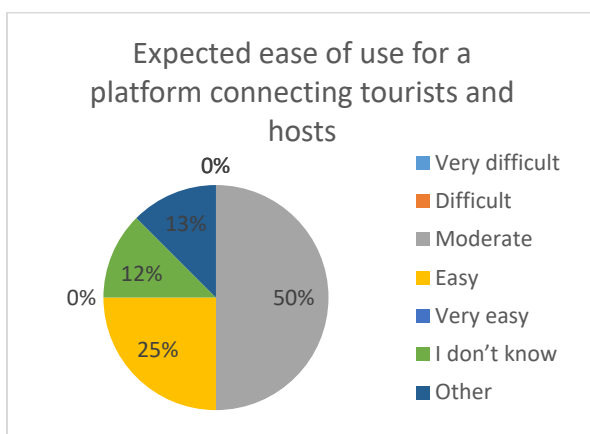


Figure 83 Expected ease of use of the platform connecting tourists and hosts.

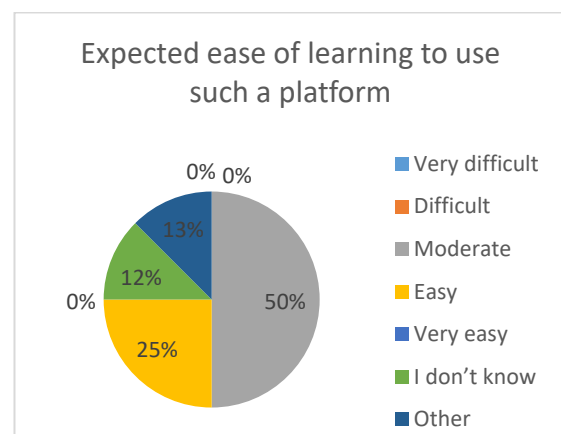


Figure 84 Expected ease of learning to use the platform.

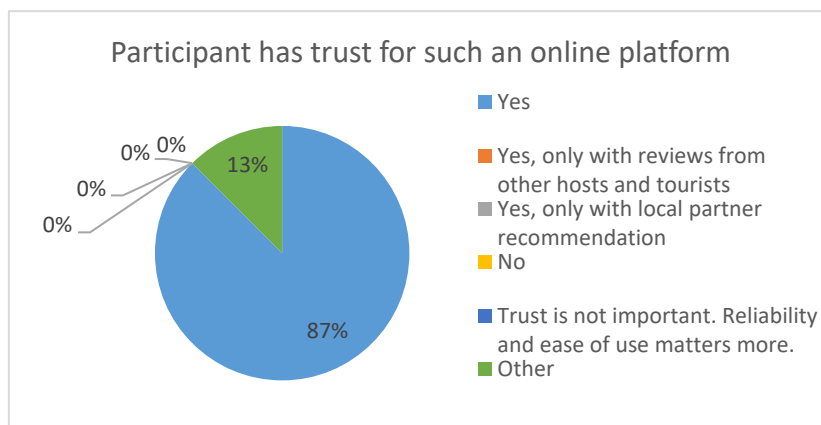
On a scale from very difficult to very easy, two out of the eight respondents indicated that it would be easy to use an online platform that connects tourists from around the world with hosts. Four out of eight suggested that it would be moderately easy to use the platform, while one other stated that they

did not know. The final respondent specified that, due to being unwilling to host, this question was not applicable to their situation. On a scale from very difficult to very easy, two out of the eight respondents indicated that it would be easy to learn how use this online platform. Four out of eight suggested that it would be moderately easy to learn how to use the platform, while one other stated that they did not know. The final respondent specified that, due to being unwilling to host, this question was not applicable to their situation.

When asked their preference for another person or company taking care of the technical details and communication with the tourists who wish to stay at their place, in return of a small fee deducted from the returns, four respondents indicated they would prefer this. Three respondents indicated that they would prefer to undertake this task themselves, with one person commenting that their reason for this was that they did not want to be taken advantage of. One person did not respond to this question.

### *Trust*

With the exception of one person who did not respond to this question, all other participants stated that they would trust the services of such an online platform. Several respondents commented that they are trusting people in every aspect.



*Figure 85 Participants' trust for such an online platform.*

When asked whether they would trust an intermediary to facilitate between themselves and interested tourists, two out of the eight participants responded that they would, if the person or company is competent and professional, and explains clearly how the partnership will work. Three respondents indicated that they would trust an intermediary, but it would be better if the person or company had a local contact point that they could talk to in case of questions or if problems arise. Two respondents indicated that they would not trust an intermediary at all, with one person commenting that they were concerned over their inability to assess the intermediary's commitment and that such a situation could result in a loss of money. One other did not respond.



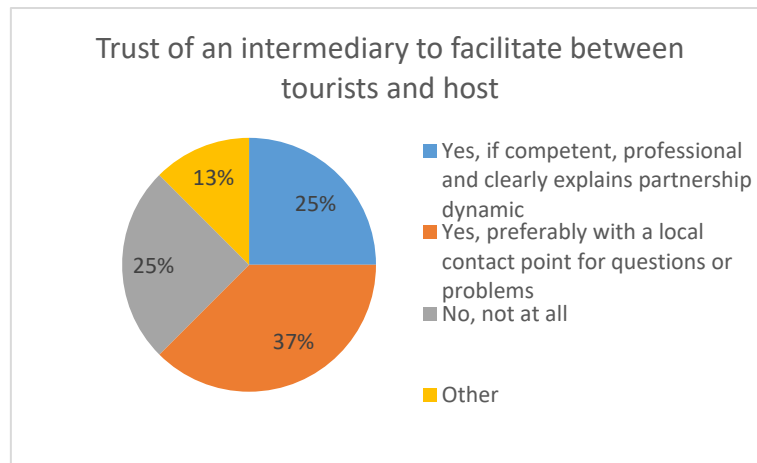


Figure 86 Participants' trust for an intermediary to facilitate between tourists and the host.

Participants were asked to indicate the most important aspect in deciding whether they would host a tourist at their place.

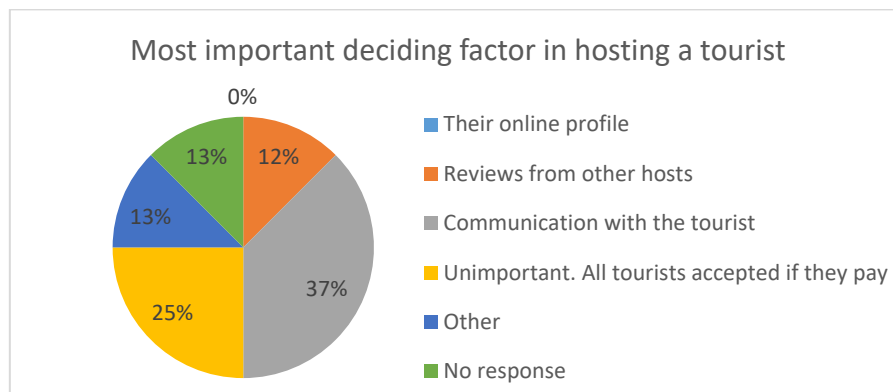


Figure 87 The most important deciding factor in hosting a tourist for respondents.

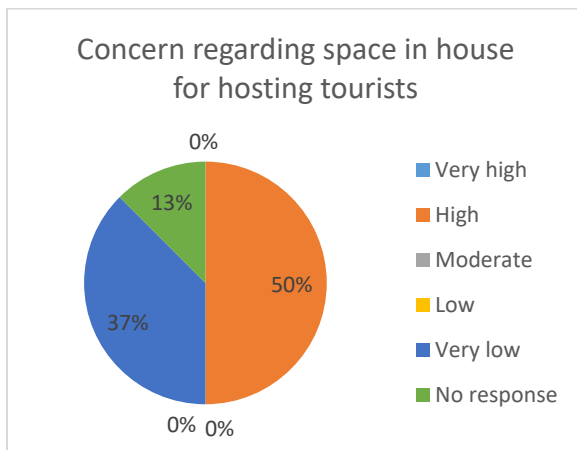
No respondents indicated that the tourist's online profile would be the most important factor; however, one respondent indicated that the reviews the tourist received from other hosts would be important. Three out of the eight participants stated that communication with the tourist would be the most important deciding factor in hosting tourists at their place. Two respondents indicated that they did not care and would accept all tourists, as long as they pay for their stay. One respondent indicated other reasons: they are an artist, so they specified that the tourists must be interested in art, but that they would also take on tourists recommended by a mutual connection. One person did not respond.

When asked whether they think it is important to communicate with other hosts and exchange experiences, four out of the eight participants stated that it was absolutely important. One indicated that it was important, but not necessary and two others stated that it was not important. One person did not respond.

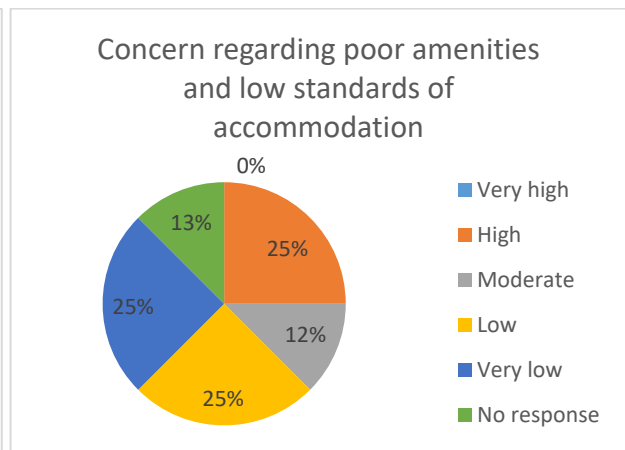
*Perceived risks*

Participants were asked to assess a series of concerns regarding hosting tourists at their place. These concerns were rated on a scale from very high to very low.

Four out of eight participants responded that they had high concern regarding whether they had enough space in their house to host tourists. Three respondents indicated they had very low concern over space for hosting and one other did not respond.



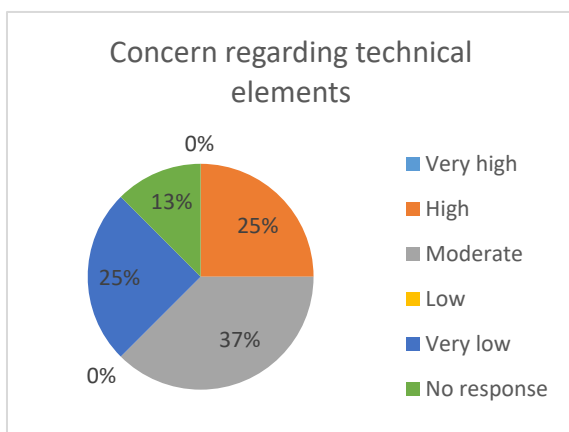
*Figure 88 Level of concern respondents have regarding space in their house for hosting tourists.*



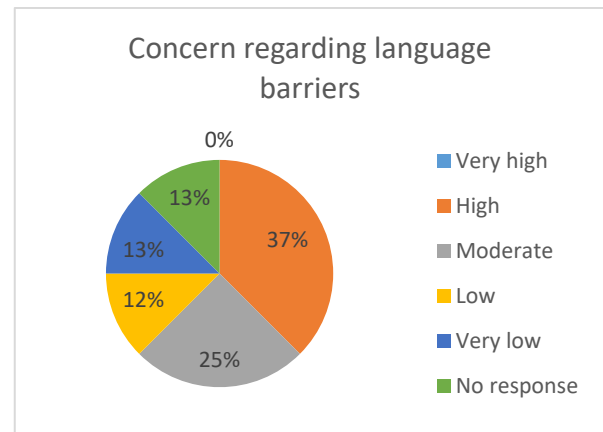
*Figure 89 Level of concern respondents have regarding poor amenities and accommodation standards.*

Two participants indicated they had a high level of concern regarding the poor amenities and low standards of accommodation at their place making them unable to fulfil tourists’ expectations. One respondent indicated that they had moderate concern on this matter, while two stated that they had low concern and a further two indicated that they had very low concern regarding the fulfilment of tourists’ expectations due to the standard of amenities and accommodation. One person did not respond.

Regarding the technical elements of using the computer and dealing with the reservations online, two participants out of eight had high concern. Three respondents indicated that they had moderate concern and two had very low concern regarding the use of technology. One person did not respond.



*Figure 90 Level of concern regarding technical skills.*



*Figure 91 Level of concern regarding language barriers.*

Three out of the eight participants indicated a high level of concern regarding language barriers, while a further two respondents stated that they had moderate concern. One respondent indicated that they had low concern and one other that they had very low concern regarding language barriers between themselves and the tourists. One person did not respond.

Regarding the prospect of too many tourists disturbing their household and the place where they live, one person out of the eight participants indicated that this was a high concern. One respondent had moderate concern on this matter and three further participants had low concern regarding such a disruption. One respondent had very low concern and one other person did not respond.

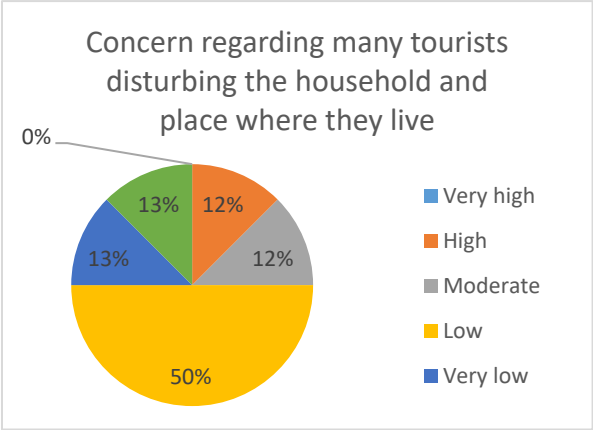


Figure 92 Level of concern that many tourists will disturb their household and place where they live.

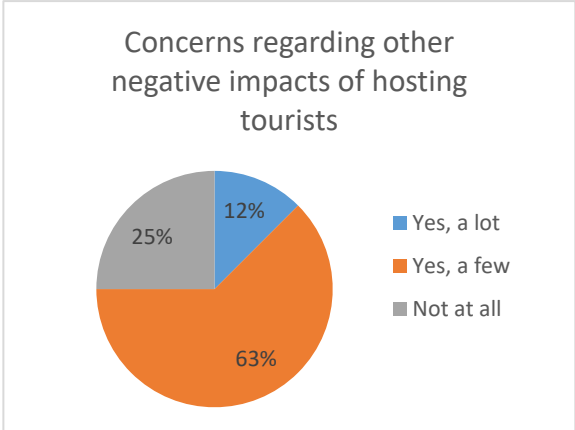


Figure 93 Level of concern respondents have regarding other negative impacts of hosting tourists.

When asked whether they had concerns regarding other negative impacts that hosting tourists could bring to the place where they live, one out of the eight respondents indicated that they had a lot of concerns. These concerns pertained to the expected difficulty of tourists understanding the local culture and customs. Five respondents stated that they have a few concerns. These concerns included not being able to foresee all the possible circumstances, tourists potentially not accepting the local lifestyle and breaking rules, COVID-19, the inappropriate way in which tourists might dress, food, language and daily scheduling difficulties. Two further respondents indicated that they did not have any concerns at all regarding potential negative impacts of hosting tourists. Five out of the eight participants indicated that they had moderate concern regarding the distribution of revenues from hosting tourists. One respondent stated that they had low concern and one person did not respond.

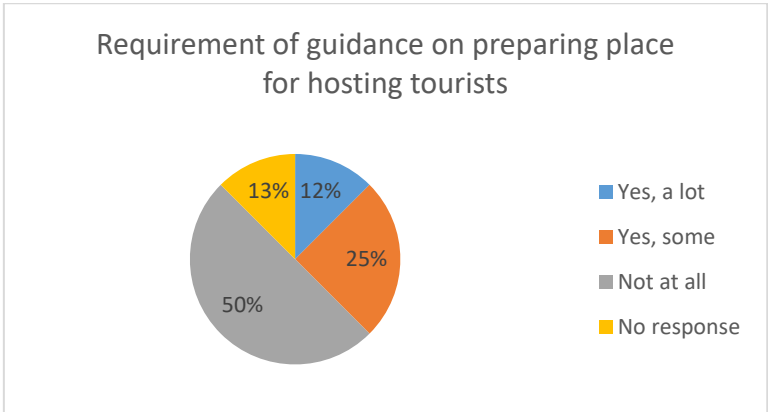


Figure 94 Participants' requirement of guidance on preparing place for hosting tourists.

When asked whether they may require additional guidance to prepare their place for hosting tourists, one out of the eight participants stated that they would need a lot of guidance, while two further respondents indicated that they would require some guidance. Four of the respondents indicated that they would not need any guidance at all to prepare their place for hosting and one person did not respond.

#### *Other issues*

When asked whether they could think of any other barriers or concerns that would make them not want to participate in such a tourism project, respondents listed concerns over: tourists experiencing problems during the stay, meeting tourist expectations, creating additional space in the home for tourists, people from lower castes wanting to stay (people from certain communities of lower social status were not wanted in the house), the necessity to take leave from their day job for hosting (however, this is not perceived as a problem, rather a practicality to be managed).

### **4.5 Discussion and conclusions**

As explained earlier in this chapter, the locations in Romania and India were selected based on a few characteristics that they share and which could be relevant for the development of the proposed form of small-scale, immersive tourism. They are both located in rural contexts with rich natural and cultural resources. The communities who live here have a deep understanding of the environment that surrounds them, with which they form a strong bond. They still use the land through traditional practices that reflect an extensive knowledge about the elements and cycles of nature, which has been accumulated for generations. These practices ensure not only the subsistence of these communities, but also a healthy relationship with the eco-system upon which they depend. However, these places are struggling with socio-economic changes (out-migration, declining population, few economic opportunities, etc.) that make the continuation of these traditional practices critical. They are examples of marginalised communities (in Romania, because of the geographic location at high altitudes, as well as the lack of public facilities and services, or economic prospects, in India because of societal and cultural discrimination that has been reinforced throughout centuries and has led to similar socio-economic consequences). All locations have not been exposed to tourism development yet, which puts them in an ideal starting position to embrace a different path and a more gratifying alternative in this regard.

Despite of the existing similarities, it was important for the research to conduct the survey in two completely different geographical and cultural contexts, in order to verify whether there is convergence of attitudes towards tourism development. It was also explained earlier that the results of the survey had rather an exploratory purpose with regard to the hypothesis that communities in these disadvantaged areas would be open to embrace the development of tourism through a collaborative economic model.

The results displayed a similar socio-economic profile of the respondents. In Romania, the respondents were slightly-younger, mainly between 35 and 54 years old, whereas in India they were significantly older, mainly above 55 years old. In all locations, respondents are predominantly married, living in households of 4 people or more. The level of education of the respondents was generally low, in Romania the average was secondary school and high school, whereas in India a large part of the respondents did not complete any schooling at all. Most of the participants are self-employed or self-sufficient, the main source of income being farming and forestry.

The survey demonstrates a very high degree of convergence with regard to people's acceptance of tourism as an alternative income. In Romania, the large majority of respondents (73%) indicated they would be willing to host tourists at their homes, while the remaining 27% still considered the possibility, but needed more time to think about it. Similarly, in India, 87% of the respondents answered positively to this prospect. In Romania, most respondents appeared to be open to host tourists whenever tourists desire. In India, 57% of the respondents were in favour of hosting tourists every month, whereas the rest thought it necessary to restrict this either to only 6 months or only 3 months a year.

When analysing the responses regarding the main reason that would determine the participants' willingness to host tourists at their place, interesting similarities, but also differences emerge. In Romania, the financial benefits of tourism appear to have more weight. For example, 73% of all respondents considered the possibility to earn additional income from tourism as very important or important, 73% valued the opportunity of individual enterprise and economic independence, while 67% considered the potential contribution of tourism to improving the living condition a very motivating incentive. However, the respondents also valued the opportunity to get to know and make friends with people from other countries (63%). One of the highest values registered in this part revealed a strong awareness of the local culture, as 87% of the respondents considered sharing their traditional knowledge and culture with other people as the most important aspect when hosting tourists. 67% of the respondents also indicated that it is important that tourism provides financial security, so that traditions are continued without economic pressures. In India, the respondents placed more importance on the social benefits that tourism could generate. Although 75% of the participants considered that earning additional income from tourism is important, none of them stated that this is very important. Similarly, 57% of the respondents considered the entrepreneurial aspects of tourism (people starting their own business and gaining economic independence) not so important, while 63% of the respondents indicated that improving their living conditions through additional income from tourism is also less important. No respondent in these two categories considered the above two reasons as being very important when agreeing to tourism development or not. A large majority of respondents (74%) considered instead that knowing people from other countries and making friends was important or very important. With regard to sharing traditional knowledge and culture, Indian respondents were equally split: half considered it to be important, and half not. The same distribution was noted with regard to the importance of tourism to provide financial security and to enable the continuation of traditional practices. The economic concerns did

not appear to be perceived as pressure threatening the continuation of tradition continuation, but these two aspects were rather independent from one another. The respondents were also very reserved when suggesting an agreeable income to host tourists, some even indicating that they would accept whatever the tourists may be offering.

In terms of logistics, the Romanian respondents expressed more confidence with the current accommodation and amenities in place at their home. 67% considered only small renovations would be needed in order to host tourists, while 27% would need bigger renovations. In India, the percentage was significantly lower, suggesting a potential problem if such a tourism model is to be developed. Here, 50% of the respondents mentioned that they do not have sufficient space at their home, and only 37% would be able to host tourists with small renovations.

A strong agreement exists in relation to the respondents' willingness to allow tourists to assist with the daily chores and to learn traditional skills and knowledge. In Romania, all respondents agreed to this prospect, the only concern being the lack of time and that the daily tasks around the household and in the field might prevent them from dedicating attention to tourists. In India, 62% of the respondents indicated they would be willing to welcome tourists as part of their daily life, while 87% of the respondents stated that they would like to share traditional skills and knowledge with tourists. Issues like language and social status (caste) barriers appeared to be strongly perceived in the Indian context. Both Romanian and Indian respondents expressed no particular preference in the type of tourists they would like to host. To a small extent, families and middle-aged couples seem to be preferred in both contexts.

With regard to the perceived usefulness of the collaborative economic model and the platform on which hosts and tourists would interact, strong agreement exists between the Romanian and Indian respondents. In Romania, all respondents would be willing to register on such a network, 93% are convinced of its benefits and 87% considered it would attract more tourists. In India, the majority of respondents (75%) would be willing to register on such a network, 75% were convinced of its benefits and 87% of its ability to attract more tourists.

Differences appeared concerning the respondents' digital literacy and the perceived ease of use of the collaborative platform. In Romania, most respondents (80%) owned a computer and had internet access where they live. In India, 88% of the respondents did not have a computer at home, but did mention they had access to an internet connection. However, the majority owned a smart phone, which indicates that it would be very important that such a collaborative platform should be optimised for mobile and app operation, and not be designed exclusively for computer use and access. Similar rates (around 50%) of Romanian and Indian respondents considered that using or learning how to use a collaborative platform that would connect tourists and hosts would be moderately easy. In Romania, some respondents (33%) were cautious and perceived the use of such a platform as difficult or very difficult. In India, no respondent perceived this to be difficult, while 38% considered it to be easy or very easy.

When addressing the issue of trust, the large majority of respondents (80% in Romania and 87% in India) indicated that they would have confidence in the services of such a platform. In Romanian context, the recommendation of local partners or the reviews from other hosts and tourists were regarded as important in enforcing trust, whereas in the Indian context trust was more generally accepted. Similarly, 80% of the Romanian respondents and 62% of the Indian respondents mentioned that they would trust an intermediary to facilitate between tourists and hosts. The role of a local contact point for questions or problems is acknowledged in both contexts. In Romania, the competency and professionalism of such a partner is considered more important. A rather contradictory set of responses indicated that 25% of the participants would actually distrust such an intermediary, despite of the fact that the majority trusted the platform itself.

In Romania, trust towards tourists was considered to be mostly dependent on the reviews received from other hosts (37% of the respondents), whereas in India the reviews were not so important (only 12% of the respondents prioritised them). In India, communication with the tourists was regarded more important in establishing trust (by 37% of the respondents), whereas in Romania this aspect was minor (only 13% of the respondents considered it relevant for trust). Interestingly, 50% of all Romanian respondents did not consider the issue of trust to be important at all in tourism development. In India, the percentage of this category was considerably lower (25%).

Finally, potential risks were perceived differently by Romanian and Indian respondents. In Romania, the biggest concern was considered to be the language barrier (assessed as very high by 67% of the participants and as high by 13%). The language concern is significantly lower in India (no respondent indicated this was a very high concern, and only 37% mentioned it was a high concern). Despite of the confidence expressed with regard to the existing accommodation that could be offered to tourists, 60% of the Romanian respondents worried about the available space and the standards of the accommodation and amenities, which may not necessarily satisfy the tourists' expectations. In India, the level of concern for this aspect was significantly lower. While 50% of the respondents indicated that space might be a problem, 50% expressed very low concern in this regard. Similarly, 50% of the Indian respondents indicated low to very low concern about the standard of accommodation available for tourists. The technical concerns were acknowledged by both Romanian and Indian respondents. In Romania, a large number of participants (60%) were moderately concerned about this aspect and 14% highly concerned, whereas in India the technical concerns were slightly less important (25% of the participants perceived them as high and 37% as moderate). Both in Romania and in India there were low or very low concern about the tourists' possibly disturbing the household, as the respondents had quite a positive attitude about integrating tourists into their daily life. Among the specific concerns expressed, the Romanian respondents mentioned again the language barriers and the lack of time as two important aspects, whereas the Indian respondents made references to cultural aspects such as the inability of tourists to understand local traditions and a certain cultural incompatibility between hosts and visitors.

Finally, both in Romania and in India, respondents appeared to be rather self-confident in approaching such a collaborative tourism model and expressed little need for guidance in this regard.

In conclusion, the data provided by the survey conducted at the different locations in Romania and India indicates a strong willingness of the potential hosts to participate in the development of a small-scale, immersive form of tourism. The perceived benefits, the available accommodation and the enthusiasm expressed towards the possibility of sharing the routines of daily life, but also traditional knowledge and practices with tourists indicate an overall positive attitude with regard to the proposed type of tourism. The usefulness of this collaborative model is acknowledged by almost all respondents, which indicated the immense potential this may have. The digital literacy and the technical configuration are slightly different in the two regions (higher in Romania, lower in India), and certain reservations were expressed by participants with regard to the ease of use of such a collaborative model, which is perceived to be moderate. This information is important for the technical development of a platform, which should try to simplify its functionality and not require too demanding parameters at the users' end. The survey revealed that most respondents are trustful towards a platform that would connect them with potential tourists. Certain hesitation was expressed towards a potential entity that would act as an intermediary, which demonstrates the importance of transparency in explaining how the collaborative model works and how the benefits are distributed. Moreover, this would speak in favour of a shared economic structure, in which the platform would actually be owned by the users and the benefits shared by them. This would address the eventual trust concerns and replace them with more confidence towards the collaborative model, even though an intermediary may be needed to facilitate in the beginning. Trust towards potential tourists does not appear to be problematic, as most participants expressed a general openness to host anyone who would like to come. Enabling a review feature and a messaging option between hosts and tourists would enhance trust in the actual economic interactions. With regard to the perceived risks, the language barriers and time availability appear to be the most significant aspects of concern. There is probably also a concern that the simplicity of the accommodation and amenities offered by the host would not be up to the tourists' expectations. With the first hosting experience, this perception might change and simplicity could be understood more of a value rather than a disadvantage. The technical concerns are present with the respondents mostly in a moderate form, and they could potentially be tackled by a short training at the beginning of their participation in the collaborative model. Finally, all respondents appeared to be confident in their ability to approach such a project, which speaks again for their readiness to embrace it.



# CHAPTER FIVE: TOURISTS

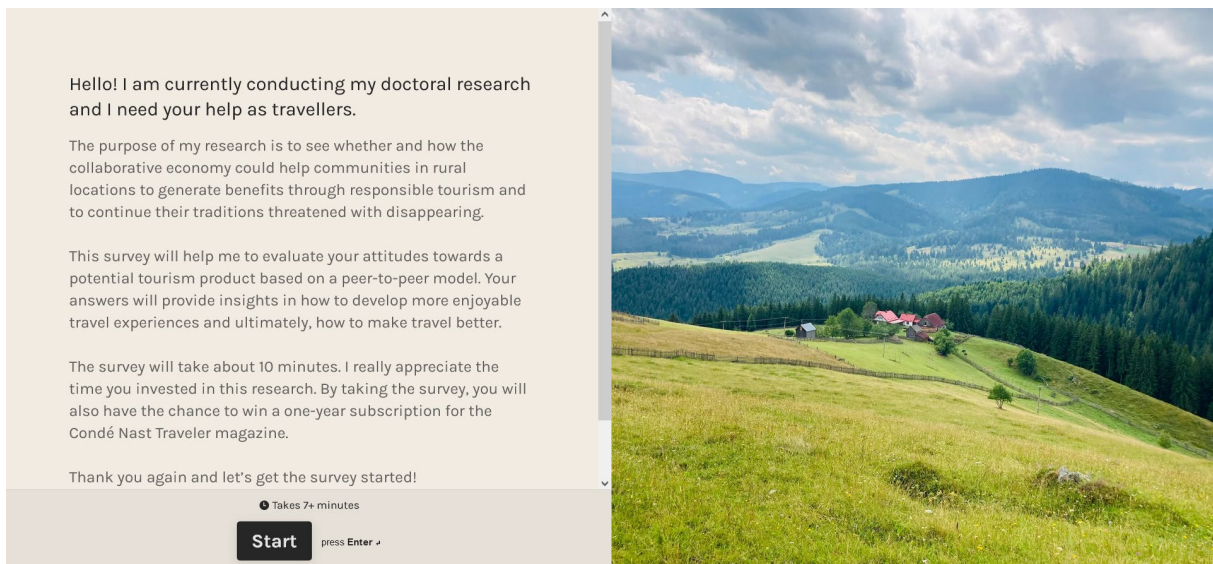
## 5.1 Background

The second part of the empirical research focuses on the other category of potential users of a collaborative model for heritage tourism, namely tourists. An online survey was conducted in order to understand the individual readiness towards such a model. The primary goal of the survey was to capture attitudes and opinions from the general population regarding the possibility to participate in an immersive, small-scale form of heritage tourism and to use a collaborative economic model for this purpose. The collected data provided insights into the following aspects: the behavioural intention to engage in the proposed type of tourism, the perceived usefulness and key requirements of a tourism platform, attitudes with regard to trust, as well as the perceived risks associated with participation in this collaborative tourism model.

## 5.2 Methods

### 5.2.1 Survey format

The survey was administered online with the help of the software provided by the service platform Typeform ([www.typeform.com](http://www.typeform.com)). The contents of the questionnaire were personalised and made available online in a user-friendly format. The survey was opened to respondents for two months, from November to December 2021.



*Figure 95 Screenshot displaying the welcome page to the online survey.*

### 5.2.2 Ethical considerations

Similar to the study presented in the previous chapter, the online survey was designed and conducted with full consideration of the principles of ethical research. At the beginning of the questionnaire, the purpose of the research was succinctly explained. Respondents were informed about how the data would be obtained and processed within the scope of the doctoral research. It was mentioned at the end of the survey that the anonymised research data will be archived at BTU Cottbus-Senftenberg in order to make it available to other researchers in line with current academic data-sharing practices. The anonymity of the responses was clearly explained and participants were invited to proceed on a voluntary basis and in full acceptance of their involvement in the research. The full content of the initial slide explaining the anonymity of responses is available in Annex 7. Furthermore, the questionnaire did not include contents that could be perceived as harmful to the participants or invading their privacy. All the questions related to the socio-demographic profile of the respondents had an opt out alternative (“prefer not to answer”), leaving the respondents’ contribution entirely on a voluntary basis.

### 5.2.3 Survey questions

The survey included 32 questions with the purpose to convey information regarding three main aspects: the willingness of the participants (potential travellers) to engage in the proposed small-scale, immersive heritage tourism concept and their behavioural preferences, the acceptance of a tourism platform and the functional requirements and the perceived risks for the implementation of such a collaborative model. The questions can be divided into six categories, which will be presented and explained below.

- **Intention to participate in the proposed type of tourism and behavioural travel preferences of the respondents.** This set of questions were designed to capture the respondents’ preference for immersive, authentic\* travel experiences. (\* It was explained that what is understood by authentic may differ from person to person, but that in the survey, authentic referred to an experience that is true to its context, that has a real and genuine connection to the lived environment in which it occurs). As this represents a core characteristic of the proposed form of heritage tourism, it was important to establish whether such a behavioural preference exists at all among the participants. Some questions referred to the perceived availability of similar tourism offers on the market. Respondents were asked whether they would consider engaging in a form of immersive tourism that involves their stay with a local family. Several questions captured their preferences for experiences and activities, duration of stay, potential budget, form of accommodation, frequency of travel in this form, as well as considerations of the potential benefits and impacts on the preservation of rural traditions.
- **Potential use of a tourism platform and functional/content requirements.** This section explored the respondents’ willingness to use a collaborative tourism platform for finding and

booking the proposed travel experiences. Aspects related to the required information on the platform, booking content, as well as payment were included.

- **Trust.** These questions aimed to capture how the respondents perceive the reliability of such a platform, as well as what are their most important considerations when building trust with the potential hosts.
- **Perceived risks.** This section examined the respondents' concerns when potentially booking the proposed travel experience. Various aspects like accommodation and amenities, safety issues, language barriers, infrastructure and quality of the activities offered were taken into consideration. An open-end question provided room for the examination of further barriers or risks that respondents perceived when considering their participation in this form of tourism.
- **Attitudes about travel.** A set of questions intended to identify certain preferences in travel behaviour that could be later connected to the acceptance or rejection of the proposed type of tourism.
- **Demographic and socio-economic data.** Information about the age, gender, marital status, parental status, education, occupation and employment was collected. The purpose of this section was to understand the socio-demographic profile of the respondents and to potentially identify links with their preference for the proposed collaborative model of tourism.

The full text of the questionnaire is available in Annex 8.

#### 5.2.4 Survey sampling

Similar to the study undertaken on potential hosts, this survey on potential tourists had an explorative character. Its aim was to investigate whether the proposed collaborative tourism model has potential to respond to current travel attitudes and preferences. The quantitative results were regarded as an indication of this potential (which could be further explored in a more extensive survey) and not as the basis for the actual development of such a tourism model.

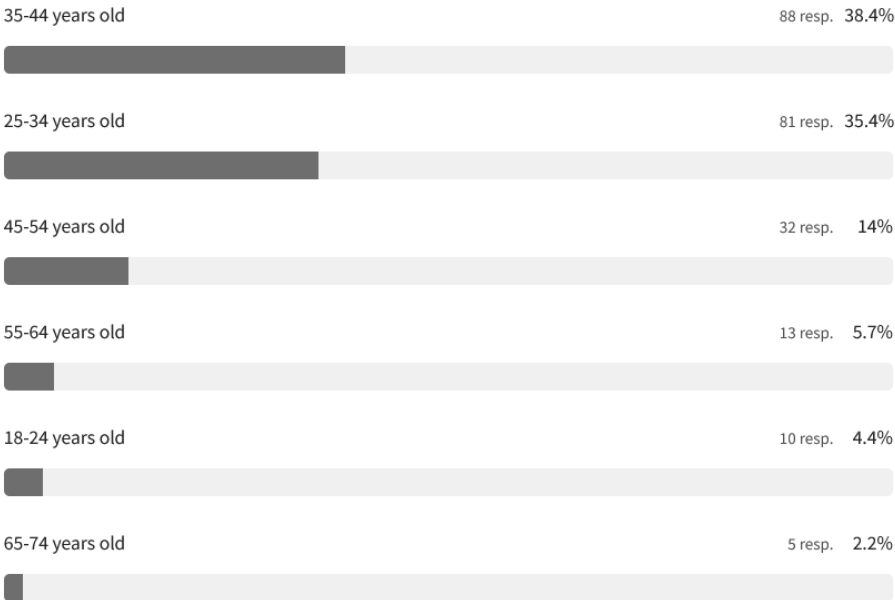
Since the survey targeted the general population who could potentially travel, no sampling frame was available. An appropriate sample was generated by circulating the invitation to respond to the survey via various online communities (LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, e-mail lists, etc.). Relevant tourism networks were targeted, but not exclusively. It was believed that the research could benefit from exposure to respondents who are not necessarily sensitised to tourism-related issues, but can express their attitudes and preferences as individual travellers. Although the representativeness of the sample could not be controlled per se and no stratification was proposed before circulating the questionnaire, the survey strove to target respondents from very diverse age groups. The results demonstrated a good balance in this regard. Moreover, a small incentive was offered to participants (the possibility to win a yearly subscription to a popular travel magazine Condé Nast Traveler), in order to encourage a higher response rate.

A total of 230 respondents were selected by random sampling. The survey was cross-sectional, the data being collected only at one point in time (November-December 2021). In total, there were 101 submissions via desktop, 127 submissions via mobile, and 2 submissions via tablet. With the help of an online sample size calculator, Creative Research Systems it was determined that for the general adult population, this sample size has a confidence level of 95% at a confidence interval of 6.5. Whereas the study acknowledges its limits to generalisation and does not claim to interpret the results in view of their statistical significance, it provides an interpretive basis for the tourists' acceptance of the proposed collaborative tourism model. The hypothesis that a significant segment of the general population would be interested to engage in such an immersive type of tourism through a collaborative platform could be further pursued through the collection of more extensive data and more rigorous sampling techniques.

**5.3 Results**

*Socio-demographic profile of the respondents*

The data indicated a balanced representation of diverse age groups among the participants in the survey. The largest segments are from the groups of 35-44 years old (38.4%), 25-34 years old (35.4%) and 45-54 years old (14%), which are also those most actively engaged in travelling. However, all other age groups are also represented. The majority of respondents were female (69%), with male participants representing 28.8% and gender non-conforming 0.8% (three respondents preferred not to answer).



*Figure 96 Age of respondents to survey.*

Slightly more than half of the respondents (58.5%) were married or in a domestic partnership, 34.5% single, 4.4% divorced or separated and 0.9% widowed. The remaining 1.7% preferred not to answer with regard to their marital status. The majority of participants (62%) did not have children.

The data indicated that the respondents had obtained on average a high level of education, with 52.8% holding a Master's degree, 30.6% a Bachelor's degree and 8.3% a doctoral degree. Only a few respondents had completed only high school (2.6%) or vocational training (3.5%). A small percentage (2.2%) preferred not to answer to this question.

Various occupational fields were represented among the respondents. The majority (74.8%) were employed and active in different professional sectors: business and finance (16.8%), education (12.1%), IT, technology and engineering (11.2%), arts and creative industries (8.9%), healthcare (6.5%), government and civil services (5.6%), law (3.75%) and other (0.9%). 8.9% of the respondents were business owners or self-employed. 19.2% of respondents were students. 3.7% of respondents were unemployed or searching for work and 2.3% of respondents were retired.

The information provided about the annual income indicated again a very balanced representation of different categories: 9.2% stated that they earn 100,001 Euros or over, 7.9% stated that they earn 80,001 – 100,000 Euros annually, 7.9% stated that they earn 60,001 – 80,000 Euros, 14.8% stated that they earn 40,001 – 60,000 Euros, 13.1% stated that they earn 15,001 – 40,000 Euros, 14% stated that they earn 5,000 – 15,000 Euros and 13.1% stated that they earn under 5,000 Euros. 20.1% of the respondents preferred not to answer.

#### *Behavioural intention to purchase the new tourism product*

The next set of questions provided data related to the respondents' acceptance and potential engagement with a form of small-scale, immersive tourism that would help communities in rural locations to secure an additional income and continue their traditional practices. The collaborative economic model (a platform for direct access to such unmediated travel experiences) was suggested.

The first set of data reflected the degree to which respondents are open to such travel experiences and what is their perceived difficulty in finding such offers on the current tourism market. A large majority of respondents considered that having meaningful, engaging experiences and immersing themselves in the local culture when they travel was very important or important. Only a smaller percentage found it less or not important.

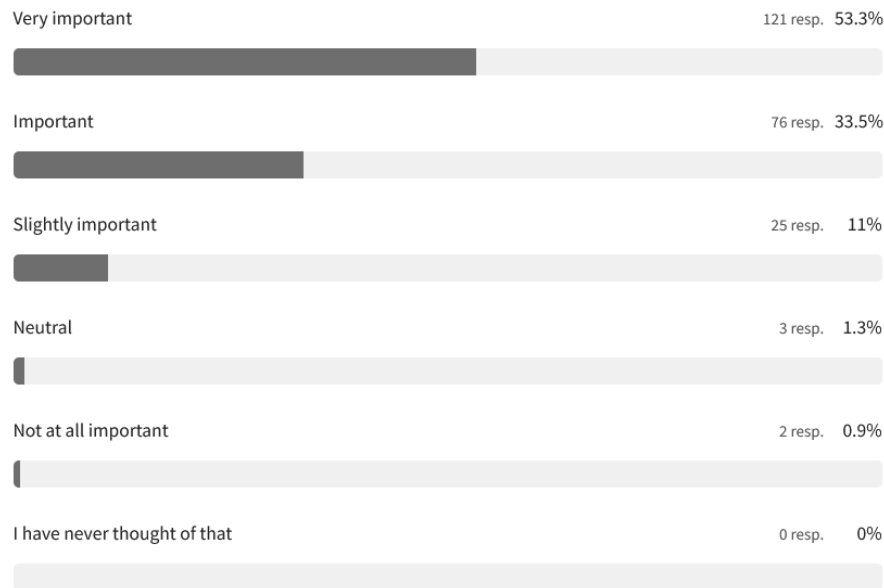


Figure 97 Importance of having meaningful, engaging experiences and being immersed in the local culture.

When asked how easy or difficult it is to find tours or holiday packages that offer authentic travel experiences, most respondents considered it to be moderately difficult, difficult or very difficult. A significant percentage (27.8%) never engaged in such a search, and only a small part considered this to be easy or very easy. Realising the potential for confusion with regard to the topic of what constitutes an authentic travel experience (as this may differ from person to person), it was specified that authentic refers to an experience that is true to its context, that has a real and genuine connection to the lived environment in which it occurs.



Figure 98 Ease or difficulty in finding tours or holiday packages that offer authentic cultural experiences.

Very interesting insights were offered by the invitation to identify a reason why, if applicable, it may be difficult to find tours or holiday packages that offer authentic travel experiences. The majority of respondents demonstrated a subtle perception of what is labelled as an authentic experience and what is sensed as truly being one. The fact that most tours (even those advertised as authentic) feel as if they were staged was identified by most respondents as the reason that makes access to the “real” experiences most difficult.

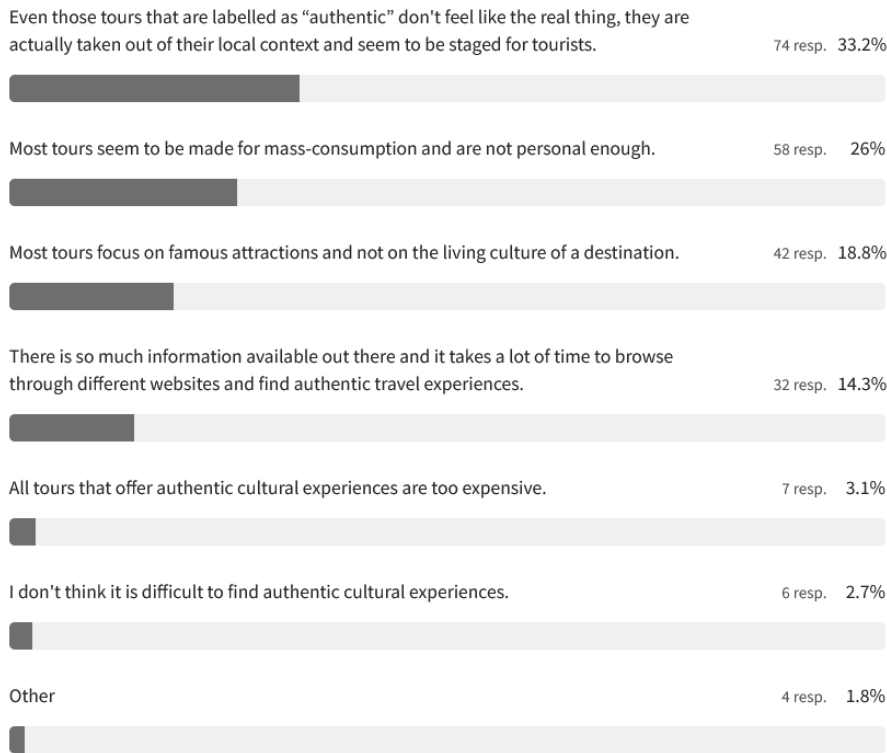
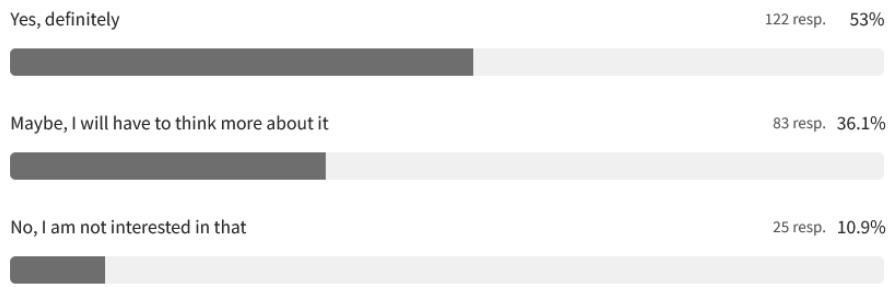


Figure 99 The most important factor that makes it difficult to find offers for authentic cultural experiences.

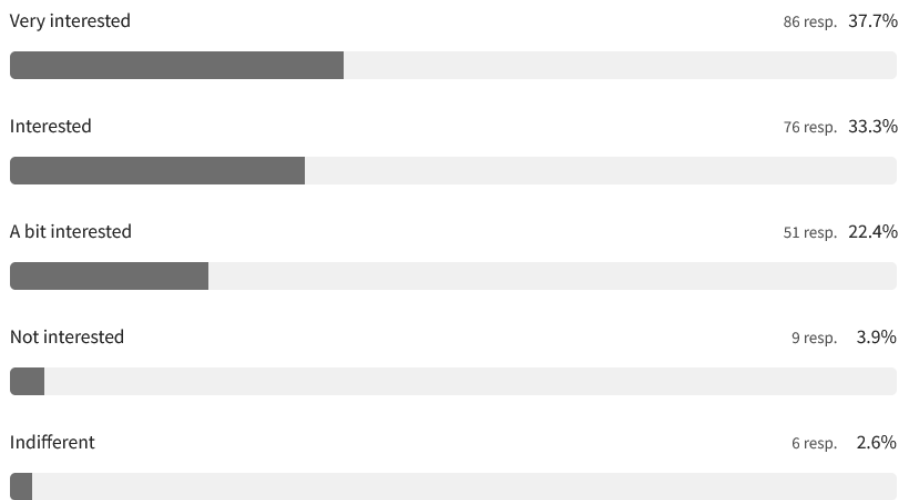
Other aspects like the lack of personalisation, the exclusive focus on attractions, or the information overload were identified as contributing to an increased difficulty in finding more genuine travel experiences. Some additional comments mentioned that an ‘authentic experience’ is not something that can be given, but something that each person can find themselves, through connecting with people and by immersing into the cultural setting they are visiting.

The next set of questions focused on the participants’ intention to book such a travel experience and the aspects they would appreciate most, or would motivate them most to engage in this form of tourism. When asked whether they would be willing to book a trip to a rural location and stay with a local family at their home, experiencing and learning from their way of living (for example, spending time with the family of a Japanese potter, a Romanian farmer, an Argentinian gaucho, or an Indigenous community in India, etc.), the respondents were predominantly positive. Even the undecided category did not categorically exclude the prospect.



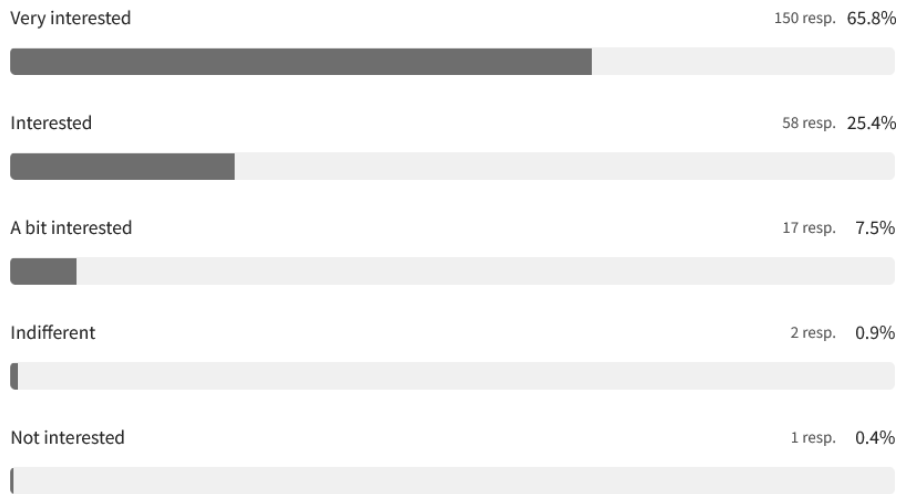
*Figure 100 Willingness to book a trip to a rural location and stay with a local family at their home, experiencing and learning from their way of living.*

Participants were asked to indicate which aspects they would be most interested to discover or experience while staying with a local family. Each category was rated from very interested, to interested, a bit interested, indifferent, and not interested. All categories appeared as strong pulling factors to the respondents. Most popular appeared to be traditional food and cooking, traditional knowledge about nature, health and wellbeing, traditional events and festivals, making friends with people from other parts of the world, as well as sports and outdoor adventures with local guides. Below is an overview of the responses received for each category.

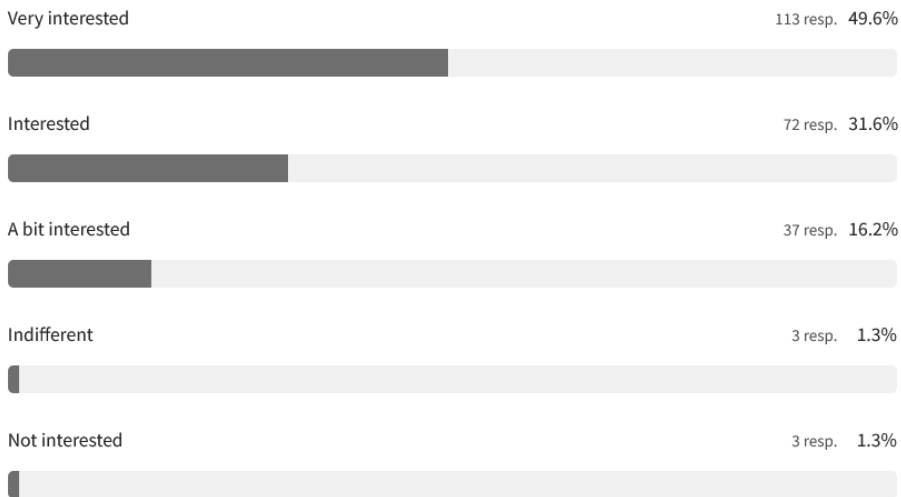


*Figure 101 Interest in traditional crafts (weaving, jewellery making, carving, pottery, blacksmithing, etc.).*

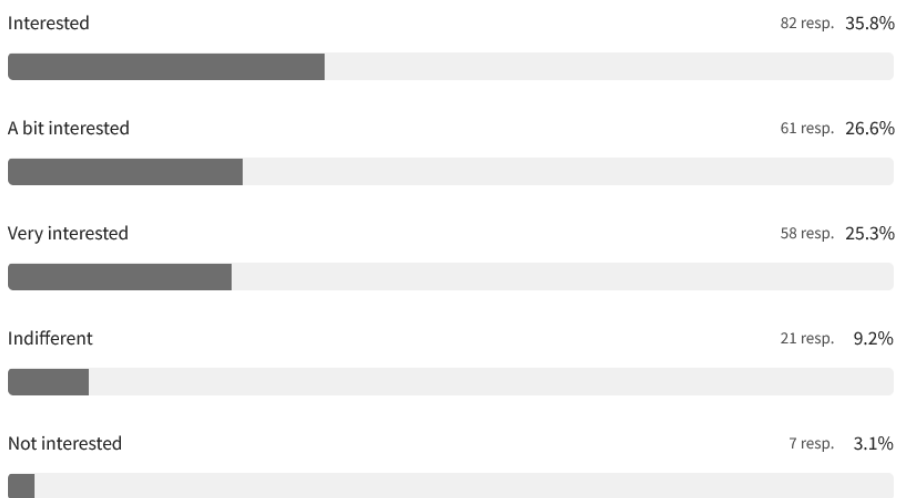




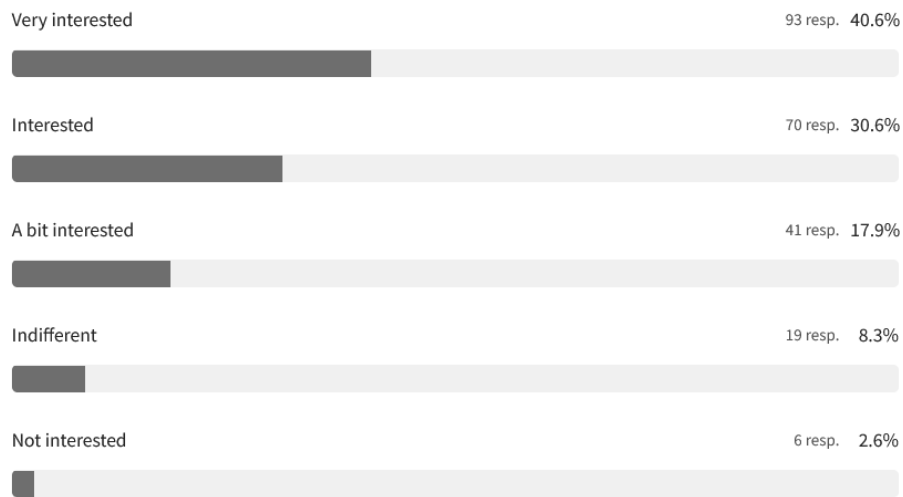
*Figure 102 Interest in traditional food and cooking.*



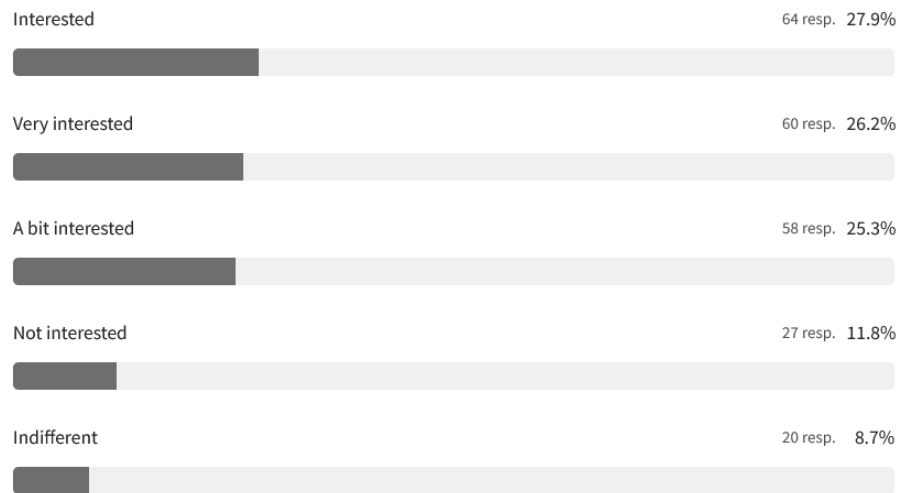
*Figure 103 Interest in traditional knowledge about nature, health and wellbeing.*



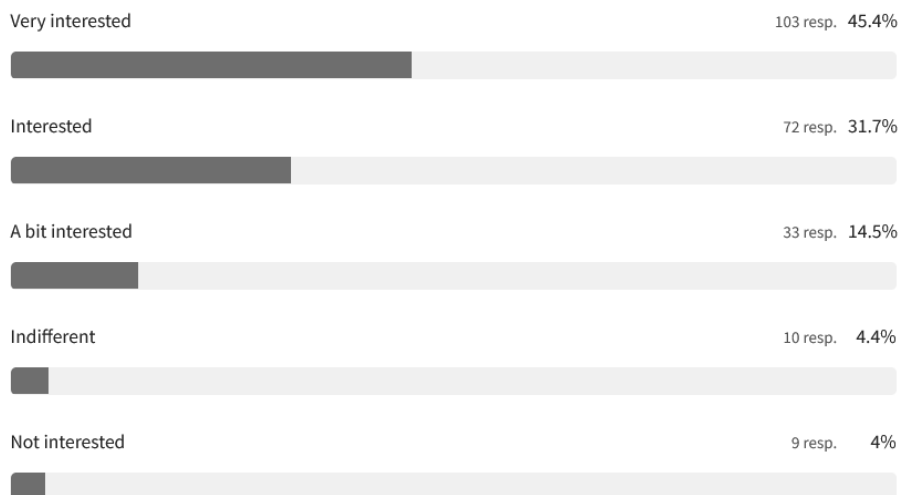
*Figure 104 Interest in traditional ways of using the land (farming and agriculture).*



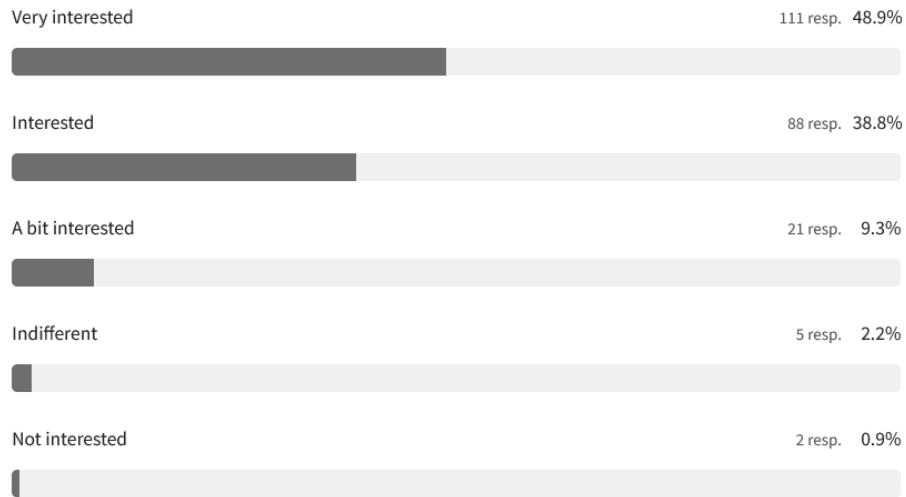
*Figure 105 Traditional arts (dance, song, theatre, calligraphy, etc.).*



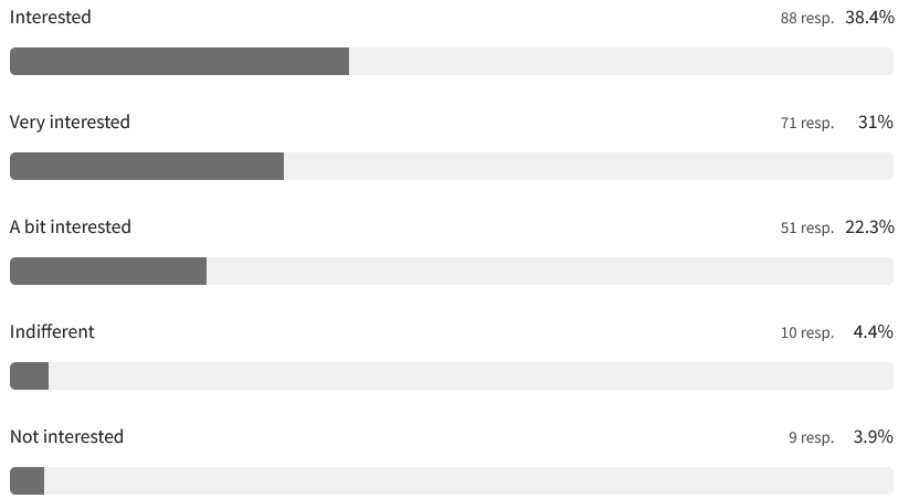
*Figure 106 Interest in spirituality.*



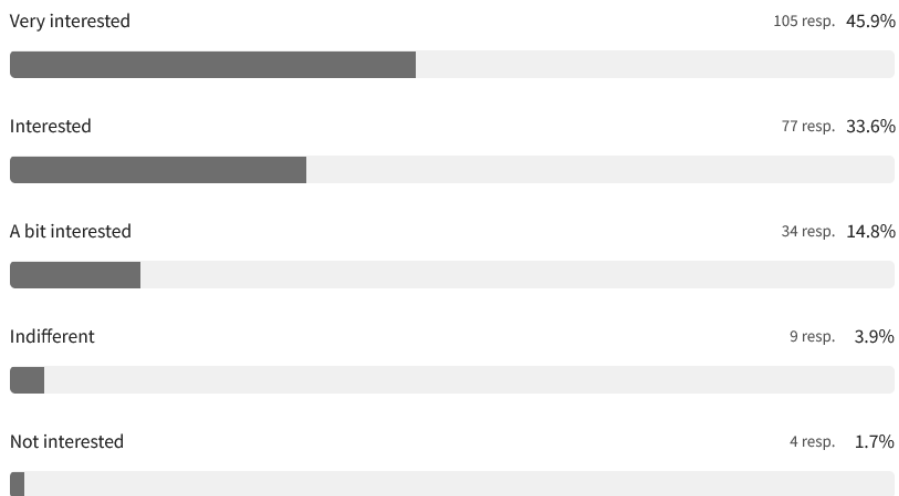
*Figure 107 Interest in sports, hiking and outdoor adventures with local guides.*



*Figure 108 Interest in traditional events and festivals.*



*Figure 109 Interest in simply be part of their daily routine.*



*Figure 110 Interest in making friends with people in other parts of the world.*

The remaining questions in this part aimed to establish certain behavioural preferences that may be relevant for the potential implementation of such a tourism model. Aspects such as the duration of stay, budget, accommodation and amenities, expected frequency of engaging in this type of travel experience.

The most preferred duration for such a travel experience appeared to be one week. Other lengths from less than one week to two weeks have a balanced representation, but also the prospect of longer than two weeks received a comparable amount of responses.

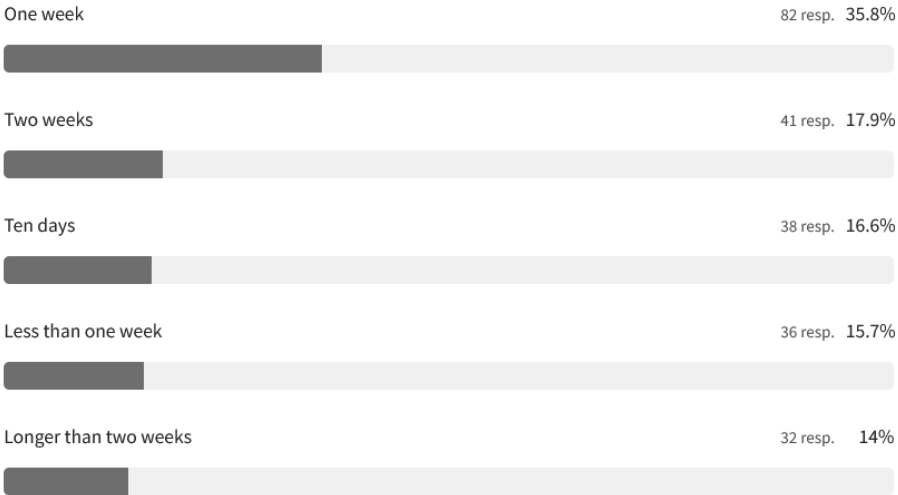


Figure 111 Length of ideal stay.

When asked how much they would be willing to spend per week per person, including accommodation, food and participation in traditional activities, most of the respondents (44.3%) opted for a budget of 281 – 560 Euros per week per person.

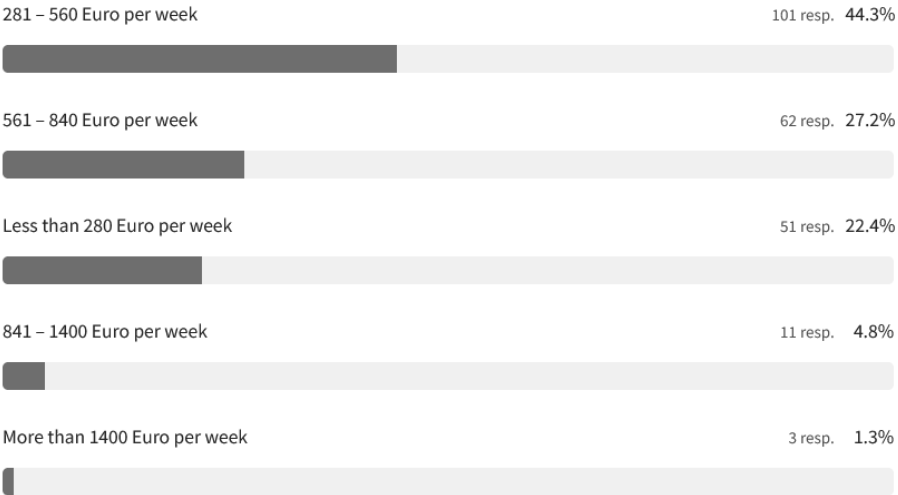


Figure 112 Amount respondents would be willing to spend per week per person.

With regard to accommodation, the majority of respondents (64.9%) stated that they would prefer to stay in the same house with the host family, but expressed their preference to have a separate dependency on the property. A certain percentage (17.8%) preferred separate accommodation and to

visit only during the day, whereas a relatively equal number (16.4%) stated the need for full immersion in the daily routines of the visited family. Some comments emphasised that this decision may also depend on space, privacy (for both sides) and other circumstances (e.g. allergies, medical conditions, etc.)

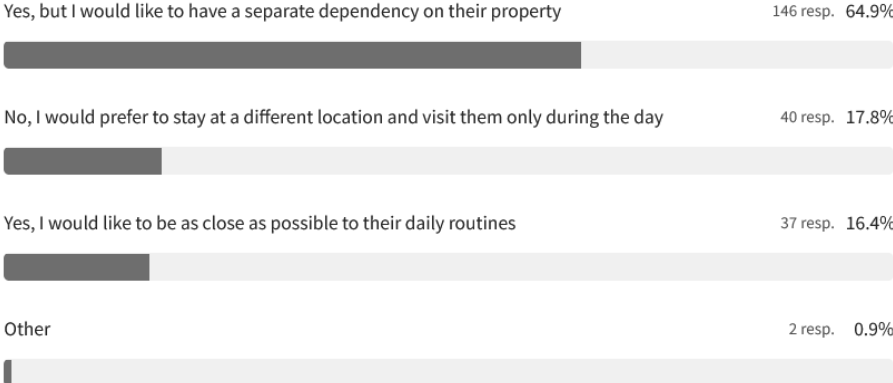


Figure 113 Preferred accommodation arrangements.

With regard to the comfort and available amenities are at the place where they will be staying, most of the respondents considered them to be important, but expressed understanding towards the different realities of the place they were visiting and the potential willingness to lower their standards. 15.4% of the participants stated that they were willing to fully immerse themselves in the lifestyle they experience, doing everything as the hosts do, whereas a small percentage (4.4%) emphasised the need to have access to modern amenities where they stay.

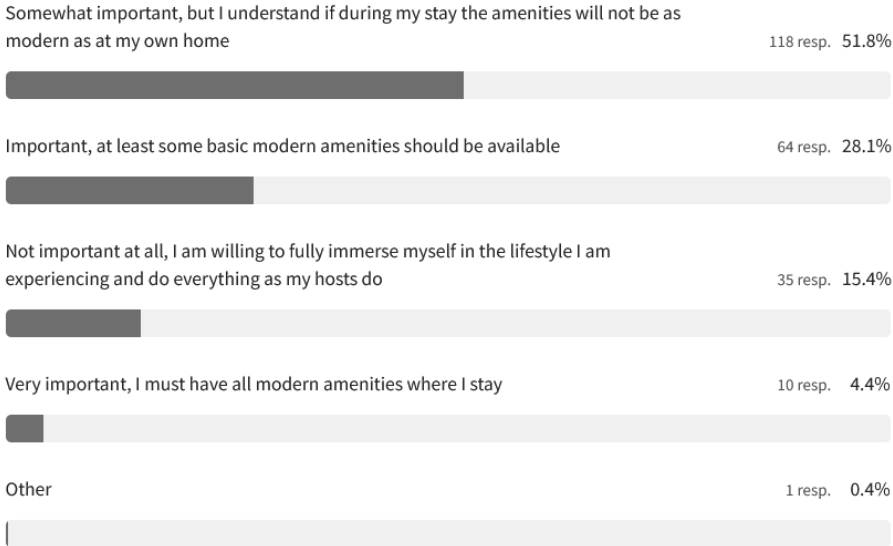
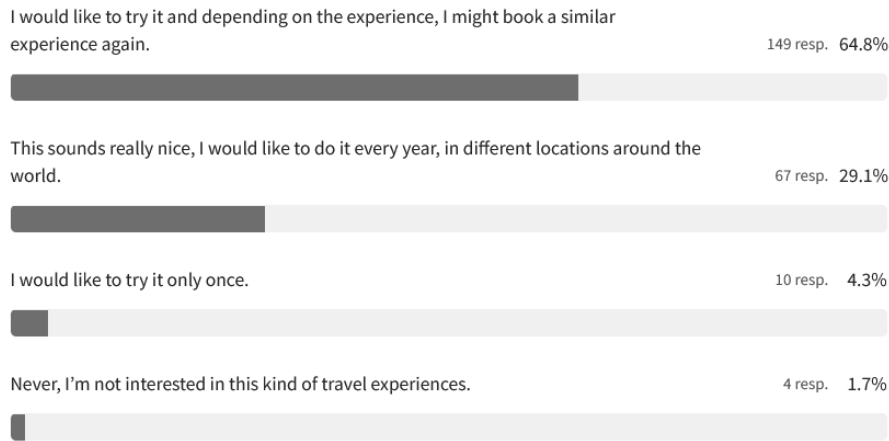


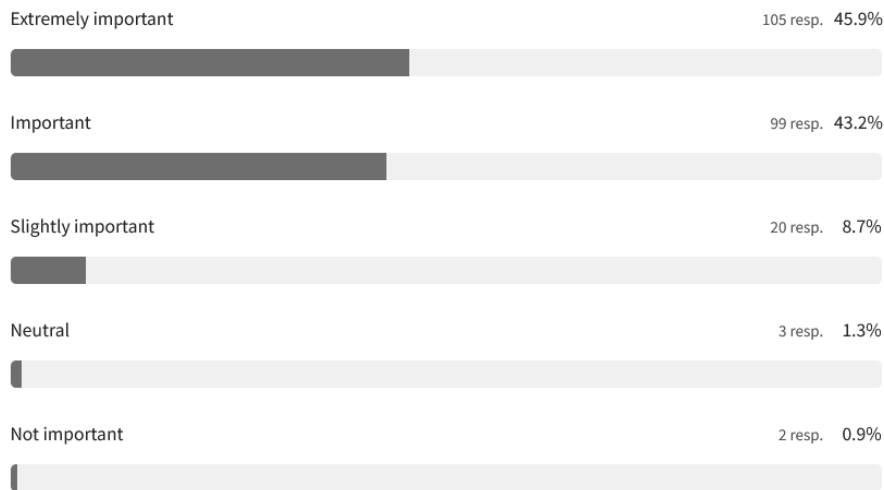
Figure 114 Importance of comfort and available amenities at the place where they will be staying.

When asked how often they would like to try this kind of travel experience, the majority (64.8%) conditioned their willingness to re-book on the quality of the first experience. A significant percentage (29.1%) stated they would consider engaging in this form of tourism more permanently.



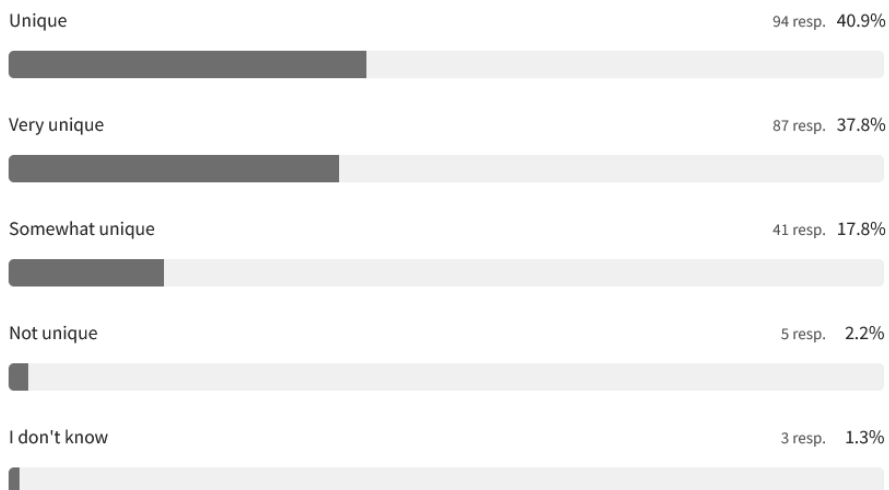
*Figure 115 Respondents' intention to book.*

The perceived contribution of this form of tourism to the financial security of the host communities and to the preservation of the local traditional knowledge and practices was recognised by the large majority of respondents as an extremely important or important consideration.



*Figure 116 Importance of potential benefits to the host family, as well as the preservation of local traditional practices.*

The suggested type of small-scale, immersive tourism was perceived by the majority of respondents (78.7%) as very unique or unique compared to other tours and holiday packages currently available on the market.



*Figure 117 Perceived uniqueness of the suggested tourism model.*

## Platform

The participants signalled a strong acceptance of a potential collaborative platform that would facilitate the proposed travel experiences. A convincing 94.3% of the respondents answered favourably when asked whether they would be willing to use the services of an online platform where they could book their stay directly with hosts at various locations around the world.



Figure 118 Willingness of respondents to use a collaborative tourism platform.

Participants were asked to indicate which aspects on such a platform would be of most importance to them. Each category was rated from very important, to important, neutral, slightly important, and not important. The profile of the host family and a visual description of their property were regarded particularly important, but also the description of activities available and ratings from former guests.

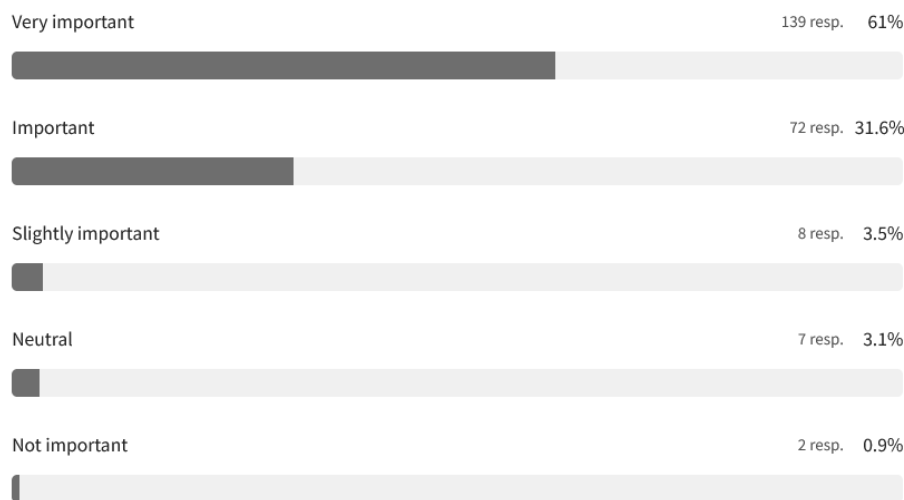


Figure 119 Importance of the profile of the host family, including photos of their property.

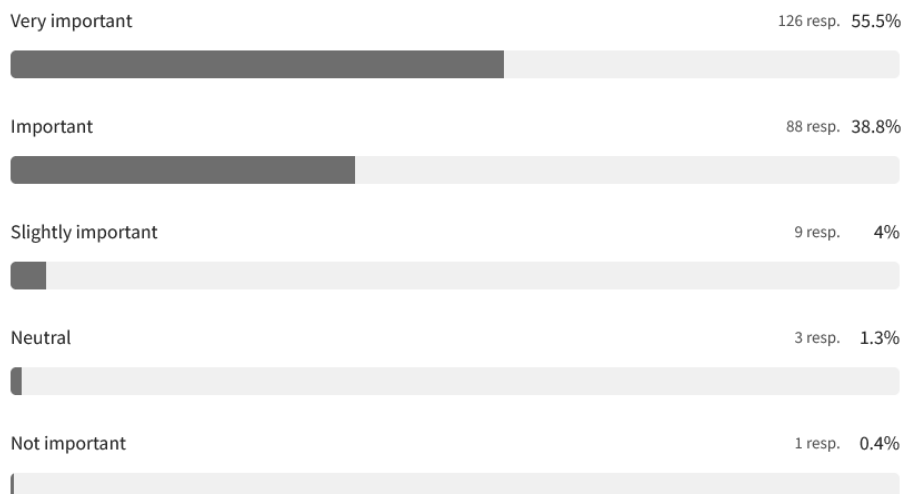


Figure 120 Importance of the description of activities available with the host family.

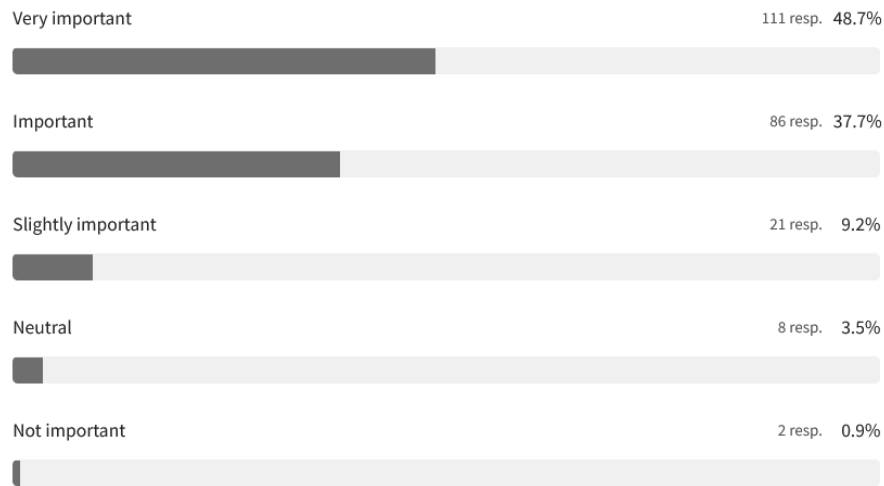


Figure 121 Importance of the ratings and reviews of former guests.

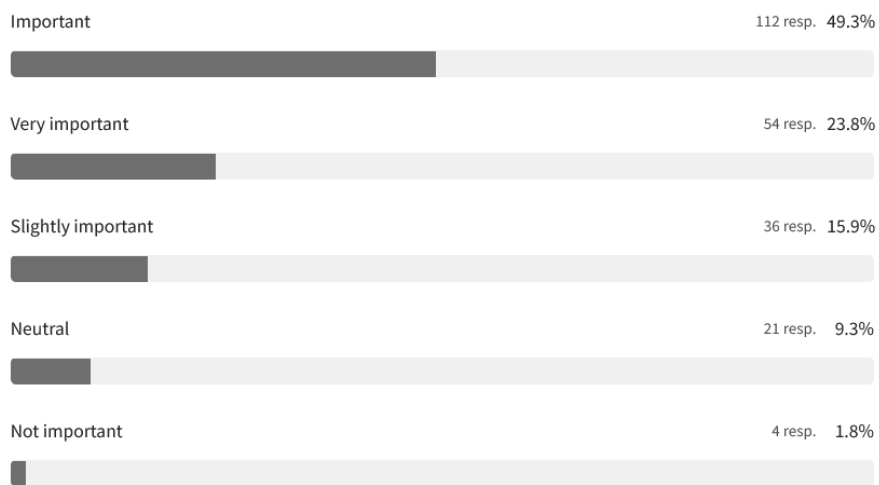


Figure 122 Importance of a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) section.

Although the practical aspects (physical surroundings, range of activities, reliability through ratings and logistical details) appear to play a very important role in defining the attractiveness of the travel experience, information about the social cause and the traditions supported by this form of tourism is also acknowledged as significant in influencing the tourists' decision.

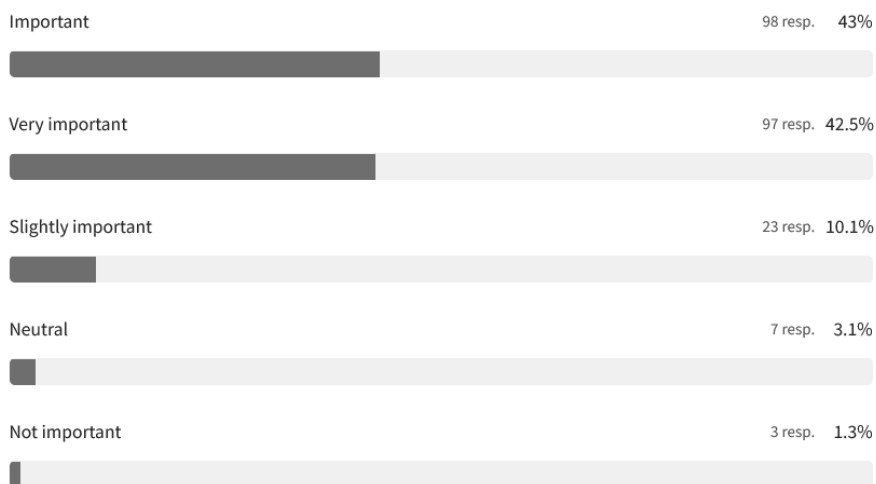


Figure 123 Importance of information about the social cause supported.



When asked which feature they would most appreciate at the locations and host families listed on such a platform, the majority of respondents (52.5%) referred to the uniqueness and the authenticity of the activities offered. The natural environment and the low level of tourism development were also indicated as having significance for their destination choice.

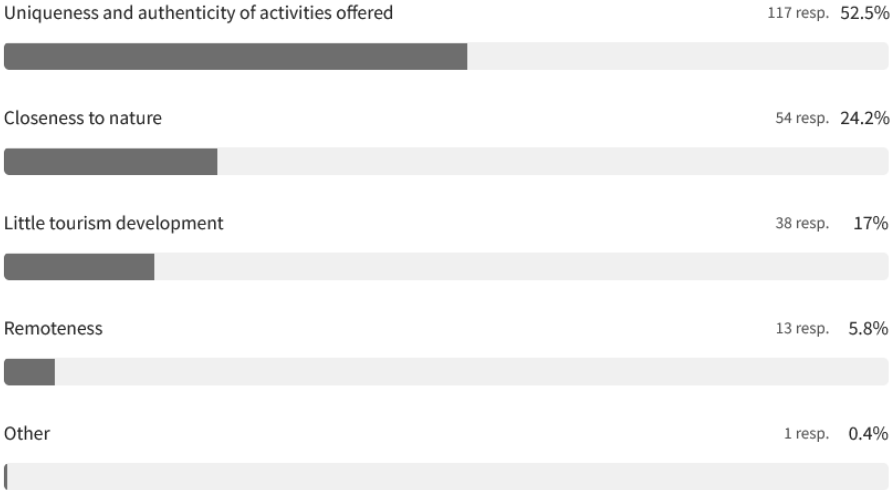


Figure 124 Respondents' most appreciated feature at the visited locations.

Most of the respondents (53.1%) indicated that they would prefer that transportation would also be provided when booking such a travel experiences, mainly because these destinations are often remote and getting there may require too much time and effort, or not have access to relevant local knowledge. A smaller part of the respondents (32.5%) stated that they would like to have some guidance about how to reach the location, but that they would prefer to organise the travel arrangements on their own. Only 14.5% of the participants indicated that they would not require any guidance with regard to transportation.

Finally, when asked whether they would be willing to pay a small fee to a company that would facilitate such travel experiences online most of the respondents (89.1%) answered favourably.



Figure 125 Respondents' willingness to pay a fee for platform services.

*Trust*

The potential acceptance of the collaborative model was also examined from the perspective of trust. The answers provided insights into how potential tourists perceive trust in relation to the platform itself (that would facilitate access to the proposed travel experiences), but also to the potential hosts (that would accommodate them during their stay at the selected destination). Most respondents (57.5%) considered the reviews provided by other users (both hosts and tourists) to be important in ensuring the reliability of the platform, whereas 24.6% of the respondents stated that they would trust

the services of such a tourism platform only if it were recommended by a friend or a trusted travel partner. 13.6% of the participants indicated that they would trust such a platform unconditionally, and 2.9% expressed their distrust.

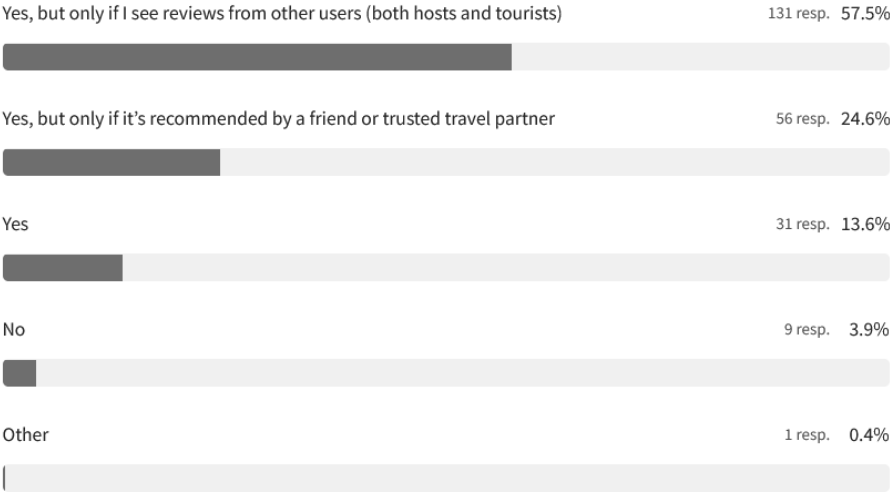


Figure 126 The trust towards the services of a tourism platform.

A set of questions aimed to identify what would influence potential tourists when determining the reliability of their hosts and what would convince them to make the purchase of such a travel experience. Participants were asked to indicate which aspects would be of most importance in deciding whether they would like to book a stay with a host family. Each category was rated from very important, to important, neutral, slightly important, and not important. The location of the property, the online profile of the host and the reviews received from other tourists appeared to hold an equal amount of significance for most respondents.

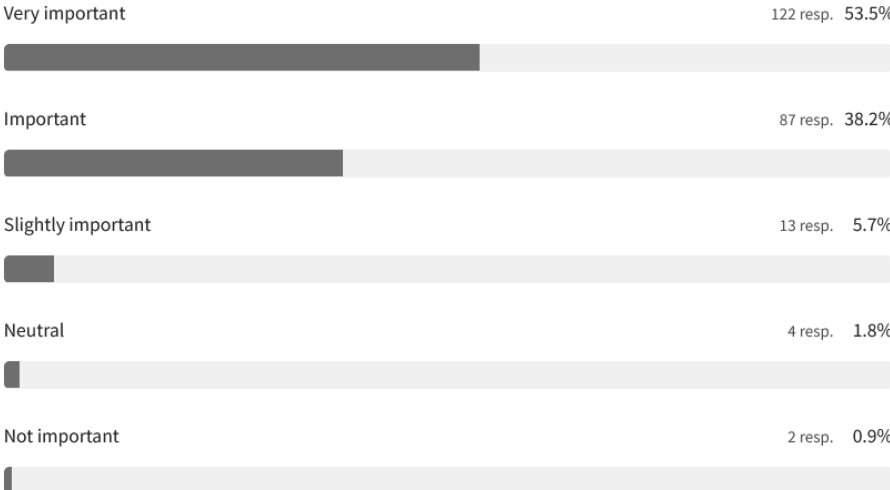
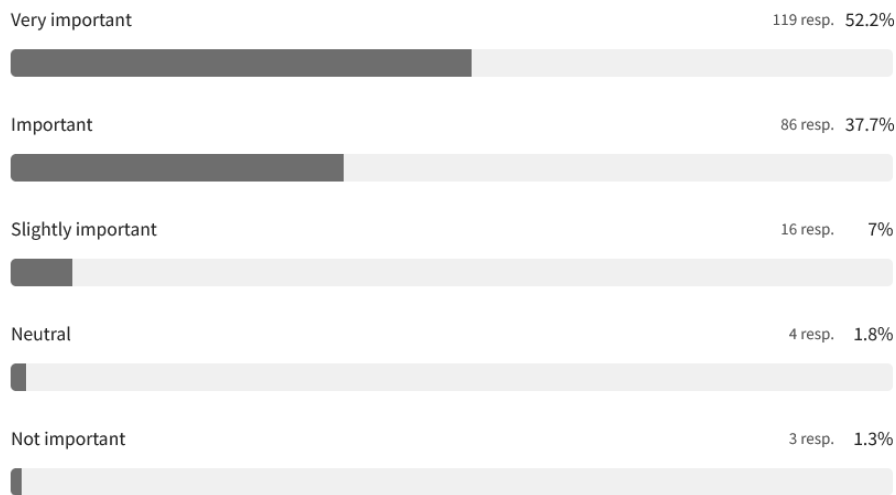
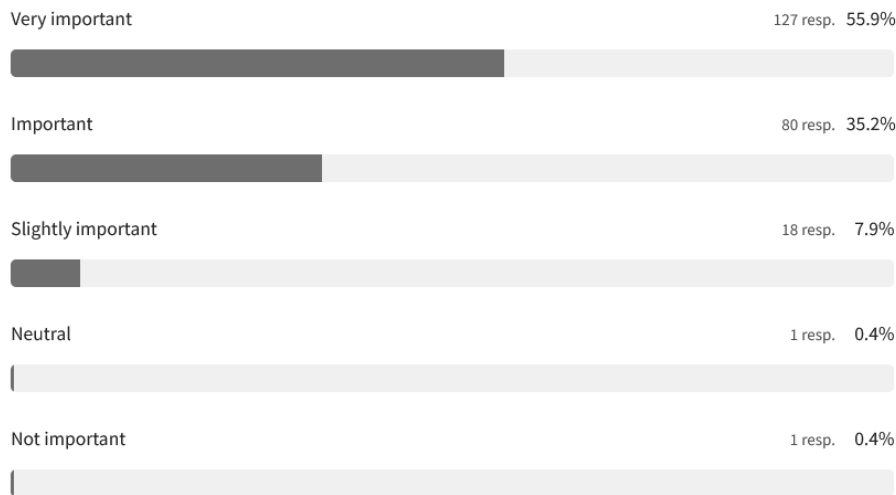


Figure 127 Importance of the online profile of the host.

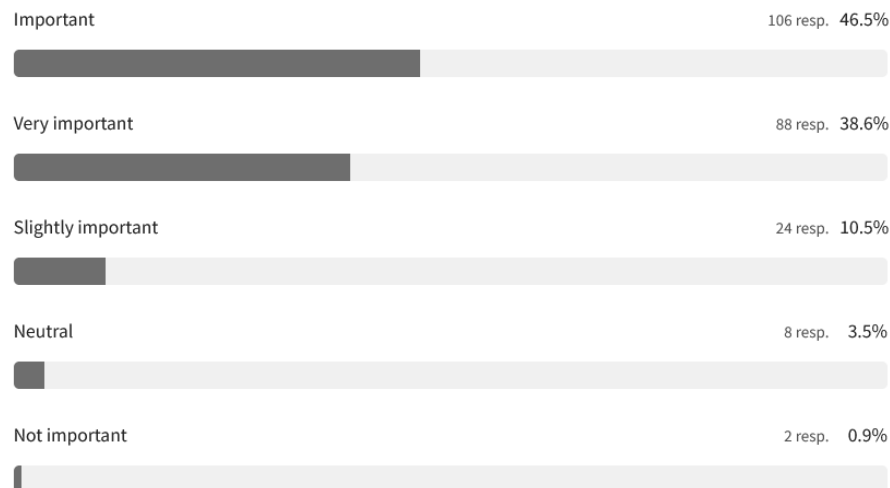


*Figure 128 Importance of reviews the host received from other tourists.*

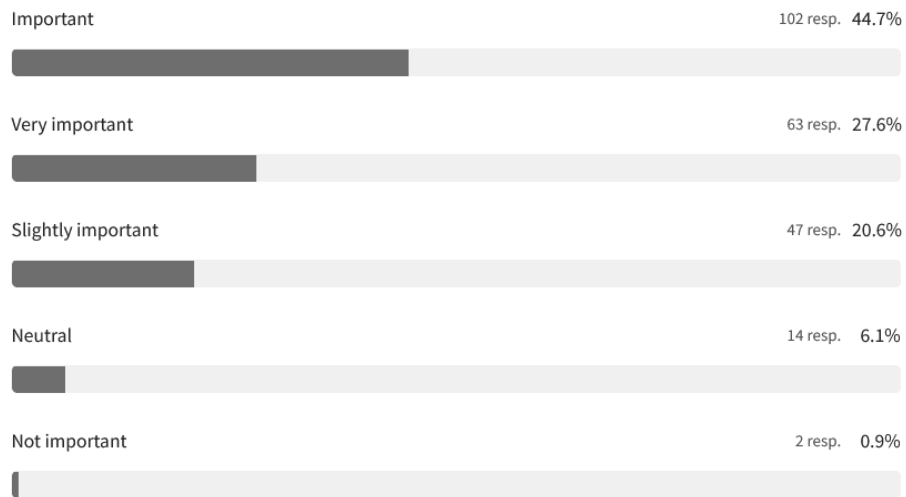


*Figure 129 Importance of the location of the host family, including information on the natural surroundings and property.*

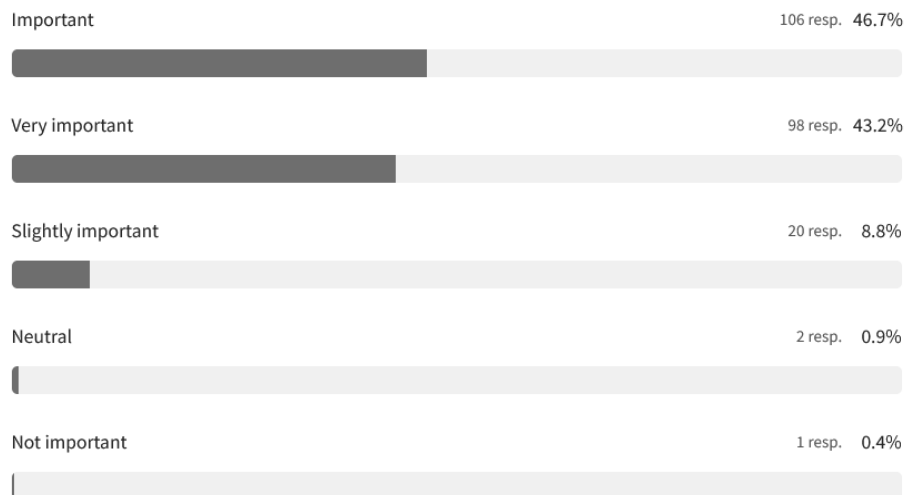
Other aspects such as the activities offered during the stay, the standards of the available accommodation, communication with the host and an awareness of the social contribution of tourism at the respective localities were also recognised as important considerations in the decision to book such a travel experience.



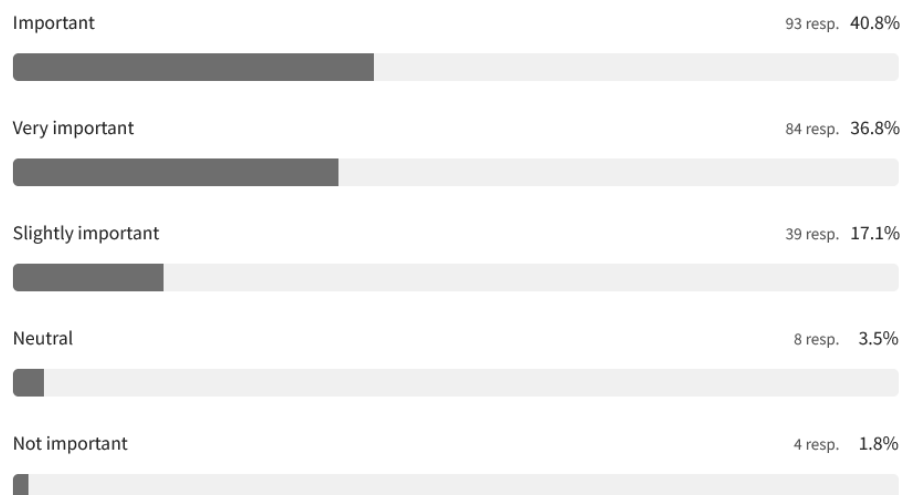
*Figure 130 Importance of activities offered during the stay.*



*Figure 131 Importance of conditions and amenities of the accommodation.*



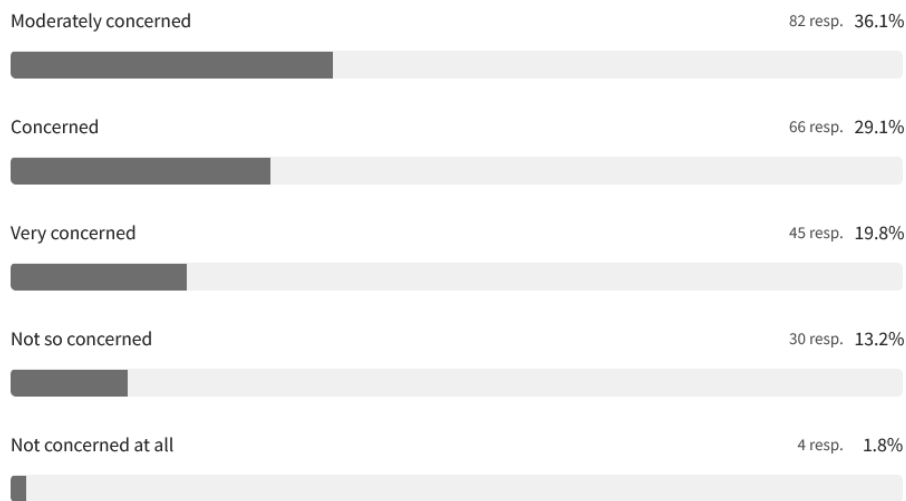
*Figure 132 Importance of communication with the host.*



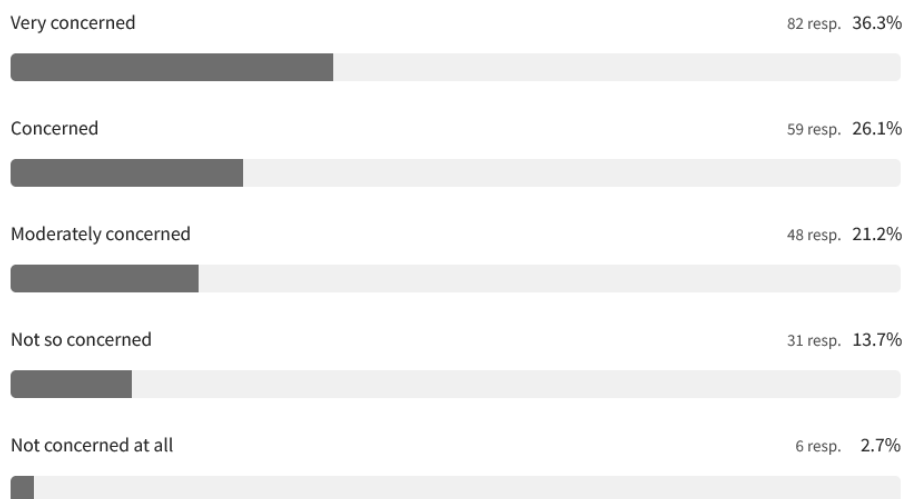
*Figure 133 Importance of social cause and traditions their stay will support.*

*Perceived risks*

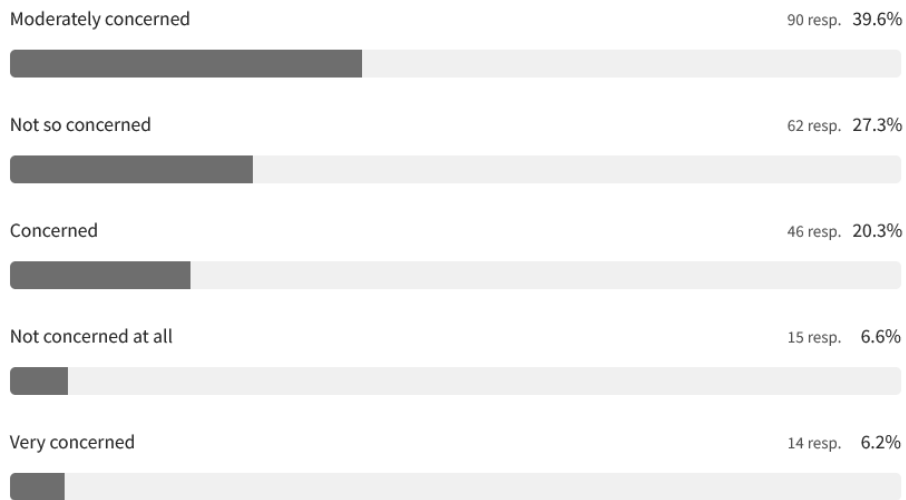
This section aimed to establish the tourists' perceived risks with regard to their participation in the proposed tourism mode. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of concern regarding certain aspects when booking such a travel experience. Each category was rated from very concerned, to concerned, moderately concerned, not so concerned, and not concerned at all. Overall, the safety issues appeared to be prioritised, both in relation to the host family (the unfamiliarity with the people that would host tourists) and to the reliability of the online payment. The standards of accommodation and amenities, the quality of the offered activities, the available infrastructure at the destination and the total costs of the stay were on average perceived as moderate concern. Language barriers were identified as a potential concern, but not rated too high.



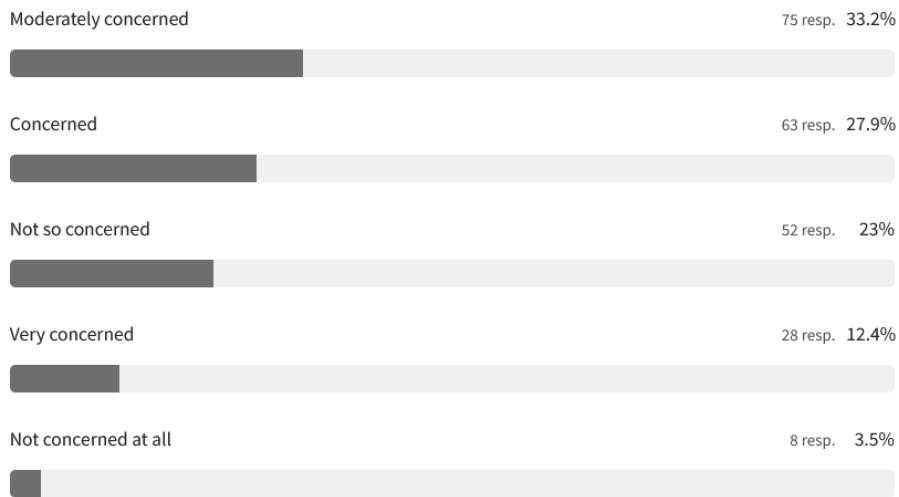
*Figure 134 Concern regarding poor amenities and low standards of accommodation.*



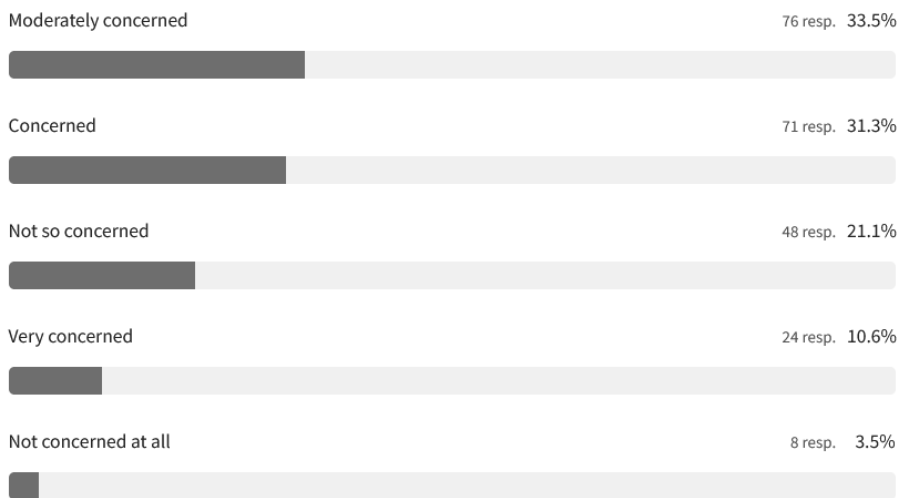
*Figure 135 Concern regarding safety issues (not knowing the host family).*



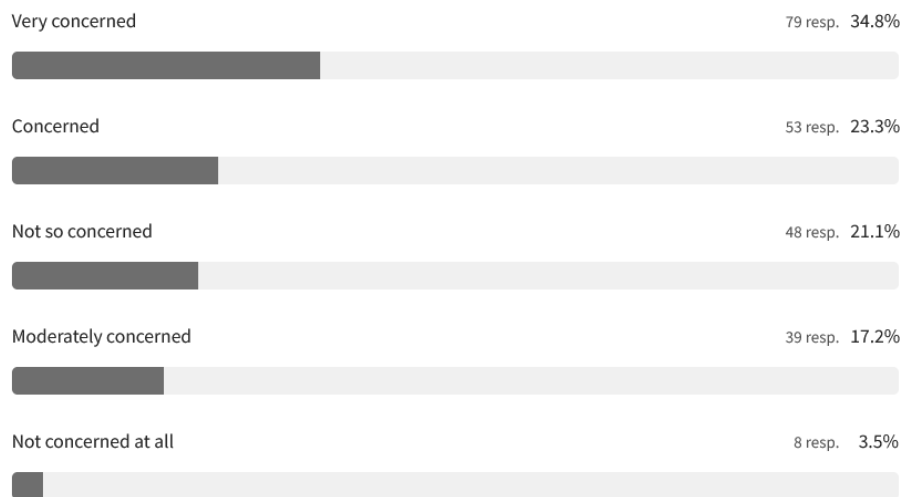
*Figure 136 Concern regarding language barriers.*



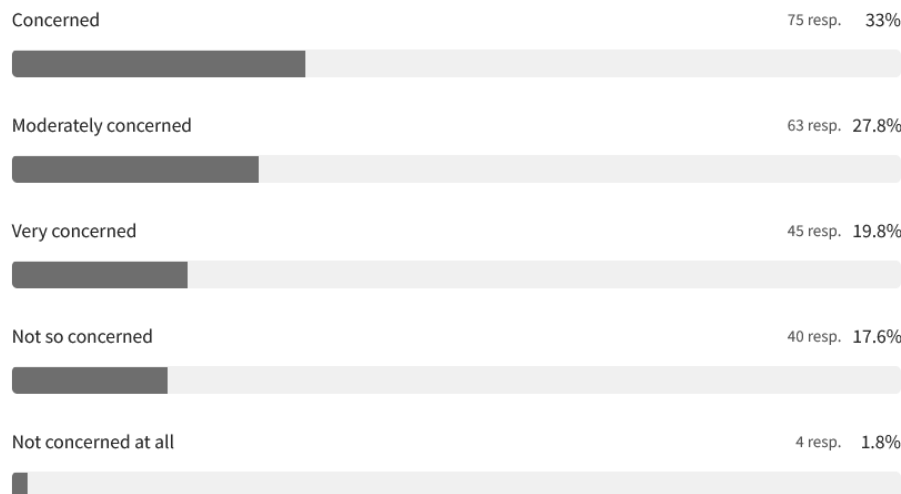
*Figure 137 Concern regarding infrastructure (too difficult to travel to the location of the host family).*



*Figure 138 Concern regarding quality of the activities offered during their stay.*



*Figure 139 Concern regarding online payment security.*



*Figure 140 Concern regarding total cost of the stay.*

### *Attitudes about travel*

The last part of the survey aimed to identify certain trends in the participants' travel behaviour. Some of the information (frequency, mode and motivation of travel, preferred duration of stay) was considered an important value to compare with the respondents' declared willingness to engage in this form of tourism. The relationship established between these two values will be explained in the analysis of results. An overview of the participants' responses in regard to these travel patterns is presented below.

The preferred frequency of travel (in a pandemic-free year) is 2-3 times a year (50.4%). The next largest group (29.9%) favours travelling only once a year. But there were also several respondents who have more frequent travel patterns (4-5 times or even 6 or more times a year).

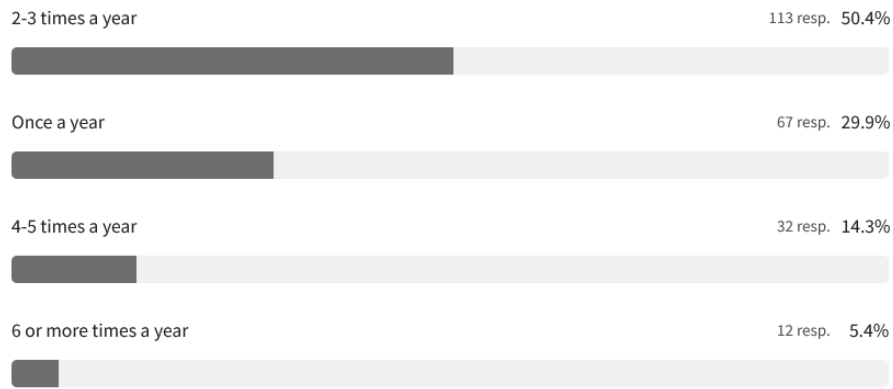


Figure 141 How often respondents usually travel for leisure.

When asked how they usually travel, 32.3% of the respondents indicated that they usually travel with their partner, 27.3% stated that they usually travel with their family, including children and 17.7% indicated that they usually travel with friends. 16.8% of the respondents indicated that they travel alone, whereas 5.5% usually travel with their family, but no children.

With regard to the participants' general motivation to travel, most of them (55.6%) prioritised the desire to see new places, have new experiences and find out new life perspectives. A significant group (22%) favoured the need to relax, escape stress and recharge their batteries, while a smaller one (13.9%) emphasised the social aspects of travelling, as an opportunity to spend quality time with family and friends. Escaping the routine and home environment or showing friends the visited places were not particularly strong in motivating the respondents to travel.

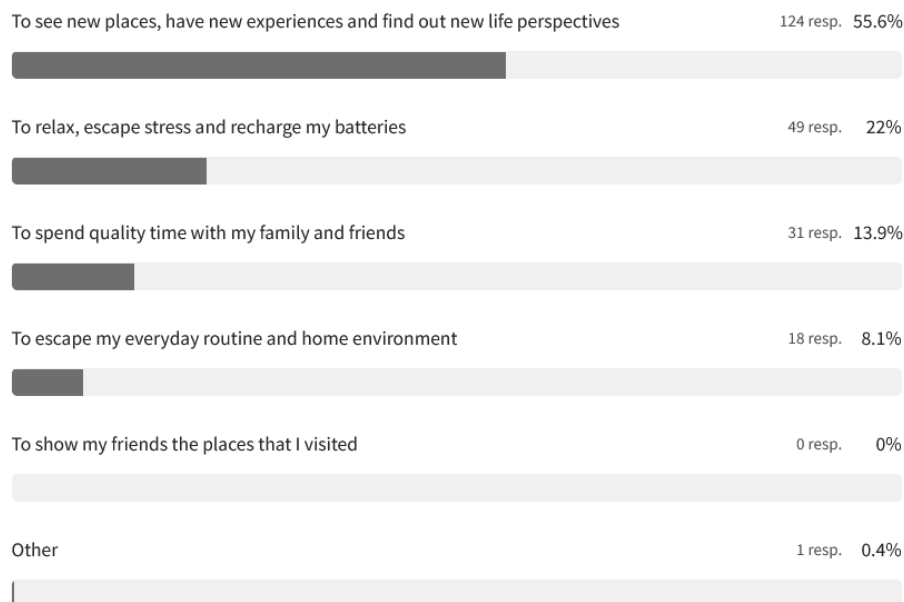


Figure 142 Respondents' main motivation to travel.

Participants were also asked to express their agreement with a range of statements perceived as representative for a particular type of travel behaviour. For each statement, it was possible to answer totally agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree and totally disagree. The following statements were proposed:



I must have the maximum comfort when I travel.

I want to relax, enjoy the peace and quiet, and do as little as possible.

I like to go to famous places and impress my friends on social media with that.

I just need to get to a destination, after that I prefer to walk around and discover everything on my own.

I want to enjoy the beauty of nature and to engage in outdoor activities.

I am mostly interested in visiting historic sites and cultural attractions at the destination.

I want to get in touch with the locals and experience their lifestyles in their own environment.

I want to take part in experiential activities (e.g. learn a traditional craft, help in a local farm, learn how to cook the local cuisine, etc.).

I am so stressed out in my work, I just want to get away from everything and recharge my batteries.

I prefer it when everything is organised for me when I travel.

I want to spend quality time with my family and have fun with my kids.

I find it very stressful to adjust to unfamiliar places and I prefer going to places that are similar to my home environment.

I would like to see what alternative solutions other people have found to the everyday needs I am experiencing myself (housing, food, work, enjoyment).

Travel is my life.

The purpose of this data was to capture predominant attitudes or preferences in travel behaviour, and possibly to establish a tourist psychographic typology that could be put in relation with the potential acceptance of the collaborative tourism model. For some categories, the obtained values were inconclusive, as no major trend could be identified among the participants. This could be explained by the fact that tourists tend to have more hybrid profiles, with a diversity of preferences and behavioural characteristics that they constantly choose from and adapt every time they travel. The aspects where clear travel tendencies could be identified were related to the respondents' motivation to get in touch with the locals and experience their lifestyles in their own environment, a preference for the enjoyment of nature and outdoor activities, the prioritisation of spending quality time with own family and children, flexibility in adjusting to unfamiliar environments that differ from home, or disregard for travelling to famous destinations and social media postings about the travel experiences.

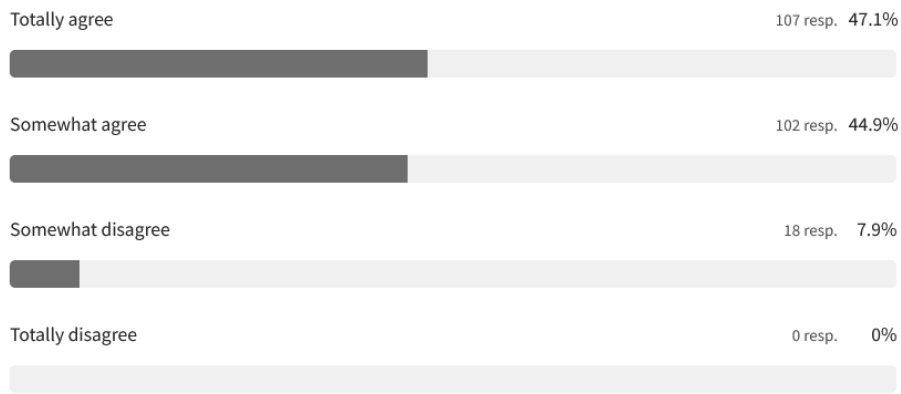


Figure 143 Desire to get in touch with the locals and experience their lifestyle in their own environment.

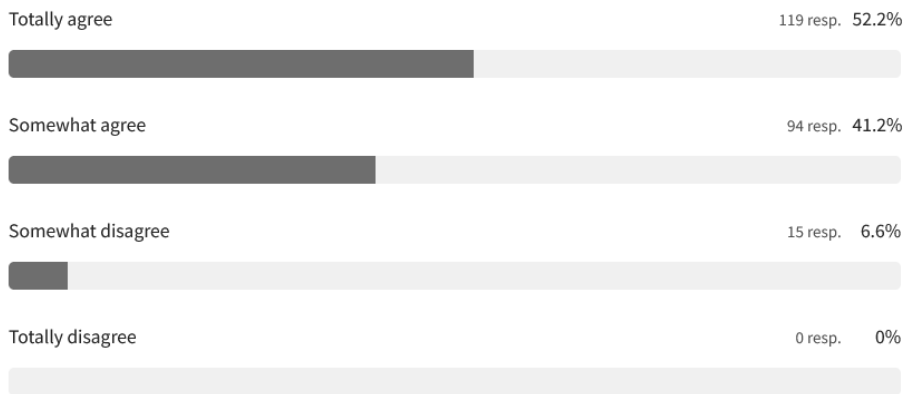


Figure 144 Desire to enjoy the beauty of nature and engage in outdoor activities during travel.

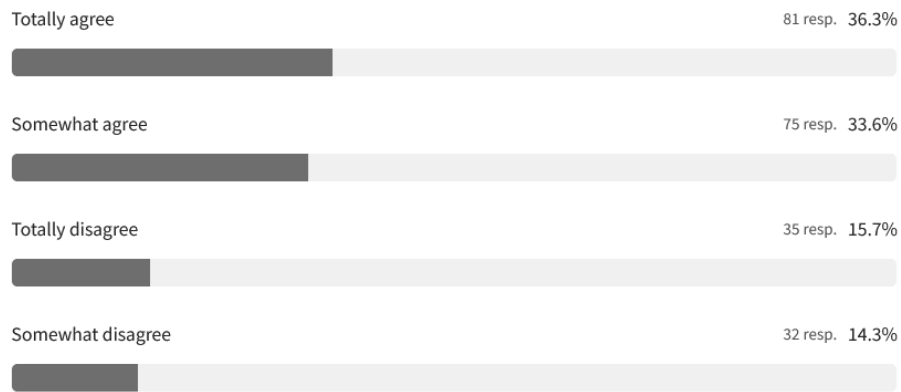


Figure 145 Desire to spend quality time with family and kids during travel.

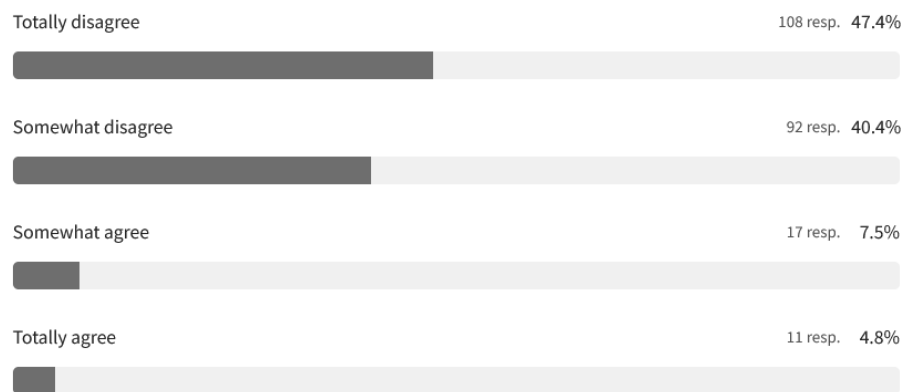


Figure 146 Stressful adjustment to unfamiliar places and preference for destinations similar to home.

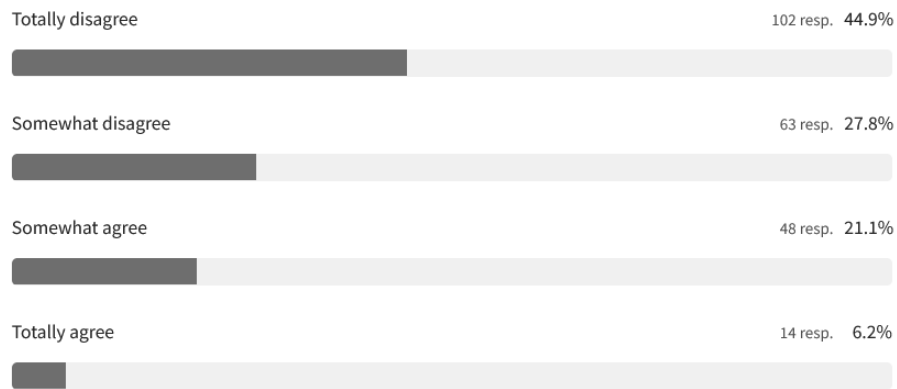


Figure 147 Preference to go to famous places and share travel experiences with friends on social media.

Certain general preferences, although not equally strong as the previous ones, were identified in relation to the respondents' inclination to take part in experiential activities (such as learning a traditional craft, helping at a local farm, or learning how to cook the local cuisine), the independence in discovering the travel destination, their interest in visiting historic sites and cultural attractions at the destination, as well as to discover alternative solutions that other people have found to the everyday needs they themselves have, in regards to housing, food, work and enjoyment.

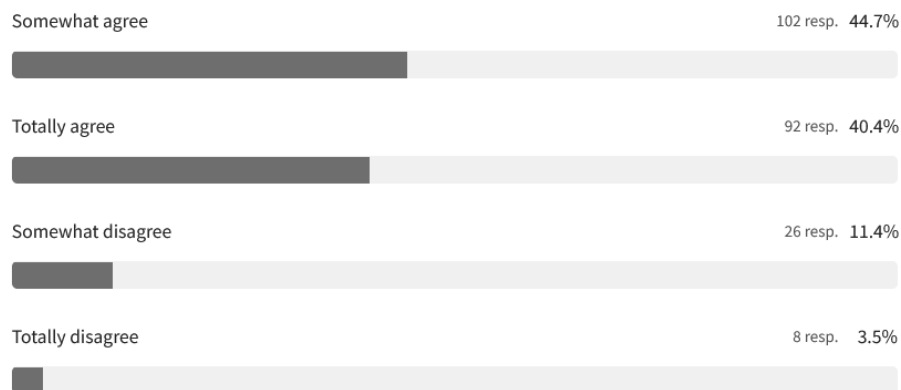


Figure 148 Desire to participate in experiential activities at the destination.

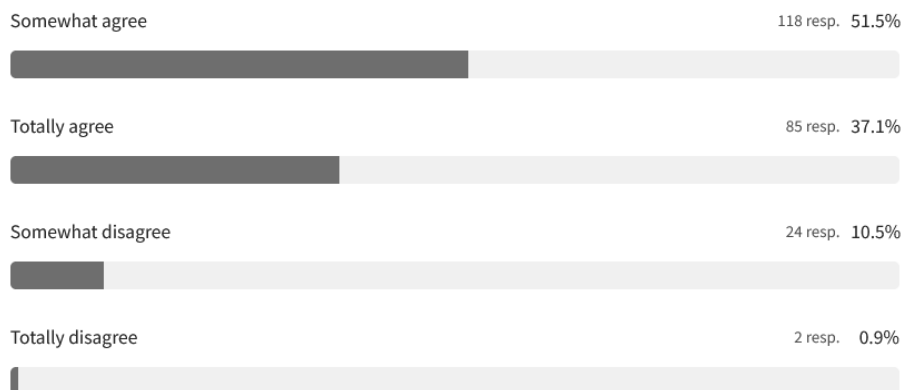
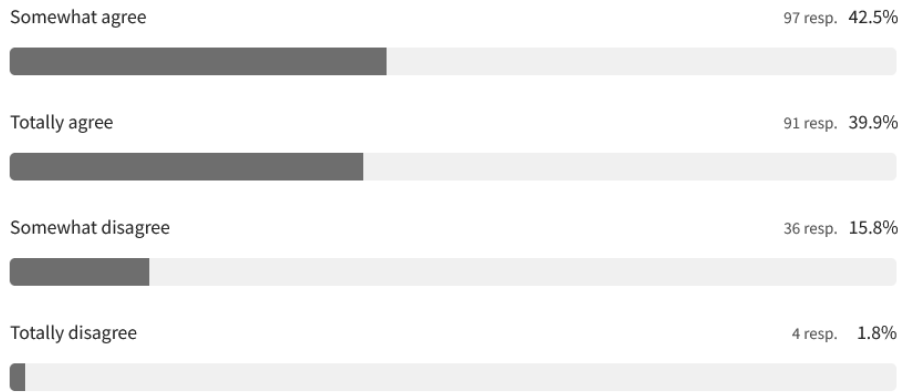
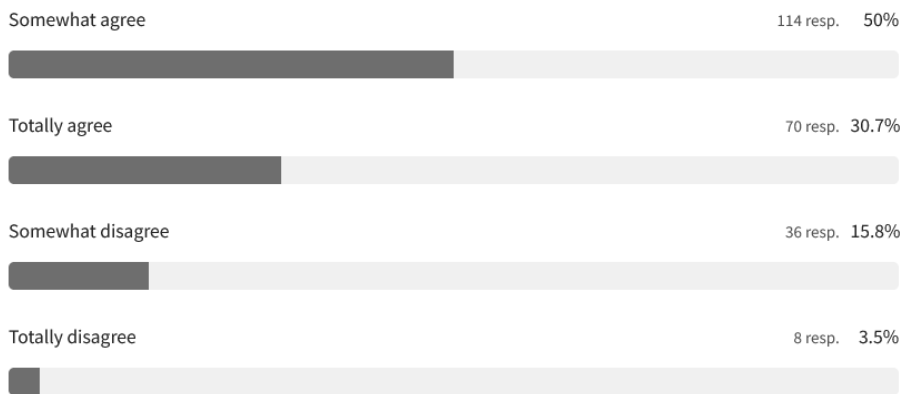


Figure 149 Respondents just need to get to a destination, after that they prefer to walk around and discover everything on their own.



*Figure 150 Interest in visiting historic sites and cultural attractions at the destination.*



*Figure 151 Interest to discover alternative solutions to housing, food, work and enjoyment.*

## 5.4 Discussion and conclusions

While acknowledging the limits to generalisation and the lack of access to an extensive database that could have provided a more solid sample size and sampling procedure, the survey collected data from 230 respondents with the purpose of capturing attitudes in relation to the proposed collaborative model for small-scale, immersive tourism.

Although the data has limited representativeness (230 responses), it is substantial enough to reflect whether there is potential interest from tourists to accept the collaborative tourism model and what would be the most important aspects to consider when aiming to pursue the practical realisation of this potential. The survey participants represented all different age groups of adult travellers (18 to 74 years old). The majority came from the category of 35-44 years old (38.4%) and 25-34 years old (35.4%), the other categories having also a fair distribution. In terms of socio-demographic profile, the majority of respondents presented an average high level of education (52.8% holding a Master's degree and 30.6% a Bachelor's degree). Most of them (74.8%) were employed in very diverse professional sectors (business and finance, education, IT, technology and engineering, arts and creative industries, healthcare, government and civil services, etc.). The professional

representativeness was supported by a diversity of income categories characterising the respondents. This indicates that overall the sample size was diverse and could provide insights into travel preferences and behaviours across different socio-demographic typologies.

The collected data indicated a strong acceptance level both towards the proposed type of tourism (small-scale, immersive travel experiences facilitated by stays with local hosts from traditional communities) and towards a collaborative platform that would make the realisation of this tourism model possible. The fact that the majority of respondents look for meaningful, engaging experiences and immersion in the local culture when travelling indicates a strong potential that the proposed tourism model has to respond to these needs. The perception that finding such authentic, immersive experiences on the current tourism market is of high or moderate difficulty, further demonstrates an existing niche of travel preferences that is not adequately addressed and valorised at the moment. Most respondents considered that this difficulty comes from the fact that many travel experiences are offered as authentic, but are still taken out of their local context and lack authenticity, as they appear to be rather staged. This demonstrates that tourists are very perceptive when 'local tourism products' are offered on the market and that the success of the proposed tourism model would depend very much on not de-contextualising the travel experiences and not attempting to transform the character of the locality with tourist purposes in mind. Other aspects which the respondents considered to be deficient, such as the lack of personalisation, an exclusive focus on monumental culture and attractions, or the enormous amount of information that needs to be filtered in the destination research process, indicate useful points that should be considered when fine-tuning the proposed tourism mode. For example, this could be structured along various modular components, different activities that could be combined by each tourist according to their personal interests and needs.

The responses confirmed a strong endorsement of this type of travel experiences by the majority of participants (53% expressed a definite intention to book such a travel experience, and 36.1% were considering it). The respondents indicated a strong interest in almost all types of proposed activities with traditional character. The most popular were traditional food and cooking, traditional knowledge about nature, health and wellbeing, traditional events and festivals, building friendships with people from other parts of the world, sports and outdoor adventures with local guides. It was interesting to observe that curiosity towards the traditional ways of using the land was rather moderate. This is an important aspect that may require to re-think the proposed tourism model and not focus it exclusively on rural heritage, but rather, as explained earlier, to develop it along diverse thematic experiential blocks that could be combined by tourists.

Very interesting insights were obtained in an open section that invited respondents to refer to other potential aspects of interest when opting for this form of tourism. The aspect of being able to access the 'real' side of the visited locations, hidden gems, offbeat and unknown places was frequently mentioned. A recurrent theme was that of languages, local literature, oral stories and word meanings. Many respondents referred to their interest in discovering the places 'from the inside', for example to experience the comfort of home, understand how people related to each other, how they build their relationships with family, friends, work and nature, or how they raise their children. This suggested

an interest in universal themes and common experiences that both hosts and guests share. Among the special interests mentioned were the alternative cultures and subcultures, the quirky aspects of the local culture, music and local bands, hunting and fishing, sustainable uses of food and materials, business management, perceptions of mental health, or local understanding of global events and globally significant issues. One very important aspect that was mentioned by several respondents was a certain sensitivity towards what the host is willing to share and not wanting to intrude. Some comments were addressed in relation to the hosts' perception of the tourists and the non-monetary benefits they could gain from the people who come to stay with them. The dynamic between hosts and guests as perceived otherness and learning to accept and include was also mentioned here.

With regard to travel preferences, most respondents were inclined towards stays of one or two weeks and a potential budget between 281 and 560 Euros per week per person. Although the standards of accommodation and available amenities are issues of concern for tourists, they also appeared very understanding towards different local realities and expressed their readiness to be flexible, sacrificing comfort at the expense of the quality of their experiences at the place. Most of the respondents preferred to have a certain level of privacy (separate dependency on the property) when hosted by the local family. Ideally, good amenities for accommodating tourists would only increase their level of satisfaction and potentially impact on their rate of return. The majority of participants emphasised how important it is that their travel choice may contribute benefits to the host family and to the preservation of the local traditional practices. This is a recurrent theme throughout the study and it signals that this contribution should have visibility and prominently communicated on the collaborative platform. Most of the respondents (93.9%) indicated a definite intention to try this form of tourism and 77.8% considered it as something unique, or very unique.

In relation to the acceptance of a collaborative platform for the realisation of the proposed tourism model, most of the participants (94.3%) gave a categorical answer that they would be willing to use its services. This demonstrates that a platform that acts as an intermediary between hosts and tourists is an appropriate instrument to facilitate contact, ease communication and give accessibility to a wide range of travel experiences at different locations. The respondents considered the profile of the host family and their property, as well as the detailed description of the experiences available at the location to be two of the most important aspects they would like to access on the tourism platform. The reviews from other guests and a set of frequently asked questions were also regarded as helpful prior to booking.

An open-end question invited the respondents to suggest other important aspects that they would like to find on such a platform and that would increase its credibility and usability. Many comments indicated a strong need for financial transparency. Respondents wanted to be clearly informed about how their money (including a potential transaction or user fee) is going to be distributed. More importantly, they expressed the need to know how much of their financial contribution will go directly to the host families or local communities. A certain suspicion towards the role of an intermediary in this collaborative model was expressed, as well as their genuine interests to support the host communities. Many respondents considered it very important to make this aspect visible of the platform. Some suggested the possibility to have direct contact with the host family, as this would

be more effective in establishing trust rather than a public profile. Safety concerns were also addressed, particularly in relation with female travellers, as well as the reliability of the hosts. Some respondents referred to the importance of a trustworthy rating system, suggesting even its authentication by an external agency that is not necessarily linked to the tourism industry (as a form of neutral verification). Another recurrent topic was the tourists' need to access a cultural guideline on the platform, introducing them to the culture of the place they are going to visit, as well as to what is appropriate and respectful towards the local traditions. This would be a potential conduct code that is culturally sensitive and may avoid unpleasant interactions with the hosts. Other practical contents such as a suggested packing list, information about local transportation, accommodation and facilities (including WiFi availability), cancellation policy, or the appropriate ages for the proposed activities were perceived as helpful information to access on such a platform.

The data assessed the respondents' perceived trust towards the tourism platform (its operational functionality and role in the business model), as well as towards the potential hosts that would accommodate them at the destination. In general, a high level of trust was expressed for both values. The role of reviews from both hosts and tourists and the recommendations of friends were recognised as important in confirming the reliability of the platform. In relation to the hosts, the respondents expressed their preference that certain information should be available on the platform (online profile of the host, location and description of the property, tourist reviews, overview of accommodation and amenities, presentation of the activities offered during the stay and communication with the host).

With regard to the perceived risks, the aspect of security (again, both towards the platform as the instrument for financial transactions and towards the host family as guarantee of personal safety) was central to the majority of respondents. Other aspects like the standards of accommodation and amenities, the quality of the offered activities (as potentially not being what they promise to be), the available infrastructure at the destination, the costs of the stays, or the language barriers were considered of high importance in influencing the booking decision of the tourists.

Among the other aspects of concern freely identified by the respondents, four main categories could be identified. First, the issue of security was most strongly addressed. Many participants emphasised the role that the general security in the regional context of the location might play, as dependent on the political situation and potential instability of the country in which the destinations are. The local crime situation (especially in rural areas) was also mentioned as a critical aspect. The respondents' concern for their personal safety recurred in many comments. Particularly for people travelling with children, or female tourists, this concern is extremely high. Other health concerns (both in terms of hazards and availability of nearby health facilities) were expressed, as well as the issue of accessibility to people with disabilities or particular characteristics.

The second type of concerns were related to the perceived nature of the proposed travel experience and the potential factors that may negatively impact on it. Many respondents expressed their concern that commercialisation may alter the authenticity of this type of tourism. Some comments referred to the fact that too much exposure might radically alter the intended character of these travel experiences,

so that after hosting hundreds of guests, this might become a mainstream experience, and authenticity may be lost in favour of just another business model. The critical reflection on whether the platform will act as the solution or be part of the problem was particularly interesting. The possibility of copycats emerging in the process and focusing more on profit and less on the actual experience offered was also mentioned. Some participants stated that advertising these experiences as tours might also kill their spirit, as potential tourists may perceive them as less authentic.

A third category of concern was directed towards the potential hosts. Many respondents identified the risk of exploiting locals for a company's financial profit, in addition to reinforcing unequal social relationships (visitors vs. hosts) during the travel experience. Several comments revealed a strong awareness that the proposed type of tourism should make a genuine contribution towards the communities who act as hosts and should ensure their voluntary participation as equal partners in this model. Some participants expressed that they would be willing to pay more for such an experience if they knew this was going to support the visited family/communities, despite being used to being on a tight budget when travelling.

Finally, the issue of affordability was also addressed as an important aspect of concern.

The last part of the survey provided additional information regarding certain trends in the respondents' attitudes and behavioural preferences in travel. The responses indicated a strong compatibility between the major patterns identified and the proposed tourism model. For example, the majority of participants expressed a preference to travel accompanied by their partner, family, children or friends. This mode fits very well with the experiential, social character of the proposed tourism mode. When exploring the predominant motivations to travel, the data revealed that most participants (55.6%) prefer new experiences that enable them to find out new life perspectives, which is again a good match with the suggested type of tourism. Finally, an analysis of the psychographic typology of the respondents further confirmed the potential of the proposed tourism model to respond to the identified preferences. The desire to get in touch with the locals and experience their lifestyle in their own environment, the inclination towards the enjoyment of the natural environment and outdoor activities, the interest in immersive, experiential travelling, or the flexibility to embrace lifestyles different than the familiar home environment are some of the most important aspects that speak for the potential of the collaborative tourism model.

The travel preferences of the participants were cross-referenced with the socio-demographic values and interesting correlations emerged. For example, the most appreciative for the proposed travel experiences are the age groups of 18-24 years old (72.7% consider it very important), 55-64 years old (71.4% consider it very important) and 65-74 years old (83.3% consider it very important). However, the last age group (65-74 years old) is also the most resistant to booking this travel experience (33.3% of the respondents mentioned they would not consider booking such a tour). The age group of 25-34 years old considers this travel model very important (53.7% of the respondents) and at the same time is the most convinced to engage in it (65.9% of their group declaring they would definitely consider booking). The age group 35-44 years old is a constant middle for both categories (with 50% convinced



about the importance of these travel experiences and 48.3% motivated to book). So the young generation is most enthusiastic and most likely to book, while the 45-54 years old group is the most critical both in terms of the type of tourism and readiness to book. The upper segment of senior tourists is very enthusiastic, but also very unlikely to book such a tour. Different preferences for activities at the host location were also identified for each age group: for the 18-24 years old group, making friends, learning crafts, cooking, nature and wellbeing and spirituality are important; the 25-34 years old group is mostly interested in learning crafts, food, nature, sport, events, and making friends, and are least interested in spirituality and learning about the land; the 35-44 years old group prefers learning about arts, sport, events and food; the 45-54 years old groups prioritises nature and wellness, sport, the daily routines and making friends; while the last two age groups 55-64 years old and 65-74 years old expressed a high interest in almost all categories.

With relation to income, the cross-references indicated that the highest earning group (100,000 Euros or more) as well as the group earning between 15,001-40,000 Euros are most appreciative towards this type of tourism. The two groups with the lowest income (under 5,000 Euros and 15,001-40,000 Euros) are most likely to book such a tour (with the rates of 71% and 58.1% stating that they would definitely consider booking). The second highest earning group (81,000-100,000 Euros) appears to be the most critical, with 44.4% considering these travel experiences to be important and only 31.6% expressing definite interest to book. With regard to the type of activities, the higher earning groups appear to focus more on food, nature and health, and sports, whereas the lower earning groups present a tendency towards crafts, land use, being part of the daily routine and making friends.

In relation to gender, female respondents appeared to be more inclined toward this type of tourism (60.5% consider it to be very important) and a potential booking (65% indicated they would definitely book). Male respondents were more critical, with only 37.3% considering this type of travel experiences important and 49.3% definitely intending to book. For the gender non-confirming respondents, not enough data was provided in order to express a trend.

Finally, the occupational fields of the respondents also provided some insights into their potential participation in the proposed tourism model. Respondents active in education and students appeared most appreciative to the suggested type of immersive travel experiences, and respondents from the IT and engineering field were the most critical. However, respondents from the IT and engineering field, together with students, were also those most inclined to complete a booking (with 64% and 71.4% respectively indicating they would definitely consider trying these experiences).

In conclusion, the obtained data indicates that there is a strong potential for the proposed collaborative tourism model to be considered by tourists. Both in terms of the type of travel experience that it offers and in its operational model, it responds to the travel attitudes and preferences of a significant segment of the participants. As indicated by the respondents, certain aspects will remain critical for the successful realisation of this model. One of the most important issues is how the hosts and the local communities receiving the tourists will be integrated into this tourism and business concept. The need to demonstrate and clearly communicate the contribution of tourism (and of the

participating tourists) to the host communities is evident. This relates both to how the profits are distributed, but also to how information about the positive changes generated in the respective communities will be communicated. Dealing with critical issues like personal safety, accommodation standards, infrastructure and the quality of the offered activities will be of utmost importance. But probably the most significant concern remains the difficulty in maintaining the authenticity of the proposed travel experience. This should be more than a homestay and definitely not a commercial tour. It should not be transformed into an exclusive tourism product (like those many wonderful travel experiences available on the market, but charging extremely high prices) and at the same time it should not become a mass product either. These are all concerns that would need careful consideration if such a model is to be put into practice. The strong potential of the collaborative tourism model will most certainly depend on whether it genuinely benefits communities, it remains affordable and it keeps the travel experiences true to their local context.

## CONCLUSIONS

“At least I would like to believe that people have an instinct for freedom, that they really want to control their own affairs. They don't want to be pushed around, ordered, oppressed, etc., and they want a chance to do things that make sense, like constructive work in a way that they control, or maybe control together with others. I don't know any way to prove this. It's really a hope about what human beings are like - a hope that if social structures change sufficiently, those aspects of human nature will be realized.” Noam Chomsky (1988, p. 756)

We could live in a world of equal condition (Sandel, 2021, p. 224). Travelling could be more fun. Traditional knowledge could be more appreciated. And despite these troubling times, we could find a way to be equally happy both as individuals and as members of communities. The secret lies, as often with everything else related to human nature, in the values that we choose, both individually and collectively, to represent the foundation for our social institutions. Our economic system and our interactions in economic exchanges are a reflection of those values and those institutions.

This research began by asking whether the collaborative economy could provide a viable model for tourism development in rural areas. The extensive inquiries across theories and disciplines concluded yes. The conceptual and operational appeal of the collaborative model relies mostly on the ingenious manner in which it manages to generate a social dynamic of its own, in a way that both empowers and connects, and balances individual interests with a sense of community and cooperative action. The insights from potential hosts who are willing to welcome others into their homes concluded yes, the collaborative economy could provide a viable model for tourism development in rural areas. The model could offer them convenient access to economic opportunities through a form of tourism that they can influence on their own terms. The insights from potential tourists who are willing to visit others into their homes concluded yes, the collaborative economy could provide a viable model for tourism development in rural areas. The same model enables them access to a travel experience that is non-mediated and embedded in its genuine contextuality. And finally, the researcher, aiming for objectivity but recognising her subjectivity, and probably with an additional dose of optimism, also concludes yes, the collaborative economy could provide a viable model for tourism development in rural areas. A potential application of the collaborative economy in the context of heritage tourism could be called the *Sharitage* model. A brief outline of how this is envisaged will follow below.

## **Caveats and limitations**

During the diverse intellectual encounters with the model of the collaborative economy in particular and with the concept of human interaction in economic exchanges in general, a few aspects emerged as critical to the successful realisation of the proposed tourism model.

Probably the most significant one is the issue of control over the platform that would provide the technological infrastructure for such a model. Various critiques and investigative studies revealed that often the interests of those individuals or entities who own the platform are incompatible with the democratic, de-centralised logic of the social and economic interactions that the platform (and the collaborative model) enables. The ownership of the platform will be critical in ensuring trust and reliability to the tourism model.

Another incompatibility is related to the monetary value of what is being exchanged or consumed on the collaborative model. Putting a price on certain things may corrupt them, as political philosopher Michael Sandel remarked in his analysis of the morality of the markets (Sandel, 2013 p. 9). Despite the argument that the sharing of goods and resources creates a sense of de-commodification, the collaborative economy can sometimes trigger the opposite effect. The easy access to the platform and the prospect that everything could potentially be associated with an economic exchange may actually lead to an augmented sense of commodification. This is particularly critical in relation to heritage tourism, as a contradiction between heritage as something of non-commercial value and the access to heritage as a commercialised activity may develop.

On a similar note, the surveys with potential tourists revealed a shared awareness and fear that exposure through tourism may erode the very places, communities and traditions this aims to protect. I certainly like to keep my favourite destinations secret, not as a sign of exclusivity, but rather as one of care and consideration. A fundamental question is whether the travel experience could at all be kept unaltered by tourism preferences or by any other form of mediation. Similarly, whether traditional practices could engage visitors from outside the community and remain what they essentially are: practices with a function and purpose unrelated to tourism. Distinguishing copycats from genuine participants could also be a collateral aspect in this regard.

There is also a potential incompatibility regarding the different perceptions that the hosts and the visitors have with regard to what constitutes the content of the travel experience. For the hosts, the traditional practices are necessities of life that need to be tended to on a daily basis. For tourists, these are mainly a form of relaxation with additional benefits. The concerns towards this incompatibility was recurrent in many discussions with the participants in the surveys in Romania and India. The tourists expect a wide range of activities to enjoy, whereas the hosts see time as a major problem, as they must tend to their household chores or work in the field.

Building trust and transparency between all involved in the collaborative tourism model (the hosts, the tourists and the administrators of the platform) is also an issue of concern. Similar to the self-evident concerns of facilities, availability of technology, or the regulatory mechanisms in relation to various forms of security.

Finally, the vision for the proposed model is influenced by several limitations of this research. Although it aimed to integrate concepts and paradigms from other cultural contexts, this study had a mainly Western-centred focus. The concept of the collaborative economy, as well as the main economic theories and models of economic policy analysed are, despite their global spread and applicability, mainly Western concepts. An analysis of other traditional forms of economic exchanges in non-Western context or in smaller communities could provide helpful insights into how the proposed model could be further adjusted.

Other limitations have been addressed at different stages of this study: particularly the lack of an informational database that could have increased the sampling frame and the reliability of the sampling process. More specialised statistical analytical procedures could be used in the future to obtain and validate more representative quantitative data in relation to how large is the market sector open to the proposed tourism model.

### *Sharitage*

Sharitage could be an alternative form of heritage tourism based on the principles of the collaborative economy. It is not a model that appeals to everyone, nor should it.

Sharitage is in essence a model that offers the raw version of travelling. A travel experience that is true to its context. That is not polished to appeal to others, that is not mediated as a tour, adventure or visit, that is not a tourism product at all (I have intentionally avoided this term for the entire study, despite its common usage in tourism as academic field and industry). A travel experience that is immersion in a different lifestyle, with everything that this entails. Sharitage is not a thing, or the result of an action, but the action itself (it is actually half verb, half noun, if we are to judge by the semantics). From this point of view, sharitage is a way in which tourists could become travellers again and rediscover, as historian Daniel Boorstin explained in one of his insightful essays, “the lost art of travel” (Boorstin, 1992, p. 77). It could enable their transformation from passive sightseers, expecting things to happen to them, to active travellers, always in search of people and experiences (ibid., p. 85).

Sharitage is a model that expands the interactions that define the basic unit of human social organisation – the family – into the economic and tourism realm. Because of this, those who travel are no longer seen as tourists, but rather as guests. This change of perception also changes how the host and guests interact with each other and build trust towards each other.

Sharitage allows users to join and leave this tourism model on a voluntary basis. It offers users a flexible way to decide what kind of benefits they want to derive from the tourism model: both for hosts (some may prioritise economic gains, others social acceptance and inclusion, while some others may seek benefits simply from the interaction with visitors), and for visitors (who can select different modular elements and personalise their travel experiences).

Sharitage is a model in which the platform that facilitates the exchanges between hosts and travellers is co-owned by its participants (if not from the beginning, at least tentatively at some point in the

future). It is used to generate economic profits, but these will return to the same participants who are its owners. Other ownership models could be explored (potentially not only among the participating hosts, but also involving tourists). An intermediary is not excluded, but this could be integrated in the ownership model explained above.

Sharitage is a model based on transparency and clearly explaining how the model is financed, how benefits are directed, or how tourism (and the tourists' contributions) actually impact on the lives of the visited communities.

Ownership of the platform means true participation. Currently, all the known tourism collaborative models are different. Those focusing on accommodation allow exchanges without the home owners personally being there (a homestay is actually similar to a hotel stay, only cheaper and more contextualised). Those platforms offering tours or adventures with locals are actually tour operators selling tours. They are operated externally of the communities advertised in these tours, by other participants, and often with other interests in mind.

Despite of its raw travel approach, sharitage does not aim to necessarily make tourists miserable. It acknowledges the tourists' needs for basic facilities and accommodation, and does not ignore the fact that comfort tends to make life more enjoyable. If upgrades are to be undertaken, at the hosts' properties, these will be integrated harmoniously into the traditional forms of architecture and the structure of their households.

Finally, sharitage is a collaborative model that inspires a sense of control and empowers. With its help, tourism development is not planned from the top or mediated by another institution, but rather by the communities themselves. It generates a horizontal value chain for heritage tourism, which is not guided by governments and destination management organisations, but directly by those living at the places where tourism occurs. And although the line of argument seems to have gotten carried away by the written words that have somehow taken the shape of a manifesto rhetoric, sharitage is simply a plan, an alternative that could explore other ways to travel.

## **Potentialities**

The collaborative economy is still a young model, emerging from societal transformations that are yet to manifest their full impact. As all forms of economic organisation, it is the result of an ideology that captures the values that we hold central for our social life (Fuentes, 2019, p. 170). Probably more often than any other economic models, the collaborative/sharing economy has been described as both a business and a social movement (Slee, 2017, p. 1). This is probably because it successfully captures the fundamental duality that lies at the core of this research: that of the individual and the collective nature of human beings. The collective economy is a model that gives individuals an opportunity for economic agency, autonomous from any other organisation, and at the same time gives the collective an opportunity to generate larger change. It empowers the one and many at the same time. It is a model that articulates private interest and economic activity with social interactions that reflect our cooperative nature.

The collaborative model provides access to opportunities that otherwise may be absent from certain communities and engages individuals that otherwise may be excluded from such opportunities. Many heritage sites, often remote and disconnected from the realities of the market economy, need such opportunities. This does not imply that the collaborative economy will provide instant happiness to all participants, but it can offer the chance. This doesn't mean that the collaborative economy attempts to turn everyone into an entrepreneur and commodify all aspects of life, but rather that gaining access to income may enable communities to also gain the freedom to focus on other aspects that they consider to be of value (most often, a non-monetary one). This also doesn't mean that a digital platform will solve all problems that communities experience, or that this may not generate new ones; rather, that solutions are possible without creating unrealistic hope about what can be achieved alone by technology, while also not dismissing the huge advantages this presents.

The egalitarian character, the focus on community, on what could be achieved through collaboration and collective action is another strong potential of the collaborative economy. This is a vision that fits well with the universal, unifying dimension of heritage. Particularly in the heritage field (and heritage tourism), the application of such a model could generate more engagement, more direct participation in the heritage of our own communities and that of others, as well as more reflection on what heritage in general represents.

Focusing on the social aspect of economic interactions and cooperation, this model could reverse the blame that the markets have infiltrated our social relations (the big stigma of the capitalist model) and instead attempt to build the markets in the shape of our social relations.

Finally, the collaborative model could be applied in the creation of social businesses, as defined by the Nobel Peace Prize laureate Muhammad Yunus. It could function as a model that "solves a social problem by using business methods" (Yunus, 2010, p. 1). Yunus discusses the ways in which the development of such a business should be approached, and considers the motivation for entrepreneurship as being essentially different: "when you start a social business, you don't begin by looking for a business case that will generate maximum profits; instead you pick a social problem you want to solve and then seek the business solution for it" (ibid., p. 58). The structural model of social business suggested by Yunus (in which the business is actually owned by the people whose social needs are addressed) could be expanded in the context of the collaborative economy. When the participants collaboratively own the platform through which they obtain the benefits of their economic interactions, the balance of power would significantly shift. Such a form of common ownership could tackle many of the conflictual aspects identified by the critiques of the collaborative model and provide a more democratic and truly empowering structure for economic activity.

These potentialities reflect exciting changes of the present and enticing prospects for the future. Ultimately, they represent another effort to reconcile the individual with the collective and to design an economic model in which both dimensions can reinforce each other, rather than exclude each other. It is far from being a perfect model, but a promising one in the making.

## Annexes

### Annex 1: Research information sheet (English)

#### Research Information Sheet

Thank you very much for agreeing to participate in this doctoral research. This information sheet explains what the research is about and how I would like you to take part in it. The research is conducted by Simona von Eyb for her doctoral thesis at Brandenburg University of Technology Cottbus-Senftenberg in Germany.

The overall purpose of the research is to see whether and how a sharing economy model could help communities to generate benefits (mainly financial, but not only) through responsible tourism and to support the continuation of their traditions and knowledge. The sharing economy is a peer to peer economic model that gives people the possibility to develop online platforms in which they can directly offer and access individual goods and services. In the case of tourism, this means creating a network that would connect two categories of users and providers:

- tourists who are in search of cultural experiences that have not been modified for business purposes, but remain true to their context (e.g. people who would like to experience other lifestyles, who would like to find out more about other people's knowledge and use of the land, to learn traditional crafts, etc.);
- and communities who have rich cultural traditions, but experience financial insecurity and, as a result of this insecurity, may leave their traditions in search of better livelihood opportunities.

For example, you create an account on the new tourism platform showing a few photos about yourself, the place where you would like to host tourists and the things tourists could take part in while at your place. A tourist from Germany may see these photos and decides he/she would like to spend a week at your place. He/she will send you a direct request and you will respond if your place is available or not. If you both agree, the tourist will send you a payment and you will be obliged to host him/her at your place for the agreed period.

Hosting a limited number of tourists every year could provide individuals with additional income. This financial safety could in turn allow people to continue the local traditions at risk of disappearing and to realise their value for tourism without compromising them.

The purpose of this particular survey is to assess the readiness of potential host communities to accept a sharing economy model for tourism, as well as the perceived risks and obstacles of potential users.

The information provided by you in the survey will be used for research purposes. It will not be used in a manner which would allow identification of your individual responses. At the end of the survey, anonymised research data will be archived at BTU Cottbus-Senftenberg in order to make it available to other researchers in line with current data-sharing practices.

Once again, I would like to thank you for agreeing to take part in this survey.



## **Annex 2: Research information sheet (Romanian)**

### **Fisa informativa despre cercetare**

Va multumesc pentru ca ati acceptat sa participati in aceasta cercetare doctorala. Aceasta fisa va explica scopul cercetarii si cum va propun sa participati la ea.

Cercetarea este condusa de Simona von Eyb pentru teza ei de doctorat la Universitatea Technica din Brandenburg Cottbus-Senftenberg in Germania.

Scopul general al cercetarii este sa analizeze daca si cum un model al economiei collaborative ar putea ajuta diverse comunitati sa obtina beneficii (in principal financiare, dar nu numai) printr-un turism responsabil si un suport pentru continuarea traditiilor si cunostintelor lor. Economia colaborativa este un model economic de la egal la egal (peer to peer) care face posibil crearea unor platforme online in care persoanele pot oferi si accesa direct bunuri si servicii individuale. In cazul turismului, aceasta inseamna crearea unei retele care va conecta doua categorii de utilizatori si furnizori:

- Turistii care sunt in cautarea unor experiente culturale care nu au fost modificate pentru profit, dar raman autentice contextului lor (de exemplu, persoane care are vrea sa experimenteze alte stiluri de viata, care ar vrea sa afle mai mult despre traditiile si cunostintele altor persoane, modul lor traditional de a lucra pamantul, mestesuguri traditionale, etc.);
- Si comunitati care au traditii culturale bogate, insa de confrunta cu dificultati financiare si, ca rezultat al acestor dificultati, ar putea abandona aceste traditii in cautarea altor moduri de subzistenta si altor oportunitati.

De exemplu, dumneavoastra creati un cont pe noua platforma de turism prezentand cateva fotografii despre dumneavoastra, locul unde ati dori sa gazduiti turistii si activitatile pe care turistii le-ar putea desfasura la dumneavoastra. Un turist din Germania vede pozele postate de dumneavoastra si decide ca ar dori sa petreaca o saptamana la dumneavoastra. El/e va va trimite direct o solicitare, iar dumneavoastra veti raspunde daca la datele indicate locul dumneavoastra este disponibil. In cazul in care amandoi sunteti de accord, turistul va va trimite direct plata pentru sejur, iar dumneavoastra veti fi obligati sa gazduiti pe perioada indicata. Gazduirea turistilor nu inseamna ca dumneavoastra va trebui sa parasiti casa, ci ca ii veti primi pentru un timp limitat sa traiasca viata la tara impreuna cu dumneavoastra si sa ia parte la ceea ce faceti dumneavoastra in mod normal.

Gazduirea unui numar limitat de turisti in fiecare an ar putea furniza un venit additional. Aceasta siguranta financiara le-ar putea permite oamenilor sa continue traditiile locale care risca sa dispara si sa profite de valoarea lor prin turism, fara a le compromite caracterul.

Scopul acestui sondaj este sa estimeze disponibilitatea unor potentiale comunitati-gazda de a accepta un model economic colaborativ pentru turism, precum si sa analizeze riscurile si obstacolele percepute de potentialii utilizatori.

Informatiile pe care le veti furniza in acest sondaj vor fi folosite doar in scopul cercetarii. Identificarea numelui dumneavoastra in raspunsuri nu va fi permisa. La sfarsitul sondajului, datele cercetarii vor fi arhivate anonimizat la BTU Cottbus-Senftenberg, pentru a le pune la dispozitia altor cercetari, totul in conformitate cu practicile actuale pentru schimbul de date.

Va multumesc inca o data pentru ca ati fost de accord sa participati in acest sondaj!

### **Annex 3: Interview consent form (English)**

#### **Interview consent form**

I, the undersigned, have read/have been presented orally and understood the Research Information Sheet provided.

I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the research.

I understand that taking part in the research will include being interviewed.

I have been given adequate time to consider my decision and I agree to take part in the research.

I understand that my personal details such as name and address will not be revealed outside the project.

I understand that my words may be quoted in publications, reports, web pages and other research outputs but my name will not be used.

I agree to assign the copyright I hold in any material related to this project to Simona von Eyb.

I understand that I can withdraw from the research at any time and I will not be asked any questions about why I no longer want to take part.

Name of Participant:

Date:

#### **Annex 4: Interview consent form (Romanian)**

##### **Formular pentru consimtamantul de a participa la cercetare**

Eu, subsemnatul, am citit sau mi-au fost prezentate oral si am inteles informatiile din fisa despre cercetarea curenta.

Mi-a fost oferita posibilitatea sa pun intrebari legate de cercetare.

Inteleg ca a lua parte la cercetarea curenta presupune a fi intervievat.

Mi-a fost acordat timpul necesar pentru a considera decizia mea si acordul de a participa in aceasta cercetare.

Inteleg ca datele mele personale precum numele si adresa nu vor fi dezvaluite in afara proiectului.

Inteleg ca unele din cuvintele mele vor putea fi citate in publicatii, rapoarte, site-uri web si alte rezultate ale cercetarii, dar numele meu nu va fi folosit.

Sunt de acord sa ofer Doamnei Simona von Eyb dreptul de copyright pe care il detin pentru orice material legat de acest proiect.

Inteleg ca ma pot retrage din aceasta cercetare in orice moment si nu voi fi intrebat care sunt motivele pentru care nu mai vreau sa particip.

Numele participantului:

Data:

## **Annex 6: Questionnaire used for the survey conducted among potential hosts in India**

### **Questionnaire conducted for the doctoral research of Simona von Eyb at BTU Cottbus-Senftenberg, Germany**

#### Part 1: Demographic data

1. What is your age?
  - 18-24 years old
  - 25-34 years old
  - 35-44 years old
  - 45-54 years old
  - 55-64 years old
  - 65 or older
  - Prefer not to answer
  
2. What gender do you identify with?
  - Male
  - Female
  - Transgender
  - Prefer not to answer
  
3. Are you married?
  - Yes
  - No
  - Prefer not to answer
  
4. How many people live in your household (including yourself)?
  - 1
  - 2
  - 3-4
  - 5-6
  - More than 6
  - Prefer not to answer
  
5. What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed?
  - No schooling completed
  - Primary school
  - Secondary school
  - High school
  - Technical/vocational training
  - Bachelor's degree
  - Master's degree
  - Doctorate degree
  - Prefer not to answer

6. What is your current employment status?
- Employed
  - Self-employed
  - Unemployed, searching for work
  - Unemployed, self-sufficient/homemaker
  - Retired
  - Prefer not to answer
7. What is your annual household income (how much your family earns together)?
- Less than 25,000 Rupees
  - 26,000 - 100,000 Rupees
  - 101,000 – 200,000 Rupees
  - 201,000 - 400,000 Rupees
  - 401,000 – 1,000,000 Rupees
  - Over 1,000,000 Rupees
  - Prefer not to answer
8. What is your main source of income?
- Farming, fishing and forestry
  - Sales or trading
  - Tourism
  - Unskilled daily wage labour
  - Monthly wage
  - Remittances
  - Other (please specify)
  - Prefer not to answer

Part 2: Acceptance of tourism as an alternative income

9. Would you be willing to host a limited number of tourists (2 persons or one family per stay) at your home every year, if this brought you additional income?
- Yes, definitely
  - Yes, but my I am worried I will have to make additional changes at my house and my resources are limited
  - Maybe, I will have to think more about it
  - No, I am not interested in that
10. If yes, how often would you be willing to host tourists?
- Every month
  - Only 6 months a year
  - Only 3 months a year
  - Whenever tourists are interested to come, as long as I have free capacity
11. What would be the main reason that would convince you to host tourists at your place?
- I could earn an additional income. ( very important, important, somewhat important, not important)

I could get to know people from other countries and make friends. ( very important, important, somewhat important, not important)

I could share my knowledge and culture with other people. ( very important, important, somewhat important, not important)

The additional income from tourists could help me continue the way I live and my traditions without having to worry about my financial security. ( very important, important, somewhat important, not important)

I could start my own business and not feel excluded or depend on others for income. ( very important, important, somewhat important, not important)

The additional income will improve my living conditions. ( very important, important, somewhat important, not important)

Other (please specify)

12. What would be an acceptable after tax income per stay, for which you will be willing to host tourists at your place?

15,000 Rupees per week

30,000 Rupees per week

60,000 Rupees per week

80,000 Rupees or above per week

I don't know yet

13. Do you currently have a space/room in your home that you could rent out to tourists?

Yes, I have a room that with small renovations could be rented out to tourists

Yes, but the room would require major renovations and more amenities

No, I do not have enough space at my home.

14. Would you be more comfortable if tourists stayed at a different location, but would visit you during the day?

Yes

No

I am ok with both options.

15. Would you allow tourists to help you with your daily chores (working the field, harvesting, taking care of the animals)?

Yes

No

Yes, but I have some concerns (specify which)

16. Would you be willing to teach tourists some of your traditional skills and knowledge (e.g. weaving, jewellery making, medicinal plants, cooking, spices, etc.) during their stay?

Yes

Yes, but I would prefer to charge extra for this

No, it would be too time consuming for me

No, because of other reasons (specify why)

17. Which of the following type of tourists would you prefer to host?

- Young tourists (18-30 years old)
- Families
- Middle-aged couples (30-45 years old)
- Senior tourists (50 years old and above)
- I don't have any preference

18. Would you be open to host international tourists as well?

- Yes
- Yes, but I have some concerns (specify which)
- No, I prefer only Indian tourists
- No, I don't want to host any tourists, either international or Indian

### Part 3: Perceived usefulness

19. Would you be willing to be registered on an international online network that puts tourists in contact with hosts like you?

- Yes
- Yes, but I have some reserves (specify which)
- No

20. Do you think using this network would help you gain direct benefits (and income) from hosting tourists?

- Yes
- No
- I don't really know how such a network works, I'll have to try it first

21. Do you think using this network would make it easier for you to attract tourists?

- Yes
- No
- I don't really know how such a network works, I'll have to try it first

### Part 4: Digital literacy and perceived ease of use

22. Can you use a computer?

- Yes, easily
- Yes, I have basic skills, but I find it rather difficult to use a computer
- No, but I would like to learn the basics
- No, I don't like using computers

23. Do you have a computer at home?

- Yes
- No

24. Does at least one member of your family have a smart phone?

- Yes
- No

25. Do you have internet access where you live?  
 Yes, I have internet at home  
 Yes, there is an internet connection in the place where I live, but I do not have it installed at home  
 No
26. If you don't own a computer or a smart phone, would you be willing to invest in buying one, so that you can deal with the planning of the tourist stays yourself?  
 Yes  
 Yes, but I would need additional support (e.g. a micro-credit)  
 No, the investment is too high for me  
 No, because of (specify why)
27. Do you have a bank account?  
 Yes  
 No
28. Do you think it would be easy to use this online platform that connects tourists from around the world with hosts like you?  
 Very difficult                      difficult                      moderate                      easy  
 very easy  
 I don't know                      other (specify)
29. Do you think it would be easy to learn how to use this online platform?  
 Very difficult                      difficult                      moderate                      easy  
 very easy  
 I don't know                      other (specify)
30. Would you prefer that another person or company takes care of the technical details and communicates with the tourists who want to stay at your place in return of a small fee deducted from the returns?  
 Yes  
 Yes, but I have some reserves (specify why)  
 No, I would like to take care of this myself

Part 5: Trust

31. Would you trust the services of such an online platform?  
 Yes  
 Yes, but only if I see reviews from other users (both hosts and tourists)  
 Yes, but only if it's recommended by a local partner  
 No  
 I don't think trust is important. What matters is that I can use it easily and that it is reliable.  
 Other (please specify)



32. Would you trust an intermediary that would facilitate between you and interested tourists?  
 Yes, if the person/company is competent and professional and explains clearly how the partnership will work  
 Yes, but it would be better if the person or company had a local contact point that I could talk to in case I have questions or problems arise  
 No, I wouldn't trust anyone  
 Other (please specify)
33. What would be the most important thing in deciding whether you would like to host a tourist at your place or not?  
 Their online profile  
 Reviews the tourist received from other hosts  
 Communication with the tourist  
 I don't care, I will accept all tourists, as long as they pay for their stay.  
 Other (please specify)
34. Do you think it is important to communicate with other hosts and exchange experiences?  
 Yes, absolutely  
 Yes, but it is not necessarily  
 No  
 Other (please specify)

Part 6: Perceived risks (sharing economy)

35. How would you assess the following concerns about hosting tourists at your place?
- Not enough place in my house to host tourists  
 very high          high          moderate          low          very low
  - Poor amenities and low standards of accommodation not able to fulfil tourists' expectations  
 very high          high          moderate          low          very low
  - The technical part: using the computer, dealing with the reservations online  
 very high          high          moderate          low          very low
  - Language barriers  
 very high          high          moderate          low          very low
  - Too many tourists will be disturbing for my household and the place where I live  
 very high          high          moderate          low          very low
  - Distribution of revenues from hosting tourists  
 very high          high          moderate          low          very low

36. Do you have concerns about other negative impacts that hosting tourists could bring in the place where you live? Please specify.

Yes, a lot (please specify)

Yes, a few (please specify)

Not at all

37. Would you need additional guidance to prepare your place for hosting tourists?

Yes, a lot

Yes, some

Not at all

Other issues (open-end question)

38. Can you think of any other barriers or concerns that would make you not want to participate in such a tourism project?

## **Annex 7: Questionnaire used for the survey conducted among potential hosts in Romania**

### **Chestionar efectuat pentru cercetarea doctorala a Simonei von Eyb la BTU Cottbus-Senftenberg, Germania**

#### Partea 1: Date demografice

1. Ce varsta aveti?
  - 18-24 ani
  - 25-34 ani
  - 35-44 ani
  - 45-54 ani
  - 55-64 ani
  - 65 sau mai mult
  - Prefer sa nu raspund
  
2. Cu ce gen va identificati?
  - Barbat
  - Femeie
  - Transgender
  - Prefer sa nu raspund
  
3. Sunteti casatorit/a?
  - Da
  - Nu
  - Prefer sa nu raspund
  
4. Cati oameni locuiesc in casa/gospodaria dumneavoastra (inclusive dumneavoastra)?
  - 1
  - 2
  - 3-4
  - 5-6
  - Mai mult de 6
  - Prefer sa nu raspund
  
5. Care este cel mai avansat nivel de scoala pe care l-ati terminat?
  - Nu am facut scoala
  - Scoala primara
  - Scoala gimnaziala
  - Liceu
  - Scoala profesionala
  - Diploma de licenta
  - Masterat
  - Doctorat
  - Prefer sa nu raspund

6. Care este statutul dumneavoastra current de angajare?
- Salariat
  - Independent
  - Somer, caut un loc de munca
  - Somer, ma pot intretine propriu/casnic
  - Pensionat
  - Prefer sa nu raspund
7. Care este venitul anual al familiei dumneavoastra (cat castiga familia dumneavoastra impreuna pe an)?
- Mai putin de 1,000 RON
  - 1,001 - 2,300 RON
  - 2,301 - 3,500 RON
  - 3,501 - 4,500 RON
  - 4,501 - 6,500 RON
  - Peste 6,501 RON
  - Prefer sa nu raspund
8. Care este sursa dumneavoastra principala de venit?
- Agricultura, pescuit si activitatea forestiera
  - Comert sau vanzari
  - Turism
  - Salariu zilnic pentru munca necalificata
  - Salariu lunar
  - Remiteri (primesc bani din afara)
  - Alta (va rog specificati care)
  - Prefer sa nu raspund

Partea 2: Acceptarea turismului ca un venit alternativ

9. Ati fi dispus/a sa gazduiti un numar limitat de turisti (2 persoane sau o familie pe sejur) in casa dumneavoastra in fiecare an, daca aceasta v-ar aduce un venit aditional?
- Da, absolut
  - Da, insa ma tem ca va trebui sa fac modificari in casa in care locuiesc, iar resursele mele sunt limitate
  - Poate, va trebui sa ma mai gandesc
  - Nu, nu sunt interesat
10. Daca da, cat de des ati fi dispus sa gazduiti turisti?
- In fiecare luna
  - Doar 6 luni pe an
  - Doar 3 luni pe an
  - Oricand turistii sunt interesati sa vina, atata vreme cat am capacitatea disponibila
11. Care ar fi motivul principal care v-ar convinge sa gazduiti turisti la dumneavoastra?

As putea castiga un venit aditional. ( foarte important, important, destul de important, neimportant)

As putea cunoaste lume din alte tari si face prieteni. ( foarte important, important, destul de important, neimportant)

As putea impartasi cunostintele si cultura mea cu alti oameni. ( foarte important, important, destul de important, neimportant)

Venitul additional provenit de la turisti m-ar putea ajuta sa continui stilul de viata pe care il am si traditiile mele, fara a trebui sa imi fac griji pentru problemele financiare. ( foarte important, important, destul de important, neimportant)

As putea sa-mi dezvolt afacerea proprie si sa nu depend de altii pentru venit. ( foarte important, important, destul de important, neimportant)

Venitul aditional m-ar ajuta sa am un conditii de viata mai bune. ( foarte important, important, destul de important, neimportant)

Altul (va rog specificati care)

12. Care are fi un venit acceptabil netto pentru care ati fi dispus/a sa gazduiti turisti la dumneavoastra?

850 RON pe saptamana

1,700 RON pe saptamana

3,400 RON pe saptamana

4,500 RON sau mai mult pe saptamana

Nu stiu inca

13. Aveti momentan o camera/spatiu in casa dumneavoastra pe care l-ati putea inchiria turistilor?

Da, am o camera pe care, cu mici renovari, as putea-o inchiria turistilor

Da, insa camera/spatiul are nevoie de renovari substantiale si mai multe facilitati

Nu, nu am destul spatiu in casa mea.

14. Ati prefera ca turistii sa locuiasca pe perioada sejurului altundeva, dar sa aiba viziteze in timpul zilei?

Da

Nu

Ambele optiuni sunt ok.

15. Ati accepta ca turistii sa va ajute in activitatile gospodaresti (lucrurile campului, recolta, sa aiba grija de animale)?

Da

Nu

Da, dar am cateva rezervari (specificati care)

16. Ati fi dispus/a sa le aratati turistilor si sa ii invatati din mestesugurile si cunostintele dumneavoastra traditionale (de exemplu tesut, prelucrarea lemnului, incondeierea oualor,

olarit, faurit, plante medicinale, pregatirea mancarurilor traditionale) pe durata sederii lor la dumneavoastra?

Da

Da, dar prefer sa percep un tariff suplimentar pentru aceasta

Nu, asta mi-ar lua prea mult timp

Nu, din alt motiv (specificati care)

17. Care din urmatoarele tipuri de turisti ati prefer sa gazduiti la dumneavoastra?

Tineri (18-30 ani)

Familii

Cupluri de varsta mijlocie (30-45 ani)

Turisti mai in varsta (50 ani sau mai mult)

Nu am nici o preferinta

18. Ati fi dispus/a sa gazduiti si turisti straini?

Da

Da, dar am cateva rezervari (specificati care)

Nu, prefer doar turisti romani

Nu, nu vreau sa gazduiesc nici un fel de turisti (straini sau romani)

### Partea 3: Utilitatea perceputa

19. Ati fi dispus/a sa aveti inregistrati pe o platforma internationala care faciliteaza contactul intre turisti si gazde ca dumneavoastra?

Da

Da, dar am cateva rezervari (specificati care)

Nu

20. Credeti ca folosind aceasta platforma v-ar ajuta sa obtineti beneficii (si venituri) directe din gazduirea turistilor?

Da

Nu

Chiar nu stiu cum functioneaza o astfel de platforma, va trebui sa o incerc intai

21. Credeti ca folosind aceasta platforma v-ar fi mai usor sa atrageti turisti la dumneavoastra?

Da

Nu

Chiar nu stiu cum functioneaza o astfel de platforma, va trebui sa o incerc intai

### Partea 4: Alfabetizarea digitala si usurinta perceputa a utilizarii

22. Puteti utiliza un computer?

Da, cu usurinta

Da, am competente de baza, dar mi se pare greu sa utilizez un computer

Nu, dar as dori sa invat cunostintele de baza

Nu, nu imi place sa utilizez computerele

23. Aveti un computer acasa?

Da

Nu

24. Are cel putin unul din membrii familiei dumneavoastra un smart phone?

Da

Nu

25. Aveti acces internet unde locuiti?

Da, am acces internet acasa

Da, este o conexiune internet acolo unde locuiesc, insa nu am access acasa

Nu

26. Daca nu detineti un computer sau un smart phone, ati fi dispus/a sa investiti in a a va cumpara unul, asa incat sa puteti planifica si administra sederea turistilor dumneavoastra insiva?

Da

Da, dar voi avea nevoie de ajutor aditional (de exemplu, un micro-credit)

Nu, investitia este prea mare pentru mine

Nu, din alt motiv (specificati care)

27. Detineti un cont bancar?

Da

Nu

28. Credeti ca ai fi usor sa folositi o astfel de platforma online care conecteaza turisti din toata lumea cu gazde ca dumneavoastra?

Foarte dificil

Dificil

Moderat

Usor

Foarte usor

Nu stiu

Altceva (specificati)

29. Credeti ca ar fi usor sa invatati cum sa utilizati o astfel de platforma online?

Foarte dificil

Dificil

Moderat

Usor

Foarte usor

Nu stiu

Altceva (specificati)

30. Ati prefer ca alta persoana sau companie a se ocupa de detaliile tehnice si sa comunice cu turistii care doresc sa petreaca un sejur la dumneavoastra, in schimbul unei mici sume deduse din venitul total?

Da

Da, dar am cateva rezervari (specificati care)

Nu, as prefer sa ma ocup de aceasta singur/a

## Partea 5: Increderea

31. Ati avea incredere in serviciile unei astfel de platforme online?

Da

Da, insa doar daca vad recenziiile altor utilizatori (atat gazde, cat si turisti)

Da, insa doar daca este recomandata de un partener local

Nu

Aspectul increderii nu este important. Conteaza doar sa pot utiliza platforma cu usurinta si ca aceasta sa fie fiabila.

Altceva (specificati)

32. Ati avea incredere intr-un intermediar care ar facilita intre dumneavoastra si turisti interesati?

Da, atata vreme cat persoana sau compania respective este competenta, profesionala si imi explica clar cum va functiona parteneriatul nostru.

Da, dar ar fi mai bine daca persoana sau compania respective ar avea un partener local pe care l-as putea contacta in caz ca am intrebari sau apar probleme

Nu, n-as avea incredere in nimeni

Altceva (specificati)

33. Care ar fi cel mai important aspect in a decide daca ati dori sa gazduiti un turist la dumneavoastra sau nu?

Profilul online al turistului

Recenziile primite de turist din partea altor gazde

Comunicarea generala cu turistul respectiv

Nu conteaza, as accepta toti turistii, atata vreme cat platesc pentru sejur.

Altceva (specificati)

34. Credeti ca este important sa comunicati cu alte gazde din retea sis a faceti schimb de experiente?

Da, absolut

Da, insa nu e necesar

Nu

Altceva (specificati)

## Part 6: Riscuri percepute (economia collaborativa)

35. Cum ati evalua urmatoarele preocupari/indoiele referitoare la gazduirea turistilor la dumneavoastra?

- Nu este spatiu destul pentru a gazdui turisti in casa mea

Foarte ridicat

ridicat

moderat

scazut

foarte scazut

- Facilitatile neadecvate si standardul redus al cazarii nu sunt conform asteptarilor turistilor

Foarte ridicat

ridicat

moderat

scazut

foarte scazut



- Partea technical: cum sa folosesc un computer sau smart phone, cum sa ma ocup de rezervari online  
Foarte ridicat                      ridicat                      moderat                      scazut                      foarte scazut
- Barierele de comunicare (limba)  
Foarte ridicat                      ridicat                      moderat                      scazut                      foarte scazut
- Prea multi turisti mi-ar putea deranja gospodaria si satul/regiunea unde locuiesc  
Foarte ridicat                      ridicat                      moderat                      scazut                      foarte scazut
- Distributia veniturilor obtinute din gazduirea turistilor  
Foarte ridicat                      ridicat                      moderat                      scazut                      foarte scazut

36. Sunteti ingrijorat de alte efecte negative pe care gazduirea turistilor le-ar putea avea in locul unde locuiti? Va rog sa specificati.

- Da, am multe ingrijorari (specificati care)
- Da, am cateva ingrijorari (specificati care)
- Nu, deloc

37. Ati avea nevoie de ghidare aditionala care s-ava ajute sa va pregatiti locul pentru a gazdui turisti?

- Da, foarte mult
- Da, putin
- Nu, deloc

Alte probleme (interbari cu raspuns deschis)

38. Va puteti gandii la alte probleme sau obstacole care v-ar determina sa nu participati intr-un astfel de proiect de turism?

## **Annex 8: Introduction to the online survey explaining the ethical considerations of the research.**

### 1→ Anonymity of responses\*

This survey is conducted by Simona von Eyb for her doctoral research at Brandenburg University of Technology Cottbus-Senftenberg in Germany.

The information provided by you in the survey will be used solely for research purposes. It will not be used in a manner which would allow identification of your individual responses. At the end of the survey, anonymised research data will be archived at BTU Cottbus-Senftenberg in order to make it available to other researchers in line with current data-sharing practices.

Please press "I accept" if you wish to continue.

A I accept

B I don't  
accept

## **Annex 9: Questionnaire used for the online survey conducted among potential tourists.**

### **Questionnaire conducted for the doctoral research of Simona von Eyb at BTU Cottbus-Senftenberg, Germany**

Hello! I am currently conducting my doctoral research and I need your help as travellers.

The purpose of my research is to see whether and how the collaborative economy could help communities in rural locations to generate benefits through responsible tourism and to continue their traditions threatened with disappearing.

This survey will help me to evaluate your attitudes towards a potential tourism product based on a peer-to-peer model. Your answers will provide insights in how to develop more enjoyable travel experiences and ultimately, how to make travel better.

The survey will take about 10 minutes. I really appreciate the time you invested in this research. By taking the survey, you will also have the chance to win a one-year subscription for the Condé Nast Traveler magazine.

Thank you again and let's get the survey started!

#### **Part 1: Intention to engage in the proposed type of tourism, behavioural preferences**

1. When you travel, how important is it to you to have meaningful, engaging experiences and immerse in the local culture?

Extremely important

Important

Slightly important

Neutral

Not at all important

I have never thought of that

2. How easy or difficult is it to find tours or holiday packages that offer authentic\* cultural experiences?

Extremely easy

Easy

Moderate

Difficult

Extremely difficult

I don't know, I have never looked for such a tour online

\*What is understood by authentic may differ from person to person. Here, authentic refers to an experience that is true to its context, that has a real and genuine connection to the lived environment in which it occurs.

3. What do you think is the most important factor that makes it difficult to find offers for authentic cultural experiences?

Most tours offered by travel agencies and tour operators seem to be made for mass-consumption and are not personal enough.

There is too much information available out there and I do not have the time to browse through all travel websites and find authentic travel experiences.

Even those tours that are labelled as “authentic” are actually taken out of their local context and it feels they are staged for tourists.

All authentic tours are too expensive.

Most tours focus on monumental attractions and not on the living culture of a destination.

Other (please specify)

4. Would you be willing to book a trip to a remote location and stay with a local family at their home (e.g. spend time with the family of a Japanese potter, a Romanian shepherd, an Indian spice grower or an Argentinian gaucho)?

Yes, definitely

Maybe, I will have to think more about it

No, I am not interested in that

5. What would you be most interested to discover or experience while staying with the local family? Please select one answer per statement.

Each to be rated: Extremely interested/ Interested/ A bit interested/ Indifferent/ Not at all interested

Traditional crafts (weaving, jewellery, carving, pottery, blacksmithing, etc.)

Traditional food and cooking

Traditional knowledge about nature, health and wellbeing

Traditional ways of using the land and working the fields (farming and agriculture)

Traditional arts (dance, song, theatre, calligraphy, etc.)

Spirituality

Sports, hiking and outdoor adventures with local guides

Traditional events and festivals

Simply be part of their daily routine

Making friends with people in other parts of the world

Other aspects (please specify)

6. How long would you like to stay at such a location?

Less than one week

One week

Ten days

Two weeks

Longer than two weeks

7. How much would you be willing to spend per week (including accommodation, food and participation in traditional activities)? Prices are per person.

Less than 280 Euro per week

281 – 560 Euro per week

561 – 840 Euro per week

841 – 1400 Euro per week

More than 1400 Euro per week

8. How important is for you the fact that your stay will generate benefits for the people you are visiting, and that it may help their family, community and region to preserve their traditions?
- Extremely important
  - Important
  - Slightly important
  - Neutral
  - Not at all important
9. Would you prefer to stay in the same house with the family members?
- Yes, I would like to be as close as possible to their daily routines
  - Yes, but I would like to have a separate dependency on their property
  - No, I would prefer to stay at a different location and visit them only during the day
  - Other
10. How important is the comfort and available amenities at the place where you will be staying?
- Very important, I must have all modern amenities where I stay
  - Important, at least some basic modern amenities should be available
  - Somewhat important, but I understand if during my stay the amenities will not be as modern as at my own home
  - Not important at all, I am willing to fully immerse myself in the lifestyle I am experiencing and do everything as my hosts do
  - Other (please specify what)
11. How often would you like to try this kind of travel experiences?
- This sounds really nice, I would like to do it every year, in different locations around the world.
  - I would like to try it and depending on the experience, I might book a similar experience again.
  - I would like to try it only once.
  - Never, I'm not interested in this kind of travel experiences.
12. How unique do you think such a travel experience would be, compared to other tours and holiday packages currently available?
- Very unique
  - Unique
  - Somewhat unique
  - Not unique
  - I don't know

**Part 2: Platform acceptance and functional needs**

13. Would you be willing to use the services of an online platform where you could directly book your stay with hosts at various locations around the world?

Yes, definitely

No, I would prefer to use a travel agent or tour operator to book such stays

No, I prefer to discover these locations myself

14. On such a platform, what information would be most important to you?

Please rate each aspect as: very important/ important/ neutral/ slightly important/ not important

Profile of the host family, including photos of their property

Description of activities available with the host family

Ratings and reviews of former guests

Information about the social cause and traditions my stay will support

FAQs

Other (please specify)

15. What feature would you appreciate most at the locations and host families listed on this platform?

Remoteness

Little tourism development

Uniqueness of activities offered

Closeness to nature

Other (please specify)

16. Is it important that transportation will also be provided when booking such a travel experience?

Yes, very important. Since these destinations are rather remote, I would prefer that transportation is organised for me as well.

I would like to have guidance about how to reach the location, but I prefer to organise this on my own.

Not really, I don't need any guidance and I prefer to organise transportation to/from the location on my own.

17. Would you be willing to pay a small fee to a company that would facilitate such homestays and travel experiences?

Yes

No

### **Part 3: Trust**

18. Would you trust the services of such an online travel platform?

Yes

Yes, but only if I see reviews from other users (both hosts and tourists)

Yes, but only if it's recommended by a friend or trusted travel partner

No

Other (please specify)

19. How important would be the following aspects in influencing your decision to book a stay with a host family?

Please rate each as: very important/ important/ slightly important/ neutral/ not important

Online profile of the host

Reviews that the host received from other tourists

Location of the host family (natural surroundings, property, etc.)

Activities offered during the stay

Conditions and amenities of the accommodation

Communication with the host

The social cause and traditions my stay will indirectly support

**Part 4: Perceived risks**

20. How concerned would you be about the following aspects when booking such a travel experience?

- Poor amenities and low standards of accommodation  

very concerned	concerned	moderately concerned
not so concerned	not concerned at all	
  
- Safety issues: not knowing the host family  

very concerned	concerned	moderately concerned
not so concerned	not concerned at all	
  
- Language barriers  

very concerned	concerned	moderately concerned
not so concerned	not concerned at all	
  
- Infrastructure: too difficult to travel to the location of the host family  

very concerned	concerned	moderately concerned
not so concerned	not concerned at all	
  
- Quality of the activities offered during my stay  

very concerned	concerned	moderately concerned
not so concerned	not concerned at all	
  
- Online payment security  

very concerned	concerned	moderately concerned
not so concerned	not concerned at all	
  
- Total cost of the stay  

very concerned	concerned	moderately concerned
not so concerned	not concerned at all	

21. Can you think of any other barriers or concerns that would make you not want to participate in such a tourism project?  
Please specify:

**Part 5: Attitudes about travel**

22. How often do you usually travel for leisure (in a pandemic-free year)?  
Once a year  
2-3 times a year  
4-5 times a year  
6 or more times a year
23. How do you usually travel?  
Alone  
With friends  
With my partner  
With my family (no children)  
With my family (including children)  
Other (please specify)
24. Why do you usually travel?  
To escape my everyday routine and home environment  
To spend quality time with my family and friends  
To see new places, have new experiences and find out new life perspectives  
To relax, escape stress and recharge my batteries  
To show my friends the cool places I visited  
Other (please specify)
25. How would you agree to the following statements describing you as a traveller?  
Please rate each: totally agree/ somewhat agree/ somewhat disagree/ totally disagree
- I must have the maximum comfort when I travel.
- I want to relax, enjoy the peace and quiet, and do as little as possible.
- I like to go to famous places and impress my friends on social media with that.
- I just need to get to a destination, after that I prefer to walk around and discover everything on my own.
- I want to enjoy the beauty of nature and to engage in outdoor activities.
- I am mostly interested in visiting historic sites and cultural attractions at the destination.
- I want to get in touch with the locals and experience their lifestyles in their own environment.
- I want to take part in experiential activities (e.g. learn a traditional craft, help in a local farm, learn how to cook the local cuisine, etc.).
- I am so stressed out in my work, I just want to get away from everything and recharge my batteries.
- I prefer it when everything is organised for me when I travel.
- I want to spend quality time with my family and have fun with my kids.



I find it very stressful to adjust to unfamiliar places and I prefer going to places that are similar to my home environment.  
I would like to see what alternative solutions other people have found to the everyday needs I am experiencing myself (housing, food, work, enjoyment).  
Travel is my life.

**Part 6: Socio-demographic data**

26. What is your age?

- 18-24 years old
- 25-34 years old
- 35-44 years old
- 45-54 years old
- 55-64 years old
- 65-74 years old
- 75 or older
- Prefer not to answer

27. What gender do you identify with?

- Male
- Female
- Transgender
- Gender variant/Non-conforming
- Prefer not to answer

28. What is your marital status?

- Single
- Married or domestic partnership
- Divorced or separated
- Widowed
- Prefer not to answer

29. Do you have children?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to answer

30. What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed?

- High school
- Technical/vocational training
- Bachelor's degree
- Master's degree
- Doctorate degree
- Prefer not to answer

31. What is your current field of occupation?

- Arts and creative industries
- Business and finance
- Education
- Legal
- Healthcare
- IT, technology, engineering
- Government, civil services
- Business owner, self-employed
- Unemployed, searching for work
- Student
- Retired
- Other

32. What is your annual income?

- Under 5000 Euros
- 5000 – 15,000 Euros
- 15,001 – 40,000 Euros
- 40,001 – 60,000 Euros
- 60,001 – 80,000 Euros
- 80,001 – 100,000 Euros
- 100,001 Euros or over
- Prefer not to answer

## Bibliography

Acquier, A., Daudigeos, T., and Pinkse, J. (2017) Promises and paradoxes of the sharing economy: an organizing framework. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, 125 (C), p.1–10. Available from <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techfore.2017.07.006> [accessed 10 May 2021].

Adler, P. (2019) *The 99 percent economy: how democratic socialism can overcome the crises of capitalism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Aflorei, I. (2009) *Izvoarele Sucevei, o comună din munții Bucovinei - studiu monographic*. Suceava: Editura Accent Print.

Allen Gunn, P. (1979) Iyani: It goes this way. In: Geary Hobson (ed.) *The remembered earth*. Albuquerque: Red Earth Press.

Antweiler, C. (2016) *Our common denominator: human universals revisited*. New York: Berghahn Books.

Aquinas St. Thomas. (1981) *Summa theologiae*. Westminster: Christian Classics.

Ardalan, K. (2019) *Global political economy: a multi-paradigmatic approach*. Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland.

Arendt, H. (1973) *The origins of totalitarianism*. New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich.

Axelrod, R. (1985) *The evolution of cooperation*. New York: Basic Books.

Atkins, R. (2015) Germany and economics: of rules and order. *The Economist*, 9 May 2015. Available from <https://www.economist.com/europe/2015/05/09/of-rules-and-order> [accessed 17 May 2021].

Atkinson Hobson, J. (2005) *Imperialism: a study*. New York: Cosimo Classics.

Austin, S., Canipe, C. and Slobin, S. (2015) The billion dollar startup club. *The Wall Street Journal*. 18 February 2015. Available from [www.wsj.com/graphics/billion-dollar-club](http://www.wsj.com/graphics/billion-dollar-club) [accessed 13 November 2021].

Backhouse, R. E. and Bateman, B. W. (2011) *Capitalist revolutionary: John Maynard Keynes*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Backward Classes Welfare Department. (2021) *Action plan 2020-2021*. Available from [https://bcwd.karnataka.gov.in/storage/pdf-files/EST%20Govt%20Orders/action\\_plan2020\\_21.pdf](https://bcwd.karnataka.gov.in/storage/pdf-files/EST%20Govt%20Orders/action_plan2020_21.pdf) [accessed 30 November 2021].

Baumann, G. (2010) *The multicultural riddle: rethinking national, ethnic, and religious identities*. New York: Routledge.

- Bauwens, M, Kostakis, V. and Pazaitis, A. (2019) *Peer to peer: the commons manifesto*. London: University of Westminster Press.
- Belk, R. (2014) Sharing versus pseudo-sharing in web 2.0. *The Anthropologist*, 18:1, pp. 7-23, DOI: 10.1080/09720073.2014.11891518
- Benhabib, S. (2002) *The claims of culture: equality and diversity in the global era*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Benkler, Y. (2004) Sharing nicely: on shareable goods and the emergence of sharing as a modality of economic production. *The Yale Law Journal*, 114(2), pp. 273-358.
- Benkler, Y. (2007) *The wealth of networks: how social production transforms markets and freedom*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Benkler, Y. (2011) *The penguin and the leviathan: the triumph of cooperation over self-interest*. New York: Crown Business.
- Bennett, J. (2016) *The Enchantment of Modern Life: Attachments, Crossings, and Ethics*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Bentham, J. and Burns, J. H. and Hart, H. L. A. (eds.). (1970) *An introduction to the principles of morals and legislation*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Berman, S. (2006) *The primacy of politics: social democracy and the making of Europe's twentieth century*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bhagavad-Gita*. (1986) New York: Bantam Books.
- Biardeau, M. (1994) *Hinduism: the anthropology of a civilisation*. Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Biebricher, T. and Vogelmann, F. (eds.) (2017) *The birth of austerity: German ordoliberalism and contemporary neoliberalism*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Binmore, K. (2007) *Playing for real: a text on game theory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Blaufarb, R. (2016) *The great demarcation: the French revolution and the invention of modern property*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Block, F. and Somers, M. R. (2014) *The power of market fundamentalism*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Boas, F. (1938) *The mind of primitive man*. Stuttgart: Macmillan Company.
- Boas, F. (1940) *Race, language, and culture*. Stuttgart: Macmillan Company.
- Boia, L. (2011) *Istorie si mit in constiinta romaneasca*. Bucuresti: Humanitas.

- Booth, A. L. (2010) *We are the land: Native American views on nature*. In: H. Selin and A. Kalland. (eds.). *Nature across cultures: views of nature and the environment in non-western cultures*. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers.
- Boorstin, D. (1992) *The image of pseudo-events in America*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Botsman, R., & Rogers, R. (2017) *What's mine is yours: how collaborative consumption is changing the way we live*. London: HarperCollins.
- Brandt, C., Fairbank, J. K., and Schwart, B. I. (2005) *A documentary history of Chinese communism*. London: Routledge.
- Bremer, F. J. and Winthrop, J. (2003) *America's forgotten founding father*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Brock, W. R. (1974) Americanism. In D. Welland (ed.). *The United States: a companion to American studies*. London: Methuen.
- Brown, D. E. (2017) *Human universals*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Bryman, A. (2012) *Social research methods*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Camerer, C. F. (2003) *Behavioral game theory: experiments in strategic interaction*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Capra, F. (2002) *The hidden connections: integrating the biological, cognitive, and social dimensions of life into a science of sustainability*. New York: Doubleday.
- Carlson, W. B. (2013) *Tesla: inventor of the electrical age*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Carlyle, T., Sorensen, D. R., Kinser, B. E., and Atwood, S. (2013) *On heroes, hero-worship, and the heroic in history*. New Haven: Yale University.
- Carver, T. and Farr, J. (2015) *The Cambridge companion to the communist manifesto*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Case, A. and Deaton, A. (2020) *Deaths of despair and the future of capitalism*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Castells, M. (2010) *The rise of the network society*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Castells, M. (2010) *The power of identity*. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Castranova, E. (2007) *Exodus to the virtual world: how online fun is changing reality*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Center for Generational Kinetics. (2020) *The state of Gen Z 2019-2020*. Available from <https://genhq.com/generation-z-research-2019/> [accessed 4 June 2021].

- Chang, J. and Halliday, J. (2005) *Mao: the unknown story*. New York: Knopf
- Chayka, K. (2020) *The longing for less living with minimalism*. New York: Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Chomsky, N. (1998) *Profit over people: neoliberalism and the global order*. New York: Seven Stories Press.
- Chomsky, N. (2003) *For reasons of state*. New York: New Press.
- Chomsky, N. and Otero, C. P. (ed.) (1988) *Language and politics*. Montreal: Black Rose Books.
- Clampet, J. (2022) The big travel trends to follow in 2022. *Skift*. Available from <https://skift.com/2022/03/29/the-big-travel-trends-to-follow-in-2022/> [accessed: 13 April 2022].
- Clément, J.-P. (2007) Chateaubriand et la politique religieuse de Napoléon : équivoques et malentendus. *Revue du Souvenir Napoléonien*, 470-471, pp. 94-99. Available from [www.napoleon.org/histoire-des-2-empires/articles/chateaubriand-et-la-politique-religieuse-de-napoleon-equivoques-et-malentendus](http://www.napoleon.org/histoire-des-2-empires/articles/chateaubriand-et-la-politique-religieuse-de-napoleon-equivoques-et-malentendus) [accessed 23 July 2021].
- Clippinger, J. and Bollier, D. (2005) A Renaissance of the commons: how the new sciences and internet are framing a new global identity and order. In: R. Aiyer Ghosh (ed.). *Collaborative Ownership and the Digital Economy*. Cambridge: The MIT Press.
- Cohen, G. A. (2009) *Why not socialism*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Cohen, M. J (2019) *The future of consumer society: prospects for sustainability in the new economy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Collins, F. (2001) *What is the human genome project?* National Human Genome Research Institute. Available from [www.genome.gov/human-genome-project/What](http://www.genome.gov/human-genome-project/What) [accessed 23.09.2021].
- Confucius & Cai Xiqin (1996) *The analects*. Beijing: Sinolingua.
- Consiliul Local Izvoarele Sucevei. (2020) *Statut Comuna Izvoarele Sucevei*. Available from [https://primariaizvoarelesucevei.ro/images/2021/proiect\\_statut\\_comuna\\_izvoarele\\_sucevei\\_compressed.pdf](https://primariaizvoarelesucevei.ro/images/2021/proiect_statut_comuna_izvoarele_sucevei_compressed.pdf) [accessed 12.09.2021].
- Consiliul Judetean Suceava. (n.d.) *Territorial administrative units*. Available from <http://cjsuceava.ro/ro/unitati-admin-teritoriale> [accessed 12.09.2021].
- CORE Team. (2021) *The economy: economics for a changing world*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Creative Research Systems. (n.d.) *Sample size calculator*. Available from [www.surveysystem.com/sscalc.htm](http://www.surveysystem.com/sscalc.htm) [accessed 4 March 2022].
- Crockatt, R. (2016) *Einstein and twentieth-century politics: a salutary moral influence*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Cullen, J. (2003) *The American dream: a short history of an idea that shaped a nation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- De Lange, N. (2002) *An introduction to Judaism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Deneen, P. J. (2019) *Why liberalism failed*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Denzin, N. (1978) *Sociological methods: a sourcebook*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Denzin, N. K., and Lincoln, Y. S. (2018) *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research*. Los Angeles: SAGE.
- de Waal, F. B. M. (1997) *Good natured: the origins of right and wrong in humans and other animals*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- de Waal, F. B. M. and Ferrari, R. F. (2012) *The primate mind: built to connect with other minds*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Dewey, J. (1963) *Liberalism and social action: the Page-Barbour lectures*. New York, Putnam.
- Directorate of Census Operations Karnataka. (2011) *Census of India*. Available from [https://censuskarnataka.gov.in/Final-DCHB\\_CRC\\_to%20ORGI\\_03.06.2016/563.Uttara%20Kannada.pdf](https://censuskarnataka.gov.in/Final-DCHB_CRC_to%20ORGI_03.06.2016/563.Uttara%20Kannada.pdf) [accessed 17 December 2021].
- Doniger, W. (2014) *On Hinduism*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Durkheim, E. (1964) *The elementary forms of the religious life*. London: Allen and Unwin.
- Eaton, G. (1985) *Islam and the destiny of man*. London: Allen and Unwin.
- Eckhardt, G.M. and Bardhi, F. (2015) The sharing economy isn't about sharing at all. *Harvard Business Review*, 28 January 2015. Available from <https://hbr.org/2015/01/the-sharing-economy-isnt-about-sharing-at-all> [accessed 15 November 2021].
- Einstein, A. (1954) *Ideas and opinions*. New York: Random House.
- European Travel Commission. (2021a) *European tourism trends and prospects*. Available from [https://etc-corporate.org/uploads/2022/02/Quarterly-Report-Q4-2021\\_Public-1.pdf](https://etc-corporate.org/uploads/2022/02/Quarterly-Report-Q4-2021_Public-1.pdf) [accessed: 26 April 2022].
- European Commission. (2021b) *Staff working document (part 1): a long-term vision for the EU's rural areas*. Available from [https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/strategy/strategy\\_documents/documents/ltvra-c2021-345-documents-part2\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/strategy/strategy_documents/documents/ltvra-c2021-345-documents-part2_en.pdf) [accessed: 5 April 2022].
- European Travel Commission. (2022) *Monitoring sentiment for domestic and intra-European travel*. Available from [233](https://etc-</a></p>
</div>
<div data-bbox=)

corporate.org/uploads/2022/04/2022\_ETC\_MSIET\_Results\_Wave\_11.pdf [accessed: 5 May 2022].

Evans, P.C. and Gawer, A. (2016) *The rise of the platform enterprise: a global survey*. Emerging Platform Economy Series No. 1. Available from [www.thecge.net/app/uploads/2016/01/PDF-WEB-Platform-Survey\\_01\\_12.pdf](http://www.thecge.net/app/uploads/2016/01/PDF-WEB-Platform-Survey_01_12.pdf) [accessed 6 September 2021].

Evdokimova, S. (1999) *Pushkin's historical imagination*. New Haven: Yale University.

Eze M. O. (2008) What is African communitarianism? Against consensus as a regulative ideal. *South African Journal of Philosophy*, 27:4, pp. 386-399.

Eze, M. O. (2010) *Intellectual history in contemporary South Africa*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Felson, M., & Spaeth, J. L. (1978) Community structure and collaborative consumption: a routine activity approach. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 21(4), pp. 614–624.

Feng You Lan. (1998) *A short history of Chinese philosophy*. Beijing: Foreign Language Press.

Ferdowsi, A. (2009) *Tales of love and war from the Shahnameh*. New York: Penguin.

Flood, G. D. (1998) *An introduction to Hinduism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Francioni, F. and Gordley, J. (2013) *Enforcing international cultural heritage law*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Francioni, F. and Vrdoljak, A. F. (eds.) (2020) *The Oxford handbook of international cultural heritage law*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Friedman, G. (2014) Workers without employers: shadow corporations and the rise of the gig economy. *Review of Keynesian Economics*, 2(2), pp.171-188.

Friedman, M. (2008) Space, time, and geometry: Einstein and logical empiricism. In: P.L. Galison, G. Holton and S. Schweber (eds.). *Einstein for the 21<sup>st</sup> century: his legacy in science, art, and modern culture*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Fromm, E. (2015) *To have or to be?* London: Bloomsbury Academic.

Fuentes, A. (2019) *Why we believe: evolution and the human way of being*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Fukuyama, F. (1992) *The end of history and the last man*. New York: Free Press.

Gade, C. B. N. (2017) *Discourse on African philosophy: a new perspective on ubuntu and transitional justice in South Africa*. Lanham: Lexington Books.



- Grup de Acțiune Locală Bucovina de Munte. (2015) *Strategia de dezvoltare a Comunei Breaza pentru perioada 2016-2026*. Available from [www.comunabreaza.eu/strategie\\_dezvoltare/strat\\_dezv\\_2016\\_2026.pdf](http://www.comunabreaza.eu/strategie_dezvoltare/strat_dezv_2016_2026.pdf) [accessed 23 July 2021].
- Gallup. (2021) *News service poll*, June 1-18 2021. Available from <https://news.gallup.com/poll/351791/american-pride-ticks-last-year-record-low.aspx> [accessed 12 January 2022].
- Gansky, L. (2012) *The Mesh: why the future of business is sharing*. New York: Portfolio.
- Garnier, E. (2012) Leicester scientists print human genome in 130 books. *BBC News*, 28 November. Available from [www.bbc.com/news/av/uk-england-leicestershire-20520843](http://www.bbc.com/news/av/uk-england-leicestershire-20520843) [accessed 23 September 2021].
- Gilabert, P. (2017) Kantian dignity and Marxian socialism. *Kantian Review*, 22(04), pp.553–577. Available from <https://doi:10.1017/s1369415417000279> [accessed 20 February 2020].
- Gintis, H. (2016) *Individuality and entanglement: the moral and material bases of social life*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Godin, S. (2009) *All marketers are liars: the power of telling authentic stories in a low-trust world*. New York: Portfolio.
- Goldsmith, S. and Crawford, S. (2014) *The responsive city: engaging communities through data-smart governance*. Jossey-Bass.
- Google Maps. (2022a) India [Map]. Available from [www.google.co.uk/maps/place/India](http://www.google.co.uk/maps/place/India) [accessed 12 January 2022].
- Google Maps. (2022b) Romania [Map]. Available from [www.google.co.uk/maps/place/Romania](http://www.google.co.uk/maps/place/Romania) [accessed 12 January 2022].
- Gottschall, J. (2013) *The storytelling animal: how stories make us human*. Boston: Mariner Books.
- Graham, A. C. (2003) *Disputers of the Tao: philosophical argument in ancient China*. La Salle: Open Court.
- Hamilton, E. (1998) *Mythology*. New York: Back Bay Books/Little, Brown and Company.
- Harari, Y. N. (2011) *Sapiens: a brief history of humankind*. London: Vintage Books.
- Hardin, G. (1968) The tragedy of the commons. *Science*, 162(3859), pp. 1243–1248. Available from <https://doi:10.1126/science.162.3859.1243> [accessed 18 June 2020].
- Hartwell, L., et al. (2006) *Genetics: from genes to genomes*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Harvey, D. (2005) *A brief history of neoliberalism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Hasson, U. (2010) I can make your brain look like mine. *Harvard Business Review*, 88, pp 32-33.
- Hayek, A. (2021) *Generation we: the power and promise of gen z*. Cork: BookBaby.
- Heilbroner, R. L. (1999) *The worldly philosophers: the lives, times, and ideas of the great economic thinkers*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Heilbroner, R. L. and Milberg, W. (2012) *The making of economic society*, 13th Edition (The Pearson Series in Economics). New York: Pearson.
- Hien, J. and Joerges, C. (eds.) (2020) *Ordoliberalism, law and the rule of economics*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Hirschman, A. O. (2013) *The passions and the interests: political arguments for capitalism before its triumph*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Hobbes, T. and Tuck, T (ed.) (1996) *Leviathan*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hochschild, J. (1995) *Facing up to the American Dream: race, class, and the soul of the nation*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Human Genome Project (n.d.). *Human genome project*. Available from <https://www.genome.gov/human-genome-project> [accessed 6 September 2021].
- Huntington, S. (1983) *American politics: the promise of disharmony*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Huntington, S. (2004) *Who are we? The challenges to America's national identity*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Ignatieff, M. (2005) *American exceptionalism and human rights*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Institutul National de Statistica Romania. (2011) *Populatia stabila (rezidenta) pe judete, categorii de localitati, municipii, orase, comune si localitati componente*. Available from [www.recensamantromania.ro/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/TS8.pdf](http://www.recensamantromania.ro/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/TS8.pdf) [accessed 4 July 2021].
- Jackson, J.B. (1997) *Landscape in sight: looking at America*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Jemielniak, D. and Przegalinska, A. (2020) *Collaborative society*. Cambridge: The MIT Press.
- Joachimsthaler, E. (2020) *The interaction field: the revolutionary new way to create shared value for businesses, customers, and society*. New York: Public Affairs.
- John, N. A. (2017) *The age of sharing*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Jokilehto, J. (2008) *The World Heritage List: What is OUV? Defining the outstanding universal value of cultural World Heritage properties. ICOMOS study: monuments and sites XVI*. Available from

[http://openarchive.icomos.org/id/eprint/435/1/Monuments\\_and\\_Sites\\_16\\_What\\_is\\_OUV.pdf](http://openarchive.icomos.org/id/eprint/435/1/Monuments_and_Sites_16_What_is_OUV.pdf) [accessed 8 January 2021].

Kant, I., Timmermann, J., and Gregor, M. J. (2011) *Groundwork of the metaphysics of morals*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Keyesers, C. and Gazzola, V. (2009) Unifying Social Cognition. In J.A. Pineda (ed.). *Mirror neuron systems*. New York: Humana Press.

Kreps, D. M. (1990) *Game theory and economic modelling*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Klein, N. (2007) *The shock doctrine*. London: Penguin Books.

Klein, N. (2010) *No logo*. London: Fourth Estate.

Kohen, J. L. (2010) Knowing country: Indigenous Australians and the land. In H. Selin and A. Kalland (eds.). *Nature across cultures: views of nature and the environment in non-western cultures*. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers.

Kouchner, B. (2004) *The future of humanitarianism*. Annual Morgenthau Memorial Lecture Series (1981-2006). Transcript. Available from [www.carnegiecouncil.org/studio/multimedia/20040302-the-future-of-humanitarianism](http://www.carnegiecouncil.org/studio/multimedia/20040302-the-future-of-humanitarianism) [accessed 18 January 2022].

Kramer, M. H. (1997) *John Locke and the origins of private property - philosophical explorations of individualism, community, and equality*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Labadi, S. (2013) *UNESCO, cultural heritage, and outstanding universal value*. Lanham: AltaMira Press.

Lakshmanan, V. (2011) *The Halakki people of Uttara Kannada district (Karnataka)*. Available from [https://indiantribalheritage.org/wp-content/uploads/Hallakki\\_Uttara\\_Kannada\\_Dist\\_V\\_Lakshmanan\\_web.pdf](https://indiantribalheritage.org/wp-content/uploads/Hallakki_Uttara_Kannada_Dist_V_Lakshmanan_web.pdf) [accessed 12 June 2021].

Landes, D. (2000) Culture makes almost all the difference. In: L. E. Harrison and S. Huntington (eds.). *Culture matters - How values shape human progress*. New York: Basic Books.

Langley, L. D. (2009) *Simón Bolívar: Venezuelan rebel, American revolutionary*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Lao-tzu, & Mitchell, S. (1988) *Dao de jing: a new English version*. New York: Harper & Row.

Lieven, A. (2012) *America right or wrong: an anatomy of American nationalism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Locke, J. (1988) *Two treatises of government*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ludwig, K. (2018) *From individual to plural agency: collective action*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Machiavelli, N. (2005) *The prince*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Macpherson, C.B. (1973) *Democratic theory*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Macpherson, C. B. (1978) *Property: mainstream and critical positions*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Macpherson, C. B. (1990) *The political theory of possessive individualism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Maher, B. (2012) ENCODE: The human encyclopaedia. *Nature*, 489 (7414), pp 46–48. Available from <https://doi:10.1038/489046a> [accessed 24 April 2021].
- Mann, M. (2013) *The sources of social power*, Volume 4: Globalizations, 1945–2011. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Mann, M. (2012) *The Sources of Social Power*. 2nd edn. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Available from <https://doi:10.1017/CBO9781139381314> [accessed 24 April 2021].
- Marx, K. (2010) *A contribution to the critique of political economy*. Available from [https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1057/9780230117457\\_5](https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1057/9780230117457_5) [accessed 24 April 2021].
- Marx, K. Fowkes, B. and Mandel, E. (1990) *Capital: volume 1 - a critique of political economy*. London: Penguin Books.
- Maynard Keynes, J. and Skidelsky, R. (2016) *The essential Keynes*. London: Penguin Books.
- Maynard Smith, J. and Szathmáry, E. (1997) *The major transitions in evolution*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Mccarraher, E. (2022) *Enchantments of Mammon: how capitalism became the religion of modernity*. Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.
- Medema, S. G. (2009) *The hesitant hand: taming self-interest in the history of economic ideas*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Melville, H. (2011) *White-Jacket*. Auckland: The Floating Press.
- Meskill, L. (2013) *A future in ruins: UNESCO, World Heritage, and the dream of peace*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Michod, R. (1999) *Darwinian dynamics*. Princeton: Princeton University Press
- Milanović, B. (2021) *Capitalism, alone: the future of the system that rules the world*. Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.
- Miller, C. (2011) Foreword. In: R. G. Weiner, B. L. Whitfield and J. Becker (eds.). *James Bond in world and popular culture: the films are not enough*. Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

- Morozov, E. (2013) The 'sharing economy' undermines workers' rights. *The Financial Times*, 14 October 2013. Available from [www.ft.com/content/92c3021c-34c2-11e3-8148-00144feab7de](http://www.ft.com/content/92c3021c-34c2-11e3-8148-00144feab7de) [accessed 23 August 2021].
- Murillo, D., Buckland, H., Val, E., (2017) *When the sharing economy becomes neoliberalism on steroids: unravelling the controversies*. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, 125, December 2017, pp. 66-76. Available from <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techfore.2017.05.024> [accessed 23 August 2021].
- Naik, R. (2017). Role of Halakki women in ecological sustainability. *Review of Research Online International Multidisciplinary Journal*, 6 (4), January 2017. Available from <http://oldror.lbp.world/UploadedData/5107.pdf> [accessed 14 June 2021].
- Nastase, S. A. et al. (2019) Measuring shared responses across subjects using intersubject correlation, *Social Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience*, 14(6), June 2019, pp 667–685. Available from <https://doi.org/10.1093/scan/nsz037> [accessed 24 April 2021].
- Newman, M. (2005) *Socialism: a very short introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Ngcoya, M. (2009) *Ubuntu: globalization, accommodation, and contestation in South Africa*. PhD diss., Faculty of the School of International Service, American University. Available from <https://auislandora.wrlc.org/islandora/object/thesesdissertations%3A6162/datastream/PDF/view> [accessed 10 March 2021].
- Noica, C. (1996) *Sentimentul romanesc al fiintei*. Bucuresti: Humanitas.
- Nowak, M. A. (2011) *SuperCooperators: altruism, evolution and why we need each other to succeed*. New York: Free Press.
- Nowak, M. A. and Coakley, S. (2013) *Evolution, games, and God: the principle of cooperation*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- OECD. (2020) *Tourism trends and policies*. Available from <https://www.oecd.org/cfe/tourism/oecd-tourism-trends-and-policies-20767773.htm> [accessed 3 March 2021].
- Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner, India. (2011) *Population census 2011: town and villages directory*. Available from <https://censusindia.gov.in/nada/index.php/catalog/42648> [accessed 14 June 2021].
- O'Keefe, R. (2004) World cultural heritage: obligations to the international community as a whole? *International and Comparative Law Quarterly*, 53(1), pp.189-209. Available from <https://doi:10.1093/iclq/53.1.189> [accessed 20 May 2021].
- Olin Wright, E. (2010) *Envisioning real utopias*. New York: Verso.
- Olson, M. (1971) *The logic of collective action: public goods and the theory of groups*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

- Owen, R. and Claeys, G. (2007) *A new view of society and other writings*. London: Penguin Books.
- Ostrom, T. L. E. (2015) *Governing the commons*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Oxford advanced learner's dictionary of current English*. (2020) Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Pavone, V. (2007) From intergovernmental to global: UNESCO's Response to globalization. *Review of International Organizations*, 2 (1), pp. 77-95.
- Peacock, A. and Willgerodt, H. (eds.) (1989) *Germany's social market economy: origins and evolution*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Pecchi, L. and Piga, G. (2008) *Revisiting Keynes: economic possibilities for our grandchildren*. Cambridge: The MIT Press.
- Perzanowski, A. and Schultz, J. (2016) *The end of ownership: personal property in the digital economy*. Cambridge: The MIT Press.
- Piketty, T. (2017) *Capital in the twenty-first century*. Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.
- Piketty, T. (2020) *Capital and ideology*. Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.
- Pine, B. J., & Gilmore, J. H. (2011) *The experience economy*. Boston: Harvard Business Review Press.
- Pinker, S. (1997) *How the mind works*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.
- Pinker, S. (2002) *The blank slate: the modern denial of human nature*. New York: Viking Press
- Polanyi, K. (2001) *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- PricewaterhouseCoopers. (2015a) *Sharing or paring? Growth of the sharing economy*. Available from [www.pwc.com/hu/en/kiadvanyok/assets/pdf/sharing-economy-en.pdf](http://www.pwc.com/hu/en/kiadvanyok/assets/pdf/sharing-economy-en.pdf) [accessed 12 September 2021].
- PricewaterhouseCoopers (2015b) *Consumer intelligence series: The sharing economy*. Available from [www.pwc.com/us/en/technology/publications/assets/pwc-consumer-intelligence-series-the-sharing-economy.pdf](http://www.pwc.com/us/en/technology/publications/assets/pwc-consumer-intelligence-series-the-sharing-economy.pdf) [accessed 12 September 2021].
- Princen, T., Maniates, M. F. and Conca, K. (2002) *Confronting consumption*. Cambridge: The MIT Press.
- Putman, R. D. (2000) *Bowling alone - the collapse and revival of American community*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Rahe, P. A. (2005) *Machiavelli's liberal republican legacy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Rand, A. (1964) *The virtue of selfishness*. New York: Signet.

- Ravitch, S. M., & Riggan, M. (2017) *Reason and rigor: how conceptual frameworks guide research*. Los Angeles: SAGE.
- Rifkin, J. (2001) *The age of access: the new culture of hypercapitalism, where all of life is a paid-for experience*. New York: J.P. Tarcher/Putnam.
- Rifkin, J. (2015) *The zero marginal cost society: the internet of things, the collaborative commons, and the eclipse of capitalism*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Rizzolatti, G., and Sinigaglia, C. (2008) *Mirrors in the brain: how our minds share actions, emotions, and experience*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Roemer, J. (1994) *A future for socialism*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Rose, C. M. (1994) *Property and persuasion: essays on the history, theory, and rhetoric of ownership*. Boulder: Westview.
- Rousseau, J.-J. (2002) *The social contract and the first and second discourses*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Russell, B. (2009) *ABC of relativity*. London: Routledge.
- Ryn C. G. (2003) *A common human ground: universality and particularity in a multicultural world*. Columbia: University of Missouri Press.
- Guvernul Romaniei (n.d.). *Serviciile administratiei locale pentru tine*. Available from <https://salt.gov.ro/> [accessed 4 June 2021].
- Sandel, M. (2009) *Justice*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
- Sandel, M. (2013) *What money can't buy. The moral limits of markets*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
- Sandel, M. (2021) *The tyranny of merit*. London: Penguin Books.
- Sathyamurthy, T. V. (1964) *The politics of international cooperation*. Geneva: Librairie Droz.
- Saukko, P. (2018) Methodologies for cultural and social studies in an age of new technologies. In N. K. Denzin and Y. S. Lincoln (eds.). *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research*. Los Angeles: SAGE.
- Schor, J. (2010) *Plenitude: the new economics of true wealth*. New York: Penguin Books.
- Schor, J. (2021) *After the gig: how the sharing economy got hijacked and how to win it back*. Oakland, California: University of California Press.
- Schumpeter, J. (1994) *Capitalism, socialism and democracy*. London: Routledge.
- Seabright, P. (2010) *The company of strangers: a natural history of economic life*. Princeton: Princeton University Press

- Seelig, C. (1956) *Albert Einstein: a documentary biography*. London: Staples Press.
- Selin, H. and Kalland, A. (2010) *Nature across cultures: views of nature and the environment in non-western cultures*. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers.
- Sennett, R. (2012) *Together: the rituals, pleasures, and politics of cooperation*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Sennett, R. (2017) *The fall of public man*. New York: W.W. Norton.
- Seung, S. (2013) *Connectome: how the brain's wiring makes us who we are*. London: Penguin Books.
- Shalabi, A.W. (1993) *Islam - religion of life*. Cairo: Shorouk Press.
- Slee, T. (2015) *What's yours is mine: against the sharing economy*. New York: OR Books.
- Smith, A. D. (2010) *Nationalism: theory, ideology, history*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Smith, A. (1994) *An inquiry into the nature and causes of the wealth of nations*. New York: The Modern Library.
- Smith, A., & Hanley, R. P. (2009) *The theory of moral sentiments*. New York: Penguin Books.
- Smith, L. (2006) *The uses of heritage*. London: Routledge.
- Soros, G. (1998) *The crisis of global capitalism*. New York: Public Affairs.
- Springborg, P. (2007) *The Cambridge companion to Hobbes's Leviathan*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Srnicek, N. (2020) *Platform capitalism*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Stanford University (n.d.) *ENCODE project*. Available from [www.encodeproject.org](http://www.encodeproject.org) [accessed 25 September 2021].
- Stein, J. (2013) The me me me generation. *TIME*, 20 May 2013. Available from <https://time.com/247/millennials-the-me-me-me-generation/> [accessed 20 April 2021].
- Stephany, A. (2015) *The business of sharing. Making it in the new sharing economy*. Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Sundararajan, A. (2016) *The sharing economy: the end of employment and the rise of crowd-based capitalism*. Cambridge: The MIT Press.
- Superbenjamin (n.d.) *India map administrative units* (CC BY-SA 4.0). Available from <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=57125449> [accessed 10 April 2022].
- Surowiecki, J. (2011) *The wisdom of crowds*. New York: Anchor Books.
- Tagore, R. (2004) *Selected Essays*. New Delhi: Rupa & Co.



- Tanakh, the Holy Scriptures*. (1985) Philadelphia and Jerusalem: The Jewish Publication Society.
- Teilhard de Chardin, P. (2001) *The phenomenon of man*. Perennial Library.
- Tesla, N. (1892) Experiments with alternate currents of high potential and high frequency. In T. Commerford Martin. *The Inventions, Researches and Writings of Nikola Tesla*. New York: McIlroy and Emmet.
- Tesla, N. (2019) *Problem of increasing human energy: with special reference to the harnessing of the sun's energy*. New York: Cosimo Classics.
- Thatcher, M. (1987) Interview for Woman's Own (No such thing as society). *Margaret Thatcher Foundation: speeches, interviews and other statements*. Available from [www.margaretthatcher.org/document/106689](http://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/106689) [accessed 4 July 2021].
- The Economist. (2013) *The rise of the sharing economy: peer-to-peer rental*. Available from <http://www.economist.com/news/leaders/21573104-internet-everything-hire-rise-sharing-economy> [accessed 25 September 2021].
- Tomasello, M. (2016) *A natural history of human morality*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Trentmann, F. (2016) *Empire of things: how we became a world of consumers, from the fifteenth century to the twenty-first*. London: Allen Lane.
- Tuminez, A. S. (2000). *Russian nationalism since 1856: ideology and the making of foreign policy*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Uday, S. (2010) *Tibers of Uttara Kannada – the Halakki tribe*. Available from <https://budahonnavar.blogspot.com/2010/08/tribes-of-uttara-kannada.html> [accessed 23 June 2021].
- UNESCO. (1972) *Convention concerning the protection of the world cultural and natural heritage*. Paris: UNESCO. Available from <https://whc.unesco.org/en/conventiontext/> [accessed 12 February 2021].
- United Nations. (1948) *UN Declaration of Human Rights*. Paris: United Nations. Available from [www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights](http://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights) [accessed 4 November 2021].
- UNWTO. (2022) *World Tourism Barometer*. Available from [https://webunwto.s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/2022-03/UNWTO\\_Barom22\\_02\\_March\\_excerpt-1.pdf?U1d1hw2v5Ga4TSml0KQRNbFKpr6mNygA](https://webunwto.s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/2022-03/UNWTO_Barom22_02_March_excerpt-1.pdf?U1d1hw2v5Ga4TSml0KQRNbFKpr6mNygA) [accessed: 30 March 2022].
- Veblen, T. (2007). *The theory of the leisure class*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Venning, N. (2011) The attraction of Venice endures for foreigners. *The New York Times*, 15 April 2011. Available from [www.nytimes.com/2011/04/15/greathomesanddestinations/15iht-revenice15.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2011/04/15/greathomesanddestinations/15iht-revenice15.html) [accessed 18 September 2021].

- Verhaeghe, P. (2016) *What about me? The struggle for identity in a market-based society*. Brunswick: Scribe Publications.
- Vogel, Ezra F. (2013) *Deng Xiaoping and the transformation of China*. Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.
- von Hayek, F. A. (1948) *Individualism and economic order*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Walker C. (1993) Beyond reason: The nature of the ethnonational bond. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 16:3, pp. 373-389. Available from <https://10.1080/01419870.1993.9993788> [accessed 24 April 2021].
- Wallerstein, E. (2006) *European universalism: the rhetoric of power*. New York: The New Press.
- Wallerstein, et al. (2013) *Does capitalism have a future?* Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Walsh, B. (2011). Today's smart choice: don't own, share. *TIME*, 17 March 2011. Available from [http://content.time.com/time/specials/packages/article/0,28804,2059521\\_2059717\\_2059710,00.html](http://content.time.com/time/specials/packages/article/0,28804,2059521_2059717_2059710,00.html) [accessed 16 October 2021].
- Watts, R. and Thomson, J. (2022) Investing in the shared economy. *Forbes*, 25 February 2022. Available from [www.forbes.com/sites/randywatts/2022/02/25/investing-in-the-shared-economy/?sh=667b17c57af5](http://www.forbes.com/sites/randywatts/2022/02/25/investing-in-the-shared-economy/?sh=667b17c57af5) [accessed 16 March 2022].
- Weber, M. (2001) *The Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism*. London: Routledge.
- Weber, M., Owen, D. and Strong, T. B. (eds.) (2004) *The vocation lectures: science as a vocation, politics as a vocation*. Cambridge: Hackett.
- Wilkinson, P. (2009) *Myths and legends: an illustrated guide to their origins and meanings*. London: DK Publishing.
- Wilson, D. S. (2015) *Does altruism exist? Culture, genes, and the welfare of others*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Wilson, D. S. (2020) *This view of life: completing the Darwinian revolution*. New York: Vintage Books.
- World Bank (2022) *World Bank database*. Available from <https://data.worldbank.org/> [accessed 12 January 2022].
- World Economic Forum (n.d.). *World Economic Forum*. Available from [www.weforum.org](http://www.weforum.org) [accessed 8 March 2022].
- World Heritage Centre (n.d.a). *Who owns a site once it's inscribed on the World Heritage List?* Paris: World Heritage Centre. Available from <https://whc.unesco.org/en/faq/23> [accessed 15 March 2022].

World Heritage Centre (n.d.b). *World Heritage policy compendium: policies regarding the credibility of the World Heritage List*. Paris: World Heritage Centre. Available from: [https://whc.unesco.org/en/compendium/?action=theme&cid\\_theme=2](https://whc.unesco.org/en/compendium/?action=theme&cid_theme=2) [accessed 21 January 2021].

WTTC. (2021) *Trending in travel*. Available from [https://wttc.org/Portals/0/Documents/Reports/2021/Trending\\_In\\_Travel-Emerging\\_Consumer\\_Trends-231121.pdf?ver=2021-11-23-101035-507](https://wttc.org/Portals/0/Documents/Reports/2021/Trending_In_Travel-Emerging_Consumer_Trends-231121.pdf?ver=2021-11-23-101035-507) [accessed: 13 March 2022].

Young, C. (1979) *The politics of cultural pluralism*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.

Yunus, M., and Weber, K. (2010) *Building social business: the new kind of capitalism that serves humanity's most pressing needs*. New York, Public Affairs.

Zahidi, S. (2022) Societies must work together to overcome long-term global risks. *World Economic Forum*, 18 January 2022. Available from [www.weforum.org/agenda/2022/01/world-economic-forum-long-term-global-risks-work-together](http://www.weforum.org/agenda/2022/01/world-economic-forum-long-term-global-risks-work-together) [accessed: 13 March 2022].

