Better Deciding Together: Citizens' Trust in Transport and Tourism Public Administration Policies

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Abstract. The objective of this manuscript is to understand whether the policies regarding tourism and transport affect positively citizens 'trust in local institutions. A survey was employed to citizens of the metropolitan area of Naples (in Italy), aiming at capturing citizens' perceptions with respect to the positive and negative impacts concerning tourism and transport related policies and the level of their engagement in the institutions 'decisions for a sustainable development.

Keywords: Trust · Stakeholders Engagement · Transport system · Tourism market · Sustainability

1 Introduction

Trust is an important topic in contemporary society and it is essential for social, political, and community relations [1]. Having trust in government initiatives gives legitimacy and authority in decision-making and it is extremely important for good governance, sustainability of the system and democratic consolidation [2, 3]. Therefore, maintaining citizens' trust is an important political objective of any government. Traditionally, it was conceived in a one-to-many relationship rather than in a co-creating process of interaction between politicians and citizens, "shaped" by an exchange of opinions, reciprocal understanding and perceptions. A new vision of trust is born, which is no longer a pre-condition but rather the result of trustworthy behaviors by the involved parties [4, 5]. Indeed, in order to build trust, knowledge and reciprocal benefits from the relationship of the parties are very important [6]. Hall [7] defined trust a glue that holds communities and societies together, when it is absent then collective action is not achievable. Besides, this also means that trust is created when it brings the promised benefits. Empathy is a relevant issue dealt in the literature with reference to inter-cultural issues as well as in hospitality industry [8]. Specifically it refers to the action of being aware of problems, of understanding the needs and of sharing feelings, ideas and experiences.

Public Engagement (PE) or Stakeholders Engagement (SE) is a process which deals with the identification of stakeholder concerns, needs and values in the decision-making process [9]. It is a two-way communication process providing a mechanism for

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exchanging information and promoting stakeholder interaction with the formal decision-makers. The objective of engagement is to achieve a transparent decision-making process with inputs from stakeholders and their support of the decisions that are taken [10]. Some administrations pay little attention to stakeholder engagement, because politicians believe that they best represent stakeholder interests. This approach is known in the literature as Decide, Announce, Defend (DAD) syndrome [11]. The administration promoting the project Decides with its experts the action to be taken, only later when the choice has been made it Announces it to the public and finally it will Defend the choice from the criticisms. Involving stakeholders in the decision-making process is a rewarding experience, enhancing the decision-making process and the value of what is produced or implemented. Effective engagement can bring about better policy directions, improved local services, possibly new ways to initiate or plan for a particular situation and a better understanding of the local situation by technical experts and community members [12, 13].

Stakeholders can be classified into "primary" and "secondary". In general terms, primary stakeholders can be defined as those with a direct interest, either because they depend on it or they are directly involved in its exploitation in some way. Secondary stakeholders are those with a more indirect interest, such as those involved in institutions or agencies concerned with managing the resource or those who depend, at least partially, on wealth or business generated by the resource [14]. Examples of primary stakeholders are, in transportation planning, institutions/authorities directly responsible for providing transportation services, economic operators (e.g. shop owners), transport operators and transport users; while local communities and unions or business associations belong to the secondary stakeholders group.

Gardner et al. [15] proposed a classification of stakeholders based on two levels of interests and two levels of power (see Fig. 1) and suggested different engagement for the various groups.

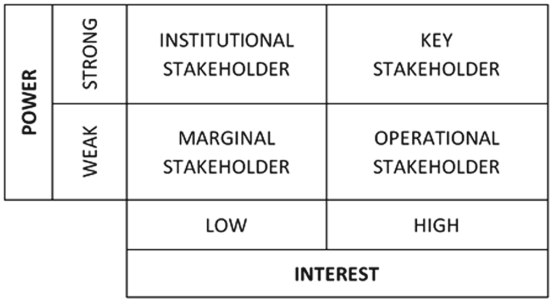

Fig. 1. Stakeholders identification: interest/power matrix. Source: *Gardner et al. (1986)*

It is necessary to keep institutional stakeholders (strong power and low interest) informed. Key stakeholders (strong power and high interest) are the most demanding ones (e.g. mayors or elected officials of areas impacted by projects, unions, etc.) as they have potential for veto rights and should be not only informed but also involved

(consulted) on various options and their effects. The marginal stakeholders (weak power and low interest) are the ones requiring the least effort. The last group of operational stakeholders (weak power and high interest) (e.g. transport operators, citizens directly affected, travelers, etc.) could be involved in the process in the listening and information dissemination phases with the appropriate tools as they have the potential to become key stakeholders by empowering themselves, or by being empowered as part of the process management strategy. The objective of this manuscript is to understand whether the policies regarding tourism and transport affect positively citizens 'trust in local institutions. A survey was employed to the citizens of the metropolitan area of Naples (in Italy), aiming at capturing citizens' perceptions with respect to the positive and negative impacts concerning tourism and transport related policies and the level of their engagement in the institutions 'decisions for a sustainable development.

The paper is organized as follows. In Sect. 2 the survey is described. In Sect. 3 the results have been reported and Sect. 4 deals with the conclusions and further perspectives.

2 The Survey

A questionnaire was distributed to the citizens in Campania region, in the South of Italy, with the aim of highlighting the link between the development of tourism and the transport systems policies and the trust that citizens place in the initiatives of the institutions. For all the questions submitted to respondents, a scale with partial semantic autonomy with 5 levels was used, from "I don't trust at all" to "I completely trust" for the first two sections; "In complete disagreement" to "completely agree" for the next four sections. The questionnaire was composed by 6 sections, in the first one it was asked the general level of trust in the municipality of Naples and Campania region administrations. These institutions are responsible for the planning and the developing of the transport and tourism systems initiatives. The second section dealt with the level of trust in the same institutions in the specific context of the transport system and the tourism market development policies. For example, it was asked the level of confidence that citizens placed in the ability of the administrations to do the interests of the community in relation to the development of tourism and transport policies. In the third and fourth sections, the questions asked were useful for evaluating the benefits and the costs related to the transport system and the tourism market policies in the city of Naples. Concerning the benefits, it was asked, for example, how much these two sectors fostered new job opportunities for the local population, how much the transport system could increase the quality of life and how much tourism could encourage investments in territorial development. Regarding the costs, an example of questions to citizens was how much the two sectors contributed to the increase of environmental pollution, how much the transport system could increase user's stress or how much tourism increased the prices of goods and services. In the remaining two sections of the questionnaire, the knowledge of the policies undertaken by the institutions, in the two sectors, and the level of impact perceived in the decisions by the respondents was considered. The number of questionnaires distributed was 1000 and only 463 were

received completed. They were submitted to citizens who were at least 18 years old. 51% of the respondents were male, women represented a slightly lower percentage (49%). The age distribution of the sample was as follows 18–24 years (28%), 25–34 years and 55–64 years (20% each), 45–54 years (17%), 35–44 years (10%) and more than 65 years (4%). The sample was on average educated with 94% of respondents with the secondary school, of which 47% of the respondents with at least a university education. The distribution by household income was as follows low income 55.8%, medium income 25.3% and high income 18.9%. 94% of the respondents lived in the metropolitan area of the city of Naples.

3 Results

The results consider as a positive answers "Neither trust them nor distrust them" to "Trust them completely" or "Neither agree nor disagree" to "Strongly agree". The answers to the questionnaire revealed that citizens had little trust in local governments and only 30% of the sample had trust in the municipal administration of Naples and 26% in the Campania region. Referring to the trust in the two sectors under consideration, in the tourism sector the percentage dropped to 27.5% for the municipal administration of Naples and to 23.9% for Campania region, while in the transport system the percentages were lower, i.e. 17.5% for the municipal administration of Naples and 20% for Campania region. The results revealed that men had higher trust in the municipal administration of Naples, while women more in the Campania region administration (see Fig. 2). Concerning the age, young people aged between 18–34 were those who showed less trust in the institutions, the 55–64 years old and those aged more than 65 were those who placed more trust both in the municipal administration of Naples and in the Campania region. Respondents with a low or high income level had less trust in the local administrations while those with a medium income level were the ones who trusted the most. As for the level of education, the results demonstrated that respondents with a master degree had higher trust in the two institutions considered and believed that they were able of doing the interests of the community, those who had the secondary school were those who had the highest trust but did not believe that these interventions met the interests of the community, the three-years graduated respondents were those who placed less trust in the two institutions. The results obtained are shown in the Tables 1 and 2.

Regarding the benefits for the transport system, 65.1% of the respondents believed that the transport system represented a source of job opportunities for the population, 74.2% of the respondents believed that a good transport system could increase the accessibility to the city, tourist attractions and public and private services. About 80% of the respondents believed that interventions in transport system could improve the perception of the quality of life and could also fostered the development of the city as a tourist destination (80% and 83.7% respectively). Within the tourism sector, 85% of the respondents thought that tourism could be a source of job opportunities for the population and local businesses; 80.5% of the respondents declared that tourism could encourage public investment in territorial development, while 83% of them believed

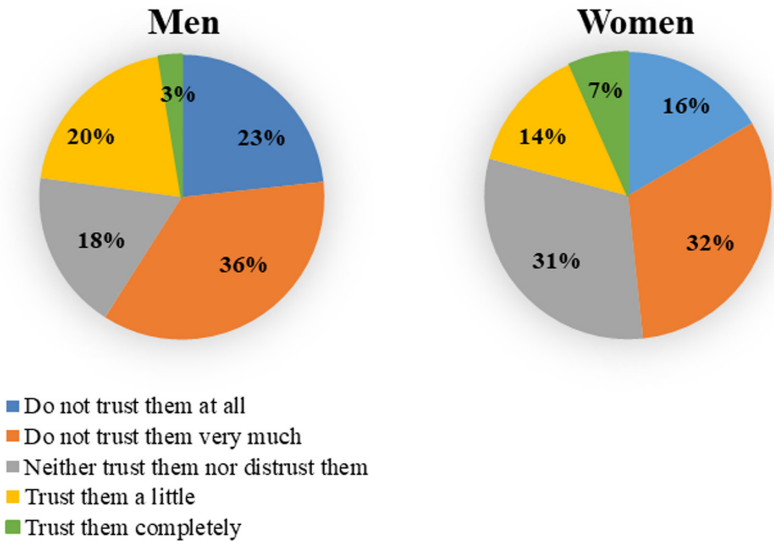

Fig. 2. Trust of men and women in Campania region

that tourism could promote the development of other sectors connected to it, fostering the renewal of sites of interest and cultural heritage.

Concerning the costs deriving from interventions in the transport system, a percentage of respondents believed that it could bring costs for the population in terms of an increase in accident (22.9%), an increase in stress (46.1%) and increase in environmental pollution (42.8%). For the development of tourism policies, 76% of the respondents believed that it could help to preserve the cultural identity of the community. A low number of respondents believed that tourism could bring costs for the population in terms of rising prices of the goods and services (30.7%), increasing traffic (27%), increasing the problem of waste (25.3%) and increasing the environmental pollution (26.7%). A higher percentage of women believed that the development of transport and tourism policies could bring benefits to the local communities, while men believed that these two sectors could increase environmental pollution and that tourism could increase the prices of goods and services. The age groups between 25–34 years and 35–44 years were the ones that most perceived the benefits but also the costs brought by the transport system and the tourism sector. Respondents with a higher level of education believed more in the benefits that these two sectors could bring while those with a low level of education believed that the costs due to the development of the transport system and the tourism sector were high (see Fig. 3). Table 3 shows the impacts of the transport and tourism system policies, Tables 4 and 5 report the benefits and costs that the transport system and the tourism sector could bring.

Table 1. Trust in the municipal administration of the city of Naples

	Trust in general	Transport		Tourism	
		Trust in the development of transport system	Trust in doing the interests of the community	Trust in the development of the tourism sector	Trust in doing the interests of the community
Women	45%	39%	41%	67%	60%
Men	45%	45%	45%	64%	57%
18–24 years	36%	25%	26%	59%	48%
25–34 years	38%	39%	39%	55%	54%
35–44 years	49%	59%	53%	73%	59%
45–54 years	39%	39%	40%	60%	55%
55–64 years	60%	56%	60%	70%	66%
>65 years	53%	53%	74%	79%	63%
Low income	44%	40%	44%	62%	53%
Medium income	53%	48%	49%	69%	64%
High income	42%	41%	40%	69%	65%
Master degree	62%	70%	66%	70%	65%
Three-years degree	52%	61%	48%	61%	58%
High school diploma	57%	64%	60%	64%	56%
Secondary school	48%	67%	44%	67%	48%

As for the development of policies on tourism and the transport system and the impacts they had in the city of Naples, only 23% of the respondents were aware of them. Women believed they knew a little more than men, the age groups with the highest percentage were those aged between 25–34 years for the transport system and 35–44 years for the tourism sector. The age groups with less knowledge were, for the transport sector, the respondents aged between 18–24 years, 35–44 years and more than 65 years. For the tourism sector, instead, the initiatives were less known for respondents aged between 25–34 years, while the effects produced by tourism in the city of Naples were less known to people aged more than 65 (see Fig. 4).

Table 2. Trust in Campania region

	Trust in general	Transport		Tourism	
		Trust in the development of transport system	Trust in doing the interests of the community	Trust in the development of the tourism sector	Trust in doing the interests of the community
Women	50%	45%	40%	69%	62%
Men	40%	51%	46%	57%	55%
18–24 years	42%	37%	36%	60%	54%
25–34 years	35%	41%	41%	58%	50%
35–44 years	53%	57%	51%	61%	63%
45–54 years	39%	49%	40%	58%	60%
55–64 years	57%	60%	52%	71%	64%
>65 years	32%	63%	58%	53%	53%
Low income	42%	49%	40%	61%	55%
Medium income	47%	50%	50%	69%	65%
High income	48%	47%	45%	64%	59%
Master degree	61%	61%	59%	61%	65%
Three-years degree	46%	58%	44%	58%	55%
High school diploma	55%	66%	52%	66%	57%
Secondary school	52%	70%	41%	70%	59%

Respondents with a three-years degree declared that they were aware of the initiatives proposed more than those with a master degree and a secondary school diploma, the only exception was the knowledge of the effects of transport policies which was higher for those interviewed with a secondary school diploma. Concerning the income, for the transport system it was the high-income group which represented the highest percentage, while for the tourism sector the initiatives were better known by citizens with low income. On the contrary, the effects were better known to people with a medium income. Table 6 shows the results.

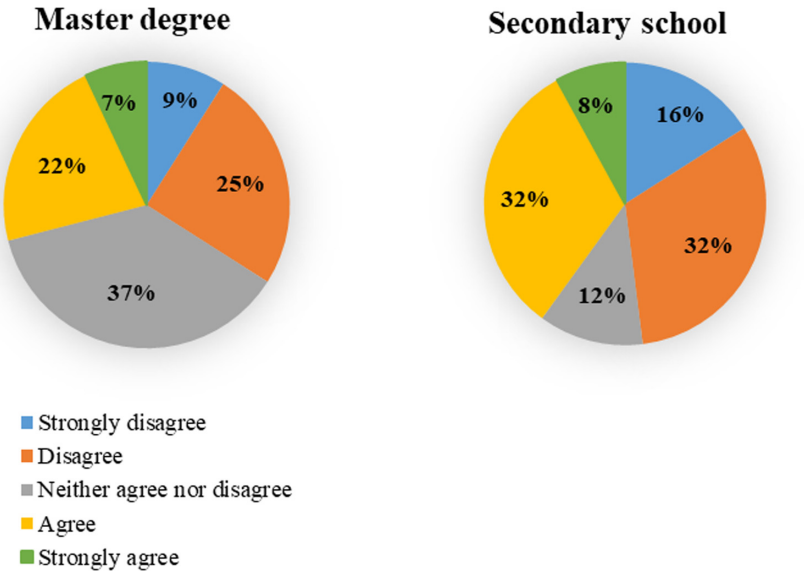

Fig. 3. Perception according to the level of education of how much the policies undertaken in the two sectors increase job opportunities

Finally, only a very small percentage of respondents (5%) believed they had the power of contributing to the decisions concerning the tourism and transport sectors. Men believed they had more influence than women and in particular the age group, that was considered mostly influential, was that of 55–64 years. High-income (see Fig. 5) and low-educated people believed they had more influence on planning decisions. However, the percentages remained very low as shown in the Table 7. Only 46% of the respondents would have been interested in being involved in the planning process.

Summarizing the results explained above, it appears that the sample interviewed has little faith in the policies adopted by local institutions regarding the transport system, this could be a consequence of the low efficiency of public transport in the metropolitan area of Naples. The level of trust in tourism policies, on the other hand, is higher and this can be linked to the increase in tourists that has taken place in the Campania region in the recent years, resulting in many benefits, one of which is the greater economic well-being of workers in the sector.

The population believes that an efficient transport system can bring significant benefits for citizens such as new job opportunities, an increase in the quality of life and greater attraction for tourists. Concerning tourism, it is viewed positively. Indeed most of the respondents believe that it brings greater attention towards the sites of interest and cultural heritage and the development of the sectors connected to it as well as preserving the cultural identity of the city.

Table 3. Impacts of the development of transport and tourism

	Transport			Tourism		
	Source of job opportunities	Creation of opportunities for business	Increase of environmental pollution	Source of job opportunities	Creation of opportunities for business	Increase of environmental pollution
Women	84%	87%	70%	95%	97%	46%
Men	80%	84%	71%	92%	93%	51%
18–24 years	75%	75%	56%	84%	84%	37%
25–34 years	76%	82%	75%	96%	98%	49%
35–44 years	92%	96%	76%	94%	92%	63%
45–54 years	84%	84%	71%	88%	92%	44%
55–64 years	82%	88%	73%	94%	96%	57%
>65 years	84%	84%	63%	95%	84%	42%
Low income	82%	87%	68%	93%	94%	48%
Medium income	84%	84%	69%	98%	98%	45%
High income	83%	84%	77%	94%	94%	55%
Master degree	65%	65%	55%	97%	97%	52%
Three-years degree	58%	55%	58%	94%	95%	52%
High school diploma	56%	57%	52%	92%	94%	44%
Secondary school	48%	59%	56%	93%	96%	63%

The perception of the costs that the two sectors entail is low, men and those with a low level of education are those who have a greater negative perspective. A small percentage of respondents believe that the transport system leads to an increase in road accidents and around 40% consider it a source of stress and environmental pollution. For the tourism sector, few respondents believe that it is the cause of an increase in the prices of goods and services, an increase in traffic and pollution.

Table 4. Benefits and costs of the transport system

	Transport							
	Benefits					Costs		
	More accessibility to services	More accessibility to tourist attractions	Increase of accessibility of the city	Quality of life	Development of the city as a tourist destination	Increase in accidents	Social differences	User stress
Women	90%	90%	94%	93%	95%	45%	57%	65%
Men	85%	90%	90%	89%	93%	44%	57%	63%
18–24 years	78%	79%	84%	78%	80%	26%	46%	48%
25–34 years	86%	87%	90%	93%	95%	42%	53%	74%
35–44 years	88%	92%	92%	86%	96%	63%	69%	69%
45–54 years	84%	91%	87%	92%	90%	51%	58%	64%
55–64 years	93%	97%	93%	92%	99%	57%	60%	63%
>65 years	89%	84%	89%	89%	100%	26%	47%	47%
Low income	90%	92%	93%	90%	93%	43%	58%	63%
Medium income	83%	87%	91%	89%	96%	46%	60%	67%
High income	88%	90%	89%	93%	96%	48%	54%	61%
Master degree	65%	59%	97%	97%	95%	97%	92%	97%
Three-years degree	57%	52%	95%	94%	94%	96%	92%	94%
High school diploma	60%	59%	94%	92%	91%	92%	93%	94%
Secondary school	56%	59%	96%	93%	96%	93%	89%	89%

The knowledge of the policies undertaken in the two sectors is low, few citizens believe that they know the initiatives in the two areas. Respondents with the age over 65 years are the least informed regarding both the transport system and tourism. As for the income, the low-income segment is more informed about tourism policies while the high-income segment is more informed about transport policies. This result is unexpected as it is a common idea that the transport system is more used by low-income people while high-income people are more likely to travel.

Table 5. Benefits and costs of the tourism sector

	Tourism						
	Benefits				Costs		
	Increase of investment in land development	Encouragement in improvements in the offer of sites of interest	Help to preserve cultural identity	Improvement in the development of sectors connected	Increase of traffic problems	Increase of the waste problem	Increase of prices of goods and services
Women	95%	96%	94%	95%	56%	46%	59%
Men	91%	91%	90%	93%	52%	53%	63%
18–24 years	83%	85%	83%	86%	49%	40%	51%
25–34 years	96%	95%	94%	96%	60%	55%	66%
35–44 years	92%	92%	92%	92%	61%	53%	76%
45–54 years	94%	95%	90%	91%	44%	44%	53%
55–64 years	91%	91%	91%	96%	57%	52%	61%
>65 years	79%	89%	84%	74%	37%	42%	53%
Low income	94%	93%	93%	94%	52%	45%	59%
Medium income	95%	95%	90%	95%	56%	54%	68%
High income	89%	94%	92%	94%	54%	54%	59%
Master degree	95%	97%	92%	97%	55%	53%	61%
Three-years degree	94%	96%	92%	94%	58%	58%	68%
High school diploma	91%	92%	93%	94%	52%	44%	54%
Secondary school	96%	93%	89%	89%	56%	48%	89%

Only a very small percentage (5%) of respondents are aware that they can participate in the decision-making process of both sectors. Higher-income people believe that they can influence decisions as well as those with a low level of education, but this is unusual as it is education that provides greater knowledge and awareness of their role in public administration decision-making processes. The results of the questionnaire show that less than half of the interviewees would still be interested in participating in the decision-making processes of the two sectors analyzed.

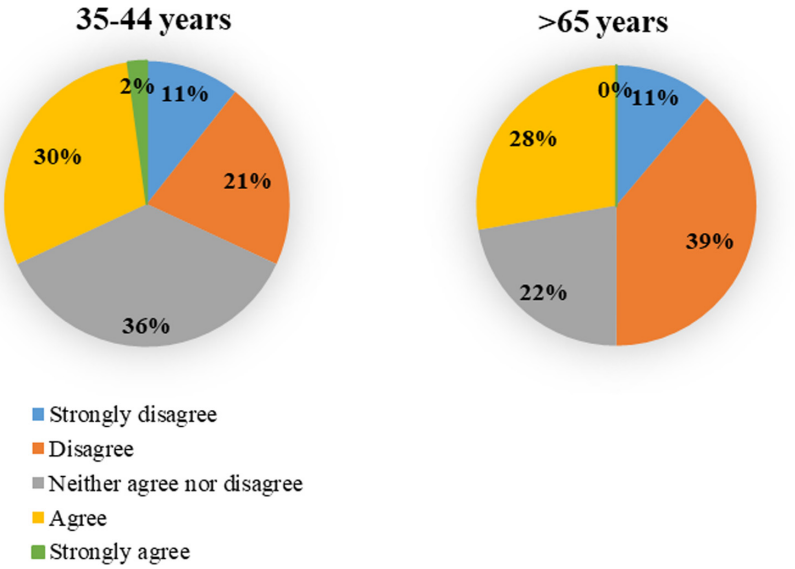

Fig. 4. Knowledge based on the age groups of the effects of tourism in the city of Naples

Table 6. Knowledge of development policies

	Transport		Tourism	
	Knowledge of development initiatives	Knowledge of the effects of transport on the city	Knowledge of development initiatives	Knowledge of the effects of tourism on the city
Women	39%	45%	55%	66%
Men	37%	52%	48%	57%
18–24 years	28%	44%	52%	61%
25–34 years	42%	60%	40%	58%
35–44 years	31%	33%	59%	65%
45–54 years	42%	42%	56%	55%
55–64 years	41%	47%	47%	59%
>65 years	37%	37%	58%	47%
Low income	35%	44%	56%	60%
Medium income	40%	48%	44%	63%
High income	43%	57%	49%	60%

(*continued*)

Table 6. (*continued*)

	Transport		Tourism	
	Knowledge of development initiatives	Knowledge of the effects of transport on the city	Knowledge of development initiatives	Knowledge of the effects of tourism on the city
Master degree	53%	61%	47%	58%
Three-years degree	58%	68%	58%	64%
High school diploma	44%	54%	55%	63%
Secondary school	48%	89%	30%	52%

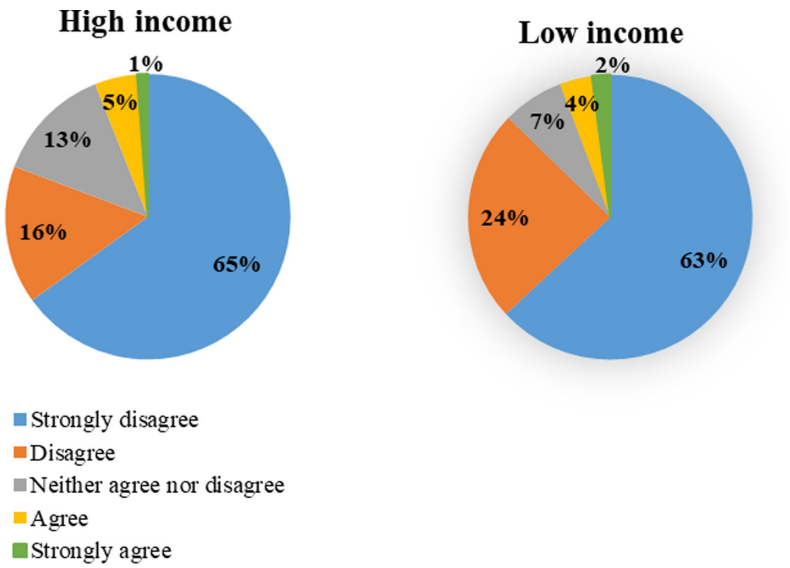

Fig. 5. Perception of the opportunity to participate directly in the planning and development decisions of the transport system based on the income

Table 7. Perception of influence on the planning process

	Transport		Tourism	
	Influence on decisions	Opportunity to participate in planning	Influence on decisions	Opportunity to participate in planning
Women	15%	11%	15%	14%
Men	15%	17%	19%	16%
18–24 years	17%	12%	11%	11%
25–34 years	14%	17%	22%	15%
35–44 years	6%	4%	14%	10%
45–54 years	17%	18%	19%	16%
55–64 years	18%	19%	23%	20%
>65 years	5%	11%	5%	16%
Low income	15%	13%	19%	14%
Medium income	13%	14%	12%	14%
High income	17%	19%	16%	16%
Master degree	50%	58%	14%	11%
Three-years degree	51%	64%	17%	18%
High school diploma	54%	63%	18%	15%
Secondary school	56%	52%	26%	19%

4 Conclusions and Further Perspectives

The results obtained show that citizens' trust in the municipal administration of Naples and the Campania region is greater in relation to the policies undertaken in the tourism sector and the transport system. These two institutions should develop policies and interventions that are well accepted by the population in order to increase the trust that citizens place in them. On the other hand, the lack of trust in the transport and tourism contexts can compromise the trust that citizens place in local governments and lead to a lack of support for the development policies of the transport system and the tourism market. This is because public trust influences citizens' political attitudes and judgments on the acceptability of development projects [16, 17]. Making the decision-making process more accessible and transparent to citizens involves an increase in the knowledge of the two sectors and of the developed policies and this makes the population favorably disposed towards the institutions, moreover the greater the knowledge of the development policies of the two sectors by the residents and the greater the confidence to be able to take part in their development. Residents with greater power in the transport system and in the tourism market looked at development in a positive way. A good development of the transport system and of the tourism market also leads to a better perception of the positive impacts produced by these two sectors and

decreases even more the costs that the population believes they involve. For this reason, it is important that local government should be more efficient in promoting initiatives for the development of the transport system and the tourism market.

Further perspectives would consider to carry out a new survey to obtain a larger sample size in order to make the sample more representative of the population. Furthermore, it would be important to have an homogeneity of the respondents 'categories in order not to invalidate the estimates.

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