The role of information in the emergency COVID 19 impacts and consequences on people behaviours.
An Italian survey
April 2020

Executive Summary [1]

Due to the global pandemic spreading in Europe since April 2020, it is of utmost importance to contribute to the debate on the emergency providing data and evidences that could help to understand how the virus is changing our life.

To support the reflection on the issue, T6 Ecosystems, partners of the SOMA Observatory[2] and funding member of the Aletheia Centre of Excellence[3], has set up a study. The study intends to analyse, understand and reflect on the impacts of the current emergency on how people get informed. In particular, it intends to investigate if and how people behaviour changed in relation to reliable and unreliable source of information.

To find some evidences, it has been applied a qualitative analysis. The qualitative analysis has been conducted through the administration of a questionnaire. The survey has been launched on March 31st and closed on April 16th and disseminated in Italian for an Italian audience. The total responses collected have been 1611. On the total of respondents, 63% are women and 37% are men. Looking at the geographical distribution, 40% of the participants are from Southern Italy and the islands, 33% from Centre of Italy and 27% from North of Italy. In terms of age, replies have been collected from minors of 18 years old to more than 80. Most of the respondents are in the ages within 36 and 65. We asked to select the education degree, most of the respondents selected the following options: master degree and high school.

Results show that people are informing themselves on the pandemic above all using official channels used by authoritative institutions and through broadcasters. Social media, even if appear among the used channel to be informed, are not the primary source of information on the pandemic. Results confirm that the most reliable source of information identified by the participants are the institutional sources of information and the information shared by the scientific community. The survey also asked if the current emergency has changed how respondents deal with information. Half of the respondents asserted that the emergency changed their relationship with the information to state how Covid-19 led them to be more aware about the importance of verified information.

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[2] SOMA (Social Observatory for Disinformation and Social Media Analysis) has been launched to provide support to a European community to jointly fight disinformation, This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 825469

[3] The ALETHEIA Centre of Excellence has been held in 2019 on the premises of the Luiss University as a joint effort of two SOMA partners: Luiss Data Lab and T6 Ecosystems. The mission, under the wider umbrella of the SOMA Observatory, is to create an Italian centre of excellence to promote research and knowledge exchange on issues related to information, professional correctness, the fight against misinformation and forced polarization in the media, on and offline

Introduction

Due to the global epidemic spreading in Europe, and in particular in Italy, since February 2020, it's of utmost importance to contribute to the debate on the understanding of the emergency collecting data and evidences that could help the impact it has on changing our life.

To support the reflection on the issue, T6 Ecosystems, partners of the SOMA Observatory and funding member of the Aletheia Centre of Excellence, set up a study aimed at analysing the role of the information sources in the emergency for COVID 19. The study aims at evaluating the impacts and consequences on people behaviours caused by information sources influence.

The analysis follows the work implemented in SOMA by T6 Ecosystems work on impact assessment of disinformation. The present survey has been conducted with the support of the Luiss Data Lab through the collaboration established within SOMA and Aletheia.

Scope of the analysis and preliminary results

Due to the Covid-19 emergency, T6 Ecosystems, with the support of the Luiss Data Lab, has launched a study addressed to analyse, understand and reflect on the impacts of the current emergency on how people get informed. In particular, we intend to investigate if and how pandemics changed the people behaviour in relation to reliable and unreliable source of information.

The questions driving the questionnaire are mainly the following: Is it possible that the recent pandemic has changed the way in which people inform themselves? If yes, how is this changed? In particular, what are the evidences on the importance of authoritative sources of information to be informed on the global epidemic, compared to other source of information (e.g social media)? Which is the impact of disinformation circulated on covid-19 on people behaviours and choices?

To answer these questions, we applied a qualitative analysis. The qualitative analysis investigates which are the impacts of epidemics on users' behaviours in news and information consumption.

The following paragraphs reports the method we use to run the analysis and to draw preliminary results.

The survey

The qualitative analysis has been conducted through the administration of a questionnaire. The reason why the questionnaire has been selected as preferred method to use is two-fold. First of all, because methods implying face-to-face contacts (e.g focus groups or interviews) were no possible due to the social distancing rules applied in that period. Second, the questionnaire has also been preferred to phone interviews or other tools because considering the situation in which

people are spending their time in isolation using digital devices and internet connection, online questionnaire seem to be more appropriate to match with users' preferred time, without imposing a time and a duration to reply to the questions.

The survey has been conducted using an online system for data collection making the survey available for any device capable of surfing the Internet. In line with the GDPR, no private or sensible data have been collected and the survey has been structured to be fully anonymous.

The survey contained 26 questions, most of them where structured as multiple choice or Likert scale. Out of the 26, four questions allowed to reply with open comments. The survey has been designed for people living or informing through Italian information channels. For this reason, it has been written in Italian[4].

The survey has been launched on March 31st and closed on April 16th. The survey has been widely disseminated. T6 Ecosystems and Luiss Data Lab have disseminated the survey using their social media accounts. Also, the SOMA Observatory official account has widely disseminated the news through its official accounts (Twitter and LinkedIn).

We are aware that the mode of administration used provides a sample that is not fully representative of the national sampling, even if all ages, sex and geographical distribution have been considered. However, for the research objectives, it has been an effective way to facilitate the broad dissemination of the survey questionnaire collecting replies in a short time due to the need to participate into the debate on Covid-19 providing some evidences.

The results

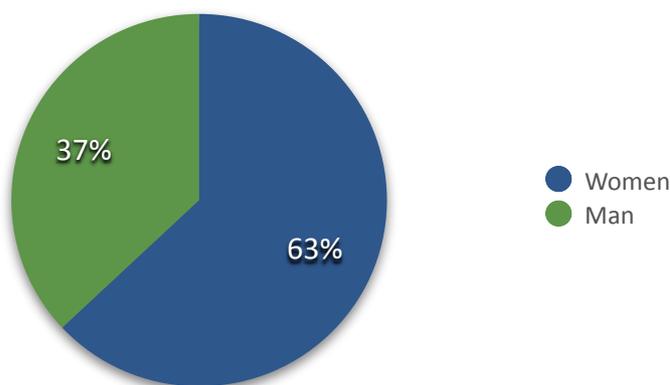The total responses collected have been 1611. On the total of respondents, 63% are women, 37% are men.

Fig.1: Gender

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[4] In the Annex it is available the original survey in Italian and its translation in English, elaborated by author of the questionnaire

Looking at the geographical distribution, 40% of the participants are from Southern Italy and the islands, 33% from Centre of Italy and 27% from North of Italy.
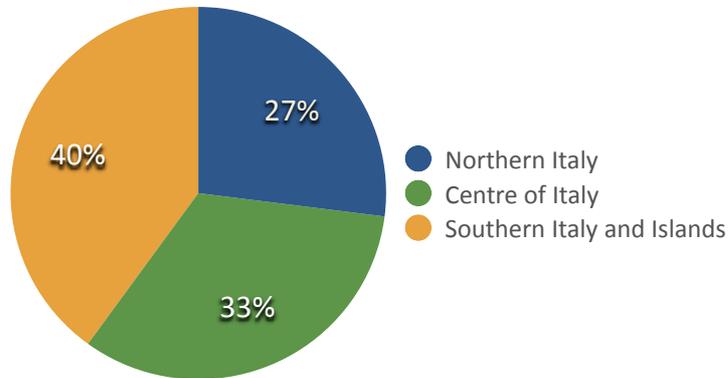

Fig.2: Geographical distribution

In terms of age, replies have been collected from minors of 18 years old to more than 80. Most of the respondents are in the ages within 36 and 65
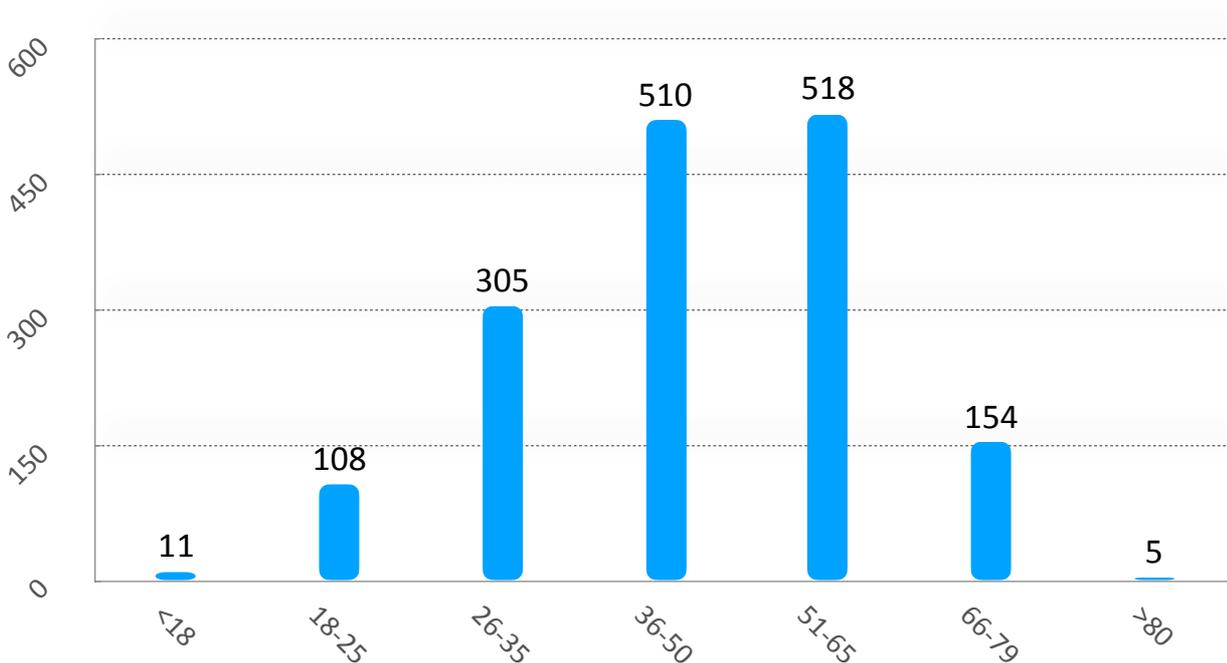

Fig.3: Age of the participants

We asked to select the education degree, replies are reported hereafter. Most of the respondents selected the options: Master degree and High school.
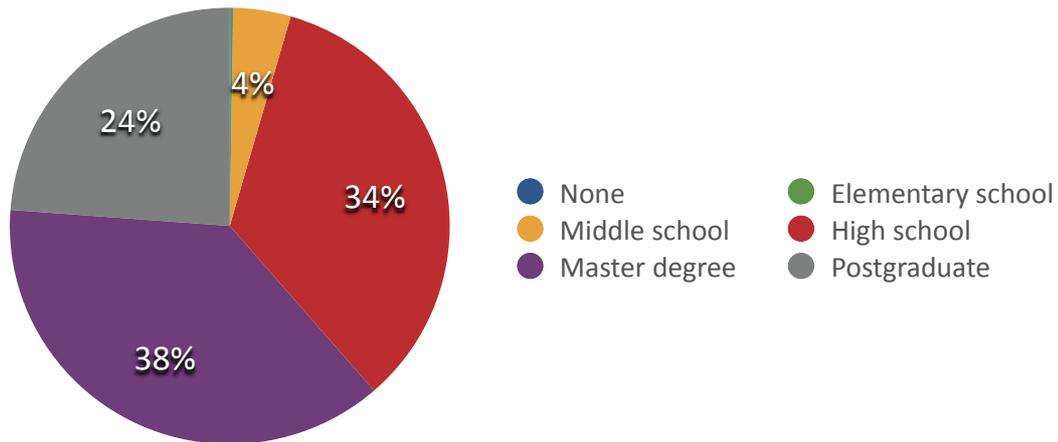
Fig 4: Education degree

Once collected basic information about the respondents, we started with focused questions on information.

We asked to the respondents to select which are the main source of information they use during the coronavirus emergency? The options provided in the survey are the following:

- Broadcasters
- Newspapers and print magazines
- Social media (Facebook, Twitter, Whatsapp)
- Official sources (Italian government, Civil Protection, Ministry of Health)

Respondents could select one option or express multiple preferences. We opted for this choice as it is widely known that most of the people use multiple channels of information and we do not intend to limit their self-expression. Indeed, 45% selected only one source of information, while the rest 55% express two up to four preferences. However, aggregating all replies from the total of 1611 participants, we collected 2978 preferences on the above-mentioned options. It is possible to say that more preferences have been collected by official sources (38%) and broadcasters (31%); then social media (20%) and, finally, newspapers (11%).
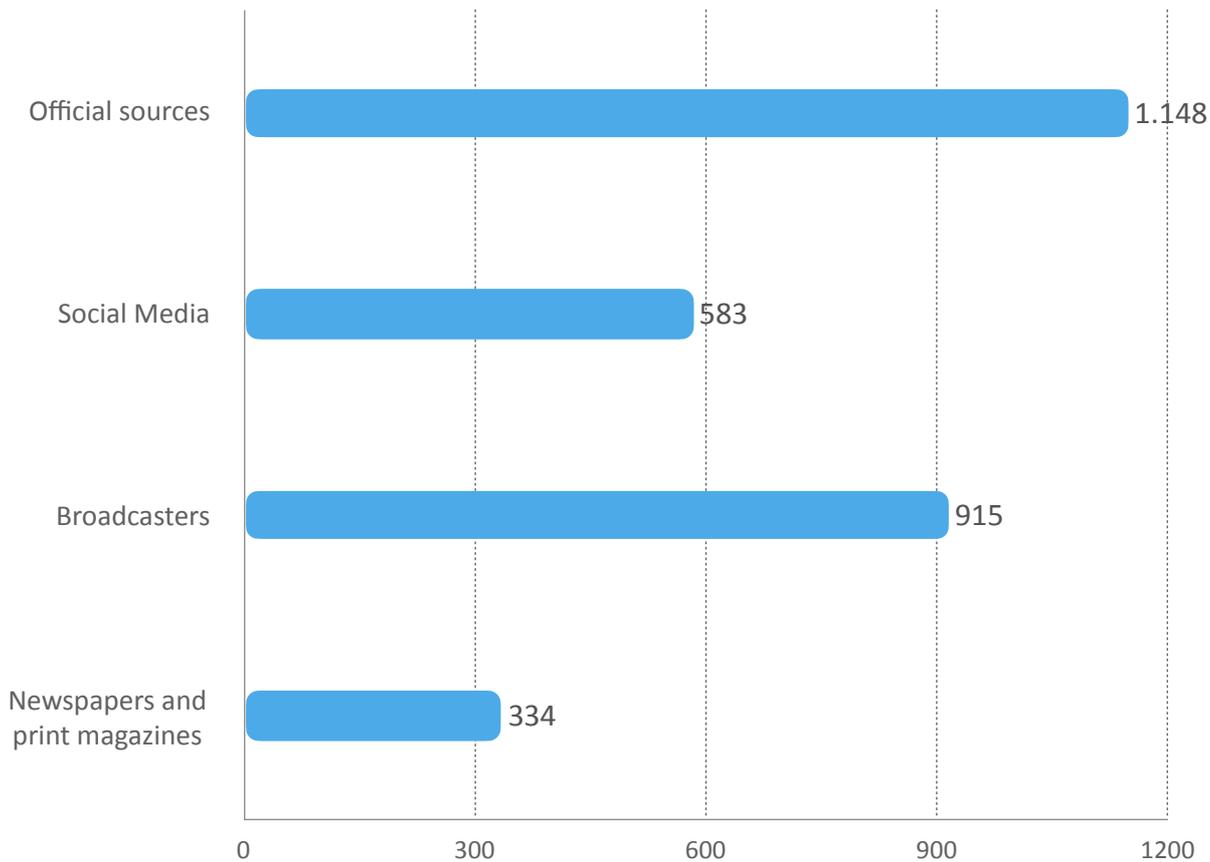
Fig.5: Most selected sources of information used by respondents

In addition we asked to express a preference on what is, in her/his opinion, the most reliable information channels during Covid-19 emergency. As in the previous case, respondents could select one or multiple preferences, so on total we got 3138 preferences. Results show that 72% of the replies state that most reliable source of information are assigned to information provided from the scientific community and from official transmissions of the Italian government and Civil protection.
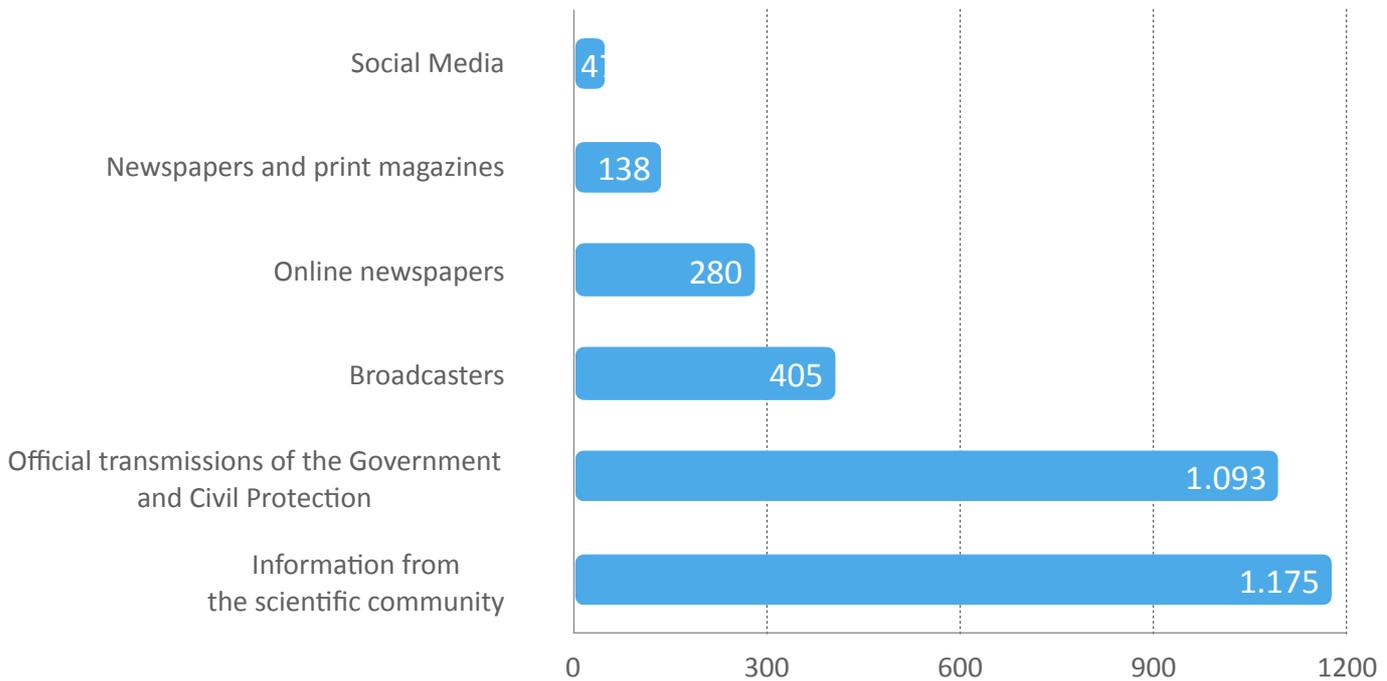
Fig.6: Most reliable source of information during Covid-19

To better understand how the information sent out by Italian institutions is perceived, we asked how important the role of the institutions is (for example: Prime Minister, Government, Civil Protection) in communicating directly to citizens what is happening and in providing information on how to behave to deal with the Covid-19 emergency. Out of the 1611 respondents, more that the 81% agree that this is very relevant or enough important. Only 5% selected the lower values of the Likert scale: "little" or "nothing".
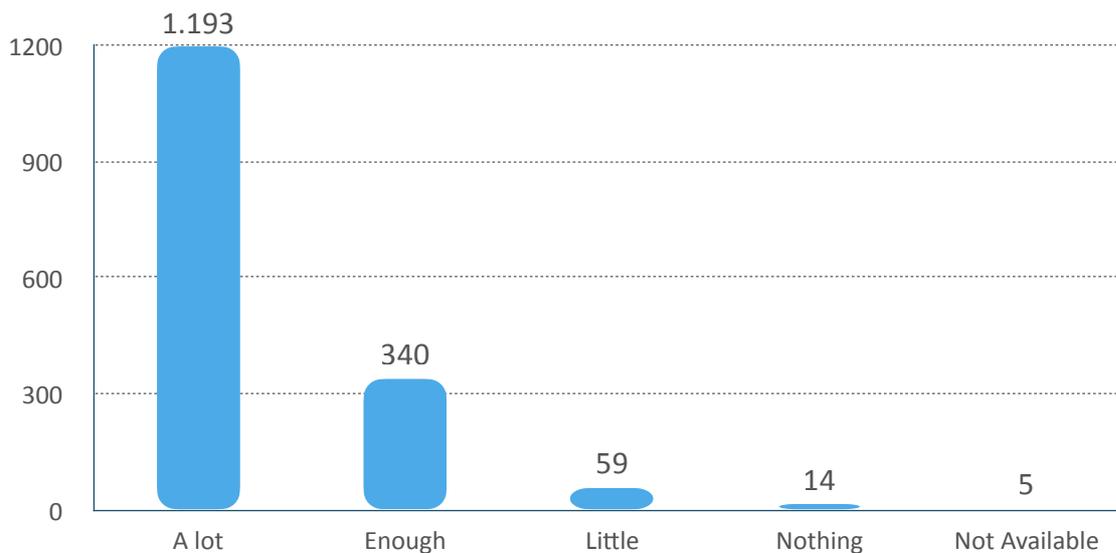

Fig. 7: Importance of the institutional communication on Covid-19

We also asked, then, to assess the importance of the scientific community and experts in the sector (for example: virologists, epidemiologists, doctors) in communicating to the citizens what is happening and in communicating how to behave to deal with the Covid-19 emergency. In this case, also, the respondents assigned high important on this kind of communication, assessing the highest values "a lot" and "enough" at 97%.
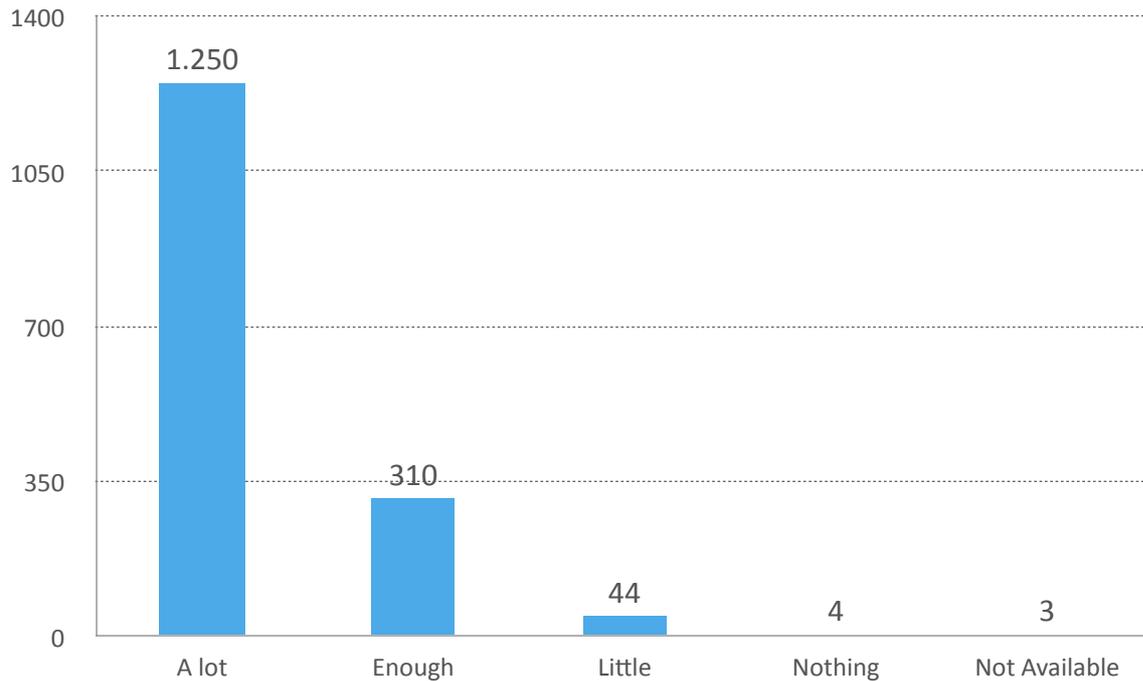

Fig. 8: Importance of the communication on Covid-19 from the experts

In order to understand if respondents rely also on information that is not necessarily coming from official sources, we asked to assess how reliable is the information received via Whatsapp[5] and Facebook.
Results on Whatsapp reliability are reported hereafter.

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[5] We decided to insert this question as in Italy is very frequent to receive information on Covid-19 directly on this application.

Out of the total of the respondents, 76% selected the lowest values of the Likert scale "little" or "nothing"; 12% selected "a lot" and "enough" and, 12% asserts that do not receive information via Whatsapp.
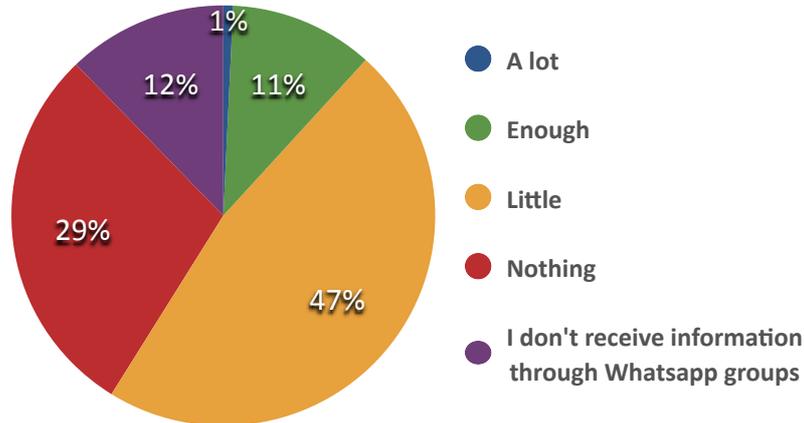

Fig.9: Reliability of information via Whatsapp

We asked to the 12% showing more reliability on the information via Whatsapp if the information via whatsapp influenced their own behaviours. Out of the total (189 respondents), 5% selected "a lot" 44% "enough", 37% "little" and 14% "nothing".
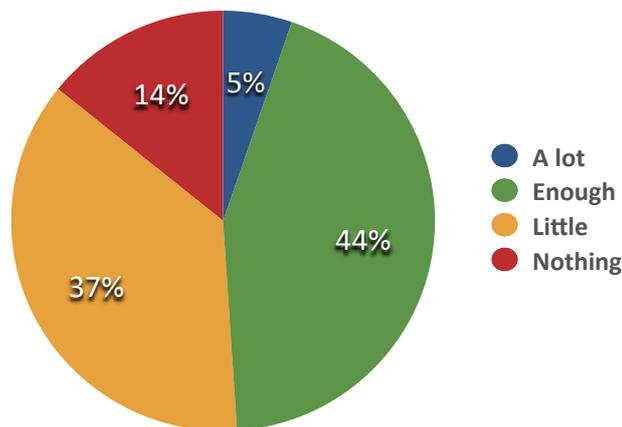

Fig.10: Impact of information via Whatsapp on people' behaviours

We then asked to the 49% replying that the information influenced "a lot" or "enough" how they have been influenced. Out of the respondents, the majority of people replied that they have been scared and alarmed by information received paying more attention on their behaviours. While 35 have been pushed to be more relaxed and not worried about the virus.
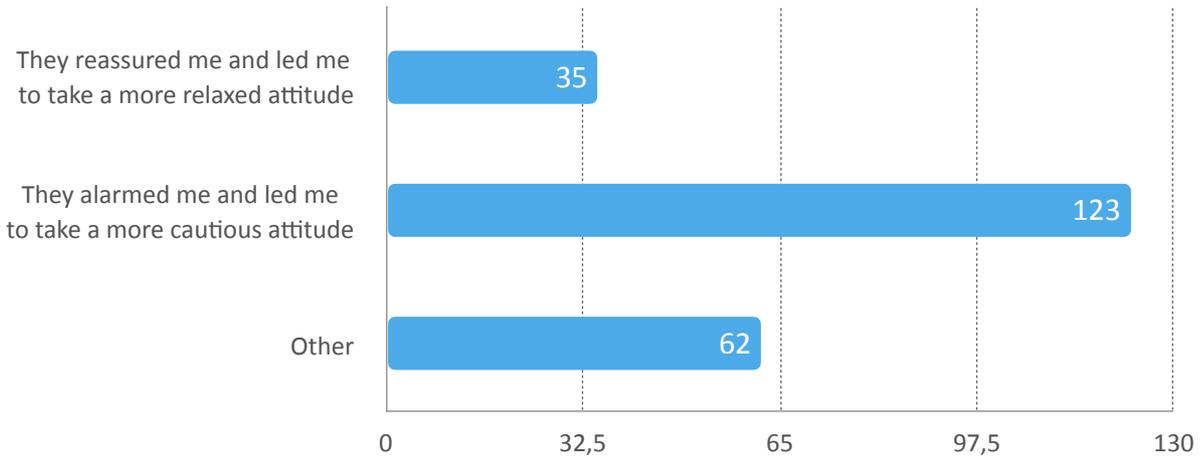
Fig.11: Kind of impact on people who If you answered "A lot" "Enough" or "Little" to the previous question, how do you think the messages on Whatsapp affected you?

62 people have selected an open option and have provided free text, text analysis have been applied and responses have been aggregated. In most of the case (26) respondents state that they have been pushed to look for other sources of information; others (3) assert that the information pushed him/her to reflect.In some other cases (4) state they have been confused and (4) they get opinions confirmed;. (6) state that the impact depends on the source received and specify that they got messages from scientific community as they are in chat set up by specialists[6].

As anticipated, we asked also to assess the reliability of information reached by Facebook. 74% of respondents selected "nothing" or "little", 23% selected "a lot" and "enough". Showing a small increase on the reliability of Facebook compared to Whatsapp.
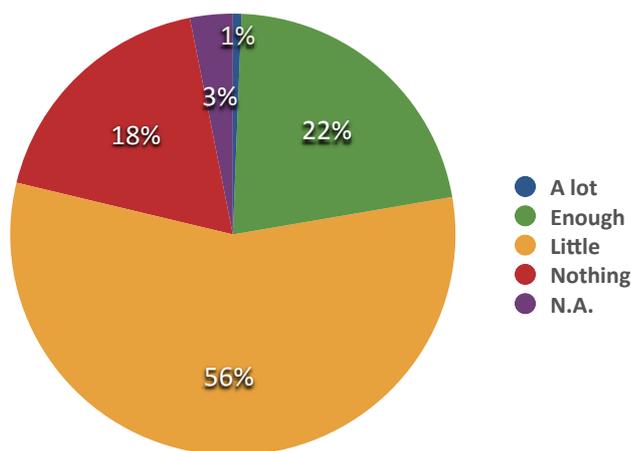

Fig.12: Reliability of information via Facebook

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[6] 19 people state that they have not been affected concretely

We also asked if respondents check information shared via Facebook. Out of the total, 61% replied "always" while 35% selected "sometime" or "never". The remaining 4% didn't provide a reply. We also asked to 100 respondents who selected "never" why they didn't check information, 50 replied that they do not check because they read the news but they do not trust it. Remaining 50 replies are scattered and more related to the absence of time to verify information.

We asked, then, if the current emergency has changed how respondents deal with information. As shown in the figure, 50% replies no, 49% replied yes and 1% didn't reply.
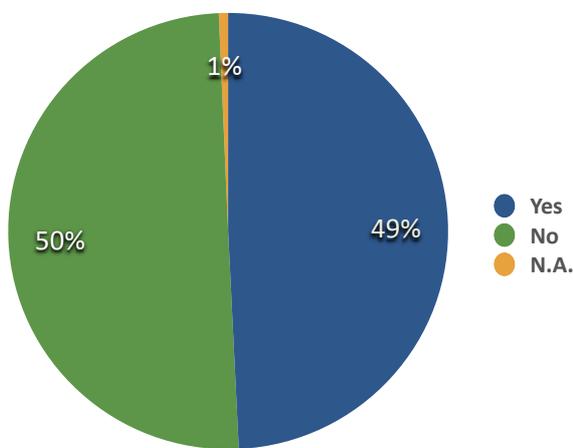
Fig.13: Changing attitude toward information due to the Covid-19 emergency

Accordingly, we asked who asserted that the emergency changed their relationship with the information to state how. Results shown that 89% state that emergency led them to be more aware about the importance of verified information. Only 11% state that they are still confused and exposed to the perils of disinformation.
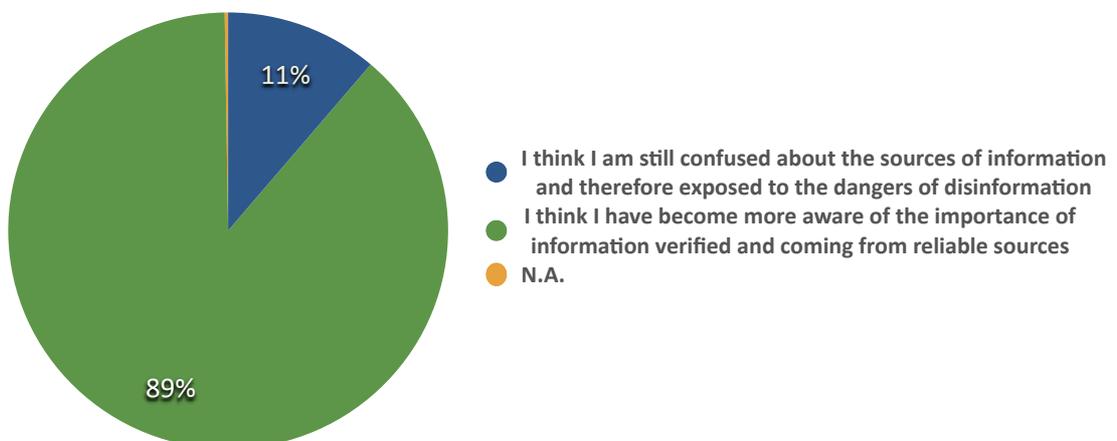

Fig.14: How attitude are changed due to the Covid-19 emergency

Finally, we asked what actions could be more effective to ensure reliable and correct information to citizenship in relation to the Covid-19 virus. The actions proposed are the following:

- Greater communication through official channels (website, social channels of the institutions)
- Greater control of platforms about the circulation of unverified news
- Greater access to traditional information channels (newspapers, television, radio)
- Greater disclosure of scientific information

As respondents could select one or more options, 42% of the respondents selected one option, 33% two options, 24% three or more options, 1% do not provided an answer. However, aggregating all replies we got 3052 replies. On the total of replies collected, 62% of replies agree to have increased communication through institutional channels and more dissemination of scientific information; 29% of the respondents selected to increase the control on platform to verify the information; only 9% requires better access to traditional sources.
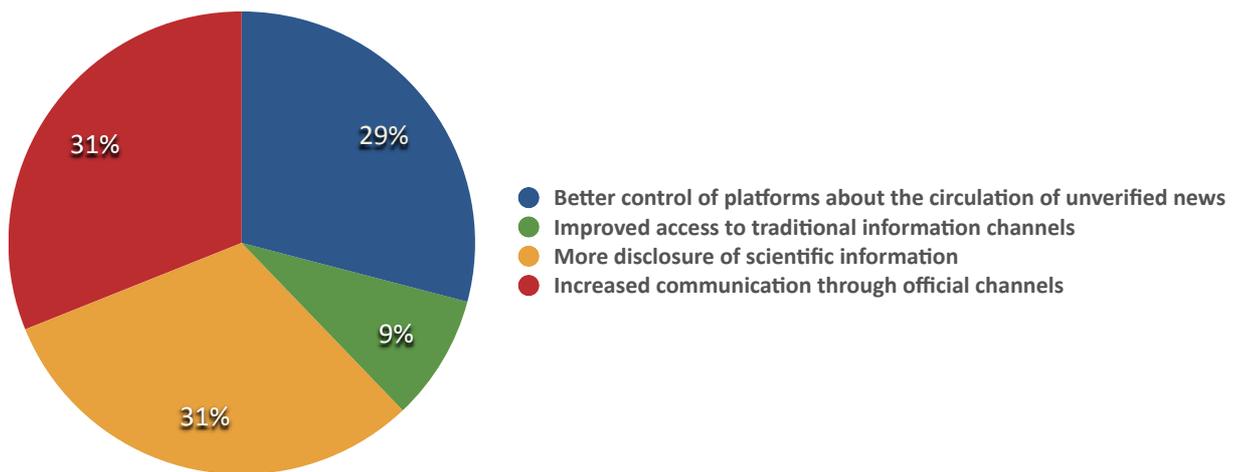

Fig.15: Measures to ensure reliable and correct information to citizenship in relation to the Covid-19

In the survey three news widely shared on internet and on social media has been brought to the attention of the respondents. The intention was to understand if they believed to that news and, in case, how the news affected their own behaviours. The document reports full results and figures elaborated. As anticipated, the survey also focused on analysing the reaction of the respondents to some selected news outlets[7].

The first one was the news regarding the fact that Covid-19 is a virus linked to a bacteriological weapons program, born in a laboratory in the city of Wuhan, in China.

We asked to the respondents if they were aware about the news: 91% replied yes, 8% no and 1% didn't reply.
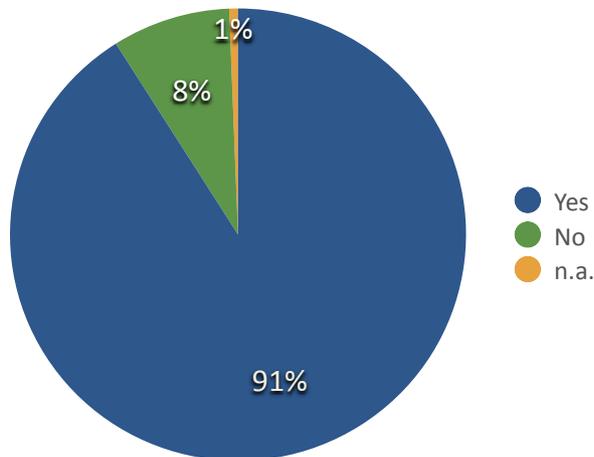

Fig.16: Did it happen to you to read the news that Covid-19 is a virus linked to a bacteriological weapons program, born in a laboratory in the city of Wuhan (China)

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[7] The news has been selected among the fake news on Covid-19 identified by Pagella Politica (here the link) and by the EEAS (April 2020) report "Disinformation on the corona virus- information environment assessment".

We then asked to the 91% replying affirmatively if they believed to the news: 78% replied "no", while 21% replied "yes", and 1% didn't reply
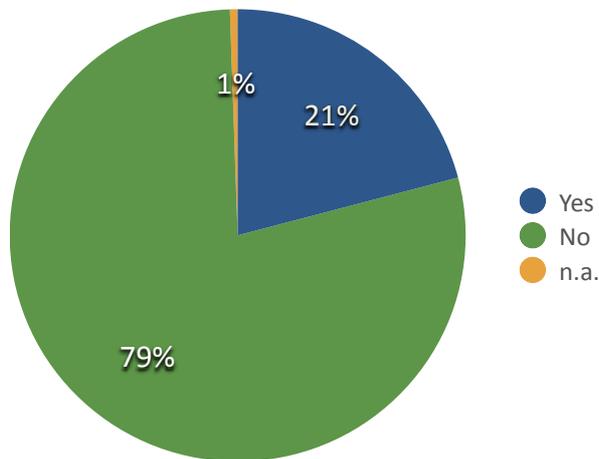
Fig.17: If you answered yes to the previous question, did you believe the news?

Then, our intention was to better understand how to believe in the news changed people behaviours. In this case, 29% selected the options suggested by the survey. Results are reported hereafter:

- 26% stated that it raised a feeling of fear and distrust of China;
- 3% stated that they become more hostile towards the Chinese community that lives in Italy;
- 71% proposed an open text. Based on a discourse analysis, results have been aggregated.
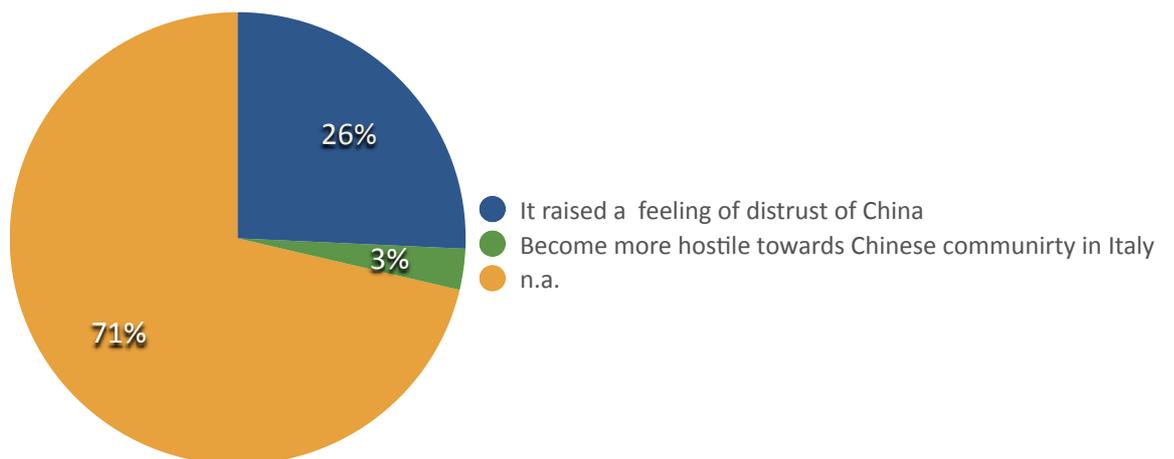
Fig.18: If you answered yes to the previous question, how did the news affect your behaviour?

Results shown that 37% share a feeling of distrust against Chine; 17% feel fear, distrust or anger more in general. In most of the cases such feelings are directed towards Italian government or national institutions; 13% and 12% is astonished or has taken notes and 17% has been pushed to think more on the causes of the pandemic; 4% confirms to be more hostile in regard to the Chinese community leaving in Italy.

Fig.19: If you answered yes to the previous question, how did the news affect your behaviour?

We also ask if they knew the news that associates the outbreak of the spread of the virus with the presence of migrants. In this case, 62% replied "no" and 38% "yes".
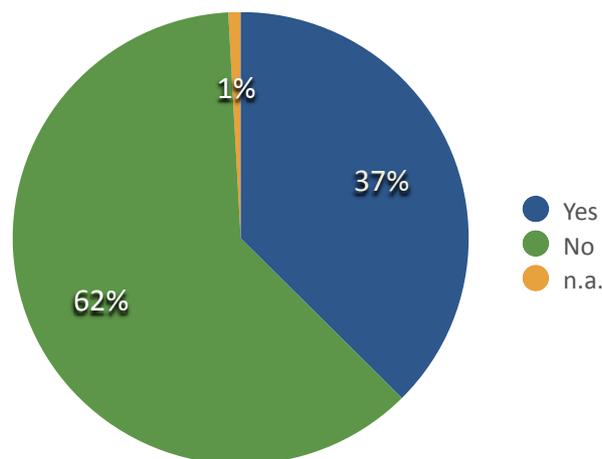
Fig.20: Did it happen to you to read the news that associates the outbreak of the virus with the presence of migrants?

We asked the 38% to tell if they believe it. The large majority, 97% said "no" and 3% "yes".
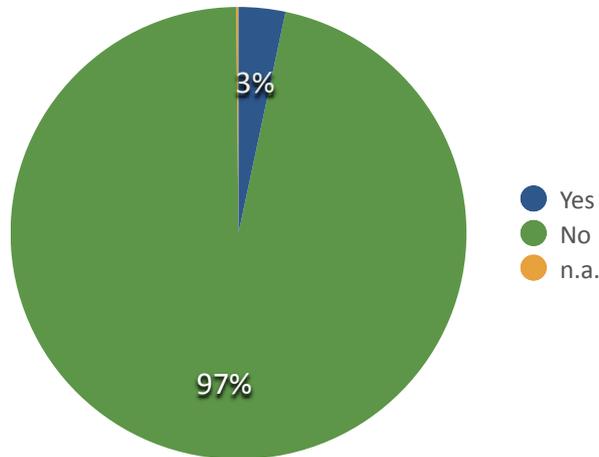
Fig.21: If you answered yes to the previous question, did you believe the news?

We asked to the 20 people who believed to the news how this affected their behaviour. They replied as following:
- 45% raised a feeling of fear and distrust for the migrants
- 15% He approached / convinced me of the positions of the right-wing parties
- 40% other

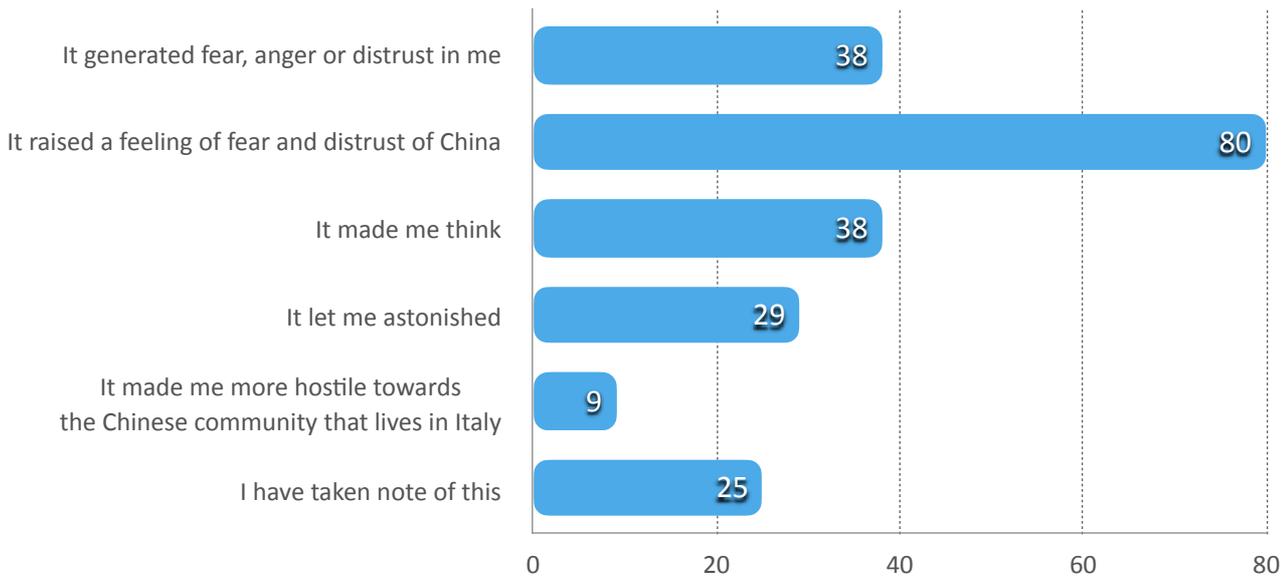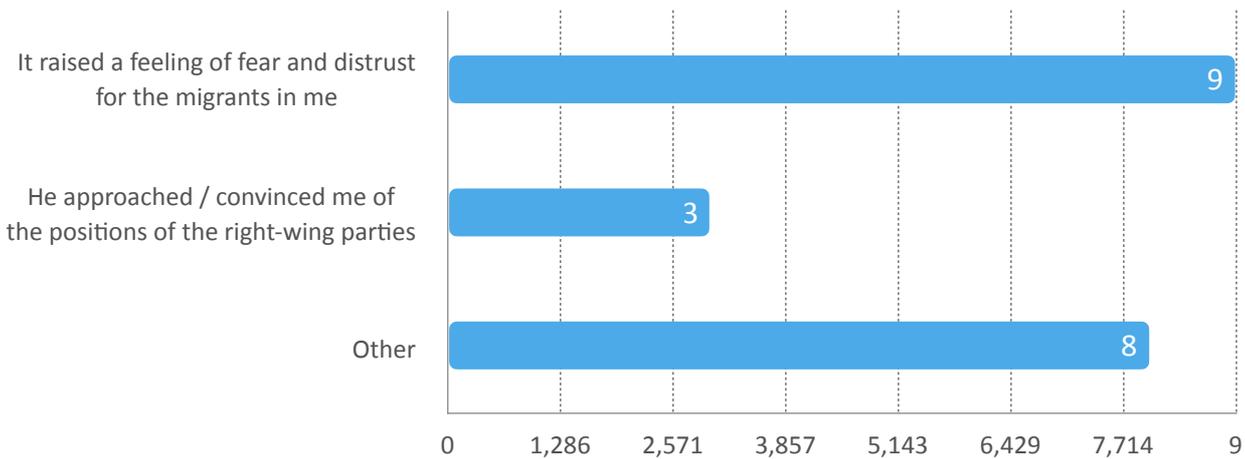*Fig.22: If you answered yes to the previous question, how did the news affect your behaviour?*

Finally, we asked if they heard the news that stated that the virus does not exist and/ or is a non-existent danger: 50% didn't knew the news, while 49% knew the news
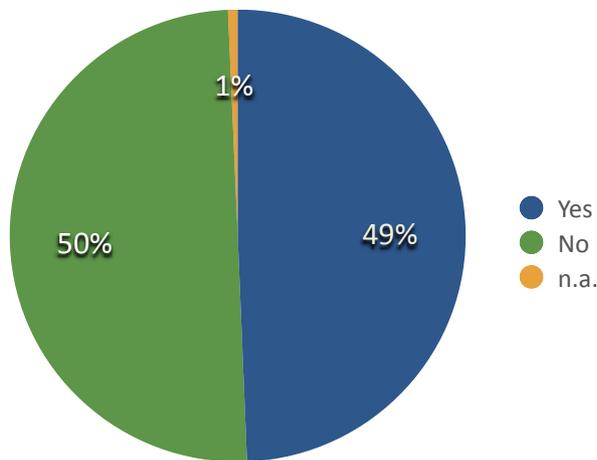
Fig.23: Did it happen to you to read the news that the virus does not exist and / or is a non-existent danger?

On the total of 49% who knew the news, 94% didn't think it was true while 6% believe it.
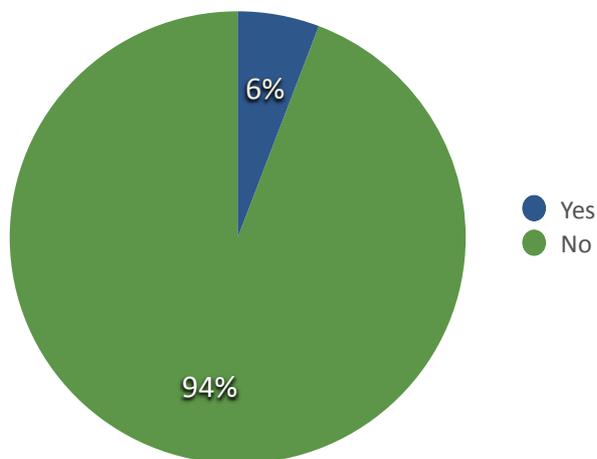
Fig.24: If you answered yes to the previous question, did you believe the news?

We asked to the 6% how this changed the behaviours.

In the majority of cases (30), it led to take a less alarmist attitude towards the virus; only in 3 cases people have been convinced that the threat does not exist and urged me to lead my life without following the instructions of the authorities. 13 selected the option "Other
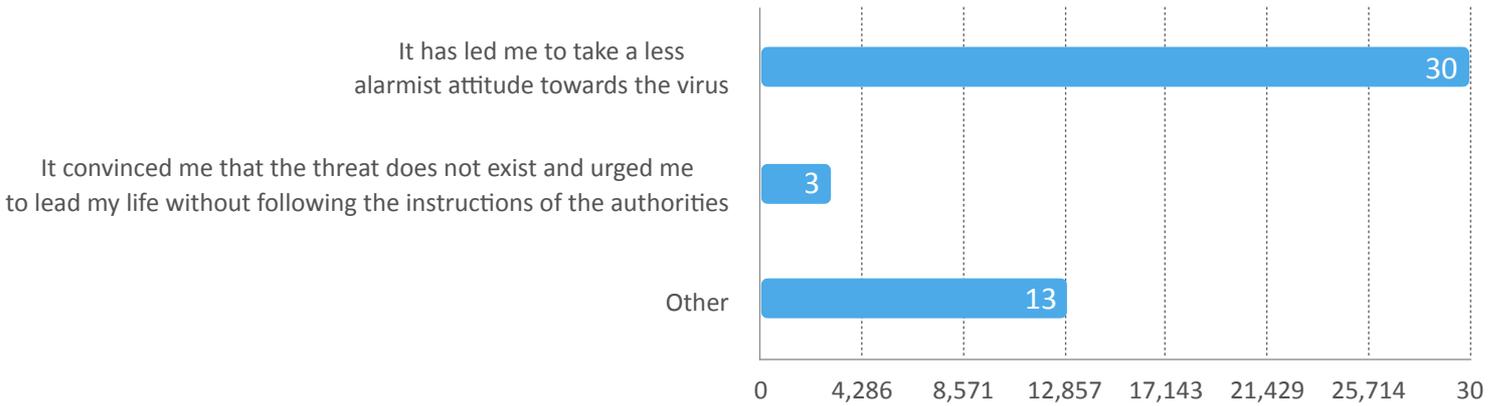
Fig. 25: If you answered yes to the previous question, how did the news affect your behaviour?

Conclusions

The current analysis allows us to better understand how people are using and harnessing information through the epidemic of Covid-19.

First of all, results show that people inform themselves on the pandemic using, above all, official channels used by authoritative institutions and through broadcasters. Social media, even if it appears among the used channel to be informed, are not the primary source of information on the epidemic. Such results seem to confirm what has been find out by the Osservatorio MSA-Covid 19 of CNR-IRPPS[8] who also assess the high level of trust for authoritative sources such as the national governments, the civil protection and the scientific community.

It is interesting to underline that the most reliable source of information identified by the participants are the institutional sources of information and the information shared by the scientific community. Such data is confirmed by the importance that the participants assign to get the information on Covid-19 directly from the institutions and from the scientific community.

Information shared via social media such as Whatsapp and Facebook are considered by most of the respondents as not trustable. Only 12% of the participants trust the information shared via Whatsapp. However, people trusting information shared via Whatsapp also stress that in most of the cases the information received has had an impact on their behaviours. The majority of people replied that they have been scared and alarmed by information received paying more attention on their behaviours. While the others stated that the information led them to be more relaxed and less worried about the virus.
Considering Facebook, 23% of the participants asserts that the information shared on this social media is trustable. Among the respondents, 35% asserts that they verify information sometime or never. These results suggest how important are the media literacy activities to motivate people to verify the sources and learn how to identify disinformation sources.

We investigated, also, if the current emergency has changed how respondents deal with information. Replies have been well balanced. Indeed, while half of the respondents replies that nothing changed on how they deal with information, the other half stated that they changed their relationship with the information. Results shows that, among the 50% who stated their behaviours changed, 89% declare that emergency led to be more aware about the importance of verified information. Only 11% are still confused and exposed to disinformation dangers.

Finally, we asked what actions could be more effective to ensure the communication of reliable and correct information to citizens in relation to the Covid-19 virus. It is interesting to notice that most of the respondents agree on the need for more information from scientific communication and institutions but also for a better control of the platforms on circulating unverified information. This suggests that even if respondents assign high importance to trusted

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[8] Information are available at https://www.irpps.cnr.it/musa/msa-covid19/

information, they also ask for better regulation the information shared via social media and platform.

Taking into account all collected results, results show how people, in difficult time and when talking about health issues, are more aware about the importance of a correct and trustable information and less inclined to believe to non verified information.

The analysis suggests that participants are careful about the challenges opened by the platforms and are also aware of the fact that the news circulated via social media have direct impact on their behaviour.
However, we can conclude that authoritative information relying on trustful and verified information is the most important channel of communication and information for the respondents and they also would like also to be more informed through these channels.

Annex 1. Survey in Italian

Questionario sulla relazione tra comunicazione e comportamenti degli italiani in base al rischio del virus COVID-19

Un gruppo di ricercatori del centro di ricerca T6 Ecosystems sta realizzando uno studio finalizzato ad indagare il rapporto tra gli italiani e l'informazione relativa al coronavirus (COVID-19) e le relative ricadute sui comportamenti dei cittadini. La ricerca è svolta in collaborazione con il Centro di Eccellenza Aletheia, polo di competenza dell'Università Luiss Guido Carli che promuove ricerche multidisciplinari e sperimentali su temi legati alla disinformazione. *L'attività di T6 Ecosystems e di Aletheia è supportata dall'Unione Europa, grazie al finanziamento ottenuto dal progetto* SOMA *(Social Observatory for Disinformation and Social Media Analysis) finanziato dalla Commissione Europea DG CNECT.*

Per la sua realizzazione è stato predisposto il seguente questionario. Le tue risposte sono molto importanti per raggiungere gli scopi della ricerca. Ti ringraziamo per il tempo che dedicherai al questionario. La compilazione richiede circa 10 minuti.

Iniziando il questionario manifesti il tuo consenso al trattamento dei dati che condividerai. Ai sensi del Regolamento UE 2016/679 (GDPR) ti segnaliamo che i dati saranno trattati da T6 Ecosystems, con sede in *Via Aureliana* 63 00187 Roma, e solo per finalità di ricerca scientifica. Il questionario è anonimo e T6 non sarà in alcun modo in grado di collegare a te le informazioni che condividerai. I dati generati da questo questionario saranno conservati sui computer di T6 Ecosystems e navigare e utilizzare i servizi Google Forms può comportare un trattamento di dati personali da parte di Google con le condizioni, conformi al GDPR, elencate in questa pagina. Per qualsiasi informazione puoi comunque scrivere a dpo@t-6.it senza formalità.

Grazie per la sua collaborazione.

1. Genere
- Uomo
- Donna
- Altro

2. Dove abiti
- Nord Italia
- Centro Italia
- Sud Italia

3. Età

- <18
- 18-25
- 26-35
- 36-50
- 51-65
- 66-80
- >80

4. Titolo di studio

- Nessuno
- Licenza elementare
- Licenza media
- Diploma
- Laurea
- Post laurea (es. specializzazione, dottorato, master post laurea)

5. Qual é la tua fonte principale di informazione sull'emergenza coronavirus?

- Televisione e Radio
- Quotidiani e riviste cartacee
- Social media (Facebook, Twitter, Whatapp,)
- Fonti ufficiali (Governo Italiano, Dipartimento Protezione Civile, Istituto Superiore Sanità ecc)

6. Quanto ritieni che siano affidabili le informazioni che ricevi sui gruppi Whatsapp?

- Molto
- Abbastanza
- Poco
- Per niente
- Non ricevo informazioni tramite gruppi Whatsapp

7. Se hai risposto "Molto" o "Abbastanza" alla domanda precedente, ritieni che l'informazione che ti ha raggiunto su Whatsapp abbia condizionato il tuo comportamento?

- Molto
- Abbastanza
- Poco
- Per niente

8. Se hai risposto "Molto", "Abbastanza" o "Poco" alla risposta precedente, come pensi che i messaggi su Whatsapp ti abbiano condizionato?

- Mi hanno allarmato e mi hanno condotto ad assumere un atteggiamento più cauto

- Mi hanno tranquillizzato e mi hanno condotto ad assumere un atteggiamento più rilassato

9. Quanto ritieni che siano affidabili le informazioni che ricevi tramite Facebook?

1. Molto
2. Abbastanza
3. Poco
4. Per niente

10. Quando leggi un articolo, una notizia, o un post su Facebook sull'emergenza Covid-19, vai poi a verificare che l'informazione sia veritiera?

- Sempre
- Qualche volta
- Mai

11. Se hai risposto "Mai" alla domanda precedente perché non ritieni di dover verificare l'informazione acquisita su Facebook?

- Perché mi fido di chi l'ha condivisa, o di chi l'ha scritta, e la ritengo attendibile
- Perché non mi fido e non la ritengo attendibile
- Perché non ho tempo
- Altro

12. In questo periodo di emergenza Covid-19, quale ritieni che sia il canale di comunicazione più affidabile?

- Social Network
- Giornali tradizionali
- Giornali on-line
- Radio e televisione
- Canali social e trasmissioni ufficiali del Governo e della Protezione Civile
- Informazioni della comunità scientifica (articoli scientifici, comunicazioni di ospedali e organizzazioni sanitarie)

13. Quanto ritieni importante il ruolo delle Istituzioni (ad esempio: Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri, Governo, Protezione Civile) nel comunicare direttamente ai cittadini cosa sta accadendo e come comportarsi per far fronte all'emergenza Covi 19?

- Molto
- Abbastanza
- Poco
- Per nulla

14. Quanto ritieni importante il ruolo di esperti del settore (ad esempio: virologi, epidemiologi, medici) nel comunicare direttamente ai cittadini cosa sta accadendo e come comportarsi per far fronte all'emergenza Covid- 19?

- Molto
- Abbastanza
- Poco

- Per nulla

15. Ti è capitato di leggere la notizia per cui il Covid 19 è un virus collegato a un programma di armi batteriologiche, nato in un laboratorio della città di Wuhan (Cina)?
- Sì
- No

16. Se hai risposto sì, hai creduto alla notizia?
- Sì
- No

17. Se hai risposto sì, come ha influito la notizia sui tuoi comportamenti?
- Ha sollevato in me paura e di diffidenza verso la Cina
- Mi ha reso più ostile verso la comunità cinese che abita in Italia
- Altro (Per favore specifica come ha influito)

18. Ti è capitato di leggere la notizia che associala diffusione del virus alla presenza di migranti?
- Sì
- No

19. Se hai risposto sì, hai creduto alla notizia?
- Sì
- No

20. Se hai risposto sì, come ha influito la notizia sui tuoi comportamenti?
- Ha sollevato in me un sentimento di paura e di diffidenza verso i migranti
- Mi ha avvicinato/convinto delle posizioni dei partiti di destra
- Altro (per favore specifica come ha influito)

21. Ti è capitato di leggere la notizia per cui il virus non esiste e/o è un pericolo inesistente?
- Sì
- No

22. Se hai risposto sì, hai creduto alla notizia?
- Sì
- No

23. Se hai risposto sì, come ha influito la notizia sui tuoi comportamenti?
- Mi ha indotto ad assumere un atteggiamento meno allarmista nei confronti del virus
- Mi ha convinto che la minaccia non esiste ed esortato a condurre la mia vita senza seguire le disposizioni delle autorità
- Altro (per favore specifica come ha influito)

24. Pensi che l'emergenza corona virus abbia modificato la tua capacità di confrontarti con l'informazione?
- Si
- No

25. Se hai risposto sì, come pensi la tua percezione dell'informazione sia cambiata negli ultimi tempi?
- Penso di essere diventata/o più consapevole dell'importanza dell'informazione verificata e proveniente da fonti affidabili
- Penso di essere ancora confuso/a circa le fonti di informazione e quindi esposto/a ai pericoli di disinformazione

26. Quale azione trovi più efficace per garantire un'informazione affidabile e corretta della cittadinanza in relazione al virus Covid-19?
- Maggiore comunicazione attraverso canali ufficiali (sito, canali social delle Istituzioni)
- Maggiore controllo delle piattaforme circa la circolazione di notizie non verificate
- Maggiore accesso a canali di informazione tradizionali (giornali, televisione, radio)
- Maggiore divulgazione di informazioni scientifiche

Grazie per aver partecipato al questionario

Annex 2 Survey in English

1.Gender
- Women
- Men
- Other

2.Where do you live?
- North of Italy
- Centre of Italy
- Southern Italy

3.Age
- <18
- 18-25
- 26-35
- 36-50
- 51-65
- 66-80
- >80

4.Education degree
- None
- Elementary school
- Middle school
- High school
- Master degree
- Postgraduate

5.What is your main source of information on the coronavirus emergency?
- Broadcasters
- Newspapers and print magazines
- Social media (Facebook, Twitter, Whatsapp,)
- Official sources (Italian government, Civil Protection, Ministry of Health)

6.How reliable do you think the information you receive about Whatsapp groups is?"?
- A lot
- Enough
- Little
- Nothing
- I don't receive information through Whatsapp groups

7.If you answered "A lot" or "Enough" to the previous question, do you think that the information that reached you on Whatsapp influenced your behavior?

- A lot
- Enough
- Little
- Nothing

8.If you answered "A lot" "Enough" or "Little" to the previous question, how do you think the messages on Whatsapp affected you?

- They reassured me and led me to take a more relaxed attitude
- They alarmed me and led me to take a more cautious attitude
- Other

9. How reliable do you think the information you receive from Facebook is?

- A lot
- Enough
- Little
- Nothing

10. When you read an article, a news, or a Facebook post on the Covid-19 emergency, do you verify that the information is true?

- Always
    - Sometime
    - Never
    - Not available

11.If you answered "Never" to the previous question, why don't you think you should check the information acquired on Facebook?

- I trust who shared it, or who wrote it, and I think it is a reliable source
- Because I don't trust and I don't think it is a reliable source
- I have no time
- Other

12. In this Covid-19 emergency, which do you think is the most reliable information channel?

- Social Network
- Online newspapers
- Newspapers and print magazines
- Radio e televisione
- Canali social e trasmissioni ufficiali del Governo e della Protezione Civile
- Official transmissions of the Government and Civil Protection through social media or other channels

13. **How important do you consider the role of the institutions (for example: Prime Minister, Government, Civil Protection) in communicating directly to citizens what is happening and in providing information on how to behave to deal with the Covid-19 emergency**
   - A lot
   - Enough
   - Little
   - Nothing

14. **How important do you think the role of experts in the sector (for example: virologists, epidemiologists, doctors) in communicating directly to citizens what is happening and in communicating how to behave to deal with the Covid-19 emergency?**
   - A lot
   - Enough
   - Little
   - Nothing

15. **Did you happen to read the news that Covid-19 is a virus linked to a bacteriological weapons program, born in a laboratory in the city of Wuhan (China)?**
   - Yes
   - No

16. **If you answered yes to the previous question, did you believe the news?**
   - Yes
   - No

17. **If you answered yes to the previous question, how did the news affect your behavior?**
   - It raised a feeling of fear and distrust of China
   - It made me more hostile towards the Chinese community that lives in Italy
   - Other

18. **Did you happen to read the news that associates the outbreak of the spread of the virus with the presence of migrants?**
   - Yes
   - No

19. **If you answered yes to the previous question, did you believe the news?**
   - Yes
   - No

21. **If you answered yes to the previous question, how did the news affect your behavior?**
   - It raised a feeling of fear and distrust for the migrants in me
   - He approached / convinced me of the positions of the right-wing parties
   - Other

21. **Did you happen to read the news that the virus does not exist and / or is a non-existent danger?**

- Yes
- No

22. If you answered yes to the previous question, did you believe the news?
- Yes
- No

23. If you answered yes to the previous question, how did the news affect your behavior?
- It has led me to take a less alarmist attitude towards the virus
- It convinced me that the threat does not exist and urged me to lead my life without following the instructions of the authorities
- Other

24. Do you think that the corona virus emergency has changed your ability to deal with information?
- Yes
- No

25. If you answered yes, how do you think your perception of information has changed in recent times?
- I think I am still confused about the sources of information and therefore exposed to the dangers of disinformation
- I think I have become more aware of the importance of information verified and coming from reliable sources

26. What action do you find most effective to ensure reliable and correct citizenship information in relation to the Covid-19 virus?"
- Greater communication through official channels (website, social channels of the institutions)
- Greater control of platforms about the circulation of unverified news
- Greater access to traditional information channels (newspapers, television, radio)
- Greater disclosure of scientific information