

Annex 1.

Data and methods

This research relies on the qualitative text analysis of 1,168 pieces of debunked Italian-speaking disinformation on COVID-19, spread online between January 1st and December 31st 2020. In order to evaluate inter-rater reliability, a trained researcher was asked to code a sample of 50 randomly selected observations. The resulting Krippendorff's Alpha (computed using [ReCal2](#)) amounts to 0.842 for actors, 0.856 for narratives, and 0.793 for misinformation typology, meaning that the level agreement between coders is high. A typology of COVID-19 misinformation transmitters was drawn, among those who are deemed experts within the public arena.

The observations were drawn from the monitoring of eight fact-checking websites or news websites that have a dedicated fact-checking section: *Butac*, *Bufale.net*, *Facta*, *Giornalettismo*, *Next Quotidiano*, *Open*, *Pagella Politica*, and *Smask.online*. Three of them (i.e. *Pagella Politica*, *Facta*, and *Open*) are active verified signatories of the [IFCN Code of Principles](#). Nonetheless, all eight outlets follow the fundamental requirements of news verification outlined by IFCN, which makes them worthy of inclusion in our study, as well as key references in the Italian fact-checking ecosystem.

Therefore, our unit of analysis is the single disinformative claim that has been debunked, whether it originally came from a social media post, an article, or a video. This variety of sources (i.e. social media posts, articles, and videos) provides a comprehensive overview of today's communication ecosystem, the way in which users gather information and are potentially exposed to disinformation. Moreover, Fact-checking articles offer a sort of random case selection concerning the main narratives, actors involved, and platform distribution over the course of the entire year, making them a good measure of the trends in public opinion.