

A mixed content analysis design in the study of the Italian perception of the Covid-19 on Twitter

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Introduction

This work aims to highlight the potential that content analysis has to face the challenges posed by the digital era and by the boom of social networks, user-generated and freely available and usable content. Potential that comes from its ability to incorporate new analytical perspectives. Thus, through the application of digital mixed content analysis on Twitter this work analyze the perception of Covid-19 outbreak in Italy.

New horizons for the «content analysis»

«content analysis is a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use» (Krippendorff, 2018).

Content analysis assumed the status of a research tool in the 1950s after the publication of fundamental texts such as those by Lasswell (1949) and Berelson (1952). After a period in which it has been little used, in recent years there has been a renewed interest in content analysis

There are at least three reasons behind this renewed interest:

- 1) In the data revolution era it's easy and not expensive to accumulate huge amounts of textual data
- 2) new techniques have been developed Digital and digitized methods (Rogers, 2013)
- 3) content analysis is a research approach that can be located at the intersection of quantitative and qualitative methods (Hamad, 2016) and for this reason it has the ability to incorporate new analytical perspectives such as mixed methods

Methodology

Research questions:

- how the spread of coronavirus direct, polarize and construct the perception of the phenomenon?
- who actors impacting on social perception?
- which is the reasoning that built the social narrative of coronavirus on this social network?

Methodology

Data collection:

First step: collect all the tweets on the covid in Italy from 5 to 15 March period in which several important decisions relating to Covid-19 mitigation were made (DPCM 4 March 2020).

The extraction keys were based on six hashtags, i.e. those that were potential or effective topic trends for the period in question:

#coronavirusitalia and #coronavirus identify the main theme and, it is assumed, index a more popular and generalist communication on the theme (we could define it knowledge-oriented);

#iorestoacasa, #fermiamoloinsieme and #italiazonaprotetta could aggregate a communication more interested in problem-solving, i.e. about measures to reduce the virus risk (so this hashtag group we could call problem solving – oriented).

Second step: extract a sample of data to be analyzed

The final corpus consists of about two millions of tweets (including retweets). To facilitate mixed design, it was decided to work on a more limited sample of 10,000 tweets (without the retweets), respecting the proportions related to: Tweet daily number and Hashtag groups.

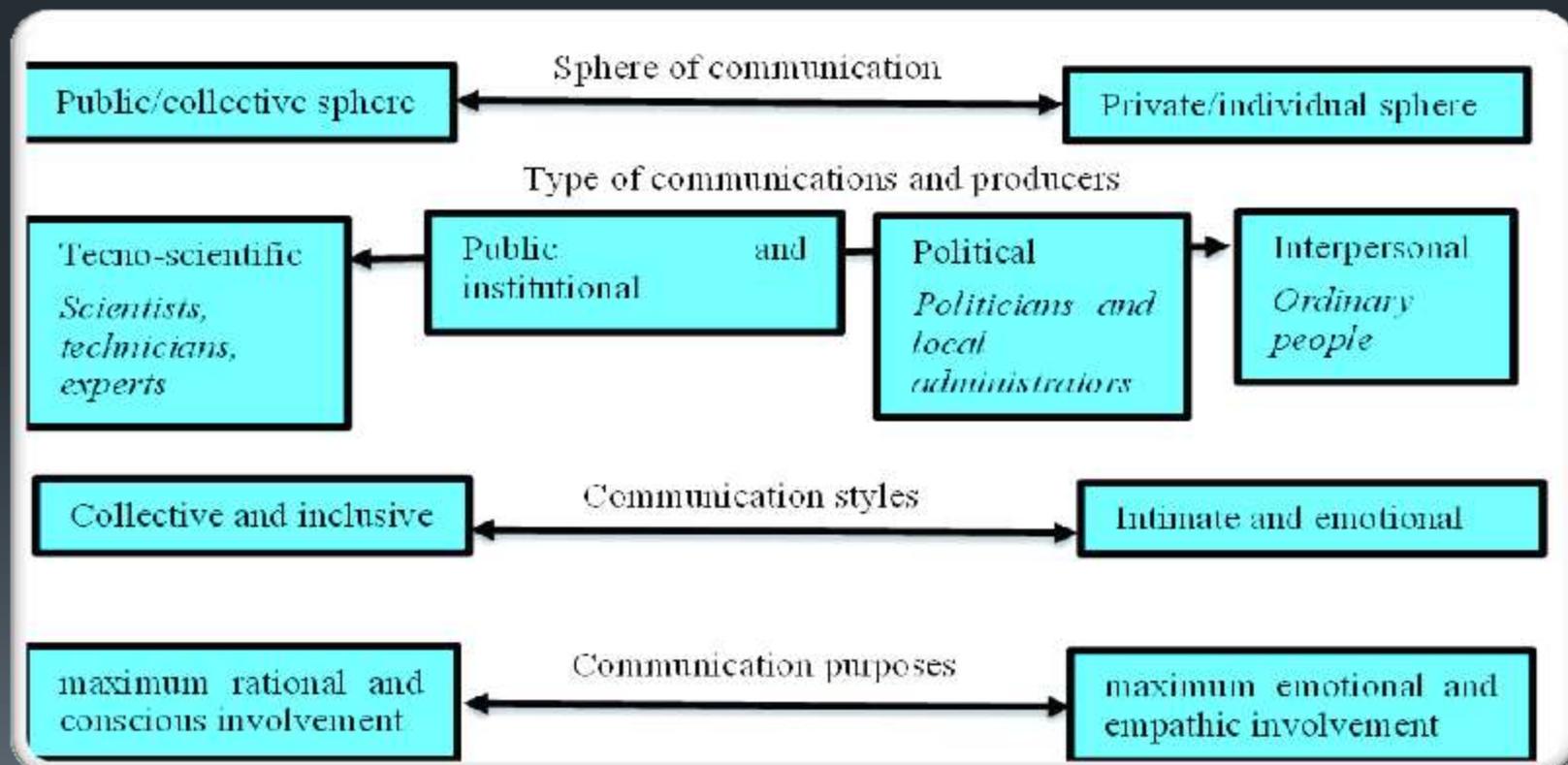
Metodology

Research design

The research design at the basis of this proposal can be identified in the sequential nested model by Creswell and Plano Clark (2017). This model, which combines data collection and analysis of a secondary set of qualitative data in a traditional quantitative research design, has the main objective of strengthening the results obtained by integrating them downstream into the process. It consists of a first quantitative phase and a qualitative follow-up in order to give depth to the results

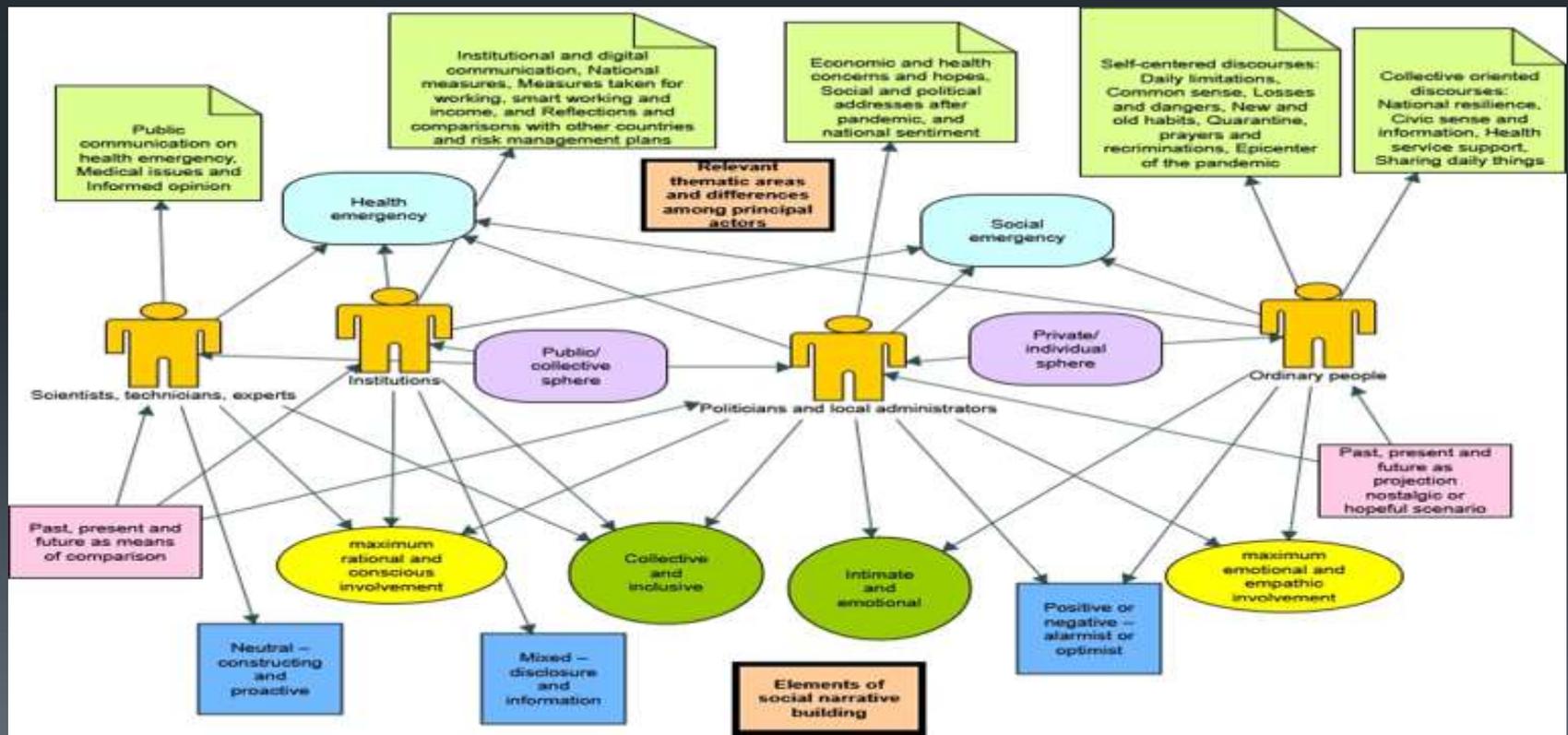
The qualitative in-depth analysis of topic and social narratives of the Covid-19 Italian's perception on Twitter #1

Figure 2. Style, type, and purposes of communication



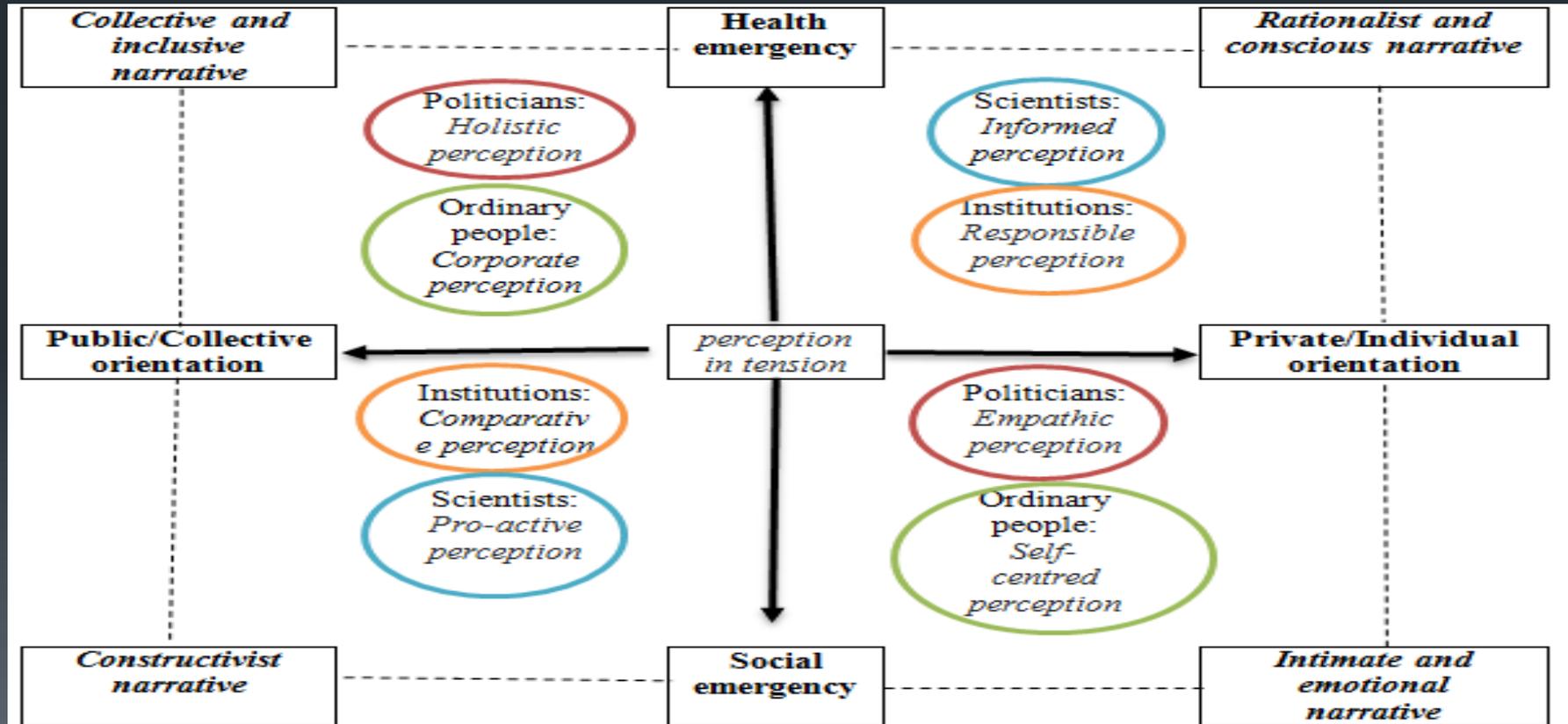
The qualitative in-depth analysis of topic and social narratives of the Covid-19 Italian's perception on Twitter #2

Figure 3. Conceptual map of actors, thematic areas, communication dimensions, and social narratives on the Covid-19 Italian's perception.



Emerging results

Figure 4. Integrated general model of classification in the Covid-19 Italian's perception. (on the axes the synthetic dimensions that addresses social discourses, in the extreme rectangles the type of narrative, into the quadrants the main actors with their perceptions developed in every specific attribute space)



Thanks for your attention