Online recruitment on social media to reach and engage distrustful people

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Outline

01 New opportunities for survey research

02 How to enroll survey participants?

03 Results of an experimental survey

04 Social media recruitment compared to traditional sampling approaches

05 Limits and opportunities of social media surveys

Background

Data collection are more complex when rare or hard-to reach populations are to be sampled and surveyed.

In many countries NIS are facing decreasing response rates and increasing survey costs

Alternative sampling and recruiting approaches are usually needed, including non-probability and online sampling.

Because of the massive popularity of online social networks, data about the users and their communication offers unprecedented opportunities to examine how human society functions at scale

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Social media for research purposes

> **They represent a growing portion of the general population**

> **Allows the recruitment of rare and hard-to-reach populations**

> **Ads on s.m.platforms are rather inexpensive compared with ads either elsewhere on the web**

> **Reducing the rate of dropouts between recruitment and actual survey participation**

> **Large amount of meta information available on these platforms.**

> **Growing share of respondents participating via mobile devices**

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Twitter

- ➢ **Is one of the social media platforms that social scientists rely on to conduct research**

- ➢ **With more than 400 million active monthly users that post 500 million tweets per day is a huge database—both in number of users and amount of data—for conducting large-scale studies of human behavior.**

- ➢ **Allows access to its data via several API which allows qualitative and quantitative research to be conducted with its members**.

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Facebook

- ➢ **Is based on mutual relations (iconnected people are referred to as "friends")**

- ➢ **Key demographic data (gender, age, etc) can be used to define target populations.**

- ➢ **Populations can be defined according to ' characteristics automatically assigned to a user according to an algorithm, based on person's interactions with the social**

- ➢ **Recruitment through Facebook facilitated diversity, with participants varying in socioeconomic status, geographical location, educational attainment, and age**

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Experimental survey

- To assess the use of social media platforms **as an alternative recruitment tool** for studying the hard-to-reach (LGBT+) population, an experimental survey was designed
- A team from Federico II University with an Istat stagiaire and DiverCityNaples association initiated an online convenience sample for which participants were recruited via and
- The questionnaire was programmed using

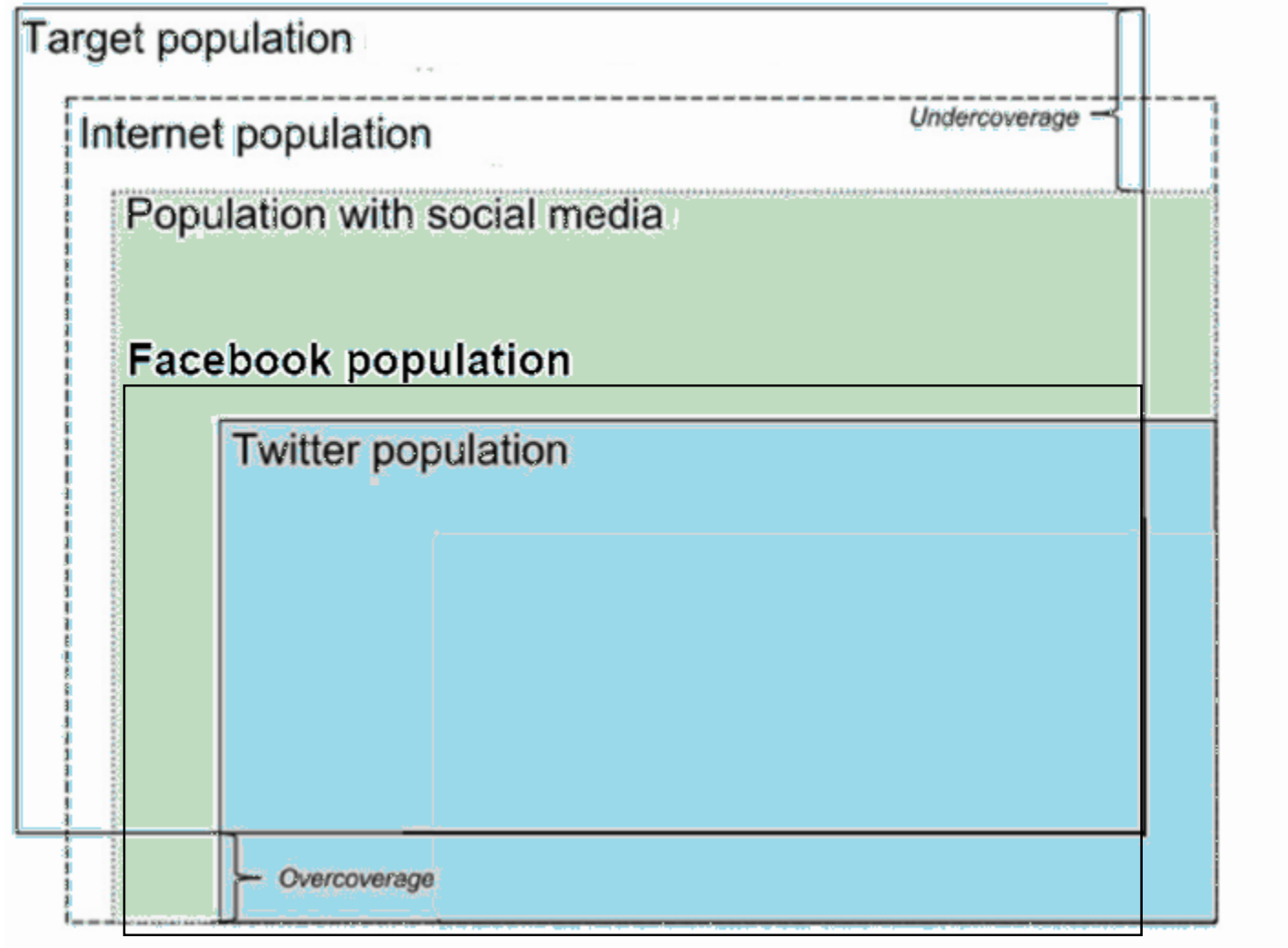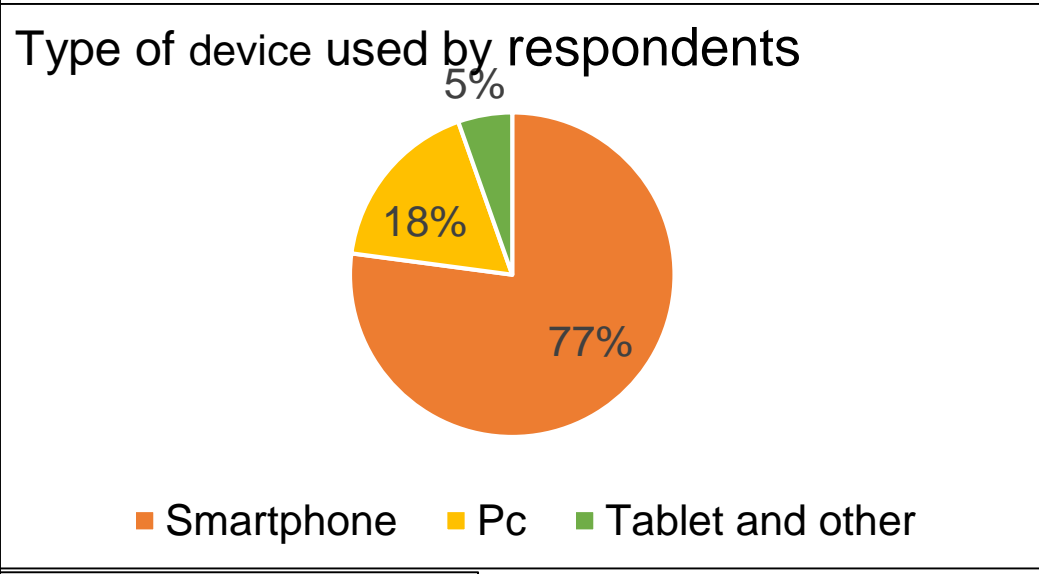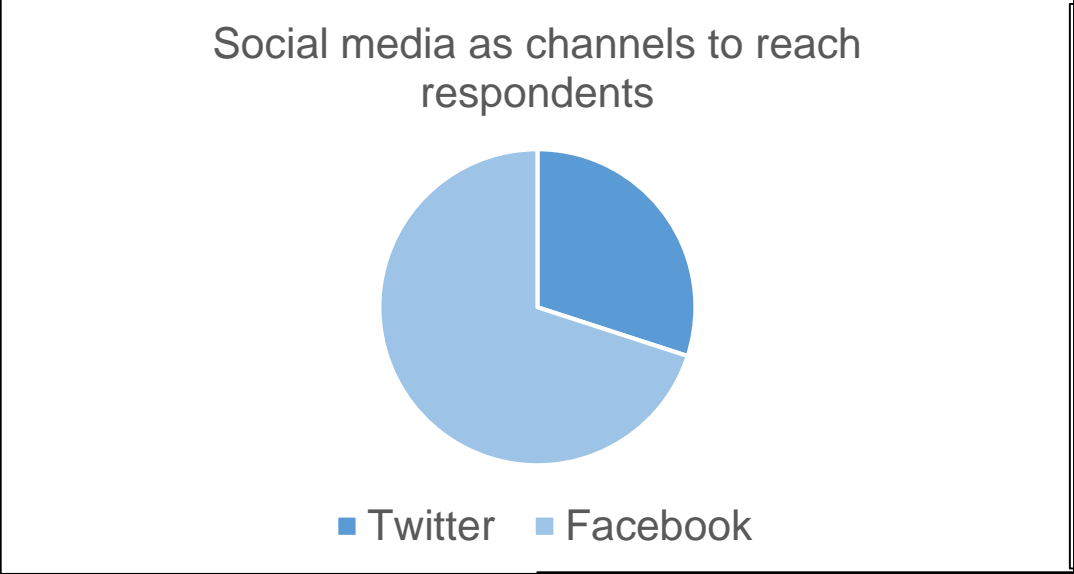- and its design was optimized for mobile devices
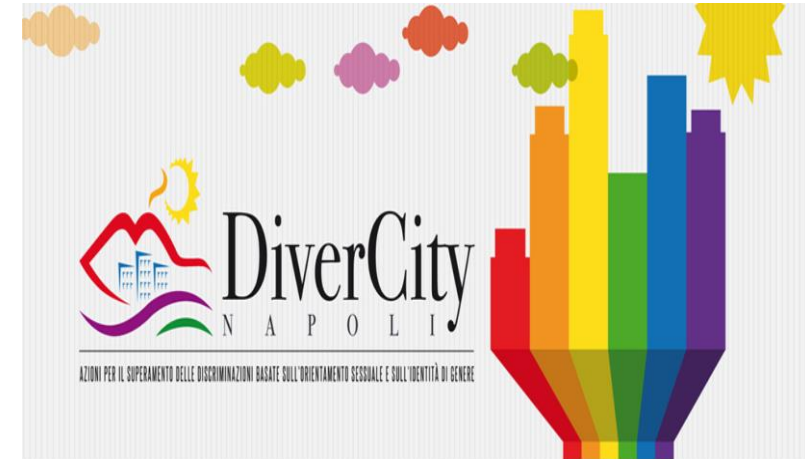
Experimental survey

➢ Recruitment using Social media by joining existing community notice board groups (no-cost option).

➢ Enabled snowball sampling where users could like, share, and circulate the social media post and questionnaire link among others

➢ A recruiting campaign was launched on Juin 3, 2022 and closed on July 2, 2022.

➢ Ads were shown on [facebook] and [twitter] Timeline

➢ Ad sets were used to address different subgroups within our target population

➢ Each ad was accompanied by a caption and a short text informing the user about our survey and encouraging them to take part in I and click on the questionnaire.

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Survey target population and social media population

Experimental survey: results
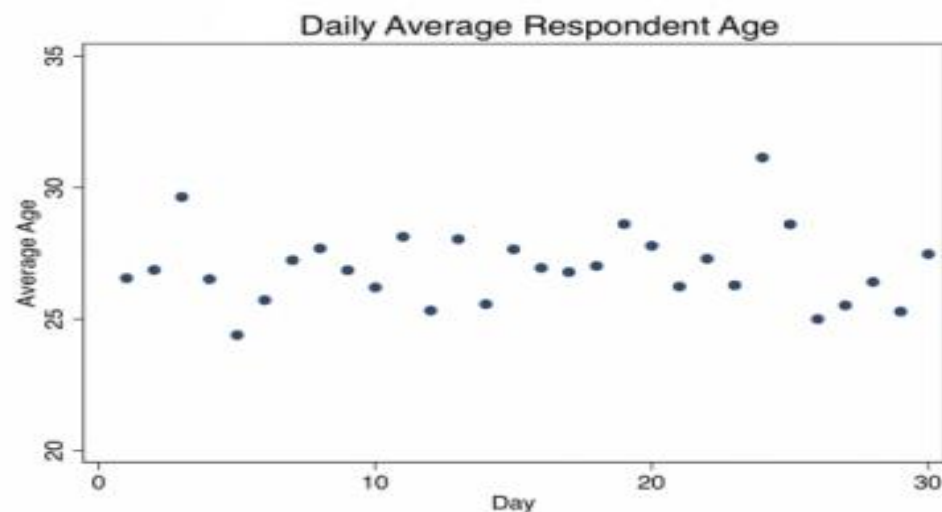
Social media as channels to reach respondents

■ Twitter ■ Facebook

Type of device used by respondents

5%
18%
77%

■ Smartphone ■ Pc ■ Tablet and other
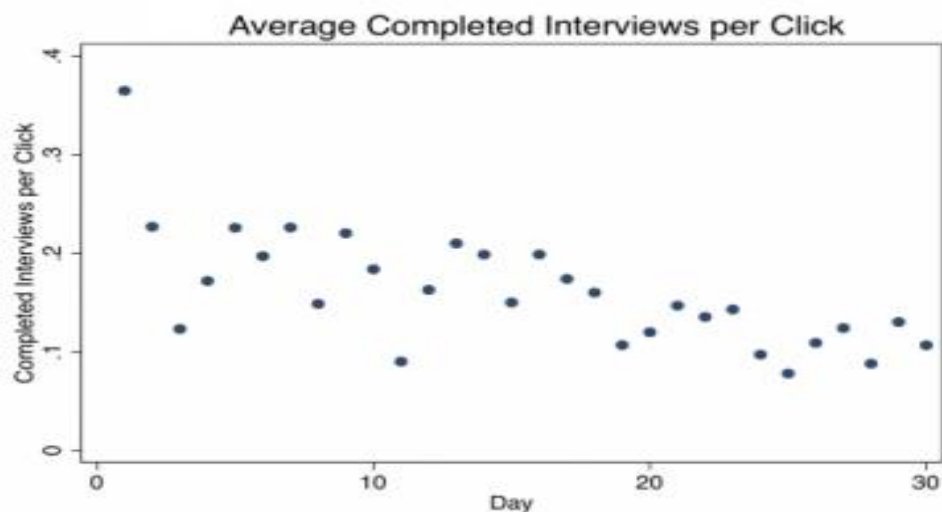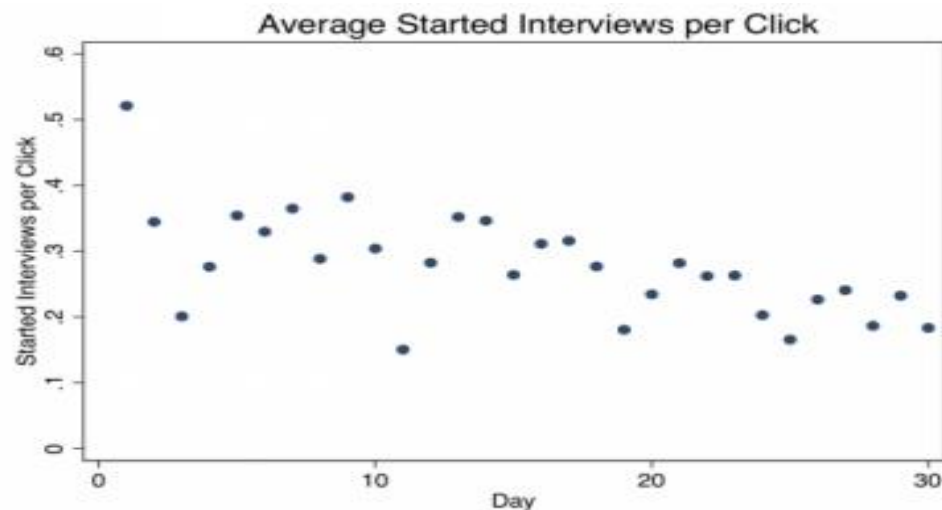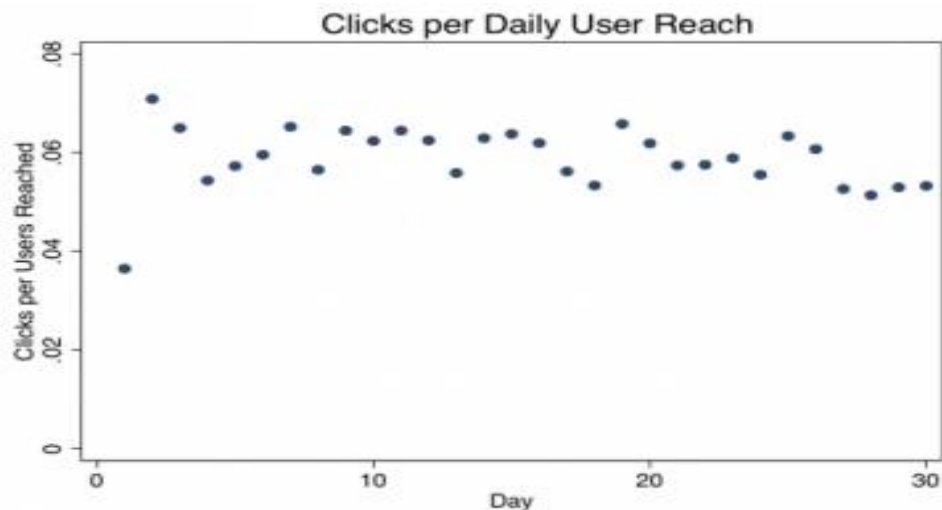
The average completion time for the survey was 14 minutes.

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Survey results across the 30-day fieldwork period

> ➤ Facebook provides meta-information about the performance of a campaign, including, the total number of individuals reached through an ad on a given day

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Experimental survey

➤ In order to learn about potential coverage error, key features of the composition of the social media sample were compared with those of the ISTAT " traditional "survey:

ISTAT-UNAR SURVEY ON LABOUR DISCRIMINATION TOWARDS LGBT+ PEOPLE (IN CIVIL UNION OR FORMERLY IN UNION)

➤ In 2021 Istat carried out the survey on employment discrimination against LGBT+ people , addressed to all individuals living in Italy who, from the Municipal Registers (LAC), on 1 January 2020 were in a civil union

➤ The survey was carried out using the CAWI-Computer Assisted Web Interviewing technique and involved the self-compilation of an online questionnaire

➤ The sample size did not allow for regional comparisons and subgroup analyses, such as the living conditions of "rainbow families"

Experimental survey: results

Comparison of the demographic composition of both surveys:

➤ The social media sample was much younger

➤ The high average educational level in the sms

LGBT+ survey	Social media survey	ISTAT survey
Age		
18-34	72,2	14,7
35-49	19,9	41,7
50+	7,9	43,6
Nationality		
Italian	74,3	92,2
Other	25,7	7,8
Gender		
Male	28,1	28,3
Female	59,3	40,8
Other	12,6	30,9
School education		
Low	10,2	34,8
Medium	34,1	34,4
high	55,7	29,2
Children in household		
Yes	25,4	7,8
No	74,6	91,2

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Outline

Feedback …
Please tell us about your experience- good or bad!

> The non probabilistic sample

- «More females»
- «Survey was aimed at recruiting rainbow families

> Feedback from the respondents

- «Willingness of participants to be re-interviewed in the future or to take part in a panel study»
- HIgh rates of re-participation minimize the potential for nonresponse bias in the analyses of survey data collected in subsequent waves.

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Conclusions

01 Recruiting survey respondents via Twitter or Facebook can offer a convenient and accessible approach

02 It's essential to be aware of the potential biases and limitations associated with this method.

03 Traditional recruitment methods can be combined with low-cost internet mediated recruitment methods for a multi-modal recruitment strategy

04 Increased response rates and more inclusive data sets through respondent involvement

05 Successful outcomes resulting from respondent-focused strategies

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"I'm an honest person but when I take an online survey, I'm a big liar."

Thank you!
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