

Report on Coronavirus survey in Italy: First wave

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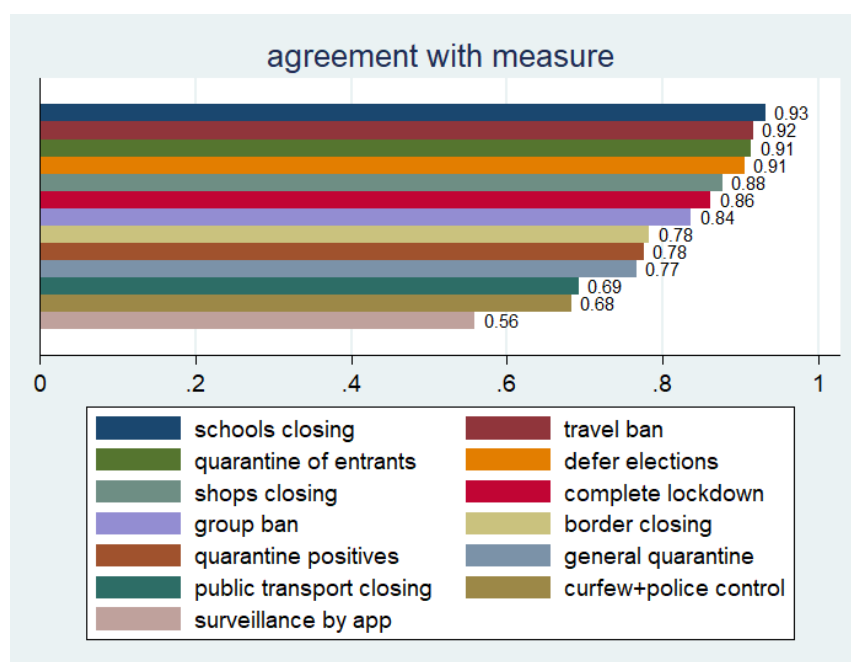
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In this report, we focus on the agreement with government measures to prevent the spread of the virus, and with their timing, on the general assessment with the government's measures in the domains of health and economic policy, and with the general satisfaction with the government. For each aspect to be discussed, we present the differences between the government (and its two major components) and the opposition, with non-voters (and the small group of voters of other parties) being placed in between the two major camps. The report is based on a representative online survey by IPSOS that has been in the field on March 28-30, 2020.

Agreement with government measures

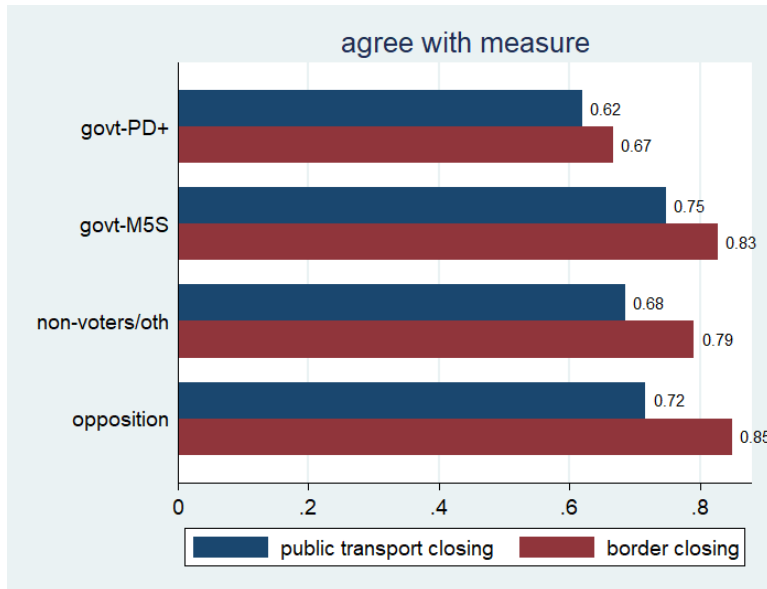
As is shown in Figure 1, agreement with the various measures taken by the government to prevent the spread of the virus is generally rather high. Even the least accepted measure, the use of apps for the surveillance of the public is accepted by a majority of the Italians.

Figure 1: agreement with measures



Given the very high level of acceptance of the measures, there are hardly any differences between the political camps in this respect. There are, however, two measures, which are accepted to a greater extent by the opposition than by the governing PD (including the governing parties to its left) – closing down public transports and closing down the borders. This is shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2: agreement with closing public transports and closing down the borders

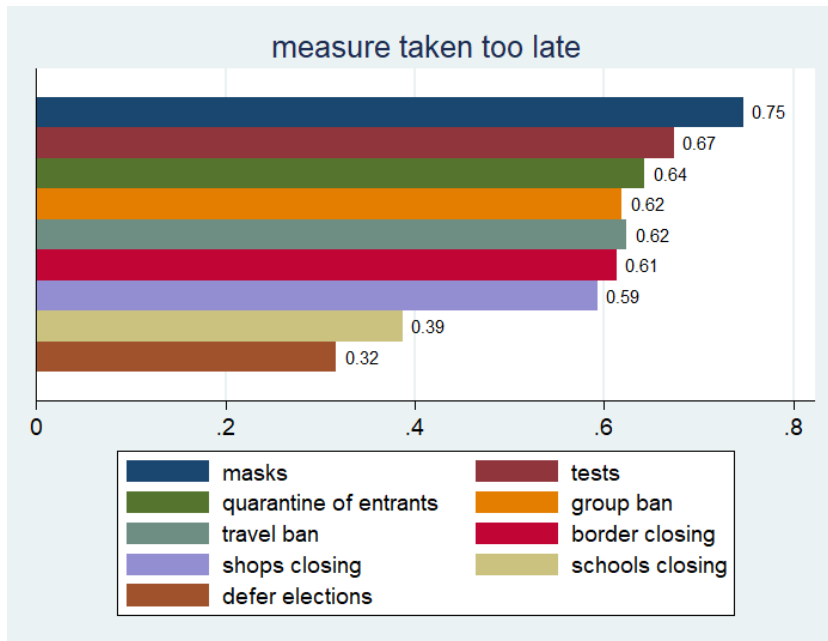


Note: govt-PD+ = PD+radical left voters at the last national elections in 2018; govt-M5S= voters of M5S; non-voters/oth=non-voters and voters of minor parties (e.g. UDC); opposition=voters of Forza Italia, Lega and Fratelli d'Italia

Timing of the measures

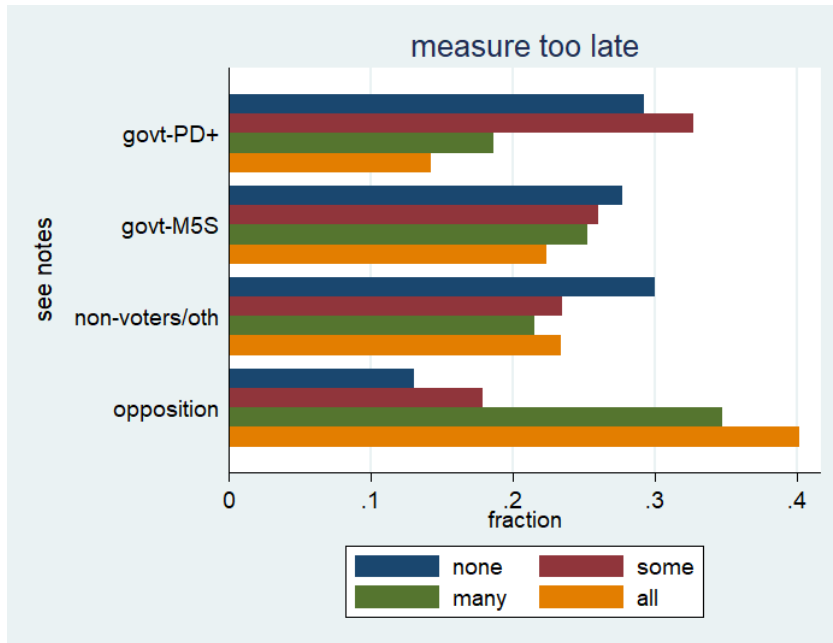
If the measures are generally very well accepted, there is widespread critique that they have not been adopted in time, as is shown by Figure 3. Except for the school closing and the deferral of elections, rather sizeable majorities of the Italians think that the measures against the spread of the virus have been adopted too late. This is most clearly the case for what concerns the availability of masks and tests, but it also applies to all the other measures

Figure 3: critique of the timing of the measures – shares of Italians saying that the measures have been adopted too late



The critique with regard to the timing of the measures is largely a function of whether or not one is a partisan of the government or of the opposition, as is shown in Figure 4. This figure distinguishes between four categories of critics: those who do not criticize any measure for late timing (“none”), those who criticize some measures for having been adopted too late, the ones who criticize many measures in this respect, and those who criticize the late introduction of all the measures. As is immediately apparent, the criticism of late timing is more widespread among the adherents of the opposition, of whom no less than 40 percent criticize the government for late adoption of all the measures. Among the adherents of the governing parties, this criticism is less widespread, but even among the adherents of the left (PD+), only bit less than 30 percent have mentioned no such critique at all, and among the partisans of M5S this critique is rather more widespread than among the non-voters.

Figure 4: critique of the timing of the measures, by political camp



Note: govt-PD+ = PD+radical left voters at the last national elections in 2018; govt-M5S= voters of M5S; non-voters/oth=non-voters and voters of minor parties (e.g. UDC); opposition=voters of Forza Italia, Lega and Fratelli d'Italia

Overall assessment of the health and economic measures

The Italians are quite critical of the government's responses, more so with regard to the economic measures than with the public health measures. A third of the Italians (34 percent) consider the public health response of the government insufficient and a majority (55 percent) considers the economic response insufficient (Figure 5). As is shown in Figure 6, the share of people who consider the economic and public health responses insufficient varies again heavily by political camp. Thus, the adherents of the parties in the opposition are much more critical in both respects than the adherents of the parties in government, with the non-voters closer to the parties in government. But even 44 percent of PD+ voters and 50 percent of M5S voters are critical of the economic measures taken by the government.

Figure 5: Shares of Italians considering public health and economic response insufficient

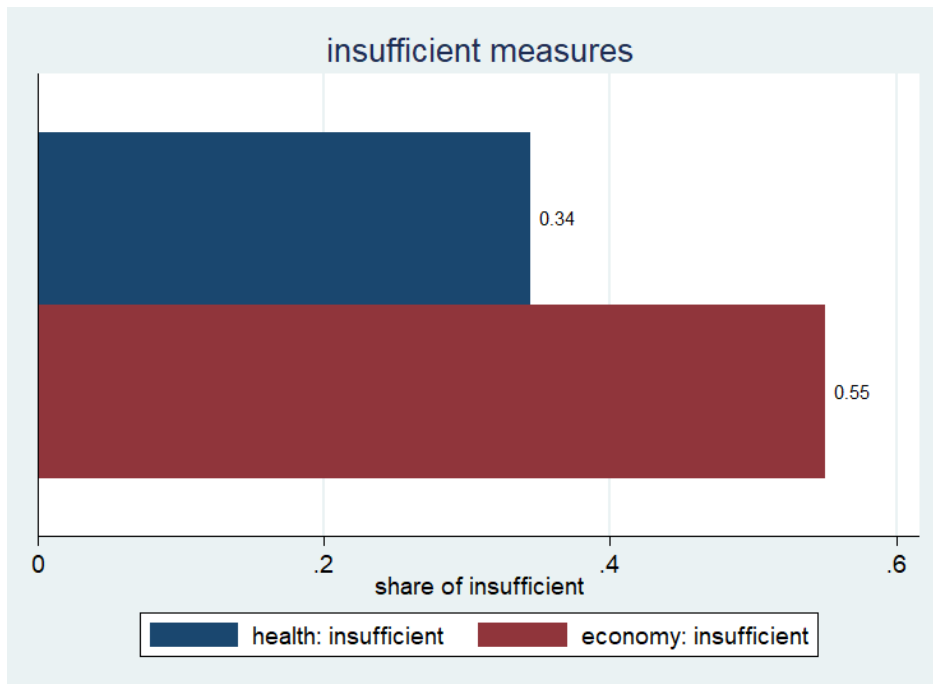
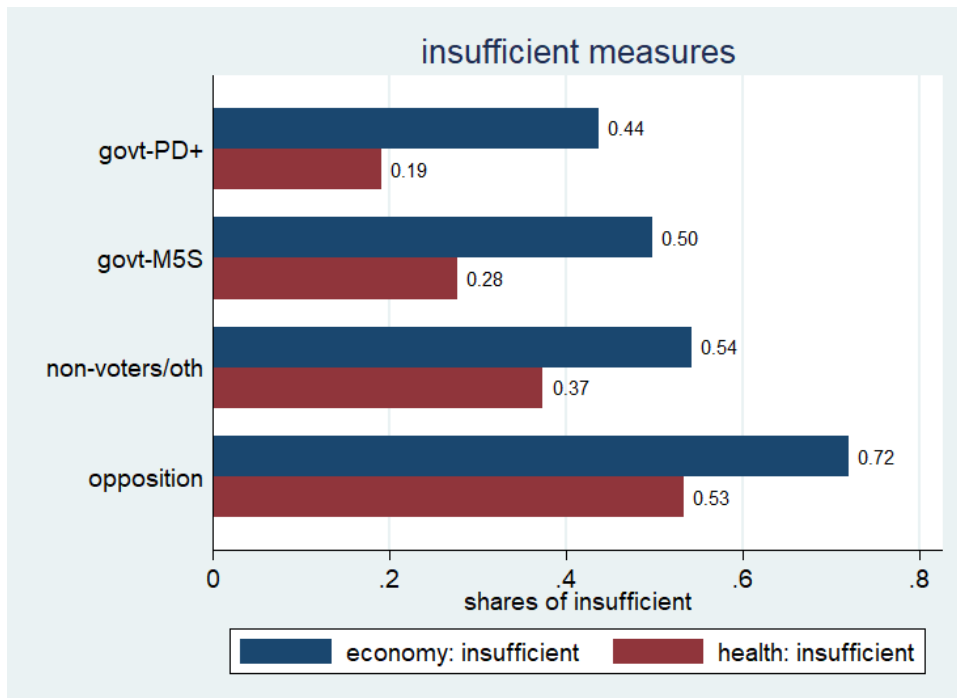


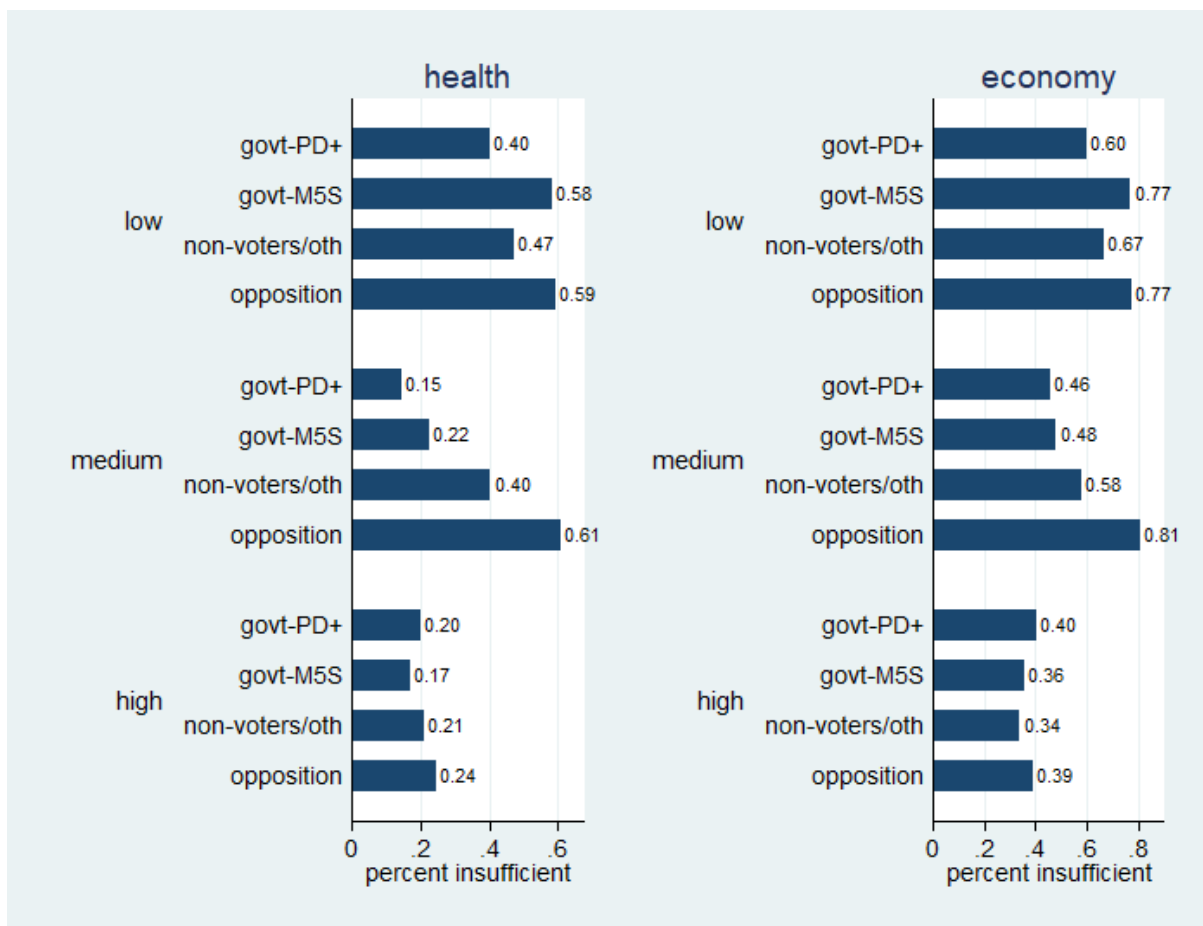
Figure 6: Shares of Italians who consider public health and economic response insufficient, by political camp



The critique of the measures taken by the government also depends on whether the person trusts the political elite/institutions or not. We can distinguish between three groups: those who have low political trust – roughly 20 percent of the voters, those who high political trust – roughly a third of the voters, and a group in between – roughly half of the voters.

Figure 7 shows how trust modifies the evaluation of the government's policies of the different political camps. As we can see, people with low political trust are the most critical of the government's health and economic measures, largely independently of whether they belong to the government camp or the opposition. Conversely, people with high political trust are the least critical of the government's policies. It is the people with medium political trust, whose assessment of the government's policies varies as a function of whether they have voted for the parties in government or for those in opposition or whether they have not voted at all. The effect of the political orientation among this group with medium trust is especially pronounced with respect to public health measures: while the supporters of the coalition parties are happy with the measures (only 15% of PD+ voters and only 22% of the M5S voters find them insufficient), almost two-thirds (61%) of the opposition voters find them insufficient.

Figure 7: Shares of Italians who consider public health and economic response insufficient, by political camp and political trust

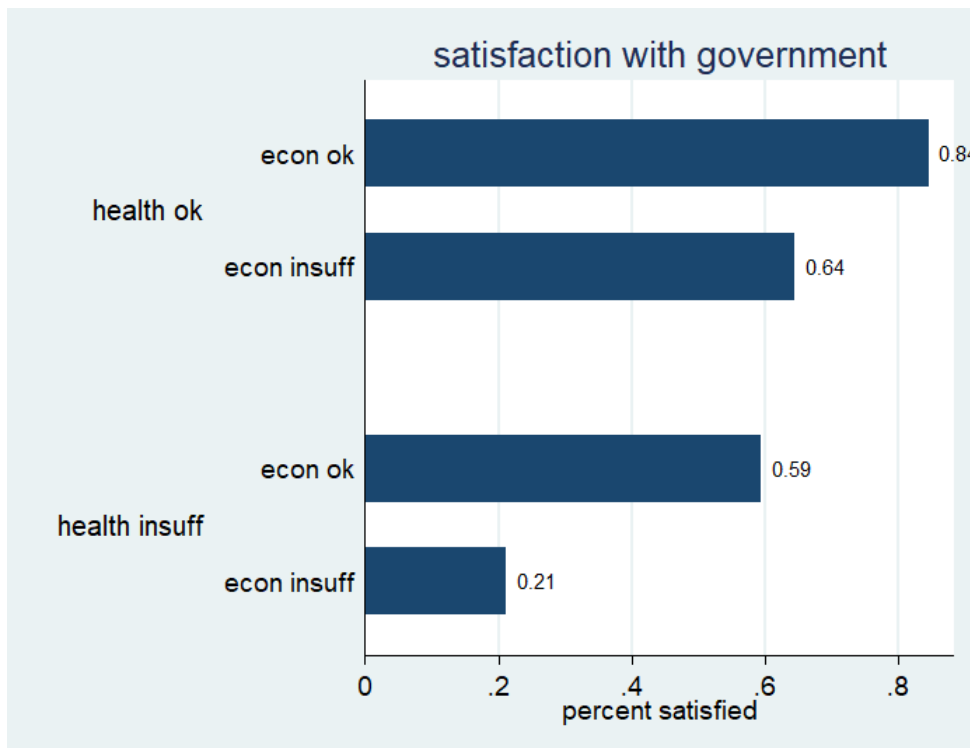


Overall satisfaction with the government

As Figure 8 shows, the overall satisfaction with the government is a function of the satisfaction with its health and its economic policy. People who think that the government's measures in both of these policy domains have been adequate are most satisfied with the

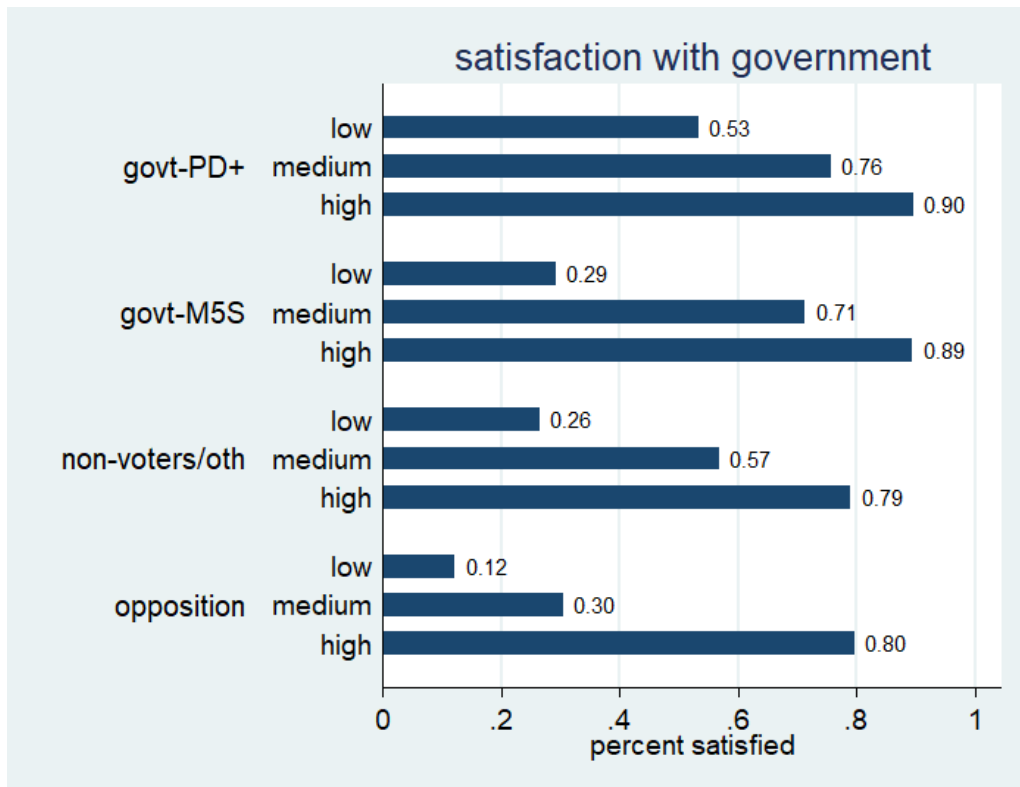
government: no less than 84% among them are satisfied with the government. Among those who are dissatisfied with one or the other type of measure, satisfaction with the government drops to roughly two-thirds – 64% if they consider the economic measures insufficient and 59% if they consider the health measures insufficient. The satisfaction with the government drops to 21% for those who consider both measures insufficient.

Figure 8: overall satisfaction with the government, by evaluation of health and economic measures



Since the evaluation of the economic and public health measures is heavily dependent on one's political orientations – one's adherence to the government or opposition camp, as well as one's political trust, the overall satisfaction with the government is effectively rooted in these political orientations, as is shown by Figure 9. In each camp, people with high political trust are satisfied with the government. Even partisans of the opposition are satisfied with the government to the tune of 80%, provided they trust the political elite and the political institutions. By contrast, in each camp, people who do not trust the political elite/institutions are less satisfied with the government. Even in the government's own camps, people who do not trust the political elite tend to be dissatisfied with the government: among the PD+ adherents, still 53% of the people with low trust are satisfied with the government, but among the distrusting M5S adherents, the share of the satisfied drops as low as 29%. The least satisfied with the government are the distrustful voters of the opposition: only 12% among them are satisfied with the government

Figure 9: overall satisfaction with the government, by political camp and political trust



Compliance with the government health measures

The overall compliance with the government's health measures is very high, as is shown by Figure 10. Only the last two measures are not followed by large majorities of the Italians: stocking food and/or medicine, and stocking masks. But this is for quite understandable reasons. At the time of the survey, masks were not readily available and the same applies for medicine. Finally, Figure 11 shows that compliance with the measures is not a question of political orientation. People from all political camps comply with the measures to largely the same extent.

Figure 10: compliance with government health measures

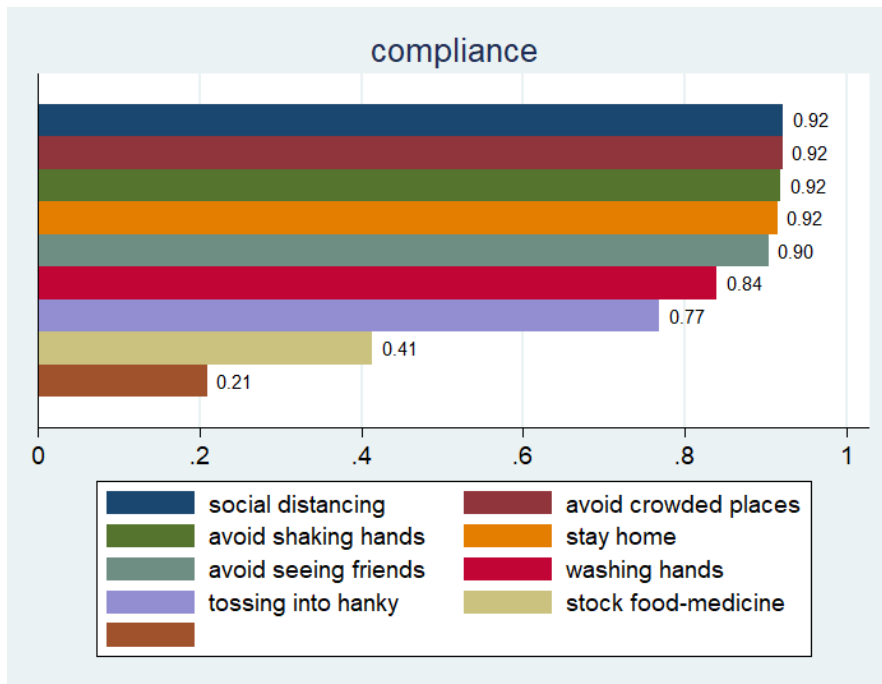
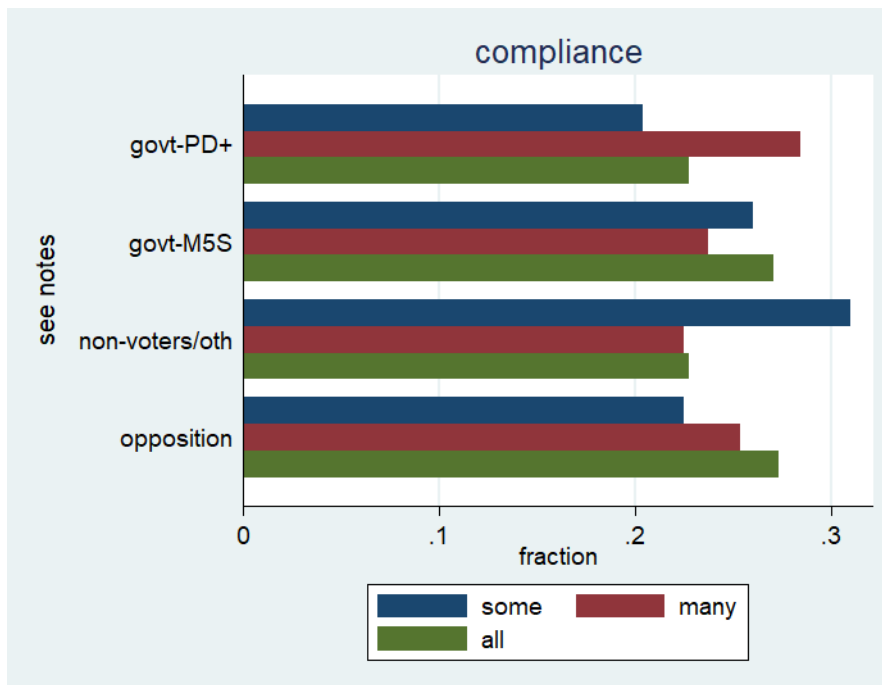


Figure 11: compliance by political camp



Note: "some" comply with some measures, "many" comply with many measures, "all" comply with all measures.