

IMPLICIT AND EXPLICIT IMAGES OF THE UNITED STATES AMONG LEFT-WING AND RIGHT-WING ITALIANS

ROSSELLA FALVO

ELENA TRIFILETTI

UNIVERSITY OF PADOVA

EMANUELE CASTANO

NEW SCHOOL FOR SOCIAL RESEARCH, NEW YORK

DORA CAPOZZA

UNIVERSITY OF PADOVA

Research findings on Image Theory show that political orientation moderates Italians' endorsement of explicit images of America; in fact, left-wingers see Americans as *barbarians*, while right-wingers describe them according to the images of *father* and *ally*. The present study aims at investigating whether the same divide occurs when images are assessed implicitly. Implicit attitudes and beliefs reflect introspectively unidentified traces of past experience, and it is thus possible that the largely common socialization of left-wing and right-wing Italians results in similar implicit images of America. Results replicated previous differences found at the explicit level. At the implicit level, however, no difference between left-wingers and right-wingers was revealed: for both groups, America was implicitly associated with the image of *father*. Thus, for left-wing participants, a case of dissociation between explicit and implicit images was detected. Implications of findings for Image Theory and the prediction of intergroup relations are discussed.

Key words: Image theory; Implicit images of America; Explicit images of America; Father image; Images and political orientation.

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Rossella Falvo, Dipartimento FISPPA – Sezione di Psicologia Applicata, Università di Padova, Via Venezia 8, 35131 PADOVA (PD), Italy. Email: rossella.falvo@unipd.it

INTRODUCTION

In the field of political science, researchers (e.g., Boulding, 1959; Herrmann, 1985) have proposed Image Theory in order to explain international relations and group relations at large (Alexander, Brewer, & Livingston, 2005). According to Image Theory, people evaluate an in-group/outgroup relation on the basis of three structural dimensions: goals compatibility, relative power, and relative cultural status, namely cultural sophistication (e.g., Alexander, Brewer, & Herrmann, 1999). The image nations have of each other derives from a specific constellation of these attributes; images serve to give meaning to the political environment and to justify one's behaviors toward the other nations (Herrmann, 2003). The most clearly theorized and empirically investigated images are those of *enemy*, *ally*, *dependent*, *barbarian*, and *imperialist*. The image of

enemy, portraying the adversary as hostile, opportunistic, and untrustworthy, arises when the in-group/outgroup relationship is perceived as defined by incompatible goals, similar power and similar status. The mirror image of enemy, ally, pictures the other nation as cooperative and reliable; it follows from the perception of compatible goals, similar power and similar cultural sophistication. Two representations — barbarian and imperialist — stem from the perception of negative interdependence (Alexander, Brewer, & Livingston, 2005). The image of barbarian (the outgroup is violent, irrational, ruthless) is evoked when the foreign nation is viewed as more powerful, but culturally inferior to the ingroup; the imperialist image (the other nation is arrogant, paternalistic, controlling), in contrast, stems from the perception of the outgroup as higher both in power and cultural status. A last image, dependent, is characterized by incompatible goals, and outgroup's lower power and lower status; it is believed that the other nation can be easily exploited. The main tenets of Image Theory have been supported both by experimental (see, e.g., Alexander et al., 1999; Castano, Sacchi, & Gries, 2003) and correlational studies (e.g., Alexander, Levin, & Henry, 2005), and by archive data (e.g., Herrmann & Fischerkeller, 1995).

Image Theory's hypotheses pertain exclusively to deliberate beliefs on both the structure of intergroup relations and the resulting outgroup images; coherently, empirical evidence has solely relied on explicit measures, based on self-report methods. However, in the last two decades, research on implicit social cognition has clearly demonstrated that much human activity may be influenced by processes falling outside of awareness, control or intention (see, e.g., Bargh, 1997; Gawronski & Payne, 2010). A large array of implicit measures, that is, indirect methods, based for instance on speeded response time tasks, has been developed, the most known technique being the Implicit Association Test (IAT; Greenwald, McGhee, & Schwartz, 1998). Thus, implicit measures are usefully applied when respondents are presumably unaware of their cognitions, or when they are unwilling to report them (see the case of socially sensitive topics).

Our suggestion is that implicit social cognition methods and theoretical accounts can bring incremental value and new insights into Image Theory. In the present study, we propose to assess the images of a foreign nation through an implicit measure, with the aim of investigating whether explicit and implicit images are consistent or not. It is possible, in fact, that attitudes and beliefs endorsed at an explicit level, namely in a deliberate and intended mode, may diverge from those held at an implicit level. Implicit attitudes and beliefs, in fact, are defined as introspectively unidentified traces of past experience that mediate favorable or unfavorable feelings, thoughts, and actions toward social objects (Greenwald & Banaji, 1995). A dissociation between the two levels can be expected, for instance, in the case of a national context, in which people's knowledge of cultural stereotypes about another nation is stored in memory in the form of associative (implicit) representations. At a deliberate level, people may accept or not accept these stereotypes or other available information (see Gawronski & Bodenhausen, 2006; Nosek & Hansen, 2008). Inconsistent implicit and explicit outgroup images would suggest the opportunity of extending Image Theory and exploring the conditions in which discrepancies are likely to occur. The relationship between explicit and implicit measures is a widely debated issue in the field of social cognition, and processes accounting for inconsistencies have been identified (see, e.g., in the attitudes domain, Greenwald & Nosek, 2009; Rydell & McConnell, 2010).

The present study investigates for the first time the correspondence between explicit and implicit images of a nation, focusing on the images of the USA among Italians with different political orientation. As a consequence of the 9/11 attacks and the international war against terror-

ism, increasing attention has been devoted to how the USA is perceived by other countries (see the Pew Global Attitudes Project, 2002, 2004, and, in the context of Image Theory, Alexander, Levin, & Henry, 2005; Bilali, 2010). Although Italy has played a central role in the war against terrorism, not all Italians look favorably upon the United States and its foreign policy. Voters of center and right-wing parties were and are generally in favor of cooperating with the USA in the war on terror. In contrast, among left-wingers, antiterrorism wars have caused a revival of the anti-Americanism, which was strong during the Cold War. The existence of a split between the Italian left and right electorate in their views of the United States is supported by anecdotal evidence and recent work on Image Theory. Capozza, Trifiletti, Vezzali, and Andrichetto (2009) found that, for right-wing participants (university students), the perceived structural attributes were: goal compatibility, stronger power of the outgroup, higher cultural status of the ingroup. In addition to the ally image, that of *father* emerged. The image of father entails the belief that the other nation is capable of protecting the ingroup, and willing to help in situations of threat.¹ As to ally, the perception of Americans' stronger power and Italians' higher status may generate the belief that the two groups provide an equal contribution in cooperation in the international scene. For left-wing participants, instead, the structural attributes were: antagonistic goals, stronger power of Americans, higher status of Italians. As expected, this combination was associated with the image of America as a barbaric country, strong but childlike, with an inferior culture. These findings were fully replicated by a study examining right-wing and left-wing Italian adults (Trifiletti, Falvo, Dazzi, & Capozza, 2012).

Results of both studies were obtained with self-report measures. As anticipated, explicit images may differ from implicit images. Since implicit images may reflect the knowledge of cultural stereotypes rather than personal beliefs (see Banaji, 2001; Devine, 1989), right-wing and left-wing Italians could hold similar implicit images of the USA.² In fact, through movies and documentary films, Italians are frequently exposed to information showing the military and economic help America offered to Italy at the end and in the aftermath of the Second World War. Prototypical of this information are the movie "Paisà," directed by Rossellini (1946), and some scenes of Benigni's "Life is beautiful." In this movie it is, for instance, shown that during the liberation of a camp a helpful American soldier, driving a powerful tank, saves the Italian child Giosué (Joshua), who is one of the main characters of the movie (Ferri, Braschi, & Benigni, 1997). Thus, among both left-wingers and right-wingers, the implicit images of the USA could be those of father and ally.

OVERVIEW

In the current paper, we present a study investigating the explicit and implicit images of the United States and their consistency. To assess the perceived structural attributes characterizing this intergroup relation and the images of the USA explicitly endorsed by right-wing and left-wing Italians, items used in previous studies were applied (see, e.g., Capozza et al., 2009). For the implicit images of the USA, we applied the Go/No-go Association Task (GNAT), adapted from Nosek and Banaji's (2001) original procedure. The GNAT is a technique derived from the Implicit Association Test (Greenwald et al., 1998). Differently from the IAT, the GNAT can detect the implicit associations of a target category, without considering a contrasting category (for

adaptations of the GNAT to different domains from attitudes see, e.g., Capozza, Andrichetto, Di Bernardo, & Falvo, 2012; Loughnan, Haslam, & Kashima, 2009; Williams & Kaufmann, 2012). The GNAT was used to tap the implicit association of America with the images of ally, barbarian, enemy, father, and imperialist. The image of dependent was not analyzed because it is not relevant to this intergroup context.

As regards to the explicit images, we expected to show again what found in Capozza et al. (2009) and Trifiletti et al. (2012). Both left-wingers and right-wingers should ascribe a higher cultural status to Italians and a stronger power to the USA, but they should diverge for the perceptions of goals, namely, right-wingers should perceive the goals of the two nations as compatible and left-wingers as incompatible. The two combinations of structural attributes should, in turn, be related to the endorsement of the barbarian image, for left-wingers, and the endorsement of the father and ally images, for right-wingers. As to implicit images, we expected that, given the cultural representation of the USA in Italy, both political groups should associate positive images (father and ally) to this country. Therefore, for right-wingers explicit and implicit images should be consistent, whereas, for left-wingers a case of dissociation should be found: left-wing respondents should deliberately describe Americans as barbarians, but they should associate Americans with father and ally on the implicit level. Data were collected during Spring/Summer 2008, namely before the end of the Iraq war.

METHOD

Participants and Procedure

Participants were 114 Italian university students (51 males, 63 females; $M_{\text{age}} = 22.09$ years, $SD = 2.68$). Political orientation was assessed by asking participants to categorize themselves on the basis of the two main coalitions present on the Italian political scene: centre-right and center-left. Sixty-four participants (40 females) classified themselves as left-wingers and 50 (23 females) as right-wingers.

Participants were examined individually. They were first required to judge the three structural dimensions: goal compatibility, relative power, and relative status. Participants then completed the Go/No-go Association Task (Nosek & Banaji, 2001). Finally, they filled out a questionnaire containing the explicit measures of outgroup images. After indicating their personal data, respondents were debriefed, thanked, and paid for participation.

Measures

Perceptions of structural attributes. Measures of structural attributes were adapted from Alexander, Levin, and Henry (2005), and Capozza et al. (2009). Goal compatibility was assessed with two items asking participants to indicate to what extent the foreign policy and economic plans of the United States were compatible with Italian interests. The response scale was anchored by 1 (goal compatibility) and 7 (goal incompatibility), with 4 as the midpoint (Americans' goals in foreign policy and economy do not affect Italians' goals). The correlation between the

two items was $r = .38, p < .01$, for left-wingers, and $r = .42, p < .01$, for right-wingers; a single measure of goal compatibility was obtained by averaging the two items. Relative power was assessed by asking participants to indicate whether they perceived Italy as superior, equal or inferior to the United States in terms of world power; on the 7-point scale: 1 = superior, 4 = equal, 7 = inferior. Relative status was measured with one item comparing the cultural status of the two countries (see Alexander, Levin, & Henry, 2005). The response scale was anchored by 1 (higher status of Italians) and 7 (higher status of Americans), with 4 (equal status) as the midpoint.

The GNAT for measuring implicit images. The GNAT required participants to respond, as quickly and accurately as possible, to stimuli presented one at a time in the center of the computer screen by pressing the space bar (*Go*), whenever a target item (*signal*) appeared, and not pressing any key (*No-go*), whenever a distracter item (*noise*) appeared. For each block of trials, targets (signals) were the outgroup category (words referring to America, e.g., the USA, American) and one of the five images (e.g., words referring to ally, such as fellow, partner); the distracter (noise) was a contrasting image (e.g., words meaning enemy, such as opponent, antagonist). The complete list of stimuli is shown in Appendix A. Labels indicating the two targets (e.g., America and ally) were shown in the upper-left and upper-right quadrants of the screen to remind the stimuli to be identified (*Go* responses). In creating the trial blocks, six categories were used: the five images, each expressed by five words, and the American outgroup, expressed by 10 words. For the stimuli selection, a first pilot study served to identify the four most frequently mentioned synonyms of each of the five images. For each of the five images, the words chosen were never used as synonyms for the other images. A second pilot study allowed us to measure valence and familiarity of the selected words.³ In the pilot studies, participants were university students; the majority belonged to the left or right coalition.

The GNAT consisted of 20 blocks of trials, obtained from the comparison between all the five images (Appendix B). For instance, a comparison concerned barbarian and enemy. In one block (1A), words related to America and words related to barbarian were the targets, while words related to enemy were the distracters; in the parallel block (1B), America and enemy were the targets and barbarian was the distracter.⁴ The order of presentation of the two blocks within each comparison, as well as the sequence of the 10 comparisons, were randomly determined for each participant. Each of the 20 blocks was composed of 35 trials randomly presented; the proportion of target items to distracter items was 4:3 (see Nosek & Banaji, 2001; Experiment 3). For instance, for block 1A, targets were the five stimuli referring to barbarian, each presented twice, and the 10 stimuli related to America; distracters were the five stimuli related to enemy, each presented three times. A 800 ms response window was used: stimuli remained on the screen until the bar was pressed or the deadline was reached. The intertrial interval was 400 ms.

Before starting the GNAT, participants completed two pencil and paper tasks. The first required them to identify the synonyms of each of the five images from a list of words; the second required them to identify the items referring to the USA from a list of terms, which indicated states, state regions, state capitals, towns, and other concepts (e.g., Marines). At the end of each task, the experimenter checked participants' responses and, in case of errors, indicated the correct response. The two tasks aimed at checking the recognition of the selected stimuli as synonyms of each of the five images, or as concepts related to the USA. They were performed twice in case of errors. A great majority of respondents ($n = 106$) gave correct answers at the first application of the tasks.

With regard to the GNAT, to measure the sensitivity (accuracy) in discriminating target items from distracter items, the index d' (Green & Swets, 1966) was calculated for each of the 20 blocks. D -prime is obtained by subtracting the proportion of false alarms (incorrect *Go* responses to distracter items) from the proportion of hits (correct *Go* responses to target items). Both proportions are converted into z scores: the higher the d' value, the stronger the association between the two concepts serving as targets. If the d' relative to the block USA + barbarian (4A, Appendix B) is higher than the d' relative to the block USA + father (4B, Appendix B), this means that America is more associated with the barbarian image than with the father image. D -prime values of 0 or below indicate that respondents were unable to discriminate targets from distracters or were not performing the task according to instructions (Nosek & Banaji, 2001; for an application of the GNAT with only one target group and two contrasting attributes, see Loughnan et al., 2009).

Explicit images. To assess the explicit images, we used items drawn from Capozza et al. (2009; see also Trifiletti et al., 2012) and adapted from Alexander, Brewer, and Livingston (2005), and Alexander, Levin, and Henry (2005). Four items were used to assess each of the following images: ally, barbarian, enemy, and imperialist. Examples are: "In the case of Italians, the United States values cooperative solutions to problems" (ally); "Americans in general take whatever they want, and enjoy intimidating others" (barbarian); "Americans cannot be trusted because they know how to trick you" (enemy); "Americans are arrogant and convinced they are superior to others, also to Italians" (imperialist). To assess the father image, seven items were used; sample items are: "If Italians are in need, Americans are ready to help them"; "We must thank Americans if we have democracy in Italy." Respondents answered on a 7-point Likert scale, anchored by *strongly disagree* and *strongly agree*, with *neither/nor* as the midpoint. Reliabilities were satisfactory among both groups of participants, after dropping one item for the ally, barbarian, enemy, and father images: alphas ranged between .69 and .74, for right-wingers, and between .66 and .84, for left-wingers. For each image, items were averaged to obtain reliable composite scores.

RESULTS

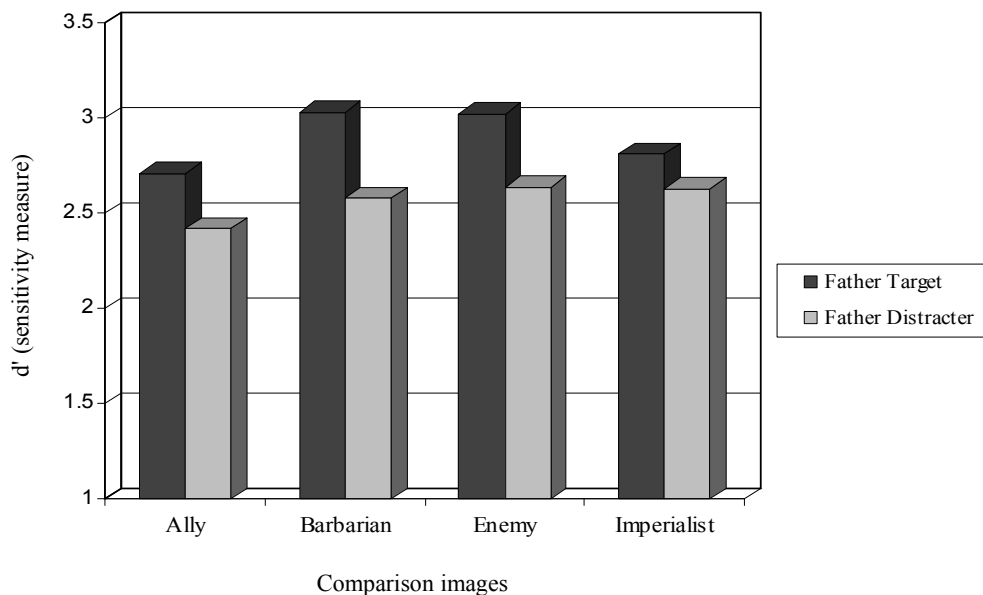
Explicit Measures: Structural Attributes

Left-wingers perceived the Italy/U.S. relationship as defined by incompatible goals ($M = 4.46$, $SD = 1.10$), greater power of Americans ($M = 6.53$, $SD = 0.62$), and higher cultural status of Italians ($M = 2.78$, $SD = 1.20$). Right-wingers, in contrast, viewed American and Italian goals as compatible ($M = 3.61$, $SD = 1.22$), ascribed greater potency to Americans ($M = 6.66$, $SD = 0.56$), and more cultural sophistication to Italians ($M = 2.46$, $SD = 1.26$). All means were reliably different from the midpoint of the scale, $ts \geq 2.26$, $ps < .03$. To test whether structural perceptions were different according to participants' political orientation, MANOVA was applied: the three structural attributes were the dependent variables. The multivariate effect of political orientation was significant, $F(3, 110) = 5.46$, $p < .01$, $\eta_p^2 = .13$. This effect was only due to goal compatibility, $F(1, 112) = 15.30$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .12$; the other univariate effects were not significant, $Fs(1, 112) \leq 1.92$, *ns*. These findings replicate what found in previous research on U.S. images in Italy (Capozza et al., 2009; Trifiletti et al., 2012).

Implicit Images

Data of 10 participants (three left-wingers and seven right-wingers) were removed from analyses of implicit images, since they had d' values of 0 or below. To test whether the implicit images of father and ally differed, blocks 10A and 10B (Appendix B) were compared. Sensitivity scores were submitted to a 2 (political orientation: left-wingers vs. right-wingers) \times 2 (target image: father vs. ally) ANOVA, with the last factor serving as a within-participants factor. Only the main effect of target image was significant, $F(1, 102) = 10.44, p < .01, \eta_p^2 = .10$; independent of political orientation, d' scores were higher for the block in which father was target and ally was distracter (10B), than in the reverse block (10A): $M = 2.71$ ($SD = 0.75$) and $M = 2.42$ ($SD = 0.86$), respectively (Figure 1). For both left-wing and right-wing participants, the American out-group was more associated with father-related than ally-related words.

To test whether the image of father was more strongly associated with America than each of the three negative images, d' scores were submitted to a 2 (political orientation) \times 3 (negative image: barbarian vs. enemy vs. imperialist) \times 2 (father image: target vs. distracter) ANOVA, with the last two factors serving as within-participants factors. Only the main effect of father image was significant, $F(1, 102) = 39.96, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .28$. Irrespective of the contrast image, d' values were higher in the blocks in which father was target ($M = 2.95, SD = 0.62$) than in the blocks in which it was distracter ($M = 2.62, SD = 0.62$). Thus, for both right-wingers and left-wingers, the U.S. image was more associated with father than with barbarian, enemy, and imperialist (see Figure 1).

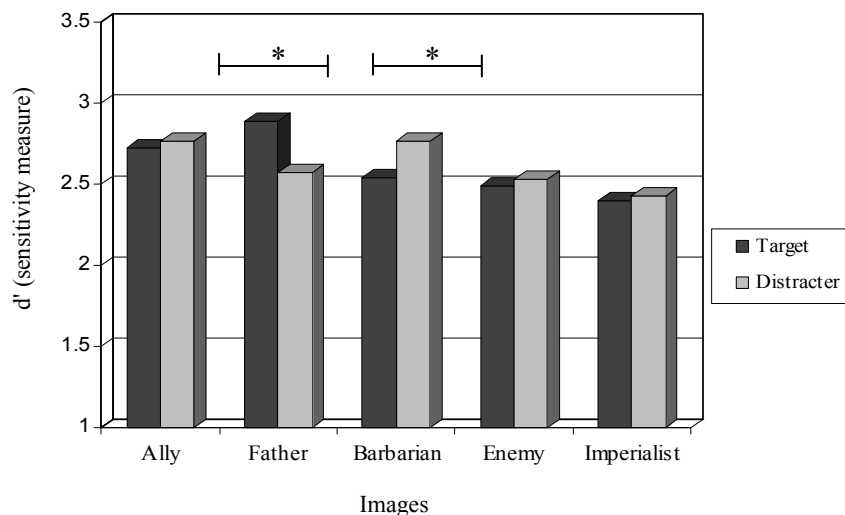


Note. For each comparison, when father is the target, the higher d' , the stronger the association of father with the United States; when father is the distracter, the higher d' , the stronger the association of the comparison image with the United States. The diagram shows that America is more associated with the image of father than with the images of ally, barbarian, enemy, and imperialist, $p < .001$.

FIGURE 1
Sensitivity scores relative to the father image.

A similar ANOVA was performed for ally: political orientation \times negative image (barbarian vs. enemy vs. imperialist) \times ally image (target vs. distracter). The main effect of negative image was significant, $F(2, 204) = 29.52, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .22$. Sensitivity scores were lower for the ally/imperialist comparison ($M = 2.51, SD = 0.77$) than for the other comparisons: $M = 2.92 (SD = 0.76)$, for enemy, $M = 2.96 (SD = 0.69)$, for barbarian, $ts \geq 6.31, ps < .001$. Also the interaction Political Orientation \times Ally (target vs. distracter) was significant, $F(1, 102) = 4.31, p < .05, \eta_p^2 = .04$. Analysis of simple effects showed only a marginally significant effect: among left-wingers, sensitivity scores were higher when ally was target than when it was distracter, $F(1, 102) = 3.43, p = .07, \eta_p^2 = .03$, this finding showing that, in this political group, America was more associated with ally than with the negative images. Thus, findings suggest that, regardless of political orientation, the American outgroup was more associated with father than with the negative images. A similar result was found for ally, but it was weak, and only pertained to the leftist group.

Last, we conducted a 2 (political orientation) \times 2 (image function: target vs. distracter) MANOVA, with the five images used as dependent variables. For each image, two scores were computed: the mean of sensitivity scores for the four blocks in which it was used as target, and the mean of sensitivity scores for the four blocks in which it was used as distracter. Only the multivariate main effect of image function was significant, $F(4, 99) = 15.11, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .38$. This effect was due to the difference between being target and being distracter for the images of father and barbarian, $F_s(1, 102) \geq 23.79, ps < .001, \eta_p^2s \geq .19$. Accuracy scores were higher when father was used as target ($M = 2.89, SD = 0.58$) than when it was used as distracter ($M = 2.57, SD = 0.62$) (Figure 2). Accuracy scores were, in contrast, higher when barbarian was used as distracter ($M = 2.76, SD = 0.64$) than when it was used as target ($M = 2.54, SD = 0.62$): this result means that America was less represented in terms of barbarian than in terms of the other images.



Note. Sensitivity scores, related to the blocks in which an image was used as the target, and sensitivity scores, related to the blocks in which it was used as the distracter, are compared. The two measures are different only for the images of father and barbarian, $p < .001$. Participants performed better when they had to associate father with America (father was the target) than when they had to dissociate the two concepts (father was the distracter). For barbarian, participants performed better when they had to dissociate the barbaric image from America (barbarian was the distracter) than when they had to associate the two concepts (barbarian was the target).

FIGURE 2
Sensitivity scores for each of the five images.

Analyses regarding implicit images were repeated on the whole sample of participants ($N = 114$). Missing data, due to d' values of 0 or below, were replaced either with the mean or the mode of the respective block (missing values rate was 0.74%). Results of main analyses were fully replicated after this correction.

Explicit Images

To test whether the five images were differently endorsed by right-wingers and left-wingers at the explicit level, we performed a 2 (political orientation) \times 5 (image: ally, father, barbarian, enemy, imperialist) ANOVA, with image serving as within-participants factor. The main effect of the image factor was found to be significant, $F(4, 448) = 25.21, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .18$; this effect was, however, qualified by the significant two-ways interaction, $F(4, 448) = 14.42, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .11$. Analysis of simple effects showed that the two political groups differed for all images, except for imperialist. In particular, as can be seen in Table 1, mean scores of right-wingers were higher for the images of father and ally, $F_s(1, 112) \geq 5.57, p_s \leq .02, \eta_p^2_s \geq .05$, and those of left-wingers were higher for the images of barbarian and enemy, $F_s(1, 112) \geq 10.50, p_s \leq .002, \eta_p^2_s \geq .09$. In addition, right-wingers endorsed both the image of father and that of ally more than each of the three negative images: $t_s(49) \geq 2.40, p_s \leq .02$, for comparisons related to father; $t_s(49) \geq 2.53, p_s < .02$, for comparisons related to ally (the difference between father and ally was not significant, $t < 1$). Left-wingers, in contrast, endorsed the image of barbarian more than any of the other images, $t_s(63) \geq 2.75, p_s \leq .01$.⁵ Differences from the midpoint of the scale further supported this pattern of findings. Among right-wingers, the mean was above the midpoint only for father and ally, $t_s(49) \geq 3.70, p_s \leq .001$. Among left-wingers, the mean was above the midpoint only for barbarian, $t(63) = 4.42, p < .001$. These results, therefore, confirm the hypotheses related to the explicit images and replicate those obtained in previous studies (see, e.g., Trifiletti et al., 2012).

DISCUSSION

The present work aimed to analyze the images that Italians with different political orientations have of the United States. In particular, we aimed at assessing images with an implicit measure, in order to test whether implicit and explicit representations may diverge. To date, Image Theory has only been investigated considering deliberate beliefs and self-report techniques.

As regards explicit images, we found, as expected, a moderation effect of the political orientation. Left-wing Italians perceived Americans as barbarians while for right-wing Italians Americans were father and ally (see Capozza et al., 2009; Trifiletti et al., 2012). These beliefs, however, did not hold at the implicit level. Indeed, regardless of political orientation, America was implicitly associated with the father image. Therefore, the hypothesis of inconsistency between explicit and implicit images, for left-wingers, was clearly confirmed. For right-wingers, in contrast, implicit and explicit images were consistent: the USA was represented as father both in deliberate responses and implicit associations.

TABLE 1
Means and standard deviations for the five explicit images and the two political orientations

	Images									
	Ally		Father		Barbarian		Enemy		Imperialist	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Political orientation										
Left-wing	4.13 _a	0.86	3.65 _a *	0.86	4.66 _a **	1.20	4.21 _a	1.19	3.37 _a **	1.19
Right-wing	4.51 _b **	0.86	4.41 _b **	0.79	3.99 _b	0.97	3.49 _b **	1.05	3.18 _a **	1.10

Note. On the 7-step scale, the higher the score the more strongly the image is endorsed. A different subscript, in the same column, indicates the two means are significantly different, $p \leq .02$.
* $p < .01$, ** $p \leq .001$: difference from the midpoint of the scale (4).

The exposition to media representations of the USA and positive cultural stereotypes are likely to explain the dissociation between implicit and explicit level observed among left-wing participants. Thus, political orientation does not affect the implicit images that derive from cultural milieu and reflect accumulated experiences. Alternatively, we could say that cultural milieu and the implicit images it contributes to form do not affect political self-positioning.

Interestingly, Americans are implicitly associated with the image of father, but less strongly with the image of ally. One may wonder whether the father/America link is evidence for the association of America with positive concepts rather than with this specific image. Research, using the IAT in the framework of System Justification Theory (see Jost & Banaji, 1994; Jost, Banaji, & Nosek, 2004), suggests, in fact, that powerful groups are generally associated with positive concepts even by members of less powerful groups. This does not appear to apply in this case, since ally, a positive concept, does not perform similarly to father: ally is only weakly associated with America and just by left-wing participants.

The present work singles out, for the first time, a case of dissociation between implicit and explicit images; it suggests, therefore, the usefulness of extending Image Theory, by including implicit images in its tenets and predictions.

It's worth noting that even in the case of consistency between the two levels, implicit images may give a significant contribution to the prediction of intergroup behaviors. Research on implicit social cognition shows, in fact, that implicit and explicit attitudes predict separate variance in judgment and behavior (see, e.g., Greenwald, Poehlman, Uhlmann, & Banaji, 2009; and, for the predictive validity of the GNAT, Spence & Townsend, 2007; Teachman, 2007). Moreover, automatic associations may guide not only spontaneous actions (e.g., seating distance from posters depicting outgroup symbols), but also controlled and deliberate behaviors (e.g., Rudman, 2004). This has also been proved for political judgments and actions. For instance, in the USA, it has been found that implicit political identity, namely the association between being liberal/conservative and self/other words, measured by the IAT, predicted moral judgments after controlling for explicit political identity (Graham, Haidt, & Nosek, 2009). Moral judgments analyzed in these studies were, for instance, the importance given to values such as fairness or respect for authority, when deciding whether an action is right or wrong. In studies on voting behavior, Carter, Ferguson, and Hassin (2011) found that priming the American flag resulted in a shift toward conservative beliefs, the increase in intention to vote for the Republican candidate, and subsequent voting behavior (2008 U.S. presidential elections). Again in the context of voting behavior, Friese, Bluemke, and Wänke (2007) revealed that, in the 2002 German elections, implicit attitudes toward parties predicted voting decisions independently from explicit attitudes. One study (Galdi, Arcuri, & Gawronski, 2008) dealt with Italian participants' position toward the expansion of a U.S. military base in Northern Italy (Vicenza). Galdi et al. revealed that, for decided participants, explicit attitudes toward this policy were the only predictor of the subsequent choice of supporting or opposing the base expansion; whereas, for undecided participants, choices were only predicted by implicit attitudes. If, in Galdi et al.'s study, the automatic association between father and the USA had been measured, it would likely have affected undecided individuals' choices.

Evidently, implicit measures can add predictive utility to understanding political thought and behavior (for moderators of this predictive utility in the general field of implicit measures, see Friese, Hofmann, & Schmitt, 2008). Future research should investigate the effects of the implicit image of father on morality evaluations of America's actions, and on the decisions of sup-

porting or hindering America's policies. The implicit association between father and America could also affect Italians' voting behavior in the political elections, leading to favoring parties that support America's politics. Future research should also identify the conditions in which explicit and implicit images diverge. A potential factor influencing the relationship between the two levels could be, for instance, the amount of contact people have with members of the other nation (for moderators of the consistency between explicit and implicit attitudes, see Hofmann, Gschwendner, Nosek, & Schmitt, 2005; Nosek, 2005).

Our results have practical implications, in as much as they suggest at least one clear path through which the image of the outgroup can be modified, namely changing goal compatibility. They indicate, moreover, that explicit beliefs about the nature of a country may not correspond to the beliefs held at the implicit level. This is not to say that information campaigns may not affect both kinds of beliefs. It has been shown, in fact, that a large amount of verbal information may influence both explicit and implicit attitudes (e.g., Rydell & McConnell, 2006; Rydell, McConnell, Strain, Claypool, & Hugenberg, 2007). A stronger and more accessible association with positive images (father, ally) may affect behavior more strongly, facilitating favorable responses to the other nation (see the MODE model; Fazio, 2007).

This study presents, however, some limitations. First, the sample used only included university students. However, to the extent that implicit beliefs reflect accumulated experiences in one's social milieu, findings should also hold for Italians of different generations and educational level. Second, our participants probably endorsed moderate political positions. It would be interesting to investigate, in future studies, whether findings are replicated with participants who support extreme-left parties. Given its cultural origins, we expect to find the father/America association among extremist participants as well. Finally, we only used the GNAT; it would be interesting to replicate findings by using other implicit techniques, for instance the IAT, which is based on reaction times more than accuracy data. The application of the IAT, implying the use of two contrasting groups (e.g., the USA and Russia), would also enable us to detect whether the implicit/explicit incoherence may hold for other foreign countries.

To conclude, findings presented here testify to the usefulness of extending Image Theory by analyzing both explicit and implicit images. Such analysis can offer insights into the specific configuration of beliefs and attitudes toward a country, their strength, and their origin.

NOTES

1. In the Italian society, as generally in Western countries, father has some power over his children, but not necessarily a higher cultural sophistication. The level of paternal education tends to be similar to that of children in the upper class, but lower in the middle and lower classes. However, although less educated compared to children, father tends to have a greater financial basis and a larger network of relationships (a higher social power), this superiority generally lasting several years after children finish their studies.
2. For other sources of implicit attitudes, such as early experiences, affective experiences, system justification motives, and consistency principles, see Rudman (2004), and Rudman, Phelan, and Heppen (2007; see also the dual process models of attitude, e.g., Gawronski & Bodenhausen, 2006; Strack & Deutsch, 2004).
3. Words expressing the five images were matched for familiarity; as regards valence, mean ratings did not differ for the two positive and the three negative images.
4. Each of the 10 comparisons was preceded by two practice blocks, in which participants learnt to differentiate the two images involved in the comparison. For instance, when barbarian and enemy were compared, in one practice block barbarian was the target and enemy the distracter, while in the other prac-

tice block enemy was the target and barbarian the distracter. Responses to practice blocks were excluded from analyses.

5. Simple effects of the image factor were significant for both the left-wing group, $F(4, 109) = 31.85, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .54$, and the right-wing group, $F(4, 109) = 16.56, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .38$.

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APPENDIX A

Stimulus words used in the GNAT

Imperialist. Imperialista [imperialist], accentratore [monopolizer], colonialista [colonialist], espansionista [expansionist], prepotente [domineering].

Enemy. Nemico [enemy], avversario [adversary], antagonista [antagonist], rivale [rival], oppositore [opponent].

Barbarian. Barbaro [barbarian], feroce [ferocious], violento [violent], selvaggio [savage], primitivo [primitive].

Ally. Alleato [ally], collega [colleague], compagno [fellow], partner [partner], associato [associate].

Father. Padre [father], capostipite [initiator], genitore [parent], capofamiglia [head of the family], papà [dad].

USA. America, Americano [American], Stati Uniti [United States], Statunitense [U.S. citizen], USA, Marines, Texas, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Tennessee.

APPENDIX B

The 20 blocks of the Go/No-go Association Task

Comparisons		Blocks	
1	1A	<u>USA+Barbarian</u> Enemy	1B <u>USA+Enemy</u> Barbarian
2	2A	<u>USA+Barbarian</u> Imperialist	2B <u>USA+Imperialist</u> Barbarian
3	3A	<u>USA+Barbarian</u> Ally	3B <u>USA+Ally</u> Barbarian
4	4A	<u>USA+Barbarian</u> Father	4B <u>USA+Father</u> Barbarian
5	5A	<u>USA+Enemy</u> Imperialist	5B <u>USA+Imperialist</u> Enemy
6	6A	<u>USA+Enemy</u> Ally	6B <u>USA+Ally</u> Enemy
7	7A	<u>USA+Enemy</u> Father	7B <u>USA+Father</u> Enemy
8	8A	<u>USA+Imperialist</u> Ally	8B <u>USA+Ally</u> Imperialist
9	9A	<u>USA+Imperialist</u> Father	9B <u>USA+Father</u> Imperialist
10	10A	<u>USA+Ally</u> Father	10B <u>USA+Father</u> Ally

Note. For each block, the target categories are reported above the line, and the distracter category is reported under the line.