HIERARCHICAL REPRESENTATION OF REASONS FOR BEING IN FAVOR OR AGAINST IMMIGRATION

ZIRA HICHY
GRAZIELLA DI MARCO
UNIVERSITY OF CATANIA

SHARON COEN
UNIVERSITY OF SALFORD

CARLA DAZZI
UNIVERSITY OF PADOVA

The aim of this study was to investigate the reasons drawing people to be in favor or against immigration, using a method that investigates goal setting. By examining participants who were favorable to immigration (N = 141), 12 reasons were obtained, for instance: “Italy’s cultural growth,” “Cultural exchange,” “Greater tolerance,” and “Multi-ethnic society.” Unfavorable participants (N = 177) gave 11 main reasons, for instance: “Fear,” “Immigrants make trouble,” “Immigrants steal jobs from Italians,” and “Italy’s economic collapse.” The hierarchical structure of reasons showed that, for people favorable to immigration, immigrants are primarily a resource for economic and cultural growth of Italy; in contrast, people unfavorable to immigration perceive immigrants as a threat to the Italian economy and culture.

Key words: Immigration; Motivation; Laddering Technique; Goal setting.

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Zira Hichy, Dipartimento di Scienze della Formazione, Via Biblioteca 4 (Palazzo Ingrassia), 94124 Catania (CT), Italy. Email: z.hichy@unict.it

INTRODUCTION

Studies carried out on intergroup relations, with particular reference to the relationship between host communities and immigrants, have focused on general variables influencing this relationship. However, it may be important to identify specific variables that affect the relationship between specific host communities and immigrants. The aim of this study is to investigate the motives underlying the choice to be favorable or unfavorable toward immigration in the Italian context.

Studies on Immigration

Social scientists have shown great interest in studying attitudes toward immigration. The major field in which the relationship between host and immigrant communities has been studied is acculturation. Bourhis and his colleagues (Bourhis, Moïse, Perreault, & Senécal, 1997; Montreuil &
Bourhis, 2004) identified five strategies of acculturation that the host community may endorse toward immigrants; integrationism and individualism are considered as welcoming attitudes toward immigrants, whereas assimilationism, segregationism, and exclusionism are considered as unwelcoming attitudes. The model also suggests that acculturation orientations of dominant groups toward immigrants may differ as a function of specific immigrant groups. “Valued” immigrant groups are perceived favorably by members of the host community and are seen to benefit the local economy (Bourhis & Dayan, 2004). On the other hand, “devalued” immigrant groups are perceived unfavorably and are seen as economic rivals for employment and housing, or as a threat for the welfare of the country (Montreuil & Bourhis, 2001). Several correlates of welcoming and unwelcoming acculturation strategies were identified (Bourhis, 2007; Trifiletti, Dazzi, Hichy, & Capozza, 2007): authoritarianism (Altemeyer, 1988), social dominance orientation (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999), ethnocentrism (Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson, & Sanford, 1950), basic human values (Schwartz, 1992), and ingroup identification (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) negatively correlate with individualism and integrationism, and positively correlate with assimilationism, segregationism, and exclusionism. Moreover, people adopting welcoming strategies are more likely to identify with left or center political parties, feel comfortable with immigrants, and have close relations with them. Conversely, people endorsing unwelcoming strategies feel that their ingroup identity is threatened by the presence of immigrants, feel insecure (culturally, linguistically, and economically), and avoid close relationships with immigrants.

Another field of study concerning immigration focused on strategies for improving relationships between immigrants and the host community. Following Allport’s (1954) Contact Hypothesis, many researchers have sought to identify which aspects of the contact situation are most important in determining positive attitudes toward immigrants. Four factors have been repeatedly cited as crucial: there should be cooperation for superordinate goals, the contact experience should be positive, characterized by equal status of interacting group members, and supported by social norms promoting equality (see, for a review, Pettigrew, 1998; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). A number of moderating and mediating variables have been suggested to explain the effects of contact (see Brown & Hewstone, 2005; Vezzali & Giovannini, in press). Regarding mediation, some of the investigated variables were: inclusion of other in the self (Wright, Aron, McLaughlin-Volpe, & Ropp, 1997), intergroup trust (Lewicki & Wiethoff, 2000; Tam, Hewstone, Kenworthy, & Cairns, 2009), empathy (Batson, 2010; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008), intergroup anxiety (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008; Stephan & Stephan, 1985), infrahumanization (Leyens, Demoulin, Vaes, Gaunt, & Paladino, 2007; Tam et al., 2007), and threat (Stephan & Stephan, 2000). Regarding moderation, some of the investigated variables were: ingroup identification, authoritarianism, need for closure (Kruglanski, 1989), and categorical representation (see, e.g., Vezzali, Capozza, Mari, & Hichy, 2007).

The Laddering Technique

The laddering technique is widely used in the field of psychology, but has spread out from psychology to other areas such as marketing, advertising, architecture, information technology, and organizational management (Rugg et al., 2002). The technique was introduced in the field of psychology by Hinkle (1965), with the aim of modeling people’s concepts and beliefs (see also Bannister & Mair, 1968). The laddering technique has its roots in Kelly’s (1955) per-
sonal construct theory, which was one of the early cognitive approaches. According to Kelly, individuals create templates of their world by means of hierarchically organized bipolar constructs. In order to explore people's personalities, psychologists use a "repertory grid," that is, an interviewing technique suited to elicit information about a given element, which might be a situation, a person, an object, an event, and so forth.

The laddering technique is particularly suitable to reveal people’s goals, values, and evaluative dimensions, and is highly recommended in research that elicits hierarchical constructs. Moreover, it can investigate personal values according to the models derived from the Means-End Chain (MEC) theory (Dibley & Baker, 2001; Gengler, Mulve, & Oglethorpe, 1999; Reynolds & Gutman, 1988; Valette-Florence & Rapacchi, 1991; Veludo-de-Oliveira, Ikeda, & Campomar, 2006; Vriens & Hofstede, 2000). MEC theory affirms that knowledge is organized in a hierarchical way with concrete thoughts linked to more abstract thoughts in a sequence leading from means to ends. The MEC theory was conceived in order to supply a theoretical structure capable of linking consumers’ values to their behavior. It is an adaptation of Hinkle’s (1965) laddering method that allows investigators to reveal motives and their relationships (Gutman, 1982; Olson & Reynolds, 1983) while overcoming the limitations related to a priori tools. The laddering technique was designed especially for use in consumer and organization research. The literature shows how the means-end chain theory and laddering technique can be used to represent consumers’ reasons for supporting or not supporting abstract marketing products such as ideas, goals, or perceptions. There are works that studied goals underlying consumers’ weight loss behaviour (Pieters, Baumgartner, & Allen, 1995), attitudes toward recycling (Bagozzi, Henderson, Dabholkar, & Iacobucci, 1996), and the public’s perception of President Clinton (Bagozzi & Dabholkar, 2000).

The means-ends analysis has, then, moved to a broader domain: for example, it has been employed to study people’s beliefs about the Internet (Capozza, Falvo, Robusto, & Orlando, 2003), people’s regulation of body weight (Bagozzi & Edwards, 1998), and to understand user’s goals in virtual social worlds (Jung & Kang, 2010). Nunkoo and Ramkisson (2009) highlight the usefulness of personal values in explaining residents’ attitudes toward tourism. Through the laddering interviews, a “mental map,” linking the attributes of tourism to the benefits or consequences of tourism, was created. In a study on organizational behaviour (van Rekom, van Riel, & Wierenga, 2006), means-end analysis was used to determine the values that organization members manifest in their daily behavior. The laddering technique was used to establish the core values, which effectively motivate organization members in their job. This technique was also used in the health and medical fields: Alexy (1985) studied the effects of client participation in goal selection aimed at health risk reduction; Bradley, Bogardus, Tinetti, and Inouye (1999) used qualitative research methods to investigate goal setting of patients with dementia; Taylor, Bagozzi, Gaither, and Jamerson (2006) utilized a hierarchical goal structure methodology to identify the actual goals of patients with hypertension and the relationships among these goals.

Context of the Study

Immigration in Italy is a relatively recent phenomenon. Unlike other European countries (such as, France, United Kingdom, Germany), Italy was a country of emigration until the second
half of 20th century (ISTAT, 2012). Only around 1970, due to the increasing industrialization and economic growth, immigration became an important phenomenon, and Italians have seen an increase in the number of immigrants each year (Hichy, Halim Helmy Gerges, & Santisi, 2013). In this country, on the 1st January 2011, immigrants were 4,570,317, that is, 7.5% of the total residents, and represented 10% of the Italian workforce. The breakdown of estimated total continental area sees Europe as prevalent, including EU citizens (27.4%) and non-EU citizens (23.4%), followed by Africa (22.1%), Asia (18.8%) and from American Continent (8.3%), while people from Oceania and stateless people do not even reach 0.1%. Regarding geographical distribution, 61.3% of immigrants live in the North, 25.3% in the Centre, and the remaining 13.4% in the South of Italy. Demographic, economic, and social indicators (Caritas/Migrants, 2011; ISTAT, 2012) show that immigrants are well-integrated and useful for the development of Italian society. Indeed, the fact that immigrants are younger than Italians has a positive effect on the demographic equilibrium of the population. Moreover, immigrants are willing to work in all employment sectors and to perform discredited jobs.

Studies carried out in the Italian society have showed an ambivalent attitude toward immigration. Some studies found that Italians have a slightly positive attitude toward immigrants (Capozza, Trifiletti, Vezzali, & Favara, 2012; Capozza, Vezzali, Trifiletti, Falvo, & Favara, 2010), and think immigrants should maintain some aspects of their culture, also adopting important features of Italian culture (Barrette, Bourhis, Capozza, & Hichy, 2005; Di Marco, Hichy, & Sapienza, 2012; Sapienza, Hichy, Guarnera, & Di Nuovo, 2010). Other studies showed that the attitude toward immigrants is not fully positive; in particular, people attribute to immigrants the majority of crimes committed in Italy (Mari, Capozza, Hichy, Falvo, & Volpato, 2007; Voci & Hewstone, 2007).

**Method**

**Participants and Procedure**

Participants were 318 Italian students (88 males and 221 females, nine participants did not indicate their gender) attending high schools; they were aged between 16 and 20 years (\(M_{\text{age}} = 17.73, SD = 0.84\)). All participants and their parents were born and lived in Italy. Participants were asked to complete a questionnaire during class time, and were informed that their responses would remain confidential. Within the classes examined, only Italian students were present.

Respondents were first asked whether they were favorable or unfavorable to immigration. Participants favorable to immigration were 141 (45 males and 96 females; \(M_{\text{age}} = 17.67, SD = 0.88\)), whereas participants unfavorable were 177 (43 males, 125 females, nine participants did not indicate their gender; \(M_{\text{age}} = 17.78, SD = 0.81\)). On the basis of this answer, respondents completed two questionnaires: one about motives for being favorable (Questionnaire 1) and one about motives for being unfavorable (Questionnaire 2) to immigration.

Both questionnaires were adapted from Bagozzi and Edwards (1998; see also Bagozzi, Bergami, & Leone, 2003). They consist of a table of five rows and three columns (see Appendix). Participants were first asked to list five personal motives explaining why they were favorable (Questionnaire 1) or unfavorable (Questionnaire 2) to immigration, and to write these reasons in the boxes of the first column, named Reasons. Next, respondents were instructed to consider the

RESULTS

Effects of Social Desirability

In order to verify whether social desirability affected the choice to be favorable or unfavorable toward immigration, an ANOVA was carried out. Results showed a very small difference between the two groups, $F(1, 312) = 5.01, p < .02, \eta^2 = .02$; participants favorable toward immigration have a higher level of social desirability ($M = 4.96, SD = 0.84$) compared to participants unfavorable toward immigration ($M = 4.71, SD = 0.99$).

Hierarchical Goal Structure for Reasons to be Favorable toward Immigration

Participants favorable toward immigration provided 820 explanations for their attitude. In order to construct the goal categories, two independent judges analyzed the content of responses and derived 12 categories of goals (Table 1).

In order to analyze the structure of motives, an implication matrix was constructed (Table 1). This is a square matrix displaying the number of times each reason leads to another reason. For example, reason 2 (“Cultural exchange”) led to reason 12 (“Italy’s cultural growth”) 46 times. Reasons were arranged in the matrix by the degree of abstractness (Bagozzi & Edwards, 1998; Bagozzi et al., 2003; Taylor et al., 2006), which measures the proportion of times a reason is the end in a linkage. Abstractness — a number from 0 to 1 — is computed as the ratio of in-degrees (number of times a goal is the end in a relation) to the sum of in-degrees plus out-degrees (number of times a goal is the source in a relation): the higher abstractness is the more a goal will be used as an end to achieve. “Italy’s cultural growth” was the most abstract goal, followed by “Living in a dignified way.” On the other hand, the least abstract goal was “Providing jobs for immigrants.”

To determine the goal importance, two indexes, prestige and centrality, measuring the salience of a goal compared to other goals, were calculated (Bagozzi & Edwards, 1998; Bagozzi et al., 2003; Taylor et al., 2006). Prestige measures the degree to which a reason is the target of other reasons, and is computed as the ratio of in-degrees to the total number of cell-entries in the implication matrix. The goal with the highest prestige was “Italy’s cultural growth.” Centrality

first given reason and to write why it was important to them in the first box of the second column (Why – 1). Participants were then asked to explain why the answer given in the second column was important to them in the first box of the third column (Why – 2). This process was repeated for all the reasons expressed in the first column.

Finally, in order to measure social desirability, a 9-item scale adapted from the scale by Crowne and Marlowe (1960; for the Italian adaptation see Manganelli Rattazzi, Canova, & Marcocin, 2000) was used. The 7-point rating scale ranged from 1 (definitely false) to 7 (definitely true). Alpha was .53 for participants favorable to immigration, and .65 for participants unfavorable to immigration.
### Table 1
Implication matrix and prominence indices for goals in favor of immigration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goals</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>11</th>
<th>12</th>
<th>Out degree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Providing jobs for immigrants</td>
<td>.38</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>26</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Cultural exchange</td>
<td>.40</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.34</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>70</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Immigrants wellbeing</td>
<td>.40</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.28</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>58</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Individual freedom</td>
<td>.41</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Immigrants take on jobs that Italians refuse</td>
<td>.45</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Multi-ethnic society</td>
<td>.46</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Immigrants come from underprivileged countries</td>
<td>.53</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Equality</td>
<td>.55</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Italy's economic growth</td>
<td>.57</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Greater tolerance</td>
<td>.58</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Living in a dignified way</td>
<td>.65</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Italy's cultural growth</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>.29</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>33</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In degree: 16 46 39 16 13 17 28 31 21 29 20 68 344

*Note. A = abstractness, P = prestige, C = centrality.*
measures the rate with which a reason is involved in linkages with other reasons; it is computed as the ratio of the sum of in-degrees plus out-degrees to the total number of cell-entries in the implication matrix. The most central goal was “Cultural exchange.”

Starting from the implication matrix, a representation of hierarchical goal structure was produced (Figure 1). To construct this structure, it is necessary to choose a cut-off level to select the linkages to be inserted in the map. Following Taylor et al. (2006; see also Pieters et al., 1995), the proportion of active cells (non-zero cells) in the implication matrix was compared to the proportion of linkages between reasons at a given cut-off. We selected a cut-off of 6 (15 active cells), because in this way we could account for 58% of all linkages (number of active linkages as a proportion of all linkages), using only 11% of all possible cells (number of active cells as a proportion of all cells) and only 17% of cells containing a value different from zero (number of active cells as a proportion of all cells mentioned at least once). The hierarchical goal structure showed in Figure 1 displayed goals, ordered on the basis of their abstractness, and key connections between them. The diagram showed three distinct clusters of motives for being favorable to immigration: economic, cultural, and universalistic. Regarding economic motives the more concrete goal “Immigrants take on jobs that Italians refuse” directly led to the more abstract goal “Italy’s economic growth.” For cultural motives, the more concrete goal “Cultural exchange” led to the more abstract goals “Italy’s cultural growth” and “Greater tolerance,” which in turn led to “Italy’s cultural growth.” Finally, as regards universalistic motives, the concrete goal “Providing jobs for immigrants” led to “Immigrants’ wellbeing” that led to “Equality,” “Immigrants come from underprivileged countries,” and “Living in a dignified way.”

Hierarchical Goal Structure for Reasons to be Unfavorable toward Immigration

Participants unfavorable toward immigration provided 1224 different explanations for disapproving immigration (including answers given in Reasons, Why – 1, and Why – 2). In order to construct the goal categories, two independent judges analyzed the content of responses and derived 11 categories of goals (Table 2).

Also in this case, an implication matrix was constructed, and abstractness, prestige, and centrality indexes were computed (Table 2). The goal “Fear” was the most abstract goal, followed by “Italy’s economic collapse.” On the other hand, the most concrete goal was “Immigrants steal jobs from Italians.” The goal with the highest prestige index was “Italy’s economic collapse,” whereas the most central goal was “Violation of Italian laws.”

In order to construct the representation of the hierarchical goal structure, we selected a cut-off of 7 (with 16 active cells): in this way we accounted for 60% of all linkages, using only 14% of cells and 19% of cells containing a non-zero entry. The hierarchical goal structure, showed in Figure 2, displayed goals ordered on the basis of their abstractness and their key connections. Results showed that the concrete goal “Immigrants make trouble” directly and indirectly (through “Violation of Italian laws”) led to the most abstract goal, namely “Fear.” The concrete goal “Immigrants steal jobs from Italians” led to “Italy’s economic collapse,” which, in turn, led to “Immigrants steal jobs from Italians.” Finally, the goal “Cultural differences” led to “Disrespect of Italian culture” and “Italy’s economic collapse.”
Hierarchical goal structure for reasons in favor of immigration.

Note. Numbers near the arrows indicate how many times a reason leads to another reason.
### Table 2

Implication matrix and prominence indices for goals against immigration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goals</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>11</th>
<th>Out degree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Immigrants steal jobs from Italians</td>
<td>.32</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>69</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigrants make trouble</td>
<td>.36</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.28</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>74</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural differences</td>
<td>.40</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>29</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violation of Italian laws</td>
<td>.43</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.32</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>74</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigrants are too many</td>
<td>.45</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigrants do not accustom</td>
<td>.57</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigrants are uncivilized</td>
<td>.58</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigrants are favored over Italians</td>
<td>.58</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disrespect of Italian culture</td>
<td>.59</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy’s economic collapse</td>
<td>.66</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td>.27</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fear</td>
<td>.74</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In degree

|                      | 33 | 42 | 19 | 55 | 18 | 17 | 42 | 28 | 33 | 72 | 49 | 408 |

Note. A = abstractness, P = prestige, C = centrality.
Note. Numbers near the arrows indicate how many times a reason leads to another reason.

FIGURE 2
Hierarchical goal structure for reasons against immigration.
DISCUSSION

We conducted a field study aimed at investigating the reasons leading people to be favorable or unfavorable toward immigration. The laddering technique was used and participants were Italian students attending high schools. Results showed an almost opposite pattern of reasons for being in favor of or against immigration. Regarding reasons for being favorable to immigration, three clusters of motives emerged. The first cluster referred to economic motives: people favorable to immigration believed that immigrants take on jobs that Italians refuse, with the consequence of promoting the economic growth of Italy. Actually, it has been documented that in this country immigrants perform disqualified jobs (ISTAT, 2012). The second cluster of reasons for being in favor of immigration was focused on culture. People in favor of immigration thought that a multi-ethnic society encourages cultural exchange, thus promoting the cultural growth of Italy. These results are in line with studies showing that citizens evaluate cultural diversity of their country as important for the functioning of society as a whole (Berry & Kalin, 1995). Summarizing, these two clusters show that pro-immigration attitudes are based on economic and cultural reasons: immigrants are seen as important resources for the achievement of these goals.

Finally, the last cluster concerned universalistic reasons: people are willing to provide jobs for immigrants because in this way immigrants’ wellbeing will improve, allowing equality and dignity for all. This cluster supports results showing that universalistic values (Schwartz, 1992) are related to a favorable attitude toward immigrants (Sagiv & Schwartz, 1995; Sapienza et al., 2010).

Regarding reasons for being against immigration, results showed a more integrated hierarchical representation, with three kinds of master motives: fear, disrespect for Italian culture, and Italy’s economic collapse. With regards to the first, people were afraid because they believed that immigrants make trouble and violate Italian laws. Regarding economic reasons, people against immigration thought that immigrants steal jobs from Italians and, for this reason, immigration would lead to Italy’s economic collapse. Finally, with regards to cultural motives, differences between Italian and immigrant cultures were seen as a threat to the Italian culture, which would be modified by immigration. Taken together, these results are coherent with research showing that realistic threat (based on economic, physical, and political issues and referred to competition over material and economic group interests) and symbolic threat (based on perceived group differences in values, norms, and beliefs, that can threaten cultural identity) (Stephan & Stephan, 2000; Stephan, Ybarra, & Morrison, 2009) can play an important role in generating prejudice toward immigrant groups (Riek, Mania, & Gaertner, 2006).

Furthermore, it is possible that the media contribute significantly to establishing the motives people will be focusing on when thinking about social issues, as well as the hierarchy of priorities given to such issues: research on the agenda setting function of media (McCombs & Shaw, 1972) suggests that the media are indeed a powerful tool to suggest what issues should receive priority in citizens’ thoughts and evaluations. A second powerful function of the media is that of providing an interpretative frame for events. Tverski and Kahneman’s (1981) seminal work demonstrated how presenting an event in terms of loss or gain affects people’s behavioral preferences, in terms of risk-taking or risk-avoidance behavioral choices. By framing immigration as a gain or a loss for the economic, cultural or social life of a country, the media can, therefore, influence citizens’ attitudes and policy support for immigration-related issues. For example,
Fogleman and Kellstedt (2012) showed how media coverage of immigration significantly affects the American public’s attitude toward immigration and immigration-related policies.

In general, findings of this study provide support to previous studies on immigration and show the need to integrate multiple variables in the study of attitudes toward this phenomenon. On the basis of these results actions could be proposed in order to make people understand that immigrants are not a threat (e.g., showing that immigrants follow ingroup norms; Hichy, Mari, & Capozza, 2008), but can be a resource for a country. Motives and linkages reported in hierarchical representations provide information that can be used in persuasive communication; or else, practitioners may implement programs based on the reduction of threat perceived by host members (e.g., using strategies derived from Contact Hypothesis; Vezzali & Giovannini, in press).

This study has some limitations. First of all, participants were high school students who do not have contact with immigrants (at least during the class time); therefore, generalization of results should be done with caution. Indeed, it is possible that people having contact with immigrants may show a different pattern of reasons to be favorable or unfavorable to immigration. In addition, while we asked respondents to list reasons for being favorable or unfavorable to immigration in general, it is possible that reasons may differ depending on which specific groups of immigrants are considered (e.g., “valued” or “devalued” groups; see Monreuil & Bourhis, 2001). Further studies are needed to obtain a comprehensive model of motives leading people to be favorable or unfavorable to immigration.

REFERENCES


APPENDIX

Questionnaire for People Favorable to Immigration (Questionnaire 1)

We would like you to express your personal reasons for being favorable to immigration. List five reasons for being favorable toward immigration and write them in the boxes in the first column (Reasons). After listing the five reasons, take the first one that you wrote and explain why this reason is important to you, placing your answer in the first box in the second column (Why – 1). After you have answered why your first reason is important to you, think about why that answer is, in turn, important to you and place the response in the third box in the third column (Why – 2). Repeat this procedure for each reason wrote in the first column following the order indicated within the boxes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons</th>
<th>Why – 1</th>
<th>Why – 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reason 1 for be favorable to immigration</td>
<td>Why is it important to you?</td>
<td>Why is it important to you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reason 2 for be favorable to immigration</td>
<td>Why is it important to you?</td>
<td>Why is it important to you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reason 3 for be favorable to immigration</td>
<td>Why is it important to you?</td>
<td>Why is it important to you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reason 4 for be favorable to immigration</td>
<td>Why is it important to you?</td>
<td>Why is it important to you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reason 5 for be favorable to immigration</td>
<td>Why is it important to you?</td>
<td>Why is it important to you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>