UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI PADOVA

Sede Amministrativa: Università degli Studi di Padova

Dipartimento di Psicologia Dello Sviluppo e Della Socializzazione

SCUOLA DI DOTTORATO DI RICERCA IN SCIENZE PSICOLOGICHE

INDIRIZZO SCIENZE COGNITIVE

CICLO XXI

IMPRESSION FORMATION AND
ATTITUDE CHANGE IN POLITICAL PSYCHOLOGY:
The role of negative messages

Direttore della Scuola: Ch.mo Prof. Luciano Stegagno

Supervisore: Ch.mo Prof. Luigi Alessandro Castelli

Dottoranda: Luciana Carraro

31 Gennaio 2009

To my Family

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank some important people that have made possible the realization of this work. First of all, I am very grateful to *Luigi Castelli* for supporting and guiding me with his experience and enthusiasm for research in social psychology during my PhD and in the realization of this final work. I would like to thank also *Luciano Arcuri* and all the SPECOLA members (University of Padova) for their insightful comments throughout all these three years. I also thank *Bertram Gawronski* and all the Social Cognition Lab members (University of Western Ontario) for their valuable support and precious observations during my research period abroad. Finally, I am thankful to all the undergraduate students who helped me in collecting experimental data (Francesca Bona, Elisa Tolotti, Giovanni Tondini, Laura Torresan).

INDEX

Brief description of the work

The current work is aimed at implementing some research areas within Political Psychology with theories and methodologies drawn from Social Cognition. Specifically, we have tried to depict a picture of impression formation and attitude change toward political candidates following two experimental routes.

In the first session (Session A, Chapters 2, 3 and 4) the attention was focused on the analysis of the role of some communication strategies used in the political arena with a particular attention to the widespread use of negative messages against the opposing candidates (i.e., negative campaigns). The ample literature about this topic is still inconclusive (e.g., Lau et al. 1999, 2007), and it is not able to clearly indicate what are the likely consequences of negative political campaigns. The main purpose of this session was to go beyond this inconclusive condition taking into account some variables that may be the origin of the inconclusive results described in the literature. Chapter 2 (Study 1, 2, 3 and 4) was primarily focused on the likely consequences of negative messages on the perception of the source candidate. The obtained results clearly indicated the role of several variables in changing the likely consequences, such as: the specific type of negative messages used, the level of measurement (implicit vs. explicit), and the evaluated dimension of social judgment (competence vs. warmth, Fiske et al., 2002). Some negative campaigns may increase the competence ascribed to the source candidate but at the same time decrease the perceived sociability.

Subsequently, in order to assess the actual efficacy of a negative message, the focus of attention moved to the analysis of the likely consequences on the perception of both the source candidate and of the opposing candidate. Moreover, despite the consequences described in the previous studies (Chapter 2) on perceived competence and warmth, the aim was to delineate a general affective evaluation, both implicit and explicit. For these reasons, in Study 5 (Chapter 3) we analyzed the effects of negative campaigns on the general evaluation toward both the involved politicians. Overall, results delineated negative consequences for both candidates, both at the implicit level and at the explicit level. The effects were discussed and interpreted at the light of dual system models (e.g., Gawronski & Bodenhausen, 2006).

Finally, in Study 6 (Chapter 4) the aim was to analyze the consequences of another type of negative campaign: an attack against the electorate, and thus toward the participant. In this case, we analyzed the consequences on the modification of the degree of identification (implicit and explicit) with our own political group. Moreover, in this last study we

investigated the likely influences of some personal features of the audience. Specifically, we took into account the polarization of pre-existing implicit attitudes toward own political group. Results indicated that people with well polarized pre-existing implicit attitudes were not influenced by the content of the negative campaigns. Conversely, those with weak pre-existing implicit attitudes were strongly affected by negative messages. Moreover, in those last participants after the manipulation there was dissociation between implicit and explicit consequences, interpreted as the outcomes of two different attitude systems (Gawronski & Bodenhausen, 2006).

The second session of the current work (Session B, Chapter 5 and 6) focused on the investigation of some differences between the two most important political ideologies. Specifically, in Chapter 5 we examined some differences in the communication style between the two Italian coalitions, that may have an influence in persuasive routes. In a first study (1a and 1b) the focus was on the analysis of some grammatical features, such as syntactic complexity and linguistic wordiness: right-wing candidates are less prolix and use simpler sentences as compared to left-wing politicians. Then, the focus of attention moved to the analysis of the real use of negative campaigns: the left-wing is more likely to attack single candidates, whereas the right-wing is more likely to attack the opposite coalition in general (Study 2a). Finally, we analyzed the use of negative messages during the last US presidential race (Study 2b).

In Chapter 6, because of the opposite consequences of negative campaigns on the two universal and fundamental dimensions of social judgment (competence vs. warmth, e.g. Fiske et al., 2002), we analyzed the ascription of these dimensions to left- vs. right-wing politicians. Results from Study 1 and 2 indicated that the relevance of these two dimensions changed on the basis of the political affiliation of the participants. Moreover, in general, a right-wing candidate is perceived as more competent than warm, the opposite for a left-wing candidate. Subsequently, Study 3 and 4 indicated that the described pattern of results may be detected also in some subtle qualities. Indeed, in line with the special agency bias (e.g., Chatterjee, 2002), people portrayed left-facing oriented (right from the observer point of view) are more likely described as right-wing candidates as compared to left-wing politicians.

In the last part the obtained results were discussed highlighting two key concepts emerged from the current work. On the one hand, we stressed how important is the use of indirect measures in Political Psychology in order to detect implicit attitudes. On the other hand, we stressed the role of the two dimensions of social judgment, namely competence and warmth, in impression formation processes in the political field.

Breve descrizione del lavoro

Questo lavoro è nato dall'obiettivo di implementare alcuni ambiti di studio di Psicologia Politica con la prospettiva e la metodologia della Social Cognition. Nello specifico si è cercato di delineare un quadro dei processi di formazione e cambiamento di atteggiamento nei confronti di candidati politici seguendo due percorsi sperimentali.

Nella prima parte (Sessione A, capitoli 2, 3 e 4) l'interesse si è focalizzato sull'analisi del ruolo di alcune strategie comunicative usate nell'ambito politico con particolare attenzione ai sempre più diffusi messaggi di attacco nei confronti della controparte politica (campagne negative). La vasta letteratura sull'argomento presenta ancora dei risultati contraddittori (e.g., Lau et al. 1999, 2007), e non è in grado di indicare chiaramente quali siano le possibili conseguenze di tale comunicazione. Obiettivo di questa sessione sperimentale è stato principalmente cercare di superare tale inconclusività individuando delle possibili variabili intervenienti che potrebbero esserne responsabili. Il Capitolo 2 (Studi 1, 2, 3 e 4) si è principalmente focalizzato sull'analisi delle conseguenze delle comunicazioni negative sulla percezione di chi le utilizza. I risultati hanno indicato l'importanza di diversi fattori nel diversificare le conseguenze; in particolare è stata evidenziata la necessità di distinguere tra diversi tipi di messaggi negativi, inoltre una dissociazione tra livello implicito ed esplicito di valutazione, nonché differenze legate alle specifiche dimensioni di giudizio sociale prese in considerazione (competenza vs. socievolezza). Certe campagne negative possono portare ad un aumento della competenza attribuita alla fonte, ma ad una contemporanea diminuzione della sua socievolezza percepita.

In seguito, per stabilire l'effettiva efficacia di un messaggio di tipo negativo, l'attenzione si è spostata anche sull'analisi delle conseguenze non solo sul candidato fonte ma anche sul candidato attaccato. Inoltre, al di là degli effetti individuati dagli studi precedenti su competenza e socievolezza percepite, si è cercato di prendere in considerazione un indice di valutazione affettiva generale, sia implicita che esplicita. Per questi motivi, nello Studio 5 (Capitolo 3) sono stati analizzati gli effetti che le campagne negative possono avere su una valutazione generale di piacevolezza rispetto ai due candidati coinvolti. I risultati hanno evidenziato conseguenze negative per entrambi i candidati sia a livello implicito che esplicito, interpretate e discusse alla luce delle teorie dei sistemi duali di atteggiamento (e.g., Gawronski & Bodenhausen, 2006).

Infine, nello Studio 6 (Capitolo 4) l'obiettivo è stato analizzare le conseguenze di un'altra tipologia di campagna negativa: un attacco nei confronti dell'elettorato e quindi un attacco

rivolto al partecipante stesso. In questo caso sono state esaminate le conseguenze sulla modificazione del livello di identificazione (implicita ed esplicita) con il gruppo politico di appartenenza. Inoltre, in quest'ultimo studio sono state indagate eventuali modulazioni degli effetti dovute a caratteristiche proprie delle persone a cui sono diretti tali messaggi, nel caso specifico alla forza degli atteggiamenti impliciti pre-esistenti rispetto al proprio gruppo politico. Dallo studio è emerso che chi ha atteggiamenti impliciti pre-esistenti molto polarizzati non si lascia influenzare dalle campagne negative. Al contrario, coloro che presentano degli atteggiamenti impliciti pre-esistenti deboli sono fortemente influenzati dai messaggi negativi. Inoltre, questi stessi partecipanti hanno presentato una dissociazione tra conseguenze a livello implicito ed esplicito, spiegabili nuovamente come prodotti di due diversi sistemi di atteggiamento (Gawronski & Bodenhausen, 2006).

Nella seconda parte di questo lavoro (Sessione B, capitoli 5 e 6) sono state prese in esame alcune differenze tra le due più diffuse ideologie politiche. In particolare nel Capitolo 5 sono state analizzate delle differenze comunicative tra le due coalizioni politiche italiane che possono avere un peso nei processi persuasivi. In un primo studio (1a e 1b) l'interesse si è focalizzato su caratteristiche puramente grammaticali, di complessità sintattica del discorso e di prolissità linguistica: i rappresentati del centro-destra sono meno prolissi e usano una strutturazione delle frasi meno complessa dei loro colleghi di centro-sinistra. Successivamente, il focus si è spostato sull'utilizzo delle campagne negative: il centro-sinistra sembra preferire un attacco nei confronti dei singoli candidati, mentre il centro-destra sembra preferire un attacco più generalizzato (Studio 2a). Infine, è stato analizzato l'utilizzo di strategie negative nelle recenti elezioni americane (Studio 2b).

Nel sesto capitolo, visti gli effetti del tutto divergenti delle campagne negative sulle due dimensioni universali e fondamentali di giudizio sociale (competenza e socievolezza, e.g. Fiske et al., 2002), è stata analizzata l'attribuzione di tali dimensioni a candidati di centro-destra e di centro-sinistra. Dagli studi 1 e 2 è emerso che l'importanza delle due dimensioni varia in base all'affiliazione politica del rispondente; inoltre, in generale, un candidato del centro-destra viene descritto più competente che socievole, l'opposto per un candidato del centro-sinistra. Successivamente, dagli studi 3 e 4 si è dimostrato come questa differenza si rifletta e venga confermata anche da elementi più sottili. Infatti, in linea con il bias spaziale (e.g., Chatterjee, 2002), le persone ritratte con il viso rivolto verso la propria sinistra (destra dell'osservatore) vengono descritte come più probabili candidati del centro-destra piuttosto che del centro-sinistra.

Nella parte conclusiva i risultati ottenuti sono stati discussi sottolineando due aspetti chiave emersi dal presente lavoro. Da un lato il vantaggio che può essere apportato dall'utilizzo di

tecniche di indagine meno dirette nel campo della Psicologia Politica, in grado di tracciare gli atteggiamenti impliciti. Dall'altro, l'importanza delle due dimensioni di valutazione, ovvero competenza e socievolezza, nella formazione di impressioni nel dominio politico.
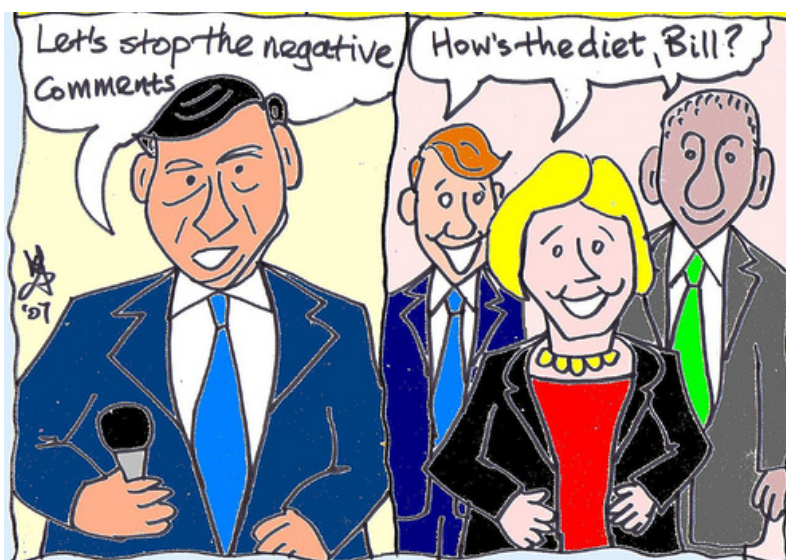
Figure 1. Two comics about the widespread use of negative campaigns during the last political races.

CHAPTER 1

IMPRESSION FORMATION AND ATTITUDE CHANGE IN POLITICAL PSYCHOLOGY

From the birth, or even before, from the day by day awakening, we are constantly enclosed in a social context. Going to a coffee shop for breakfast, reading a newspaper, listening to the radio, driving a car, and many other actions that we may perform during our everyday life, allow us to get in contact with many social others. Sometimes this happens in a direct way, for instance when a student is in a class with professors and other schoolmates: the student may have a direct interaction with other social actors. Some other times the acquaintance may happen in an indirect way. Indeed, we may know someone only by reading something about him/her in a newspaper, watching a movie, listening to the radio. Moreover, another example of indirect acquaintances is when someone tells us something about other people: image for a moment yourself at the market. The shopkeeper starts to tell you something that another person has done: "Have you ever heard that…?" "Do you know that…?". Sometimes the reported descriptions of a third person are positive, some other times are neutral, but from time to time they may be also negative. Moreover, the shopkeeper may talk about a person that we have already met, but he/she may say something also about a person that we do not know. Regardless of whether the provided information is positive or negative, about a person that we already know or that we have never met, and regardless of the fact that the interaction is direct or indirect, people automatically form or change in their mind an impression not only regarding the third person but also about the shopkeeper. In the end, they will form or change an attitude toward social targets: attitude formation and attitude change are two fundamental processes that allow people to tidy up the information about their social surroundings. These processes may have important implications in the subsequent behaviour adopted by an individual. Indeed, it is important to keep in mind a general image of the other social actors because that image may be useful later when we will meet again those persons.

The described processes happen every day and with any kind of social others: both with people that may not be very relevant for our life, and with people that, conversely, may

have a strong role in our future life. Here we will analyze the aforementioned processes in the political field: in this context people are required to form an impression toward persons that will have a strong impact for their future. People have to decide whether to vote or not for such candidates; voters have to decide which candidates may be their own representative politicians. In this work we will examine how people may form an impression about a political candidate, a topic well known and studied in the political psychology field, but that may be enriched by the social cognition angle.

1. What is Political Psychology?

Political Psychology is an interdisciplinary academic field and, at the most general level, it may be seen as an application in the world of politics of what is known from the psychological studies (Sears, Huddy, & Jervis, 2003). It is a lively subfield that explores the borders and the links between political science and psychology, on the basis of a reciprocal understanding (Jost & Sidanius, 2004). Indeed, at the one hand, this interdisciplinary contact may help political scientists to better understand some topics of their investigations at the light of the psychological processes; on the other hand, also psychologists may gain from taking into account the likely influences of political processes on psychological processes. However, this last benefit for psychologists is somehow neglected by the stronger emphasis given on the psychological processes as bases of political processes, and thus it is not a real reciprocal understanding but it is primarily oriented in one direction (Deutsch & Kinnvall, 2002).

The *Political Psychology* roots are probably sunk very far in the past, in the social philosophy of ancient Greece. Indeed, with the advent of the democracy as a political system in Athens, many philosophers, such as Plato and Aristotele, started to discuss political issues at the light of their theories of human nature. These investigations, especially focused on the theoretical speculation about the personal features of the politicians, were taken into account again during the Medieval and the Renaissance. One of the most known evidence about that speculation is *The Prince* of Machiavelli (1513). Despite these links with the past, there is a widespread agreement that probably its birth as an academic discipline may be considered between the two World Wars (Deutsch & Kinnvall, 2002). According to the same authors (Deutsch & Kinnvall, 2002) the Political Psychology origins may be detected in the new political scenario created after the First World War and, in particular, by the establishment of totalitarian regimes. Moreover, another historical cause may be identified in the advent of new mass media (see also Chapter 5 in this work) that has changed the communication between politicians and electorate leading to a new era in the political propaganda, and increasing the

public information. All these changes led scientists to develop a new awareness about the necessity to better value these phenomena and the subsequent consequences through the understanding of human processes.

Many psychological theories and models were then applied to the study of politics. One main theoretical approach is the one based on personality, aimed at individuating individual differences and personality features of the political leaders, and it is well represented by the studies made by Adorno about the authoritarian personality (Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswick, Levinson, & Sanford, 1950). Another general psychological approach applied in the political field has involved the behaviourist theories, such as the classical and instrumental conditioning, in order to explain and analyze the mass political attitudes, both in terms of mass media communication effects and in terms of political socialization (Sears et al., 2003). About this last topic, also developmental theories have had a great influence. More recently, a lively interest for social psychology theories has been detected. In particular, theories drawn from the studies about intergroup relations and from the social cognition perspective have become very influential (e.g., Legrenzi & Girotto, 1996). Indeed, several political phenomena and processes were subsequently analyzed from the assumption that the human beings are constantly seeking to develop and discover strategies in order to simply the complicate social world because of the limited processing capacities (e.g., Fiske & Taylor, 1991).

From this brief panorama on the theoretical approaches derived from psychological studies, it is also clear how many topics have been studied in the political psychology field. McGuire (2004) has even divided the long relationship among the two disciplines in three distinct eras with specific topics of interest, preferred theories and methods. Following McGuire's division (2004) the first period, that comprised twenty years from the beginning of the 1940s to the end of the 1950s, was characterized by the emphasis on the study of political personalities, both of the political leaders and of the electorate, largely with the use of content analysis of records and interviews (see also Chapter 6 of this work). Subsequently, in the second period, from the 1960s to the end of the 1970s, the research was mainly interested in political attitudes and in voting behaviour, especially by means of questionnaire in survey research and by observation. Finally, the third period described by McGuire (2004), from the 1980s to the 1990s, was characterized by the studies about political ideology, both in terms of content and processes of the belief system, with an experimental manipulation approach. In the end, the same author (McGuire, 2004) asserted that the current period may be considered as a fourth era primarily interests in interpersonal and intergroup processes.

Where does the current work stand within the described scenario? Our aim with the current work is to further investigate and understand some research topics in the political psychology field by including methodologies and theories from the social cognition perspective, under the vision of a reciprocal exchange and enrichment, both for political science and for psychology. At the one hand, we may well explain some political processes at the light of psychological theories, but on the other hand, this subfield may be considered as a good scenario in which to study and further investigate some mental processes that are familiar in the social cognition literature. Indeed, the political field represents an extremely promising setting in which to study processes of decision making, and the related attitude formation and attitude change routes. Indeed, the political context enables researchers to study what strategies politicians could use in order to create and change their own public image and persuade the electorate that they are the "good ones", whereas their opponents are the "bad ones" (Aristotele, cited in Solomsen, 1954, p. 217). The primary focus of this work will be to investigate attitude formation and attitude change processes in the perception of political candidates.

2. What is an attitude?

The study of attitudes has a long and rich history in social psychology in general, and in social cognition specifically. Indeed, even at the beginning of the last century, Allport (1935) recognized that the term *attitudes* had already a long history behind it. Moreover, he even asserted that "the concept of attitude is probably the most distinctive and indispensable concept in social psychology" (Allport, 1935, p. 798). He reviewed definitions provided in the previous decades and, in the end, he came out with the most known definition about attitudes. According to Allport "an attitude is a mental and neural state of readiness, organized through experience, exerting a directive or dynamic influence upon the individual's response to all objects and situations with which it is related" (Allport, 1935, p. 810). In this first definition there is already the suggestion of two important components of an attitude: the cognitive part and the behavioural one.

Another widespread definition is the one provided by Eagly and Chaiken (1993) that offers an "umbrella" definition (Eagly & Chaiken, 2007) of what may be considered as an attitude: "a psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of favour or disfavour" (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993, p. 1). In this tripartite model, attitudes are formed by three different components: affective, cognitive and behavioural elements. Moreover, they asserted that every attitude is formed by the aforementioned components, but that some attitudes may primarily be affectively determined, whereas other

may be more cognitively determined. Taken together these components refer to an individual's propensity to evaluate an object, a person, a place, an ideology and every possible entity of evaluation, positive or negative, favourable or unfavourable, likeable or unlikeable. However, in all the aforementioned definitions, an attitude was considered only a *conscious* feeling.

During the last decades, a sort of revolution in the study of attitudes may be described: the introduction of *implicit attitudes*. In the first definition provided by Greenwald and Banaji (1995, p. 8) implicit attitudes were defined as "introspectively unidentified (or inaccurately identified) traces of past experience that mediate favourable or unfavourable feeling, thought, or action toward social objects". Some years before, also Fazio and colleagues (Fazio, Chen, McDonel, & Sherman, 1982) proposed a new definition of attitudes that somehow underlined their double nature: conscious and unconscious. They defined attitudes as object-evaluation associations (Fazio et al., 1982; Fazio, 1995, 2007).

In the end, attitudes may be more or less conscious, people may be more or less aware about their attitudes, but despite these considerations, attitudes are something that people are not able to touch. An attitude, both explicit and implicit, *per se* is an abstract concept, an "hypothetical concept" (Fazio, 2007). However, regardless this intangible essence, as asserted by Thurstone (1928) "attitudes can be measured".

2.1. How can we measure an attitude? Explicit vs. Implicit Attitudes Measures

When Thurstone in 1928 asserted that "attitudes can be measured" he was talking about the possibility to measure the currently so-called *explicit attitudes*, and thus the conscious feeling, and evaluation toward an object. The simplest way to assess an individual attitude is to ask a single question, or more questions, about what the individual thinks and feels about the evaluated object. Indeed, we can use only a single item in order to tap the affective component of an attitude, our positive or negative feeling, our predisposition toward something, using for instance a continuum from extremely good to extremely bad (Bargh, Chaiken, Govender, & Pratto, 1992). Moreover, in order to tap the more complex cognitive structure of an attitude, we could ask many questions to a person in order to assess the personal thoughts about a specific evaluated object. We could use semantic differentials (Osgood, Suci, & Tannenbaum, 1957), Likert scales (Likert, 1932) or open questions aimed at discovering different aspects of the same attitude.

However, despite the specific instruments used in order to asses an attitude, it must be taken into account that what we are measuring is an attitude, but the response that we obtain from the participant is only an "opinion" "a verbal expression of an attitude" (Thurstone,

1928, p. 531). Moreover, Thurstone said that an opinion is only a symbol, an index of an attitude (Thurstone, 1928, p. 531), such as also the real behaviour. Indeed, he asserted that these are the unique indexes that we may use in order to asses an attitude, but that, unfortunately, we must be aware that both of them are not "infallible guides" of the related attitude (Thurstone, 1928, p. 532).

As asserted by Thurstone (1928) and by the first definitions about attitudes (Allport, 1935; Eagly & Chaiken, 1993) another important component is the behavioural one: an attitude may be reflected in the subsequent actions performed by an individual, and also by the non verbal behaviour. Scientists are aware that every individual action is rich of meaning, and thus they have started to study the apparent non verbal behaviour in order to better understand the underlying attitudes. Body position, backward or forward body inclination, eye contact, interpersonal distance, seating distance, are only some examples that allow researchers to guess the individual attitudes toward another person (Campbell, Kruskal, & Wallace, 1966; Macrae, Bodenhausen, Milne, & Jetten, 1994; Shah, Brazy, & Higgins, 2004; Word, Zanna, & Cooper, 1974). Just as we eat what we like the most, we approach people that we like and avoid those that we dislike. However, despite the fact that self-reports and the performed behaviours are two indexes of the same attitudes, very often they have been described as at odds: people may report a personal opinion about a target of evaluation, but at the same time the performed behaviour may not be consistent with the reported attitudes. Despite the fact that this discrepancy is probably caused by several factors, such as situational features, it has led scientists to assume the existence of another type or another component of attitudes: the currently so-called *implicit attitudes*. As mentioned above, with this expression initially authors aimed to indicate a more subtle component of attitudes, an unconscious part (Greenwald & Banaji, 1995; Fazio et al., 1982). The question to *what implicit attitudes are* still remains an open and hard question, to which several authors have given different answers on the basis of different empirical findings. Do we have only one attitude toward a single object of evaluation, an attitude with two components, namely one implicit and one explicit? Or do we have two separate attitudes?

In the beginning, the adjective *implicit* was posted because of two common concerns about traditional self-reported measures (for a discussion, see Gawronski, LeBel, & Peters, 2007). The first was led by the aforementioned early definition provided by Greenwald & Banaji (1995) about that concept, in which they asserted that some mental processes may be unconscious, and thus not accessible to self-reports. In other words, people may not be able, even if they really want, to reach some components of attitudes through introspection because of their unconscious nature. The second problem was that self-reported measures may be

affected by self-presentation and social desirability concerns, which may undermine the usefulness of these measures in socially sensitive domains (e.g., Fazio, Jackson, Dunton, & Williams, 1995). In this case, people are able to reach their own attitudes through introspection, but they consciously decide to misrepresent their personal opinions. Despite the different point of view, both of the aforementioned concerns reflect the idea that attitudes are unique: implicit and explicit are only two faces of the same coin. However, more recently, some authors (e.g., Gawronski & Bodenhausen, 2006; Strack & Deutsch, 2004) have argued that there are not enough empirical demonstrations in order to affirm the unique essence of attitudes, but that conversely it is more likely that they are two faces of two distinct coins: explicit and implicit attitudes are the outcomes of two different mental processes (see also Chapter 3 and 4 of this work for a detailed description).

Despite this theoretical speculation about the unique or double nature of attitudes, what is important here is that, as asserted by Banaji (2001) paraphrasing the expression used by Thurstone (1928), "implicit attitudes can be measured". Indeed, over the last decade, researchers in many areas of psychology became increasingly interested in the use of a new class of indirect measurement procedures, which have been called as *implicit measures* (for reviews, see Fazio & Olson, 2003; Petty, Fazio, & Briñol, 2008; Wittenbrink & Schwarz, 2007). These new measures do not require the introspection which is typical of the direct procedures (i.e., explicit), and sometimes participants are even completely unaware that a measurement is assessing. Indeed, the most of these indirect measures rely on participant's performance to experimental tasks aimed at assessing the spontaneous associations between the evaluated object and positive or negative attributes. Some of the most well-known measures are, for instance, the affective priming paradigm (Fazio et al., 1995), the semantic priming paradigm (Wittenbrink, Judd, & Park, 1997), the Implicit Association Test (IAT; Greenwald, McGhee, & Schwartz, 1998), the Go/No-go Association Task (GNAT; Nosek & Banaji, 2001), and, more recently, the Affective Misattribution Procedure (AMP; Payne, Cheng, Govorun, & Stewart, 2005). The procedures and rationales of some of these measures will be fully described in the subsequent chapters (see also Appendix).

In the literature, research has demonstrated that implicit measures are able to assess also political preferences, ideological standing or issue preferences (e.g., Burdein, Lodge, & Taber, 2006; Lodge, & Taber, 2005; Morris, Squires, Taber, & Lodge, 2003) and even, most importantly here, candidates preferences (e.g., Fazio & Williams, 1986; Payne et al., 2005). However, despite the fact that we can measure both implicit and explicit attitudes toward a political candidate, how do people form an attitude toward other individuals in general, and toward politicians specifically?

3. Impression formation

As said, an attitude is an overall predisposition, an impression toward an evaluated entity. The classic impression formation theories of Asch (1946) and Anderson (1965) may be considered the foundations of actual impression formation models. Asch (1946) proposed a *configurational model*: given the observation of several stimulus traits, a perceiver would configure the traits to form a gestalt impression. Differently, according to Anderson (1965) and his *algebraic model* the stimulus traits would simply be added one after the other maintaining their original meaning without changing their meaning on the basis of the overall impression. In other words, according to Anderson (1965) a trait will maintain the same meaning in every situation, whereas according to Asch (1946) the same trait may assume different meanings depending on the whole impression (i.e., the other traits on which the impression is based). However, despite this difference, for both theories the stimulus traits are integrated online with previous information in order to obtain a unified impression, without taking into account some problems related to cognitive capacities. Subsequently, two other models have been considered the cornerstones of impression formation theories. The first model is the "*Dual process model of impression formation*" proposed by Brewer (1988), and the second is the "*Continuum model of impression formation*" proposed by Fiske and Neuberg (1990). Both models have taken into account automatic and controlled processes in impression formation, and a distinction between category-based and person-based perception. In general, in order to reduce cognitive load, perceivers try at the beginning to adopt automatic and category-based processes, and only subsequently controlled and person-based processes.

However, despite the processes behind person perception, one may ask what the relevant information is in order to form an impression about another person. As stated in the first page of the current introduction, we are constantly enclosed in a social world, and thus every day we get in contact with other people. How we form an impression about those people is a lively topic of interest in the social cognition field. First of all, persons may form an initial impression about other people by the mere physical appearance: this is usually the first information that we have about others and sometimes the only one. Moreover, despite the admonition "Don't judge a book by its cover", it is clear that people have a strong tendency to rely on physical appearance when they are forming a first impression. For instance, some studies have demonstrated that pleasant people were more likely to be helped by others (e.g., Benson, Karabenic, & Lerner, 1976). Physical attractiveness seems to have a strong impact also in some important contexts, such in the school context (Clifford, 1975), in the justice context (Downs & Lyons, 1991; Stewart, 1985), and even in the political field: attractive faces

produce more positive trait inferences than unattractive ones, both for male (Rosenberg, Bohan, McCafferty, & Harris, 1986) and female candidates (Sigelman, Sigelman, & Fowler, 1987). However, not only the physical attractiveness has such an influence in social judgment, but also some other physical features are very important. For instance, another important physical cue in the political field seems to be the height: it is positively correlated with the perceived leadership (Chaiken, 1986).

Recently, some researchers have demonstrated that the face is a critical cue in the political field: when people have to form an impression about politicians they are influenced also by the traits of their faces. For instance, Todorov and colleagues (Todorov, Mandisodza, Goren, & Hall, 2005) asked to some volunteers to view pictures of pairs of leading candidates, and they were asked to rate the faces along seven traits: competence, intelligence, leadership, honesty, trustworthiness, charisma and likeability. Interestingly, they found that only the evaluation about competence accurately predicted the results of the elections. Subsequently, Zebrowitz and Montepare (2005) argued that the aforementioned pattern of results may be explained by the perceived baby-facedness: baby-faced politicians are perceived as less competent as compared to politicians with mature-faces. In general, people with a face very similar to the one of a baby (i.e., baby-facedness) are also described as people with childlike traits such as to be submissive, dependent, warm, affectionate, honest, weal, and naive (e.g., Montepare & Zebrowitz, 1998; Zebrowitz & Montepare, 1992 for a review). Concluding, from physical attractiveness overall, and from some specific traits bystanders in general, and voters more specifically, usually infer some personal traits of others. Indeed, people infer personal features of others by their physical appearance, and subsequently these inferences have an important role in determining the following behaviours and decisions (see also Chapter 6 for this topic).

Another important source of information in order to form an impression about others is from their behaviours. As said above about attitudes, we may discover and measure the attitudes of other people by watching their behaviour: from the observation of their actions we can infer personal features and their attitudes. For instance, from the non-verbal behaviour of a person who is speaking with a black people we can infer the racial attitudes. Moreover, from the showy behaviour sometimes we may infer also whether a person belongs or not to some groups, and from the membership to a given group we may infer many other important information about such a person. For instance, a person who usually helps others and volunteers in some humanitarian associations is probably a moral, nice and polite person.

More specifically, in the political domain we may form a first impression about politicians, also merely on the basis of their political affiliation. Left-wing and right-wing

politicians are described as very different not only because they support different ideologies, but also in terms of personality traits (see Chapter 6) and in the way they speak (see Chapter 5). Moreover, the membership to a specific group has another influence in the impression formation process. More specifically, we may or we may not belong to the same social group and, given the strong importance of group membership in creating our social identity (Brewer & Brown, 1998; Tajfel, 1981), people form a more positive evaluation toward people and politicians belonging to the ingroup. However, an ingroup member is not always evaluated in a more positive way as compared to an outgroup member. Indeed, negative behaviours are perceived and evaluated as more negative specifically when they are performed by ingroup members rather than by outgroup members (i.e., *black sheep effect*; e.g., Branscombe, Wann, Noel, & Coleman, 1993; Marques & Yzerbyt, 1988; Marques, Yzerbyt, & Leyens, 1988; see also later in this chapter).

Finally, the last two important cues in the impression formation process are related to the verbal communication. At the one hand, we may form our impression about social targets on the basis of their speeches, and thus on the basis of what they intentionally assert. On the other hand, we may improve the impression about social targets on the basis of what other people say about them. In the political arena, for instance, our impression about politicians is related both to their positive and negative campaigns. Indeed, they could try to create a positive image of themselves by saying something positive about themselves and their political program, but, conversely, they could also try to bring to light their image devaluating the opposing candidates. In other words, social actors intentionally say something positive about themselves or negative about other people in order to change the impression that people may have formed.

4. Attitude change

In the literature there is widespread agreement that it is very hard to change an impression once it has been created (e.g., Ross, Lepper, & Hubbard, 1975). However, despite this resistance to change, many efforts are usually devoted to change people's attitudes toward different objects, and also toward people, such as in the political domain. As said, a politician, during a political campaign, tries to change voters' attitudes by strengthening both his/her own positive features and the negative qualities of the opponents. In other words, we are constantly exposed to persuasive messages aimed at changing our attitudes: how can a persuasive message change an attitude?

In the literature there are several models aimed at explaining how an attitude can be changed. One of the first models is the *Yale model of persuasion* (Hovland, Lumsdaine, &

Sheffield, 1949): the basic idea was that persuasion was possible only after a sequence of events from message attention to message acceptance. Subsequently, McGuire (1968) tested the sequence of *information-processing* suggesting 6 different stages that occur in the following order: presentation of the message, attention to the message, comprehension of the message, yielding to the argument, retention of the changed attitude in memory, and behaviour relevant to the attitude. Moreover, another important suggestion by McGuire (1968) is that the same stimulus can have different effects for each different step of the information-processing. The two aforementioned models are essentially based on controlled processes, and they suggest that there is only one route in attitude changing. Conversely, Sherif (Sherif & Sherif, 1967) suggested the possibility of another route of persuasion. Indeed, the *social judgment model* (Sherif & Sherif, 1967) was based on the assumption that persuasion may follow also some shortcuts based on automatic mechanisms. Subsequently, most persuasion research since the mid-1980s was based on the assumption that there could be two different routes of persuasion on the basis of the cognitive efforts devoted to the processes of elaborating a persuasive message. The two most important dual-processing theories are the *elaboration likelihood model* (ELM; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986; Petty, Cacioppo, Strathman, & Priester, 2003; Petty & Wegener, 1999) and the *heuristic-systemic model* (HSM; Chaiken, 1987; Chen & Chaiken, 1999). In the ELM the two processing modes are called *central* and *peripheral routes*, whereas in the HSM they are called *systemic* and *heuristic modes*. Despite some differences between the two models, they both emphasized the possibility to have two different routes of persuasion based on recipients' motivation and capacity in elaboration processing. When participants have enough motivation, capacity, ability, knowledge, and cognitive resources, they are more likely to process the message very carefully and pay close attention to the strength of the arguments (i.e., *central routes* in the ELM, Petty & Cacioppo, 1986; *systemic mode* in the HSM, Chaiken, 1987). Conversely, whenever people lack in some of the previous qualities (e.g., motivation, capacity) they may be persuaded by some peripheral features of the message, following some heuristics, that are simple rules of inference such as "likeable people can be trusted" "expert's statements are correct" "who says more is more expert" (i.e., *peripheral routes* in ELM, Petty & Cacioppo, 1986; *heuristic mode* in the HSM, Chaiken, 1987). More recently, a *unimodel of persuasion* has been proposed by Kruglanski and Thompson (1999). According to this model, the two routes described by the ELM (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986) and by the HSM (Chaiken, 1987) can be considered as two faces of the same overall process: Kruglanski and Thompson (1999) argued that the underlying psychological process is the same and it may be depicted as a continuum related to the processing effort.

Despite all these different models about persuasion, some features of attitude change remain constant (Maio & Haddock, 2007). First of all, the notion that persuasion can be affected by extraneous information, namely non-relevant elements that sometimes are not consciously perceived by the recipients. Another common point is that some personal features of the recipients, such as motivation and ability, may have a great influence in the processing of relevant vs. irrelevant information.

4.1. Mass Communication and Political Persuasion

During political races considerable effort goes into developing strategies that could ensure the final electoral victory, and thus in persuading the electorate not to vote for the opposing candidates. Even if this main purpose has been always pursued by politicians in every historical period, nowadays, because of the new mass media, politicians have much more means that may facilitate the attainment of this aim. The advent of mass communication has profoundly changed not only information about politics, both qualitatively and quantitatively, but it has also transformed the persuasion efforts. As asserted by Kinder (2003, p. 357), nowadays people "are virtually bombarded with news and propaganda". However, people are particularly aware of persuasion strategies during political campaigns, even if nowadays there is a sort of never-ending campaign that somehow manipulates all the information in subtle ways.

First of all, politicians through the mass communication have the possibility to influence how people make sense of politics and of other topics (Kinder, 2003), namely *framing* (e.g., Girotto, 1996). Indeed, in modern societies people have to rely on others for their acquisition of knowledge, and usually the provided information is already contextualized. The new information is affected by a specific point of view, by a specific *frame* that deeply affects the subsequent interpretation by the recipients. In its real pure form, *framing* does not give any additional news, but it simply reorganizes the information that people have already in their mind. A frame suggests a new interpretation of previous knowledge, and may guide the final decision. For instance, choices might depend on whether outcomes are labelled as potential gains or potential loses (e.g., Tversky & Kahneman, 1981). An example of framing used in political communication is called *episodic framing,* that is the description of an issue in concrete terms or as specific events. For instance, Iyengar (1991) found that when poverty or terrorism were described in episodic terms (e.g., *a* poor; *a* terrorist) recipients were more likely to attribute cause and responsibility primarily to poor people and to terrorists, respectively. Another example is when the presentation of a news is joined with a specific group of people. For instance, the association between crime and black

people, as compared to white people, increases the number of people who endorse punitive criminal justice policies (Entman & Rojecki, 2000; Gilliam & Iyengar, 2000). Another type is the *thematic framing* that conversely tries to place an issue in a general and abstract context.

Mass communication does not only determine and influence how citizens think about some issues, but it usually suggests also what is important in politics, and thus what are the most crucial problems that must be taken into consideration by politicians. This phenomenon is called *agenda control or agenda setting* and it has been demonstrated in the literature both with correlational analyses (e.g., Krosnick, Lacy, & Lowe, 1998) and with experimental designs (e.g., Iyengar & Kinder, 1991; see Krosnick et al., 1998). Overall, these studies provided evidence that the insertion of some information about a specific topic is sufficient to induce substantial shifts in the beliefs about the importance of the specific topic. There are two alternative explanations about that phenomenon. On the one hand, some authors have asserted that it is simply a matter of psychological accessibility, and thus it is mostly an unconscious process: topics that are recently covered by the news are more accessible (Iyengar, 1991; Krosnick et al., 1998). On the other hand, people may consciously make inferences about what issues are important on the basis of their coverage in the media: the more an issue receives attention the more it is important for the nation (Iyengar & Kinder, 1985; Miller & Krosnick, 2000; but see Iyengar & McGrady, 2005).

Finally, mass media may have a strong influence in shaping the political preferences of the electorate. Indeed, during a political race, obviously, one major element that captures meticulous attention from politicians is the political program: try to meet the needs of the country. However, as aforementioned, these needs may be sometimes specifically shaped by the media through *framing* and *agenda setting*. Moreover, in order to increase such needs, and thus to reinforce the suitability of their political programs over those of the opponents, politicians sometimes also try to prime certain issues (Ansolabehere & Iyengar, 1994; Druckman, 2003, 2004; Druckman, Jacobs, & Ostermeier, 2004; Iyengar & Kinder, 1987; Jacobs & Shapiro, 1994). Indeed, how people evaluate the political alternatives largely depends on "which stories news media choose to cover" (Kinder, 2003, p. 364). The more an issue is covered by the media, the more it is likely that such specific issue could become a *prime* in influencing the subsequent thoughts and political decisions.

Even if priming strategies have a great role during a political campaign, political issues are not the exclusive core of attention. Indeed, politicians also spend many efforts in actively present their own agenda and programs by means of the so-called *positive campaigns,* and at the same time convince the audience that the opposing candidates and their programs are not so good for the country by means of the so-called *negative campaigns.*

4.2. The role of negative campaigns in political persuasion

Nowadays, due to the new mass media, politicians have more and more tools to use in order to persuade the electorate, but at the same time these new media require a brief and incisive communication style: more messages but shorter as compared to the past (see Chapter 5). Probably for this reason, in parallel to this increasing in communication, a specific kind of political strategy has increased as well: negative campaigning. *Negative campaigning* indicates the reliance on political messages in which the candidate is not primarily concerned in presenting his/her political program (i.e., *positive campaigning*), but he/she is deeply involved in attacking the opposite candidates. Thus, the main goal of both these types of campaigns is to move the electorate, but the means are extremely different. In the positive campaigns politicians directly self-promote; whereas, in the negative campaigns, they devalue their political challengers. Throughout the world and over the past years, politicians in many countries have spent more and more efforts in devaluating their opponents instead of presenting their own political agenda, ideas, or personal features. As such, the current political arena is characterized by an increasing level of negativity, in which candidates criticize and attack their challengers in order to win the election (see also Chapter 5).

The appeal to negative strategies in order to persuade the electorate is not new in the political field. Indeed, as remarked by Victor Kamber "*Poison politics is as old as politics itself*" (Kamber, 1997, p. 6). In fact, the roots of negative campaigns are sunk far away in the past. For instance, a couple of millennia ago, at the times of the Roman Empire, Cicero (65-64 AC) wrote a manual about political communication in which he encouraged the use of negative strategies whenever necessary. Another proof that negativism in politics is not new is from the attack suffered by Thomas Jefferson, the third President of the United States (from 1801 to 1809): his opponents said that if he had won "murder, robbery, rape and incest will be openly taught and practiced" (Dunn, 2004).

The advent of mass media likely strengthened the use of negative campaigns and since the famous "*Daisy Spot*" aired in 1964, ad hoc negative television spots have been created at each political tournament (see Diamond & Bates, 1992). This television spot rapidly became extremely popular and it is depicted as the first example of negative spot in the television era. The advertisement begins with a little girl standing in a meadow with chirping birds, picking the petals of a daisy while slowly counting each petal. When she reaches the number nine, an ominous male voice is then heard counting down a missile launch. The aim of the spot was to create a negative associative link between the candidate B. Goldwater and the risk of an imminent nuclear war. In this specific case, the aim of attacking the opposing candidate was explicitly expressed. Conversely, sometimes the same aim in recent ads was craftly hidden in

a more subtle way. For instance, in a TV spot that criticized Al Gore's drug prescription plan during the 2000 U.S. election, the word *RATS* appeared repeatedly for a short duration on the screen. The main assumption underlying such campaigns is that they create or reinforce negative associations with the opposing candidate (Weinberger & Westen, 2008). However, despite the theoretical plausibility of these assumptions (see De Houwer, Thomas, & Baeyens, 2001; Walther, Nagengast, & Trasselli, 2005), the possible consequences of negative campaigns for the target of the attack are still unclear. Interestingly, sometimes these negative ads are built in such a way to be very funny and thus to be easy remembered by the audience. For instance, during the 2004 US campaign, G. W. Bush used a very funny television spot in which his opponent, J. F. Kerry, was portrayed while surfing led by the wind, from one direction to another, like a metaphor of his political decisions in the past.

However, negativism is increasingly present not only in television spots but also in other forms of communication within the campaigns, such as forums, candidates' debates, speeches, press statements, talk shows, and posters. One of the hypothesized reasons for this trend can be tracked in the high costs of political campaigns. Indeed, on the basis of a naive intuition, one might expect that negative messages better capture the attention of the electorate in comparison to positive messages, shake the audience and convince the electorate not to vote for the opposite candidate. Therefore, negative messages are perceived as associated with a more favourable costs/benefits ratio in comparison to positive messages. The political scientist Herbert Alexander well summarized this issue. Indeed, he stated: "the high cost of television means now that you have to go for the jugular" (cited in Purdum, 1998, p. 4). However, may we be sure that negative campaigns facilitate a candidate to go for the challenger's jugular? In other words, are we sure that negative messages do actually bleed dry the opposing candidate and do not backfire against the source?

4.3. The consequences of negative campaigns

Together with the increase of negativism in politics, research has also increased in order to understand the likely consequences of such communication in the political domain. However, this literature remained largely inconclusive due to the heterogeneity of the obtained effects. Two meta-analyses by Lau and colleagues (Lau, Sigelman, Heldmann, & Babbit, 1999; Lau, Sigelman, & Rovner, 2007) ended with the conclusion that only two effects of negative campaigning enjoy unambiguous empirical support. First, memory for negative ads is typically better as compared to positive ads (e.g., Brader, 2005; Brians & Wattenberg, 1996; Chang, 2001; Dermody & Scullion, 2000; Geer & Geer, 2003, Shapiro & Rieger, 1992). Second, negative ads seem to stimulate knowledge acquisition, such that voters

show higher levels of knowledge about the current election and the involved candidates (e.g., Brader, 2005; Niven, 2006; Pinkleton & Garramone, 1992). However, with the exception of these two effects, the empirical evidence is ambiguous as to whether negative ads are more or less effective than positive ads (Lau et al., 1999, 2007).

Overall, the research in this topic has typically investigated the effects of negative campaigns at two different levels, namely the effects on voter turnout and on the perception of the involved politicians. As for the former, research has focused on the consequences on the perception of politics in general, that is whether negative campaigns increase or decrease voter turnout, and foster or not an environment in which people are more or less interested in politics. Some authors, both with survey research and experimental studies, suggested that negativism may decrease voter turnout (Ansolabehere & Iyengar, 1995; Ansolabehere, Iyengar, & Simon, 1999; Ansolabehere, Iyengar, Simon, & Valentino, 1994; Kahn & Kenney, 1999), especially among political independent voters. However, other authors have recently questioned these findings (Goldstein & Freedman 2002; Martin, 2004). Indeed, some other studies have underlined positive outcomes, such as that negative campaigning could mobilize the electorate, and therefore it might have a stimulating effect on voters. One possibility to reconcile these different perspectives has been suggested by Lau and Pomper (2001) who described an interesting curvilinear effect between the tone of the campaign and voter turnout: a moderate level of negativism may mobilize potential voters, but increasing negativism can distance and discourage them. The underlying message is that not all negative campaigns are the same and that the extremity of the negative tones may matter.

As for the second line of investigation, namely the likely consequences on the perception of the involved politicians, one basic problem is implied by the vague definition of the term *effective*. Indeed, one could argue that negative advertising should be regarded as effective only when it causes a positive difference between the evaluation of the source of the campaign and the evaluation of the attacked candidate. In other words, negative campaigns should have positive (or at least neutral) but not negative consequences for its source, and negative (or at least neutral) but not positive consequences for its target. Thus, even if negative ads lead to a negative perception of the attacked candidate, it seems important to rule out equally negative consequences for its source. However, also in this case the pattern of results still remains cloudy (Lau et al., 1999, 2007). Indeed, on the one hand some studies have suggested that the use of negative messages may be strategically functional for the source candidate (Kaid, 1997; Roddy & Garramone, 1988; Wadsworth, Patterson, Kaid, Cullers, Malcomb, & Lamirand, 1987). However, on the other hand, some studies showed that negative messages can elicit more negative feelings toward the source of the attack

(Budesheim, Houston, & DePaola, 1996; Haddock & Zanna, 1997; Hill, 1989; Hitchon & Chang, 1995; Matthews & Dietz-Uhler, 1998; Roese & Sande, 1993; but see Johnson-Cartee & Copeland, 1991). As such, the intended negative effect on the evaluation of the target is sometimes counterbalanced by an unintended negative effect on the evaluation of the source (Budesheim et al., 1996; Matthews & Dietz-Uhler, 1998). Such negative outcomes for the source seem to be particularly likely when the source candidate is an ingroup member, namely a politician of the supported coalition. Indeed, in this case the backlash against the source is even more pronounced (Budesheim et al., 1996; Matthews & Dietz-Uhler, 1998). According to the so-called *black sheep effect* (Marques & Yzerbyt, 1988; Marques et al., 1988), when an ingroup member performs a stigmatized behaviour, he/she will be condemned even more strongly than an outgroup member carrying out a similar behaviour. As aforementioned, the political affiliation and the match between voters' and candidates' membership is an important cue that may influence the impression formation process, both in a positive way and in a negative way such as in this case. Indeed, the aforementioned *black sheep effect* (Marques & Yzerbyt, 1988; Marques et al., 1988) could be considered as a strategy adopted in order to defend one's own social identity from the negative behaviour of a deviant ingroup member. Therefore, since negative political advertisements are disapproved (Merritt, 1984), all candidates who engage in negative campaigns risk blame but this seems to be especially true in the case of ingroup candidates. These outcomes would suggest avoiding negative campaigning if politicians care about their own jugulars.

To conclude, an overall disagreement about the likely consequences of negativism in the political domain still emerges from the described panorama. For this reason, Lau and colleagues (Lau et al., 1999) concluded, from an extensive meta-analysis, that there is no empirical demonstration that negative political ads are more or less effective than positive ads. Indeed, for every finding there seems to be also the opposite outcome. In a subsequent meta-analysis (Lau et al., 2007) the authors included additional studies and tried to individuate some potential moderators, but the results essentially reinforced their earlier conclusion.

5. Overview of the present work

As aforementioned, given the described puzzling scenario about the likely consequences of negative political campaigning in shaping impression formation toward the involved politicians, our aim with the present work is to clarify why the research about this topic is still full of loopholes. We will try to go beyond this inconclusive condition taking into account some variables that may be useful in order to outline clear results. In the first

experimental session of the present work (Session A) we will try to further investigate the role of negative messages in impression formation and attitude change in the political arena. Specifically, Study 1, 2, 3 and 4 (Chapter 2; Carraro & Castelli, 2008) will be primarily focused on the likely consequences of negative messages on the perception of the source candidate, taking into consideration some factors such as: the specific type of negative messages used, the level of measurement (implicit vs. explicit), the evaluated dimension of social judgment (competence vs. warmth), and the political affiliation of the recipients. Subsequently, in order to assess the actual efficacy of a negative message, the focus of attention will move to the analysis of the likely consequences on the perception of both the source candidate and of the opposing candidate, in terms of a general affective evaluation, both implicit and explicit (Study 5, Chapter 3; Carraro, Gawronski, & Castelli, 2008). Finally, in Study 6 (Chapter 4; Carraro & Castelli, unpublished manuscript) the main aim will be to analyze the likely consequences of a negative campaign on the identification (both implicit and explicit) with one's own political party. Moreover, another aim will be to analyze the impact of some personal features of the participants (specifically the strength of their implicit political affiliation) on the likely consequences of negative messages.

Subsequently, in the second experimental session (Session B) we will move the focus of attention to some other aspects that may have a great weight in creating and changing an impression toward a politician, and thus in the end influence the voting decision. In particular we will analyze some differences between politicians. Initially, Chapter 5 will analyze some differences between the two Italian coalitions in terms of communication style, such as grammatical features, syntactic complexity, linguistic wordiness (Study 1a and 1b; Carraro, Castelli, & Arcuri, 2008) and in the use of negative campaigns (Study 2a and 2b; Castelli, Carraro, Tondini, & Arcuri, 2007). Then, Chapter 6 (Study 1, 2, 3 and 4) will analyze the ascription of two dimensions of social judgment, namely competence vs. warmth, to left- vs. right-wing politicians.

SESSION A: *The Implicit and Explicit Effects of Negative Messages*

Chapter 2

THE IMPLICIT AND EXPLICIT EFFECTS ON PERCEIVED WARMTH AND COMPETENCE:

Aversion but compliance with those who say something negative

1. General Introduction

As aforementioned in the introduction, despite the widespread use of negative political campaigning and the ample literature about such topic, the empirical research about the likely consequences of this type of communication is still unclear: for every finding there is also the opposite one (Lau et al., 1999). Because of this puzzling scenario, many authors have begun to wonder why research about negative campaigns is so inconclusive (e.g., Phillips, Urbany & Reynolds, 2008; Sigelman & Kugler, 2003). As mentioned, our main aim here is to further investigate this topic from the social cognition point of view. Specifically, we assume here that a possibility to disentangle the described inconclusive scenario is to take into account several factors, at least four factors. The first is related to the mere definition of what is intended with the expression *negative campaigning*. The second factor is related to the level of measurement of attitudes toward a politician: explicit vs. implicit. The third factor concerns the specific evaluated dimension of social judgment: competence vs. warmth. Finally, the last factor takes into consideration the influence of participants' political affiliation.

1.1. Different effects for different types of negative messages

The first factor that, in our opinion, must be considered in order to outline clear results about the effects of negative political campaigns, is related to the mere definition of such expression. Indeed, one potential explanation for the inconsistency of previous studies in the literature may partially be due to an inaccurate and fuzzy definition of what might be actually considered as a negative message. For instance, Richardson (2001) suggested the idea that negative campaigning per se is a "*suspect category*". Also Lau and his colleagues (Lau et al., 1999) recognized this issue and were forced to adopt a self-definition method to select which studies to include in their meta-analysis. Indeed, they specified that "*negative advertising is a contested concept, we based (...) on whether the authors of a given study themselves*

categorized an ad as negative" (Lau et al., 1999, p. 853). Unfortunately, this leaves open the possibility that different authors have included different types or undertones of negative messages and, most importantly, that these different types do actually lead to differentiated effects.

Some authors have started to investigate the possibility that different consequences follow from different types of negative messages. For instance, Lau and Pomper (2001) distinguished negative political messages during the US Senate campaign between 1988 and 1998 as either *person-based* or *issue-based*. However, they found no evidence that these two types of message differentially affected voter turnout. In contrast, significant effects were found on the perception of political sources (Budesheim et al., 1996). The authors (Budesheim et al., 1996) analyzed backlash against the sources as a function of the specific type of the sentence. They distinguished between 4 different types of remarks. In the *issue-based attacks* the target was criticized for his/her political program; whereas, in the *person-based attacks* the target's morality and skills were devalued. The latter two types of attack – *dual attacks* and *integrated attacks* – combined issue-based and person-based attacks by either merely alternating them or integrating them into coherent sentences. Results showed that *person-based attacks* were particularly detrimental for the source in comparison to *issue-based attacks*, at least when they were not discussed within a well-developed discourse (i.e., *integrated attacks*). Also Kahn and Geer (1994) distinguished both positive and negative messages on the basis of the topic of the attack. They called "Positive Trait Ads" and "Negative Trait Ads" those messages based on the personal features of the involved politicians; whereas, they called "Positive Issue Ads" and "Negative Issue Ads" those messages based on the candidate's or the opponent's views of issues. They (Kahn & Geer, 1994) found that participants were more tolerant of attack ads based on issues rather than of attack ads based on personal traits. Overall, these findings clearly indicate that not all negative messages are created equal and that attacks on the personal characteristics of the target may pose problems for the source candidate.

1.2. Different effects for different levels of measurement

A second source of variability may concern with the level of measurement of the effects. So far, research has only investigated the self-reported perception toward political candidates who used negative messages. As mentioned in Chapter 1, there are several reasons to think that verbal responses may not be able to capture the whole underlying attitude. The first reason is that controlled responses may sometimes be at odds with more spontaneous responses because of a lack of introspective ability (e.g., Greenwald & Banaji, 1995).

Therefore, individuals may sincerely report to endorse specific attitudes without being aware that when control lacks their responses are not in line with such explicit attitudes. The second reason is that self-reports may often be biased by social desirability concerns and reflect the outcome of very controlled processes. In particular, when individuals are aware about the socially inappropriate nature of a given behaviour – like saying negative remarks against another person – they may overtly stigmatize the actor even though they subtly approve such behaviour. The literature on intergroup and intragroup perception often reports dissociation between explicit and implicit attitudes (e.g., Maass, Castelli, & Arcuri 2000; Wilson, Lindsey, & Schooler, 2000). Finally, there is now widespread agreement that implicit and explicit attitudes could be inconsistent from each other because they are qualitatively distinct (e.g., Gawronski & Bodenhausen, 2006). According to a recent influential model (i.e., APE model, Gawronski & Bodenhausen, 2006), the two attitudes are rooted into two different mental processes, namely associative and propositional. Implicit attitudes are the outcomes of associative processes, and thus they can be considered as automatic affective reactions resulting from the spontaneous activation of associative networks when exposed to a stimulus object. This process does not require much cognitive capacity and it could also be activated without an intention to evaluate the object. Conversely, explicit attitudes are the results of evaluative judgments based on syllogistic inferences, and this propositional process usually requires more cognitive capacity than the associative process (see also Chapter 3 and 4).

Within political psychology there is now a lively interest for indirect attitude measures (Burdein et al., 2006; Lodge & Taber, 2005; Morris et al., 2003). These measures aim at capturing the spontaneous affective responses toward political leaders, issues or symbols (see Burdein et al., 2006) or the spontaneous approach/avoidance tendencies that are elicited when faced with well-known politicians (Paladino & Castelli, 2008). Because the socio-cognitive literature shows that implicit attitudes may quickly develop and are influenced by the received information (Castelli, Zogmaister, Smith & Arcuri, 2004; Rydell & McConnell, 2006; Rydell, McConnell, Strain, & Claypool, 2007), it is crucial to determine what kind of impression is spontaneously formed toward sources of negative messages, and, more specifically, whether this spontaneous impression can simultaneously be positive on some dimensions but negative on others.

1.3. Different effects for different evaluated dimensions

Related to the previous point, research about intergroup and intragroup evaluations has shown that there are at least two fundamental and universal dimensions underlying social judgment: competence and warmth (e.g., Fiske, Cuddy, & Glick, 2006). These two

dimensions seem to be the result of evolutionary pressures because they are necessary in order to survive in the complicated social world. Indeed, people generally need to know others' intentions and others' capability (Peeters, 1983) in order to adopt the proper social behaviour. As for the intentions, a social actor could pursue only one's own profits, namely to be competitive, or he/she could be cooperative. Therefore, we could judge an individual as more or less competitive on the basis of his/her own intentions and this dimension negatively predicts the evaluation about warmth. The more a person is perceived as competitive, the less he/she is perceived as warm (Cuddy, Fiske, & Glick, 2008). However, capability is related to power, namely the potential to achieve one's own goals, and it positively predicts the other dimension: competence. In general, people perceive as more competent those who are able to achieve their own purposes.

The relevance of these two dimensions has emerged also in studies about politics and the perception of political candidates in the United States (Abelson, Kinder, Peters, & Fiske, 1982; Kinder & Sears, 1981) as well as in Poland (Wojiciszke & Klusek, 1996; see also Chapter 6 for an investigation in the Italian scenario). For this reason, we argue here that some inconsistencies of previous studies about negative campaigning could be partially due to discrepant effects on these two dimensions. Indeed, the same communication strategy may have opposite effects on the perception of competence and warmth. More specifically, an intriguing possibility is that negative campaigns have the influence to decrease the perceived sociability of the source, but at the same time increase his/her perceived competence. Indeed, a candidate who attacks the challenger may be perceived as more powerful (and thus high in competence) and more competitive (and thus low in warmth) as compared to a candidate who uses a positive campaign.

1.4. Different effects for different types of voters

Another potential explanation for the inconsistency of previous studies in the literature about the effects of negative political campaigns may be somewhat due to the political affiliation of respondents. In general, a first relevant issue is related to the distinction between participants with a clear political preference and undecided or uninvolved respondents. Indeed, these two different samples might be differently influenced by political messages in general and by negative messages specifically. Most importantly here, a second relevant factor is related to the understanding of whether the source of a political message is an ingroup or an outgroup member. As mentioned in the general introduction (Chapter 1) the membership to a social group is an important cue in the impression formation process. Indeed, researchers have remarked how important it is for an individual to be a member of a given

group and how central it could be to belong to a positively evaluated group in order to achieve and maintain a positive social identity (e.g., Tajfel, 1981; Tajfel, Billig, Bundy, & Flament, 1971). The membership to a given political group may have a direct influence not only in terms of intergroup evaluation – namely participants generally evaluate more positively the source of a message when he/she is an ingroup member rather than when he/she is an outgroup member (i.e., ingroup bias) – but even in terms of intragroup evaluation both in a positive way and in a negative way. Indeed, ingroup members are differently perceived and evaluated as a function of their behaviours. At the one hand, recently some studies have found a positive implicit evaluation toward ingroup members who manifest a preference toward their own group (Castelli & Carraro, 2008; Castelli, Tomelleri, & Zogmaister, 2008). On the other hand, the aforementioned *black sheep effect* (Marques & Yzerbyt, 1988; Marques et al., 1988) could be considered as a strategy adopted in order to defend one's own social identity from the negative behaviours of a deviant ingroup member. In other words, negative campaigns could lead to different and stronger effects, both in a negative and in a positive direction, precisely when the source is an ingroup member.

1.5. Overview of the current research

The main goal of the present chapter is to explore the potential effects of negative messages. Specifically, the purpose is to analyze how the four aforementioned factors of variability may affect the consequences of negative and positive political campaigns on the evaluation of the involved candidates, especially for the source candidate.

For this reason, we first propose here that negative messages should not be considered as a monolithic block and our aim is to extend previous literature (Budesheim et al., 1996) by directly comparing a positive political campaign with several types of negative messages (Study 1 and Study 2). Indeed, we hypothesize that different types of negative messages may be associated with different pattern of responses from the audience. One overall distinction among negative messages can be found in the specific target of the attack. Indeed, on one side, politicians may attack the opposite party in general, without mentioning any specific politician (e.g., "Democrats are only interested in increasing the control of the Government over citizens"). However, on the other side, the attack may also be carried out against a specific challenger. In this case another distinction based on the content of the attack becomes important. Indeed, the negative remarks could be about the challenger's personal and moral features (e.g., "Kerry is unreliable and he goes where the wind blows") or about of his/her political program (e.g., "Kerry will increase taxes"). Therefore, at least three different types of negative messages can be described, namely *negative ideological*, *negative person-based* and

negative issue-based, respectively. In general, attacks against single and identifiable individuals may be perceived as more morally inappropriate and therefore be condemned. In contrast, no normative pressure prescribes to avoid attacks centred on specific political issues or directed toward a political group as a whole. As such, different types of negative messages could also be differently appraised.

As for the second source of variability, the core goal of the present work is also to start examining the less controlled effects of negative campaigning. Indeed, we will test whether the controlled reactions toward politicians who use negative messages differ in comparison to less controlled responses. We expect that, at least in the case of *person-based* attacks, verbal and controlled responses toward the source would be largely negative. As said, we hypothesize that respondents will verbally take distance from politicians who use person-based attacks, especially when they belong to their same party (i.e., *black sheep effect*). However, it is unclear whether these are just superficial responses that reflect the operation of controlled processes, or whether perceivers do also develop negative attitudes on a more spontaneous and implicit level. Furthermore, we will attempt to disentangle between different types of effects that might occur at the implicit level. Indeed, implicit attitude measures enable us to grasp the spontaneous affective responses that are formed toward a person, but they may also allow us to capture other dimensions like the tendency to conform to a person. To this end, across the various studies we will employ a wide range of different measures aimed at assessing spontaneous responses.

As for the third source of variability we will attempt to distinguish between the effects that more directly relate to the perceived sociability and warmth of a target and those that are more closely related to the perceived power and competence. As discussed above, our prediction is that negative campaigns lessen perceived warmth but may increase perceived competence of the source candidate.

Finally, we will focus here only on the effects for decided participants in order to better understand the influence of intergroup and intragroup relations. Indeed, identity concerns are crucial in the evaluation of candidates. Therefore, we will examine the effects as a function of the ingroup vs. outgroup membership of the source of the message. We predict that the usual ingroup bias (i.e., preference for the ingroup candidate) will be lowered or even reversed when the ingroup candidate conveys *negative person-based* messages (i.e., *black sheep effect*), at least in relation to judgments involving the pleasantness and warmth of the candidate at the explicit level.

2. STUDY 1 *explicit evaluation and implicit conformity*

2.1. Method

Participants and Design

One hundred and twenty students participated in the experiment. Participants were aged between 19 and 30 years ($M = 23.63$, $SD = 2.60$), and there was an approximately equal number of males and females.

The experiment consisted of a 4 (type of the message) × 2 (political affiliation of the source candidate: left-wing vs. right-wing) × 2 (political affiliation of the participants: left-wing vs. right-wing) design with all the factors varying between participants.

Materials

The stimulus material consisted of a description of an alleged political candidate (e.g., involved in politics for twenty years, married, with two children, an expert of modern art) and 10 sentences for each type of political campaigning (overall there were 4 conditions; see Appendix A for the sentences). In one case, all sentences were *positive*: the candidate promoted his political plan without making any reference to the opposing candidate (e.g., "We fight every day for democracy and for a free society"). In the other three conditions, the candidate adopted a mixed campaign strategy (i.e., 5 positive and 5 negative remarks). In the *negative ideological* condition, the candidate attacked the general ideology of the opposite coalition (e.g., "The left wing coalition is dishonest and distorts the truth as none else"). In the *negative issue-based* condition, the politician directly attacked the opposite candidate about his political program (e.g., "His economic plan will not give prosperity and stability to our Country"). In the *negative person-based* condition, the attack toward the opposite candidate concerned his personal features (e.g., "He isn't a real leader. He is not skilled enough to tackle difficult situations with courage and devotion"). Moreover, we used ten modern art paintings for the conformity measure.

Measures

The dependent measures consisted of an implicit measure and some explicit measures. As for the former, we used a new unobtrusive measure of spontaneous conformity (Castelli, Arcuri, & Zogmaister, 2003; Castelli et al., 2008; Castelli, Vanzetto, Sherman, & Arcuri, 2001; Castelli, Zecchini, Sherman, & De Amicis, 2005; Vaes, Paladino, Castelli, Leyens, & Giovanazzi, 2003). Immediately after participants have read the message said by a politician, they were asked to provide judgments in a different domain (i.e., artistic preferences) under

severe time constraints. When providing their personal judgments, participants had the chance to follow or not the advices of the politician. The absolute distance between the provided anchors and personal evaluations may be considered as an index of spontaneous conformity toward the political candidate. In this way, it is allowed to indirectly assess to what extent a source that makes use of a specific type of political campaign is then considered as a valuable model in a different domain (see Figure 1 in this Chapter for an example of the procedure).

As for the explicit evaluation of the source candidate we used a questionnaire with a semantic differential that comprised 14 bipolar scales (e.g., happy-sad, good-bad). Responses were provided on 7-point scales. Next, there were 6 items assessing how much they would have liked to meet the politician, whether they would have liked to be represented by him, whether they would participate in one of his political meetings, how much he was considered as likeable, interesting, and opportunist. Responses were provided on 7-point Likert scales (1 = not at all, 7 = very much).

Moreover, in the end, we recorded also the political affiliation of the participants by asking to report how far-close they felt with respect to each of the 8 most representative parties in the Italian scenario (4 right-wing and 4 left-wing) at the time of the study. Responses were provided on 7-point Likert scales (1 = very close, 7 = very far-away).

Procedure

Participants took part individually at the study. They were placed in front of a computer screen and were informed that they were going to read some information about an alleged political candidate, who was running for the European elections in another region. First, some personal information was provided (e.g., involved in politics for twenty years, married, with two children) and it was remarked that he liked modern art, and that he used to work as an art critic during his free time. Moreover, for half the participants he was presented as a left-wing politician; whereas, for the other half he was presented as a right-wing politician.

Next, participants were required to form an impression about such a candidate on the basis of a series of remarks he made during his last political campaign. Ten sentences were shown and the content was manipulated between participants creating four conditions: *positive*, *negative ideological*, *negative issue-based*, *negative person-based*, as described above.

As part of the cover story, because we were allegedly interested in impression formation processes while being distracted by other tasks, participants were informed that in between each sentence and the following they had to quickly evaluate a modern art painting by saying aloud a value between 1 (extreme disliking) and 10 (extreme liking). Only 3 seconds were

allowed to evaluate the painting and the experimenter recorded the response. Importantly, at the top of each painting participants could see the evaluation provided by the politician about the painting. Therefore, such an evaluation could be used as an anchor while reporting personal judgments and this was our spontaneous conformity measure (see Figure 1 for an example).

At the end of this computerized presentation, participants were asked to fill in the questionnaire aimed at assessing their perception of the presented politician, as well as their personal political affiliation. Finally participants were thanked and fully debriefed.
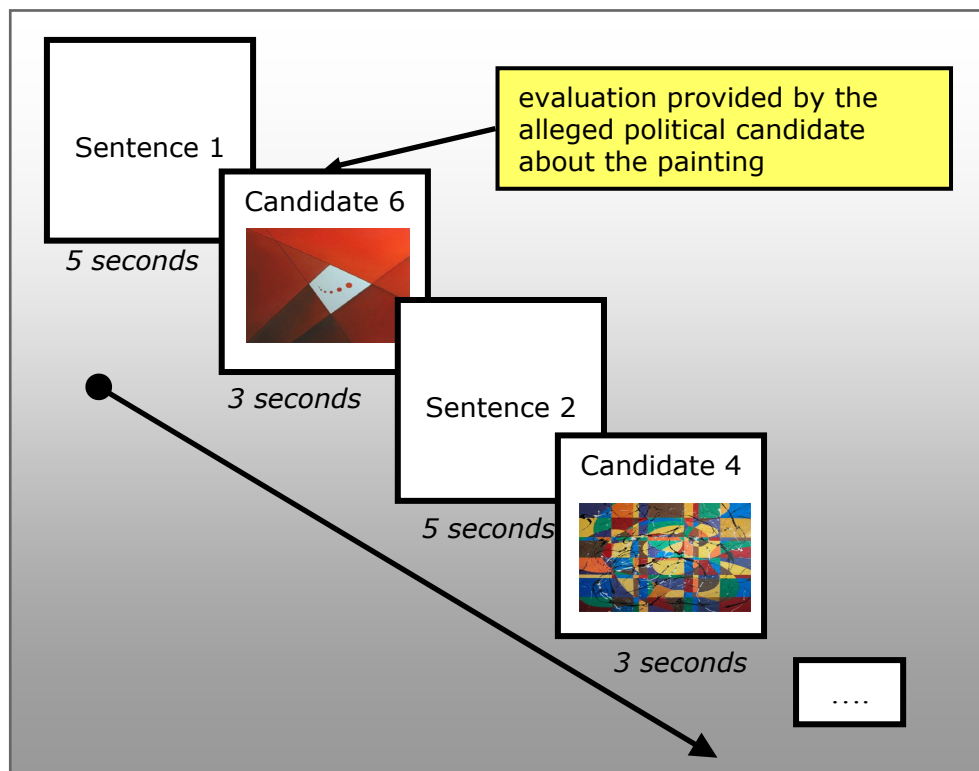
Figure 1. Schematic view and time course of the spontaneous conformity measure.

2.2. Results

First, participants were categorized on the basis of their political affiliation. The mean closeness to the four left-wing parties was calculated as well as the mean closeness to the four right-wing parties. A difference score, which could range between –6 to +6, was then computed. Participants with a difference score of less than 1.5 were classified as undecided (N = 35[1]). Because one of the main goals of the present study was to assess the effects of

---

[1] The percentage of participants who were classified as undecided roughly corresponds to the number of citizens who, at that time, according to national surveys reported to be undecided about which coalition to vote for in the case of eventual elections.

negative messages on the basis of the respective political affiliation of the politician and the respondents, we included in the analyses only the data from decided participants (35 were in favour of the right-wing coalition and 50 were in favour of the left-wing coalition).

Spontaneous conformity measure

For each participant we calculated a single index of conformity based on the mean of the absolute difference between participants' evaluations of each of the 10 drawings and the provided anchors. Then, for each participant, we subtracted the obtained value from 9 (i.e., the theoretical maximal distance from personal responses and the provided anchors). Therefore, higher values indicate stronger conformity toward the political candidate. This index was submitted to a 2 (political affiliation of the source: left- vs. right-wing) × 2 (political affiliation of the respondent: left- vs. right-wing) × 4 (type of message: *positive, negative ideological, negative issue-based, negative person-based*) analysis of variance with all factors varying between participants. Only one significant effect emerged, namely the main effect of the type of message, $F(3, 69) = 3.30$, $p < .05$, $\eta_p^2 = .126$. Conformity was significantly lower when the source used a positive campaign strategy ($M = 3.5$, $SD = 1.10$) as compared to the other three negative conditions [$M_{\text{negative-Ideological}} = 4.08$, $SD = .56$, $t(47) = 2.18$, $p < .05$; $M_{\text{negative-Issue-based}} = 4.02$, $SD = .49$, $t(38) = 1.7$, $p = .09$; $M_{\text{negative-Person-based}} = 4.19$, $SD = .26$, $t(36) = 2.34$, $p < .05$] which were not different from each other (see Figure 2).
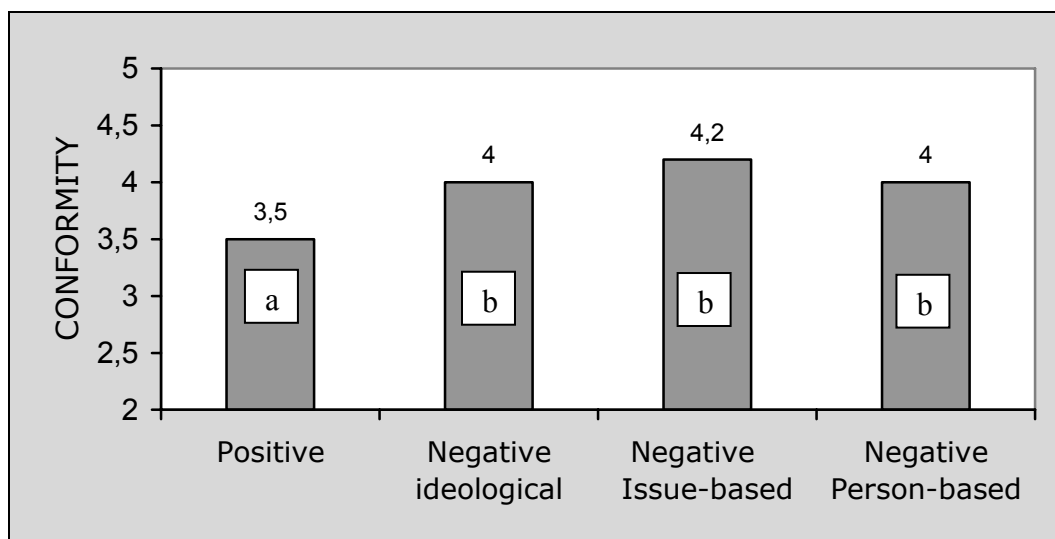
Figure 2. Perception of the source candidate emerged from the spontaneous conformity measure. High values indicate more conformity toward the source candidate.

The Implicit and Explicit Effects on Perceived Warmth and Competence: Aversion but Compliance with Those Who Say Something Negative

Semantic differential

All responses were rescaled so that lower values indicated more negative perceptions, and then we carried out a factor analysis (Varimax rotation) on responses to the 14 items. Two major factors emerged that accounted for about 46% of the variance. The first factor comprised the following scales: insecure-confident, small-great, powerless-potent, weak-strong, slow-fast, passive-active. This subscale was assumed to measure the perceived power ($\alpha = .85$). The second factor comprised the following items: sad-happy, stupid-intelligent, disagreeable-likeable, good-bad, untrustworthy-trustworthy. This subscale was assumed to capture a dimension of personality evaluation of the candidate ($\alpha = .74$), that is more related to pleasantness and interpersonal qualities.

The perceived power was analyzed through a 2 (political affiliation of the source) × 2 (political affiliation of the respondent) × 4 (type of message) analysis of variance with all the factors varying between participants. We found a significant interaction between the political affiliation of the source and that of the participants, $F(1, 69) = 6.25$, $p < .05$, $\eta_p^2 = .083$. Both right-wing and left-wing respondents perceived the candidate as more powerful when he was presented as a politician of their preferred coalition. No other effect was significant.

A similar analysis on the evaluation of the pleasantness and the interpersonal qualities of the candidate showed a significant main effect of the political affiliation of the candidate, $F(1, 69) = 4.29$, $p < .05$, $\eta_p^2 = .059$: the left-wing candidate received a more positive evaluation. This effect, however, was qualified by a significant two-way interaction between the political affiliation of the source and that of the participant, $F(1, 69) = 15.82$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .187$. Again, there was a clear more positive evaluation of the candidate of one's own coalition. More interestingly, responses were also affected by the type of message, $F(3, 69) = 2.72$, $p = .051$, $\eta_p^2 = .106$. *Negative person-based* campaign elicited the most negative evaluations ($M = 3.7$, $SD = .90$). Indeed, in this condition the evaluation was more negative as compared to the other conditions [$M_{positive} = 4.28$, $SD = .78$, $t(36) = -2.22$, $p < .05$; $M_{negative-Ideological} = 4.35$, $SD = 1.26$, $t(43) = -1.96$, $p < .05$; $M_{negative-Issue-based} = 4.50$, $SD = .82$, $t(34) = -2.89$, $p < .05$].

The three-way interaction was also significant, $F(3, 69) = 2.81$, $p < .05$, $\eta_p^2 = .109$ (see Figure 3). Indeed, the preference for the candidate of one's own coalition was strong in all conditions but it disappeared when the candidate used a *negative person-based* campaign. Indeed, only in this condition the difference in the evaluation of an ingroup and an outgroup member was not statistically significant [$t(15) = .70$, $p = .50$]; whereas in the other three conditions the ingroup source was evaluated more positively as compared to the outgroup source candidate [$t(26)_{negative-Ideological} = 4.49$, $p < .001$; $t(17)_{negative-Issue-based} = 2.59$, $p = .02$;

t(19) Positive = 2.24, *p* = .04]. This finding is in line with previous work about the *black sheep effect* (Marques et al., 1988; Matthews & Dietz-Uhler, 1998). Moreover, consistent with this view, the type of message did not significantly affect responses when the source was an outgroup member. In contrast, when the source was an ingroup member, the type of message mattered, $F(1, 36) = 3.73$, $p < .05$, and responses were maximally negative in the case of *negative person-based messages* (*M* = 3.85, *SD* = .74), as compared to the other three conditions [*M* positive = 4.64, *SD* = 4.64, *t*(15) = -2.20, *p* < .05; *M* negative-Ideological = 4.96, *SD* = .88, *t*(23) = -2.94, *p* < .05 ; *M* negative-Issue-based = 4.95, *SD* = .84, *t*(14) = -3.25, *p* < .05].
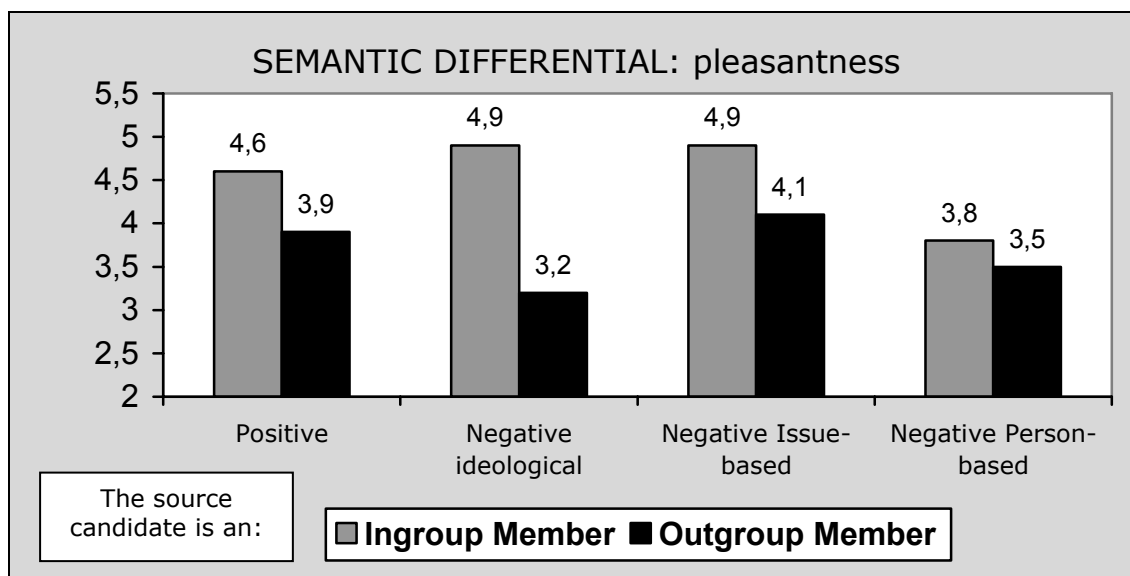
Figure 3. Perception of the source candidate emerged from the semantic differential about the pleasantness and the interpersonal qualities as a function of the type of message and participants' political affiliation.

Likert scales

Responses to the 6 items, after appropriate rescaling, proved to be highly correlated and the reliability of the scale was good (α = .83). Therefore, a mean index was computed and submitted to a 2 (political affiliation of the source) × 2 (political affiliation of the respondent) × 4 (type of message) analysis of variance with all the factors varying between participants. Several significant effects emerged. First, the left-wing candidate was evaluated in a more positive way as compared to the right-wing candidate, $F(1, 69) = 4.13$, $p < .05$, $\eta_p^2 = .057$, although the effect was qualified by an interaction with political affiliation of the respondents, $F(1, 69) = 28.49$, $p < .001$. This effect indicated the presence of an ingroup bias, namely a more positive evaluation of the candidate of one's own coalition. In addition, there was a significant main effect of the type of message, $F(3, 69) = 3.78$, $p < .05$, $\eta_p^2 = .141$. Evaluations

were more negative when the candidate adopted a *negative person-based* campaign (M = 3.03, SD = 1.04) than the other three conditions [$M_{positive}$ = 3.97, SD = 1.11, $t(36)$ = -2.55, p < .05; $M_{negative\text{-}Ideological}$ = 3.84, SD = 1.05, $t(43)$ = -2.55, p < .05; $M_{negative\text{-}Issue\text{-}based}$ = 4.24, SD = 1.75, $t(34)$ = -3.39, p < .05] which were not different from each other.

Finally, the three-way interaction was also significant, $F(3, 69)$ = 6.00, p < .001, η_p^2 = .207 (see Figure 4), demonstrating that ingroup bias was affected by the type of message transmitted by the source. Indeed, the preference for the candidate of one's own coalition was stronger in the case of *negative ideological* messages [$t(26)$ = 6.39, p < .001]. It was slightly decreased in the case of *positive* [$t(19)$ = 2.33, p = .03] and *negative issue-based* messages [$t(17)$ = 2.22, p = .04], and disappeared in the case of *negative person-based* messages [$t(15)$ = 1.18, p = .25].
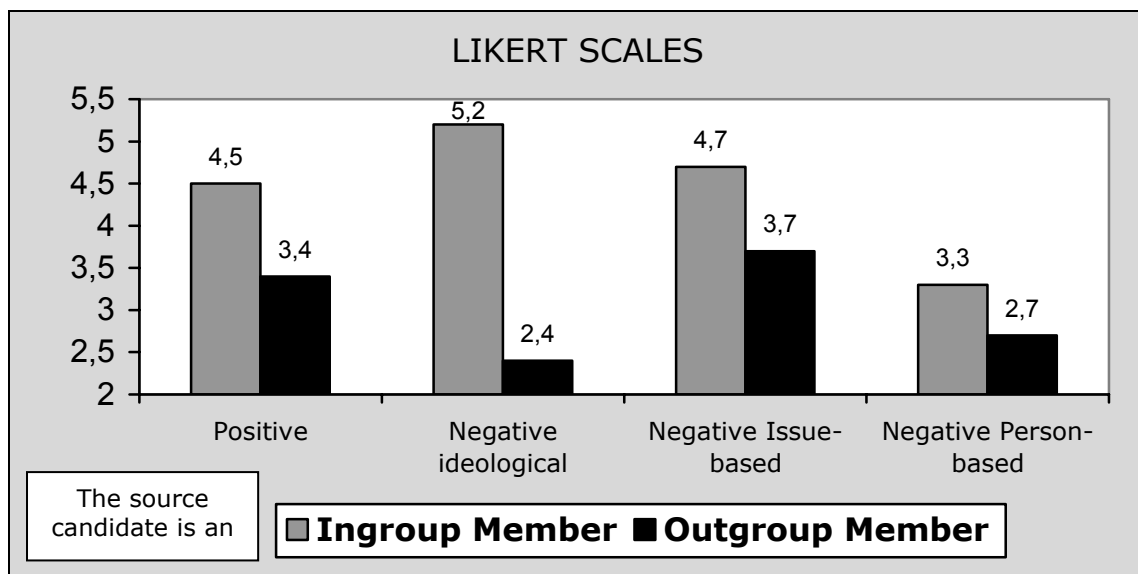
Figure 4. Perception of the source candidate emerged from the Likert Scales as a function of the type of message and participants' political affiliation.

2.3. Discussion

Overall, results demonstrated that when considering the consequences of negative political campaigns several factors are crucial and may modulate the effects. It thus appears clear that the attempts to univocally determine whether negative messages are effective or not may often be frustrated by the fact that quite different outcomes emerge under different conditions.

As for the explicit responses, findings showed that not all negative messages lead to comparable effects. Indeed, decided voters provided very negative evaluations toward a candidate who attacked the challenger about his/her personal features. In contrast, responses toward the source were less negative when the remarks involved ideological issues or actual

contents of the program. In these latter cases, explicit responses did not differ with respect to a condition in which the source adopted positive campaigns. These findings suggest that citizens do not refuse negativity overall. Negativity is in some ways a recurring component of political campaigns and when it is directed toward ideological instances or parts of the political program it seems to be accepted. In these cases, the source was evaluated just like when he used positive messages. In contrast, aversion is revealed only toward politicians who bring the dispute on the interpersonal level and devalue the personal qualities of their opponents. In sum, *negative person-based* messages may backfire against the source; whereas, other forms of negative message do not.

As predicted, the insidious nature of *negative person-based messages* is also stressed by another dimension, namely the correspondence between the political affiliation of the respondent and that of the candidate source. Indeed, the explicit preference for the candidate of one's own coalition disappeared when he made *negative person-based* remarks, but even the backlash against the source of these messages was particularly pronounced when the recipient shared a common political identity with the source. Overall, when considering the explicit evaluation of the source it becomes clear that not all negative messages are the same and that some specific instantiations, like ideological and issue-based attacks, are well tolerated.

In addition, the analysis of explicit responses indicated that the type of message used by the politician basically affected interpersonal evaluations as for instance, how likeable and trustworthy he was perceived to be (i.e., warmth dimension). In contrast, the perception of power, as measured by a subscale of the semantic differential, did not vary across conditions. This suggests that negative messages, especially when they are *person-based*, do mainly backfire on the more affective and interpersonal side but leave the perception of power unaffected. Therefore, different effects emerged, as predicted, depending on the specific dimension assessed.

However, interesting and different findings emerged from the analysis of spontaneous conformity toward the source. Indeed, as for the implicit responses, we found that the reliance on negative messages increased conformity in comparison to the condition in which positive messages were used. Importantly, the specific type of negative message was not relevant: negativity attracted the respondent. As mentioned before, previous research on the effects of political campaigning has exclusively focused on controlled responses toward politicians who made use of either positive or negative messages. The analysis of more spontaneous responses represents an extremely promising but still unexplored field. Social cognitive research has shown that spontaneous responses develop very quickly also toward novel exemplars (Castelli

et al., 2004), as in the case of unknown political candidates. This implies that such implicit attitude measures may also prove to be particularly useful in order to understand the attitude formation processes that occur in the political domain. Variations in the communication style of the candidate may give rise to different automatic reactions toward such candidate. For instance, the current results showed that respondents who already hold polarized political opinions did not spontaneously reject a source who used negative messages, in contrast to what appeared from explicit measures.

In Study 1 we employed a spontaneous conformity measure that could be considered as partially different from the most widespread implicit attitude measures, such as the Implicit Association Task (Greenwald et al., 1998) or the Go/No-go Association Task (Nosek & Banaji, 2001), which assess associative links in mind. In contrast, the spontaneous conformity measure is more likely to tap the tendency to go along with the source and follow his suggestions, even though this does not necessarily imply that the source is also positively evaluated. The asymmetry observed in the explicit responses in which negative messages affected evaluations at the interpersonal level but not the perception of power further indicates the need to more directly determine the spontaneous affective responses that arouse in response to negative messages. For this reason, in Study 2 we analyze the effects of positive and negative remarks through another implicit measure, namely the Go/No-go Association Task (Nosek & Banaji, 2001). Moreover, in the next study we will start to analyze also some consequences for the opposing candidate, namely the target of a negative remark.

3. **STATUS 2** *implicit conformity vs. implicit similarity*

3.1. Method

Participants and Design

One hundred and sixty students (110 female) at the University of Padova participated in the experiment. Participants were aged between 18 and 36 years ($M = 21.28$, $SD = 2.87$).

The experiment consisted of a 2 (evaluated politician: source candidate vs. competing candidate) × 4 (type of the message) × 2 (political affiliation of the source candidate: left-wing vs. right-wing) × 2 (political affiliation of the participants: left-wing vs. right-wing) design with the first factor varying within participants and the other factors varying between participants.

Materials

The materials used in the second study were the same described in Study 1: 4 different political campaigns each formed by 10 sentences (see Appendix A for the sentences). Moreover, we used 3 pictures of two middle-age men presented as two ostensible political candidates: one was presented as the source candidate and the other one was presented as the opposing candidate (counterbalanced across participants).

Measures

As for dependent measures we employed also in this case both implicit and explicit measures. As for the explicit evaluation we used the same questionnaire already used in Study 1: participants were asked to explicit evaluate both the source candidate and the opposing candidate. As for the implicit evaluation we employed two different measures: a conformity measures (the same used in Study 1; only evaluation about the source candidate and not about the opposing candidate was assessed) and a Go/No-go Association Task (i.e., GNAT; Nosek & Banaji, 2001, see also Appendix E; evaluations for both candidates). In the course of the task, participants were presented with four different types of stimuli on the computer screen: three photos of each candidate, six "self-relevant" words (i.e., I, My, Me, Self, My, Self, Mine), and six "others-relevant" words (i.e., They, Them, Their, He, It, His). Specifically the task contained four practice blocks and four critical blocks. The former were aimed to acquaint with the task. In two of the practice blocks participants had to discriminate between pictures of the two candidates; whereas, in the other two practice blocks participants had to discriminate between words regarding the self and words regarding others. Next, the four critical blocks were introduced. In each block, participants were presented with all four types

of stimuli, and their task was to press a key on the computer keyboard any time a given target picture (one of the two candidates) or a word regarding the self (or others) appeared. No response was required to the other stimuli and there was no response deadline. Therefore, in each of these four blocks two types of stimuli (e.g., left-wing candidate and self-relevant word) represented distracting stimuli, whereas the other two types of stimuli were the targets (e.g., right-wing candidate and others-relevant words). The relative order of these four blocks was randomly determined. This modified version of GNAT allowed us to indirectly assess how much participants associated themselves with each of the two candidates.

Procedure

As in Study 1, participants were tested individually. They were initially presented with two candidates (i.e., personal information and 3 pictures of each politician) who were competing during a political race. One of them was said to belong to the left-wing coalition and the other to the right-wing coalition. Participants were also informed that they were going to read a series of statements that one of the candidates said during his last political campaign. Whether the messages were from a right- or left-wing candidate was manipulated between participants. As in Study 1, we also manipulated the content of the messages (*positive, negative ideological, negative issue-based*, or *negative person-based*). The spontaneous conformity measure used in Study 1 was also administered (see Figure 1 for an example).

At the end of this phase, participants were required to perform the modified version of Go/No-go Association Task (GNAT; Nosek & Banaji, 2001; see also Appendix E) described above. Then, participants were asked to fill in the same questionnaire used in Study 1 both in relation to the source of the messages as well as in relation to the opposing candidate. Next, participants' political affiliation was assessed just like in Study 1. Finally participants were thanked and fully debriefed.

3.2. Results

Following the same procedure outlined in Study 1, 29 respondents were classified as undecided, 42 favoured the right-wing coalition and 89 favoured the left-wing coalition. We reported only the data of decided participants.

Spontaneous conformity measure

The index of spontaneous conformity (see Study 1) was submitted to a 2 (political affiliation of the source: left- vs. right-wing) × 2 (political affiliation of the respondent: left- vs. right-wing) × 4 (type of message) analysis of variance with all factors varying between

participants. The main effect of the type of message was marginally significant, $F(3, 115) =$ 2.65, $p = .052$, $\eta_p^2 = .065$. Post-hoc comparisons showed that conformity was significantly lower in the *positive* condition ($M = 2.98$, $SD = .60$) rather than in the *negative ideological condition* (M = 3.11, $SD = .64$, $p = .008$) and in the *negative person-based condition* ($M = 3.13$, $SD = .56$, $p = .033$). No significant difference emerged as for *negative issue-based condition* ($M = 2.89$, $SD = .63$).

The two-way interaction between the political affiliation of the source and the political affiliation of the participant was also significant, $F(1, 115) = 4.21$, $p < .05$, $\eta_p^2 = .035$. In general, conformity was stronger toward the ingroup candidate.

The third significant effect was the two-way interaction between the political affiliation of the participants and the type of message, $F(3, 115) = 3.24$, $p < .05$, $\eta_p^2 = .078$. Right-wing participants were more affected by the type of message and they were particularly likely to conform toward the source who employed negative messages.

Finally, the three-way interaction emerged to be significant, $F(3, 115) = 2.71$, $p < .05$, $\eta_p^2 = .066$. Indeed, when the source was an outgroup member the main effect of the type of message did not emerge, $F(3, 55) < 1$, $p > .55$. In contrast, when the source was an ingroup member such main effect was significant $F(3, 74) = 2.80$, $p < .05$, $\eta_p^2 = .106$. In this case, the strongest conformity emerged in the *negative person-based* and *negative ideological* conditions ($Ms = 3.26$ and 3.30, $SDs = .58$ and $.62$, respectively), it was intermediate in the *positive* condition ($M = 3.08$, $SD = .53$), and rather weak in the *negative issue-based* condition ($M = 2.82$, $SD = .57$).

Go/No-go Association Task

For each participant, we calculated the mean latencies for correct responses in each of the four critical blocks. This enabled us to assess how much each of the two candidates was associated to the self. We calculated two difference scores (one for each candidate) in such a way that higher values indicated higher self association with the candidate. Then, the two indices were submitted to a 2 (source of the messages vs. competing politician) × 2 (political affiliation of the source: left- vs. right-wing) × 2 (political affiliation of the respondent: left- vs. right-wing) × 4 (type of message) mixed-model ANOVA with the first factor varying within participants and all the others varying between participants. Only a significant two-way interaction between the within participants factor and the type of message emerged, $F(3, 115) = 2.68$, $p = .05$, $\eta_p^2 = .065$ (see Figure 5). As for the competing politician, who was also the target of the attacks in the *negative person-based* and *issue-based* conditions, the evaluation was not affected by the manipulation, $F(3, 115) = 1.32$, $p = .27$, $\eta_p^2 = .033$. In contrast, the

evaluation of the source tended to be influenced by the manipulation, $F(3, 115) = 2.07$, $p = .10$, $\eta_p^2 = .051$. The strongest association to the self was found in the *positive message condition* ($M = 138$, $SD = 229$), it was intermediate in the *negative person-based* and *negative ideological* conditions ($Ms = 69$ and 59, $SDs = 134$ and 241, respectively) and disappeared in the *negative issue-based* condition ($M = 4$, $SD = 179$). Only the difference between the *positive* condition and the *negative issue-based* condition emerged to be significant, $t(59) = 2.55$, $p < .05$.
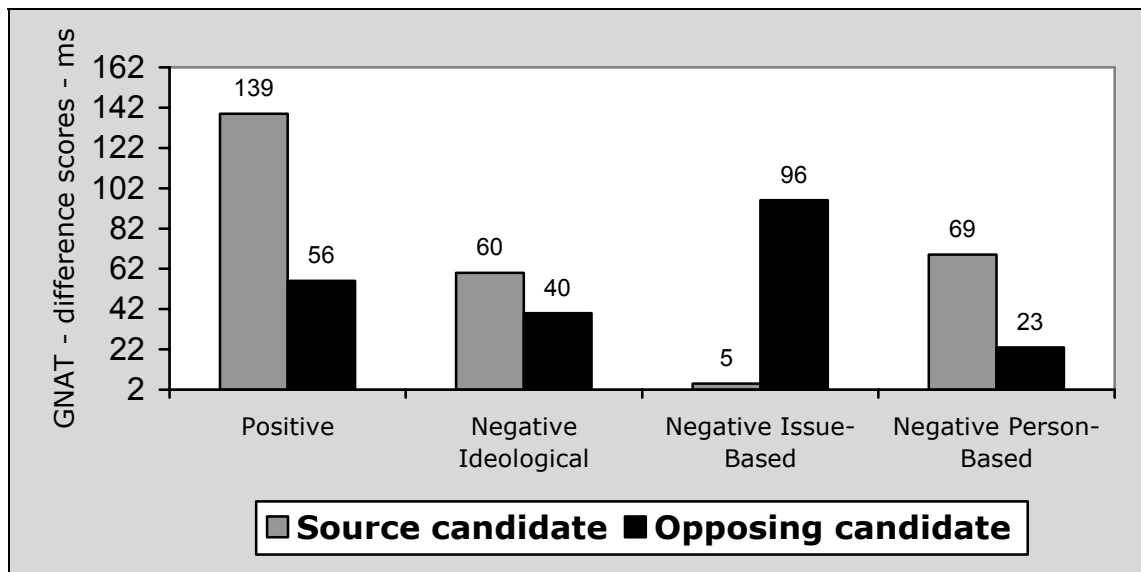
Figure 5. Evaluation of the source candidate and of the opposing candidate emerged from the GNAT as a function of the type of message. High values indicate high self-association.

Semantic differential

All responses were rescaled so that lower values indicated more negative evaluations. As in Study 1 the entire scale was divided into two subscales: perceived power (source candidate $\alpha = .79$, opposing candidate $\alpha = .74$) and perceived pleasantness (source $\alpha = .74$, competing candidate $\alpha = .65$).

The perception of power was analyzed through a 2 (evaluated politician: source of the messages vs. opposing candidate) × 2 (political affiliation of the source) × 2 (political affiliation of the respondent) × 4 (type of message) mixed-model ANOVA with the first factor varying within participants and the others between participants. First, we found a significant main effect of the evaluated politician, $F(1, 115) = 18.62$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .139$. In general, the source of the messages was evaluated as more powerful ($M = 4.62$, $SD = .87$) than the opposing candidate ($M = 4.18$, $SD = .78$). Moreover, a significant three-way interaction between the evaluated politician, the political affiliation of the source and that of the

participants was found, $F(1, 115) = 6.12$, $p < .05$, $\eta_p^2 = .051$. Participants evaluated the candidate of their own coalition as more powerful, both when he was the source of a message and the opposing candidate[2].

A similar analysis was conducted on the evaluation of the pleasantness and interpersonal qualities of the candidates. We found a significant interaction between the evaluated politician (source of the messages vs. opposing politician) and the type of message, $F(3, 115) = 3.28$, $p < .05$, $\eta_p^2 = .079$ (see Figure 6). Only in the positive condition the source was evaluated more positively than the competing candidate. A subsequent 2 (affiliation of the source) × 2 (affiliation of the respondents) × 4 (type of message) analysis of variance on the evaluation of the source showed a main effect of the type of message, $F(3, 115) = 4.59$, $p < .01$, $\eta_p^2 = .107$. Post-hoc comparisons showed that the source received the most positive evaluations in the *positive condition* ($M = 4.68$, $SD = .81$) as compared to the other three negative conditions [M negative-Ideological $= 3.94$, $SD = .81$, $t(60) = 3.54$, $p < .001$; M negative-Issue-based $= 4.27$, $SD = .76$, $t(59) = 2.06$, $p < .05$; M negative-Person-based $= 3.88$, $SD = .95$, $t(60) = 3.53$, $p < .001$]. A similar analysis of variance on the evaluation of the competing candidate did not yield any significant effect.
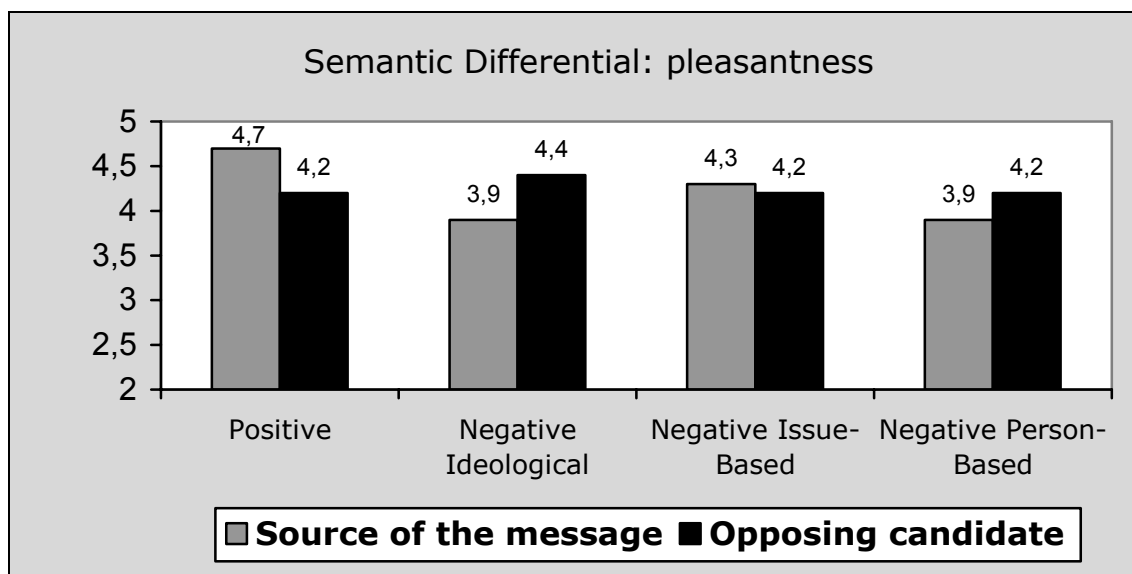
Figure 6. Evaluation of the candidate source and of the opposing candidate emerged from the semantic differential about the pleasantness and the interpersonal qualities as a function of the type of message.

---

[2] The analysis also showed a theoretically not important three-way interaction between the within-participants factor (source candidate vs. opposing candidate), the political affiliation of the source (right- vs. left-wing) and the type of message, $F(3, 115) = 3.16$, $p = .027$, $\eta_p^2 = .076$. In the *negative ideological* condition the right-wing source was evaluated more positively than the opposing candidate; whereas, the opposite pattern emerged in the case of the left-wing candidate.

Moreover, a significant interaction between the evaluated politician, the political affiliation of the source and that of the participants emerged, $F(1, 115) = 20.75$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .153$. Again, participants evaluated more positively the candidate of their own coalition, both when he was the source of a message and the opposing candidate.

Likert scales

Responses to the 6 items were averaged (for the source candidate α = .65, for the opposing candidate α = .76). Then, a 2 (evaluated politician: source vs. opposing candidate) × 2 (political affiliation of the source) × 2 (political affiliation of the respondent) × 4 (type of message) mixed-model ANOVA with the first factor varying within participants and the others between participants was performed. Only a three-way interaction between the evaluated politician, the political affiliation of the source and the political affiliation of the participants emerged, $F(1, 115) = 41.28$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .26$. Participants evaluated more positively the candidate of their own coalition, both when he was the source of a message and the opposing candidate. Therefore, a clear ingroup bias in the form of a preference for the candidate of one's own coalition emerged again.

3.3. Discussion

Overall, results from Study 2 were in line with those emerged from Study 1 especially in relation to the conformity measure and for the explicit evaluation of the personality of the source candidate. The most striking finding from Study 2, however, was the divergent pattern of results obtained through the two indirect measures, namely the spontaneous conformity measure and the GNAT. Indeed, whereas participants showed to conform more to a source who used negative messages, they also considered such source as more dissimilar to oneself in comparison to a source who made use of positive messages. Respondents automatically tended to feel closer to a politician who only promoted his political plan without attacking the opposite ideology, candidate, or party. This tendency is likely to reflect a positive automatic evaluation toward such a candidate who is therefore assimilated to the self (Aron, McLaughlin-Volpe, Mashek, Lewandowski, Wright, & Aron, 2005). On the other hand, the spontaneous conformity measure might not tap the affective responses toward the target but merely the perception of the strength and power of such politician, that is his capacity to control and change the environment. This asymmetry might be captured by the example of a physician who either responds empathically toward the patient and is emotionally moved or behaves in a cold and rational way. Whereas the former would probably be liked more, patients will probably be more likely to follow the advices of the latter. In a similar way, the

current results are consistent with the idea that, while examining spontaneous responses, negative messages produce opposite effects on measures that tap the perceived sociability of the candidate and the perceived power of such candidate.

Importantly, recent research clearly indicates that person and group perception is structured along two basic dimensions that closely resemble the aforementioned distinction, namely warmth and competence. Overall, when people form an impression about another individual or about another group, they universally base their perception on these two dimensions (e.g., Fiske et al., 2006). As explained in the introduction, one intriguing possibility is that the adoption of a negative political campaign, as compared to a positive campaign, might differentially affect the perception of warmth and competence, by decreasing the former and increasing the latter. In order words, a politician who relies on negative messages might be perceived as more competent but less warm; whereas, the opposite would be true in the case of a politician who conveys positive messages.

As an initial test of these hypotheses, in Study 3 we analyze whether participants do actually associate negative messages to high competence (and low warmth) and positive messages to high warmth (and low competence).

The Implicit and Explicit Effects on Perceived Warmth and Competence: Aversion but Compliance with Those Who Say Something Negative

4.   STUDY 3   *a preliminary test*

4.1. Method

Participants and Design

Thirty students (19 female) at the University of Padova participated in the study during a class session. The experiment consisted of a 2 (type of political campaign: positive vs. negative person-based) × 2 (high in competence but low warmth candidate vs. low in competence but high in warmth candidate) design with all the factors varying within participants.

Materials

The stimulus material consisted of a description of two political candidates: one was described as competent but not warm (i.e., high in competence and low in warmth); whereas, the other one was described as warm but not competent (i.e., high in warmth and low in competence; see Appendix B for the descriptions). Moreover, participants were presented with two political campaigns: one *positive* and one *negative person-based* (see Study 1 for a detailed description of the materials and see Appendix A for the sentences).

Measures

Participants were asked to guess and write on a response-sheet who was the source of each political campaign.

Procedure

Participants were initially presented with two political candidates, and they were told that these two candidates had some common (i.e., age, length of experience in politics, and passion for modern art) and some unique features that they would later discovered. Moreover, participants were told that the two politicians belonged to two different local parties that were not included in the two major Italian coalitions, and that they never run against each other. Next, participants were informed that they were going to read additional personal information about the two candidates and that they had to pay close attention to the differences between the two politicians. One was described as competent but not warm; whereas, the other one was described as warm but not competent.

After participants had carefully inspected these descriptions, they were presented with two sets of statements that were said to be taken from the previous political campaign of each of the two politicians. One set of statements included 5 *negative person-based* and 5 *positive*

sentences (i.e., *negative political campaign*). The other set included only 10 positive sentences (i.e., *positive political campaign*). At the end, participants were asked to guess and report on a response-sheet which of the two politicians actually conveyed one or the other set of messages. Finally, participants were thanked and fully debriefed.

4.2. Results

Twenty-two participants (i.e., 73%) indicated the competent - but not warm - candidate as the source of the negative political campaign, and the warm - but not competent - candidate as the source of the positive political campaign ($\chi^2 = 6.53$, $p < .01$).

4.3. Discussion

Overall, results demonstrated that the two different political campaigns (positive vs. negative) were differentially associated with the basic dimensions of social judgment. On the one hand, the source of a negative campaign, which included a straightforward attack toward the opposing candidate, was believed to be the competent, but not warm, candidate. This association could be explained by assuming that the adoption of a strategy of attack toward the challenger conveys the idea that the candidate is not particularly friendly and sociable (i.e., low on warmth), but that he is agentic and powerful, which is more directly related to the dimension of competence. Of course, the opposite reasoning applies to the candidate who made use of positive messages.

These results clearly indicate that the type of messages used in a political campaign may give rise to a very specific perception of the source of those messages. Negative messages may bolster competence; whereas positive messages may bolster warmth. This differential perception of the candidates may then have important consequences for the impact of those candidates and provide meaning to the pattern of results observed in Study 2. Indeed, the responses on the GNAT showed that a politician was averted when he used negative messages but, at the same time, he was also more likely spontaneously followed (i.e., spontaneous conformity measure). In other words, we do not necessarily follow the significant others – and politicians among them – that we like the most, but those who more clearly signal to be competent and, possibly, know how to deal with difficult and complex situations. Several studies in the political domain have shown the importance of perceived competence in relation to the electoral choices (e.g., Funk, 1996; 1997). A recent relevant work by Todorov and colleagues (Todorov et al., 2005) is also in line with this reasoning and demonstrated that voting behaviour is primarily driven by the perception of competence from facial cues rather than by the perception of pleasantness. The important message that we want to put forward

here is that negative campaigning can indeed be more strongly associated with a perception of high competence.

In the following study we will examine the consequences on spontaneous reactions of being perceived as either competent or warm. As discussed above, we hypothesize that the differential pattern of results obtained from the two implicit measures adopted in Study 2 stems from the fact that competent but not warm candidates are spontaneously followed but also perceived as more distant as compared to warmth candidates. In Study 4, this hypothesis will be directly tested. Therefore, the profile of two candidates will be manipulated. One of them will be presented as competent but not warm, whereas the other will be described as warm but less competent. Next, the spontaneous conformity measure as well as other two implicit measures aimed at assessing self-association with the candidates will be administered.

5. STUDY 4 *impact of perceived warmth and perceived competence on different implicit measures*

5.1. Method

Participants and Design

Ninety-two students (73 female) at the University of Padova participated in the experiment. Participants were aged between 18 and 36 years ($M = 20.60$, $SD = 4.89$). The experiment consisted of only one factor varying between participants: high in competence but low in warmth candidate vs. low in competence but high in warmth candidate.

Materials

The stimulus material consisted of the same descriptions of two political candidates used in Study 3 (see Appendix B for the descriptions): one was described as competent but not warm (i.e., high in competence and low in warmth); whereas, the other one was described as warm but not competent (i.e., high in warmth and low in competence). In addition we used the three pictures of two middle-age men already used in Study 2 of the current Chapter.

Measures

As for dependent measures we used the conformity measure used and described in Study 1 and Study 2, the modified version of GNAT described in Study 2 (see also Appendix E), and another implicit attitude measure: an Implicit Approach/Avoidance Task (Paladino & Castelli, 2008; see also Appendix F). In the course of this task, participants were presented on the computer screen with pictures of the two political candidates, and they were required to press a forward key (i.e., approach) on a modified computer keyboard every time they saw a picture of one candidate, and to press a backward key (i.e., avoidance) when they saw a picture of the other candidate (see Paladino & Castelli, 2008). Every participant performed two blocks of trials: in one block participants were required to approach one candidate and avoid the other; whereas in the other block the key assignment was reversed. The order of the two blocks was counterbalanced across participants. Moreover, there was a questionnaire aimed at assessing participants' political affiliation along a continuum (from left-wing to right-wing).

Procedure

Participants took part individually in the study. They were placed in front of a computer screen and were presented with the description of a politician who was described as high on

competence but low on warmth. In addition, participants were also shown three pictures portraying that politician. Afterwards, participants were required to evaluate 10 paintings (i.e., spontaneous conformity measure). The only difference with respect to Study 1 and 2 was that no sentence appeared between one painting and the following. At the end of this task, participants were presented with a new politician who was described as high on warmth but low on competence. As before, three pictures were also shown before introducing the paintings evaluation task. The order of presentation of the two candidates (i.e., the competent but not warm candidate as first or second) was counterbalanced across participants, as well as the specific pictures and name associated to one or the other politician.

Then, participants were required to complete the same Go/No-go Association Task described in Study 2. Again, participants were presented with four different types of stimuli on the computer screen: three photos of each candidate, six "self-relevant" words, and six "others-relevant" words.

After the GNAT, participants were required to complete another implicit attitude measure: the Implicit Approach/Avoidance Task (Paladino & Castelli, 2008). Every participant performed two blocks of trials. In one block participants were required to approach one candidate and avoid the other; whereas in the other block the key assignment was reversed. The order of the two blocks was counterbalanced across participants. Then participants were asked to complete a Single-Category IAT (i.e., SC-IAT; Karpinski & Steinman, 2006; see description and results in Chapter 6, Study 1; see also Appendix L).

In the end, participants were asked to fill in the questionnaire aimed at assessing their political affiliation along a continuum (from left-wing to right-wing). Moreover, they were presented with a list of 30 adjectives regarding three dimensions: warmth, competence and morality. They were asked to indicate how much each adjective was important in the political field. Responses were provided along 6-point Likert scales from 1 (i.e., absolutely not important) to 6 (i.e., very important). The results from the SC-IAT and from the questionnaire are reported in Chapter 6, Study 1.

Finally, participants were thanked and fully debriefed.

5.2. Results

Spontaneous conformity measure

Initially, for each participant we separately calculated a conformity score for each of the two candidates following the procedure described in Study 1. Then, we performed a 2 (politician: competent vs. warm) × 2 (order of presentation of the candidates: competent candidate first vs. warm candidate first) mixed-model ANOVA with the first factor varying

within participants and the second varying between participants. A strong and significant two-way interaction emerged, $F(1, 91) = 102.27$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .53$, indicating that participants showed more conformity overall in the second task. In the second task, indeed, participants seemed to no longer try to formulate a personal evaluation about the painting, and disproportionately based their responses on the provided anchors. For this reason, we focused only on the first conformity task. An analysis of variance showed a significant effect of the profile of the candidate, $F(1, 92) = 4.44$, $p < .05$, $\eta_p^2 = .047$. As predicted, participants showed higher conformity toward the more competent candidate ($M = 3.87$, $SD = .61$) rather than toward the warmer candidate ($M = 3.64$, $SD = .40$).

Go/No-go Association Task

For each participant we calculated four indexes based on the latencies of correct responses. The four variables were: 1) the more competent candidate + "self-relevant" words, 2) the more competent candidate + "other-relevant" words, 3) the warmer candidate + "self-relevant" words, 4) the warmer candidate + "other-relevant" words. The four variables were then submitted to a 2 (candidate: competent vs. warm) × 2 (type of words: self- vs. others-relevant) × 2 (order of presentation of the candidates: competent candidate first vs. warm candidate first) mixed-model ANOVA with the first two factors varying within participants and the last between participants. A main effect of the type of words emerged, $F(1, 90) = 18.96$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .174$, indicating that participants were faster at associating candidates with self-relevant words ($M = 656$, $SD = 113$) rather than with other-relevant words ($M = 697$, $SD = 157$) A marginally significant effect was the expected two-way interaction between the two within-participants factors, $F(1, 90) = 3.02$, $p = .086$, $\eta_p^2 = .032$ (see Figure 7).
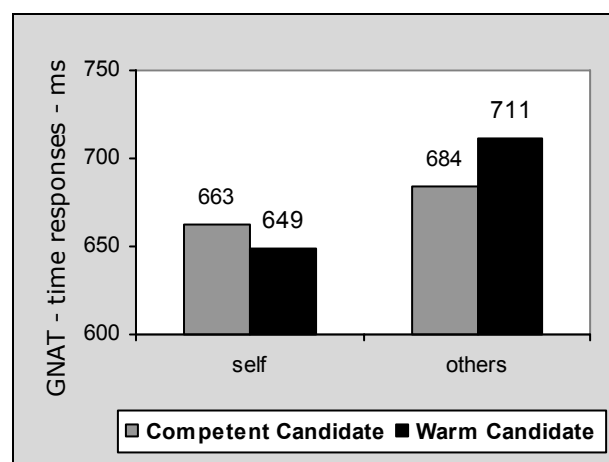
Figure 7. Time responses emerged in the GNAT both for the competent candidate and for the warm candidate.

Self-relevant words were more easily associated to the warmer ($M = 649$, $SD = 105$) rather competent candidate [$M = 663$, $SD = 122$; $t(91) = 1.17$, $p = .24$]; whereas the opposite occurred in the case of others-relevant words [as for the warmer $M = 711$, $SD = 181$; as for the more competent $M = 684$, $SD = 133$; $t(91) = -1.48$, $p = .14$].

Implicit Approach / Avoidance Task

For each respondent we calculated four indexes based on response latencies. The four variables were: 1) approaching the more competent candidate; 2) avoiding the more competent candidate; 3) approaching the warmer candidate; 4) avoiding the warmer candidate. The four variables were then submitted to a 2 (candidate: competent vs. warm) × 2 (movement: approach vs. avoidance) × 2 (order of presentation of the candidates: competent candidate first vs. warm candidate first) mixed-model ANOVA with the first two factors varying within participants and the last varying between participants. A theoretically non relevant main effect of the type of movement emerged, $F(1, 75) = 56.15$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .428$. Participants were faster while avoiding the candidates ($M = 747$, $SD = 90$) rather than approaching them ($M = 787$, $SD = 68$). Moreover, a two-way interaction between candidate and movement emerged, $F(1, 76) = 4.71$, $p < .05$, $\eta_p^2 = .060$ (see Figure 8). Participants were faster when they had to move toward the warmer candidate ($M = 780$, $SD = 63$) rather than toward the more competent candidate [$M = 797$, $SD = 74$, $t(79) = 2.53$, $p < .05$]. In sharp contrast, they were slightly faster when they had to move away from the more competent candidate ($M = 743$, $SD = 92$) rather than from the warmer one [$M = 751$, $SD = 88$, $t(83) = 1.21$, $p = .22$].
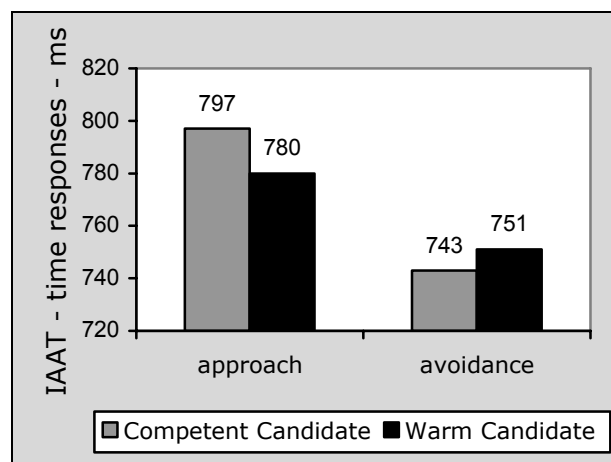
Figure 8. Time responses emerged in the IAAT both for the competent candidate and for the warm candidate.

5.3. Discussion

Overall, the results from Study 4 confirmed our major hypothesis: perceived competence and warmth had a differential impact on the different types of implicit measures that were administered. In particular, spontaneous conformity was stronger when the politician was perceived as competent, even though quite low on warmth. This further suggests that manipulations aimed at increasing the perceived competence of a politician do increase the spontaneous tendency to go along with him/her. However, the fact of being perceived as competent does not necessarily translate into a higher self-association, that is an automatic positive affective reaction toward the target. The results from the other two implicit measures, the GNAT and the IAAT, showed that the warm politician was perceived as closer to the self, despite his low competence. Therefore, whereas competence might influence our propensity to give credit to the decisions and judgments of a politician, it is warmth that is more valued when it comes to automatically defining who we feel more similar and we would approach.

6. General Discussion

Overall, results from these studies provided some hints about why the research about the effects of negative political campaigns appears to be so full of loopholes (e.g., Richardson, 2001; Sigelman & Kugler, 2003). Indeed, several factors may modulate the effects.

First, it seems crucial to consider that the expression *negative campaigns* is a general category that includes different shades of negativism and, most importantly, that they lead to dissimilar and specific effects. Indeed, the findings from Study 1 and 2 replicated and extended the results reported by Budesheim and colleagues (1996). Indeed, not all negative messages are the same and decided voters somewhat accepted some sort of negativism in their explicit verbal reports. However, the least accepted negative messages were those that directly attacked the personal characteristics of the opponent. Personal attacks are strikingly in contrast with both a general positivity bias in person perception (e.g., Granberg & Holmberg, 1987; Klar & Gilardi, 1997; Nilsson & Ekehammer, 1987; Sears, 1983) and with social norms that prescribe fairness in interpersonal relations. When participants had to evaluate the likeability of the source, the reliance on negative personal messages dampened evaluations. Interestingly, the refusal of negative personal attacks was most evident when the source was an ingroup member. Only in this condition the ingroup bias almost disappeared confirming previous results about the so-called *black sheep effect* (Marques & Yzerbyt, 1988; Marques et al., 1988). Deviant and disapproved behaviours are more likely blamed and sanctioned when they are performed by ingroup members rather than outgroup members. Therefore, explicit responses about pleasantness and the desire to get in contact with the candidate were

modulated by the specific type of political campaign he carried out. On the other hand, the explicitly reported perception of power and competence was less affected by the provided messages. Despite the overall explicit condemnation for the use of negative messages (especially if based on personal attacks) and the negative aura around the candidate who used them, such candidate was not devalued along a power and competence dimension.

The results from the implicit measures nicely complement these conclusions by showing that opposite findings emerged from the spontaneous conformity measure and the Go/No-go Association Task. The first measure likely captures the tendency to consider the candidate as a reliable and powerful individual who is focused to the goal and actively engaged to pursue it. As a consequence, participants were more likely to follow his advice. In sharp contrast, the spontaneous responses in the GNAT indicated that participants felt personally dissimilar with respect to a candidate who used negative messages, suggesting again that on an interpersonal level of evaluation the reliance on positive messages is preferred. As discussed earlier, this asymmetry can be explained with the metaphor of a professional, like a physician, who is either very involved in the interaction and empathizes with the patient or behaves in a cold and formal way by openly describing the situation to the patient. Whereas the former would probably convey a sense of warmth and would be liked more, the second would be likely perceived as more competent and agentic and therefore patients would probably be more likely to follow his/her advice.

Study 3 directly posed a link between the use of negative messages and perceived competence, on the one hand, and between positive messages and perceived warmth on the other hand. Indeed, results suggested that the specific reliance on either positive or negative messages affects the balance between perceived competence and warmth. As a further confirmation of the link between negative campaigns and perceived competence, Study 4 showed that a manipulation of competence vs. warmth produced similar findings with respect to those obtained in Study 2. A competent (but not warm) candidate gave rise to a stronger spontaneous conformity, but was also more negatively evaluated along two different implicit attitude measures that tapped the interpersonal level. Indeed, such highly competent but insensitive candidate tended to be perceived as far from oneself and to be avoided rather than approached. In sum, respondents preferred to follow the judgments expressed by a competent source even if they did not like such a source and did not feel close to him.

Overall, the current results have clearly underlined the importance of implementing the research in the political field with less direct measures (see also Chapter 7 for a discussion on this issue). Indeed, previous research on the effects of political campaigning has exclusively focused on controlled responses toward politicians who made use of either positive or

negative messages. However, as suggested by the current studies, it appears necessary to go beyond the explicit level of evaluation by investigating also spontaneous responses. Indeed, in the presented studies different outcomes emerged employing different types of measures, specifically implicit vs. explicit.

Finally, another important message from the current results is the necessity to distinguish between different types of evaluated dimensions, in particular between competence and sociability. Social psychological research is currently investigating in depth how the basic dimensions of competence and warmth affect social judgments (e.g., Cuddy et al., 2008). Moreover, research in the political field suggests that competence is a maximally valued factor. Indeed, even if also in the evaluation of political leaders three dimensions are often reported, namely competence, warmth, and trustworthiness (Funk, 1996; Kinder, Peters, Abelson, & Fiske, 1980; Miller, Wattenberg, & Malanchuck, 1986), the former dimension is usually indicated as the most important and the most related to the overall evaluation of politicians (Markus, 1982). Some authors (Funk, 1996) have argued that participants might indicate competence as the most important dimension in the political field only because social desirability concerns may lead participants not to mention warmth qualities. However, competence emerged as the core dimension not only from self-reports about the evaluations of candidates (Kinder et al., 1980; Miller et al., 1986) but also through the adoption of less direct procedures. Indeed, it seems now clear that people automatically infer these social traits after a brief exposure to a social target, or more specifically to a face (Engell, Haxby, & Todorov, 2007; Willis & Todorov, 2003). Moreover, Todorov and collegues (2005) found that participants' inferences about competence based on politicians' faces predict the actual outcomes of political races. Other judgments - such as perceived age, attractiveness, likeability, honesty – were not able to predict the election outcomes. Given the weight of these two dimensions in the impression formation process toward a politician, we will further analyze the ascription of these two dimensions to politicians with different political ideologies and the relative importance attributed by voters (see Chapter 6 current work).

However, the relative relevance of competence in determining voting choices is also related to the specific socio-cultural context and situation. Recently, Little and colleagues (Little, Burris, Jones, & Roberts, 2007), suggested that competence may be the most important dimension in conflict periods because in these cases the need for power and agency may be higher. Conversely, the same dimension emerged as less crucial in a period of peace and prosperity in which other traits related to cooperation and warmth (such as likeability and altruism) may be more relevant. This theoretical background leads to our initial hypothesis and it gives support to the presented results about the opposite effects of negative

campaigning on the two dimensions of social judgment. Indeed, a political arena characterized by a widespread use of negative campaigning might be perceived closer to a "war context" rather than to a "peace context". Therefore, a candidate who relies on negative remarks might be associated with the image of a competitive and powerful politician. Therefore, because competition negatively predicts warmth, and power positively predicts competence, the candidate who makes negative remarks may be perceived as more competent but less warm than a candidate who relies on positive campaigning. Conversely, this last politician might activate the image of a cooperative and peaceful political race, and thus the image of a warm but less competent candidate.

7. Conclusion

The final message is that negative campaigning might produce differentiated effects on voters: it might undermine the perceived warmth of the source (at both an implicit and explicit level), but conversely it might boost the tendency to conform and follow such source leading to an increased perceived competence.

Many years ago Aristotele asserted *"You must aim at one of two objects – you must make yourself out a good man and [the opponent] a bad one"* (cited in Budesheim et al., 1996, p. 523; Solomsen, 1954, p. 217). Now, at the end of the current chapter, we could argue that by attacking the opponent, and thus making the opponent a bad one, the source will not become generically a good one, but may reasonably aspire to become a competent one.

Chapter 3

THE IMPLICIT AND EXPLICIT EFFECTS ON PERCEIVED LIKEABILITY ACCORDING TO DUAL SYSTEMS MODELS:

Loosing on all fronts[3]

1. General Introduction

The studies presented in the previous chapter provided some important explanations concerning the reasons why the research about the likely consequences of negative political campaigning is still inconclusive. However, in the previous chapter we deeply investigated the influence of negative political messages on impression formation regarding the involved politicians, focusing especially on the consequences for the source candidate. Moreover, the evaluation was assessed along the two most important dimensions of social judgment, namely competence vs. warmth (e.g., Cuddy et al., 2008). Results clearly indicated that, on the one hand, the source of a negative campaign is explicitly perceived as lacking in sociability, and thus participants implicitly avoid and avert such a candidate. However, at the same time, on the other hand, the source of a negative campaign is more likely to be taken as an anchor, a sort of reference point that people implicitly follow because of the perceived competence. In sum, people would not like to be a friend of such a candidate, but at the same time they would follow his/her advices.

Going one step ahead in the current investigation, our aim in the next study is to further investigate the implicit and explicit evaluation of both the involved candidates. Indeed, one aim of the present chapter is to take a look also at the impression formation toward the opposing candidate in order to understand the real *effectiveness* of a negative campaign. As aforementioned in Chapter 1, one main problem in the literature about negative political campaigning is related to the vague definition of what is intended with the expression of *effective*. Indeed, several studies have independently analyzed the likely consequences both for the source candidate and for the opposing candidate, but without assessing the distance between the two evaluations. Some studies have underlined that negative campaigning has a

---

[3] The study was conducted in collaboration with Prof. Betram Gawronski.

negative impact on the impression about the attacked politicians (e.g., Weinberger & Westen, 2008). However, this evidence does not let researchers to say that such communication is *effective*, because it depends on the simultaneous consequences on the evaluation of the source candidate. For instance, some other studies (e.g., Budesheim et al., 1996; Matthews & Dietz-Uhler, 1998), as well as our studies presented in Chapter 2 (Carraro & Castelli, 2008), have found that negative statements may backfire against the source. Indeed, so far, the presented studies (Chapter 2) outlined negative consequences for the source candidate both at the explicit level and at the implicit level, but only about the perceived warmth. However, the described repercussions on the speaker are not enough in order to say that the use of negative campaigning is not *effective*. Indeed, it may be a little cost in order to achieve a great gain. For instance, we have already demonstrated in the previous studies (Chapter 2) that the loss in sociability is somehow counterbalanced by a gain in perceived competence. However, we are still making a comparison within the same evaluated social target, and thus in the end we cannot assert that negative campaigning is *effective* for its source. It is necessary a comparison between the two politicians. For this reason, one of our aims here is to directly assess, and then compare the evaluations toward both candidates in order to investigate the real *effectiveness* of negative vs. positive campaigning.

Moreover, in order to eliminate the previous distinction between two dimensions (competence vs. warmth) that are differently affected by negative campaigning, another aim of the next study will be to assess the evaluation toward the two involved candidates in terms of a general evaluation, namely *likeability*. Indeed, as said above, the implicit and explicit evaluation assessed in the previous chapter were bordered to two distinct evaluated dimensions, namely perceived competence and perceived warmth. Here the focus will be to examine the general implicit and explicit likeability regardless of the previous distinction, and thus detect the underlying implicit and explicit attitudes toward the involved politicians, both as the source candidate and the opposing candidate. As discussed in Chapter 1, an *attitude* is defined as a general predisposition, a personal inclination to estimate an evaluated object either as positive or negative, either as likeable or unlikeable (e.g., Eagly & Chaiken, 1993; 2007). In other words, despite the previous distinction between competence and warmth, what will be the overall evaluation of a candidate who uses a negative campaign as compared to a candidate who uses a positive campaign? Research in impression formation process has stressed the primacy of warmth in determining the whole impression: warmth is usually assessed before competence, and it is more related to affective and behavioural reactions as compared to competence (Cuddy et al., 2008; see also Chapter 6 of the current work). However, despite this primacy of warmth, several studies have demonstrated that perceived competence is more important in the prediction of the real outcomes of the elections (see also

Chapter 1, 2 and 6 for this topic). Given these opposite indications, it becomes important to outline the overall general impression about the involved politicians of a negative campaigning.

Finally, this additional study was also inspired by evidence emerged in the previous studies (see Chapter 2) that message content often influence judgments about its source, and that such influences can occur via two routes: one being mediated by associative processes (e.g., Carlston & Skowronski, 2005) and the other being mediated by propositional processes (e.g., Gawronski & Walther, 2008). According to recent dual-process models of social information processing (e.g., Gawronski & Bodenhausen, 2006; Strack & Deutsch, 2004), associative processes represent the primary determinant of implicit evaluations, whereas propositional processes provide the basis for explicit evaluations. Thus, in the end, another crucial aim of the next study is to analyze the processes behind the *backlash* effect toward the source candidate.

1.1. Associative vs. Propositional Processes

As already discussed, over the last decade, researchers in many areas of psychology became increasingly interested in the use of a new class of indirect measurement procedures, which have been called as *implicit measures* (for reviews, see Fazio & Olson, 2003; Petty, Fazio, & Briñol, 2008; Wittenbrink & Schwarz, 2007). As said, in the beginning these implicit measures were only described as instruments able either to go beyond the problem of social desirability and self-presentation in self-reported measures (Fazio et al., 1995), or to tap the unconscious part of an attitude (Greenwald & Banaji, 1995). However, more recently, researchers argued that the difference between explicit and implicit measures has its roots in distinct mental processes that underlie responses on these measures (e.g., Gawronski & Bodenhausen, 2006; Strack & Deutsch, 2004). For example, according to the associative-propositional evaluation (APE) model (Gawronski & Bodenhausen, 2006, 2007), explicit evaluations reflect the outcomes of propositional processes that are based on syllogistic inferences regarding the validity of momentarily accessible information. In contrast, implicit evaluations may be described as the affective reactions resulting from spontaneously activated associations.

The main difference between associative and propositional processes is their dependency on truth values. Whereas the activation of associations is independent of subjective truth or falsity, propositional processes are generally concerned with the truth or falsity of the information implied by activated associations. As such, implicit evaluations may sometimes be in contradiction with explicit evaluations when the evaluation implied by activated associations is regarded as invalid, for instance if it is inconsistent with other

momentarily considered information (e.g., Gawronski, Peters, Brochu, & Strack, 2008). Whereas the outcome of propositional processes (*explicit evaluations*) is usually assessed with traditional self-report measures, the activation of automatic associations (*implicit evaluations*) is usually assessed with implicit measures. The distinction between implicit and explicit evaluations seems important in the context of political campaigning, as both kinds of evaluations have shown unique effects on voting decisions (e.g., Galdi, Arcuri, & Gawronski, 2008). Thus, to the degree that the same campaign could have different effects on explicit versus implicit evaluations (e.g., Gawronski & LeBel, 2008; Gawronski & Strack, 2004; for a review, see Gawronski & Bodenhausen, 2006), it seems important to investigate whether the impact of negative versus positive campaigns differ for the two kinds of evaluations.

1.2. Effects of Message Content on its Source

Another reason why the distinction between associative and propositional processes seems important in the context of political campaigning is that both types of processes have been shown to influence recipients' representations of the source of a given message. First, in line with the notion of associative processes, research on *spontaneous trait transference* (STT) has shown that communicators often become associated with the traits they ascribe to others (e.g., Carlston & Skowronski, 2005; Mae, Carlston, & Skowronski, 1999; Skowronski, Carlston, Mae, & Crawford, 1998). According to Skowronski and colleagues (Skowronski et al., 1998) STT effects occur because of the co-activation of the trait concept implied by the content of the message and the mental representation of the source, which in turn creates an association between the trait concept and the source. Such processes of associative linking (Carlston & Skowronski, 2005) are in line with Gawronski and Bodenhausen's (2006) conceptualization of associative processes, in that the mere co-occurrence between two objects or events can create mental associations independent of whether the relation between the two concepts is regarded as valid or invalid. Supporting the lower-level associative nature of STT effects, several studies showed that STT effects are independent of recipients' explicit memory for the original ascription (Skowronski et al., 1998), prior knowledge about the source that is inconsistent with the associated trait (Mae et al., 1999), the degree of cognitive elaboration (Carlston & Skowronski, 2005; Mae et al., 1999), and even explicit warnings (Carlston & Skowronski, 2005).

Second, research on *transfer of attitudes recursively* (TAR) effects has shown that communicators often acquire the valence they ascribe to others, such that people who communicate positive attitudes about others acquire a positive valence, whereas people who communicate negative attitudes about others acquire a negative valence (Gawronski & Walther, 2008). In contrast to the associative nature of STT effects, TAR effects have been

shown to be driven by propositional processes, in that people make deliberate inferences about sources that communicate positive or negative attitudes about other people. Important for the present study, research by Gawronski and Walther (2008) showed that TAR effects are qualified by prior attitudes toward the target of a message, even though they are independent of prior attitudes toward the source.

1.3. Overview of the present study

To the degree that both STT (*spontaneous trait transference*; e.g., Skowronski et al., 1998) and TAR effects (*transfer of attitudes recursively;* Gawronski & Walther, 2008) may occur simultaneously as a result of negative campaigns, it seems likely that the sources of negative ads will acquire a negative valence at both the implicit and explicit level, as mediated by their underlying associative and propositional processes. In addition, implicit evaluations of the attacked opponent may become less favourable as a result of a newly created link between that person and the negative content of the message. However, such negative effects on evaluations of the opponent may be attenuated at the explicit level if the recipients of the message realize the ulterior motivation of the source, and therefore discount the validity of the statements about the opponent.

In sum, we predict that negative (as compared to positive) *person-based campaigns* should lead to less favourable explicit evaluations of the source, whereas explicit evaluations of the opponent should be unaffected by the type of campaign. In contrast, implicit evaluations should be influenced by the type of campaign for both the source and the target, such that both actors will elicit less favourable evaluations when the campaign is negative than when it is positive. To test these assumptions, we compared the effects of negative versus positive *person-based campaigns* on explicit and implicit evaluations of the involved candidates. For this purpose, participants were presented with two political candidates and the statements that one of them ostensibly said during his last political campaign. For half of the participants, the campaign included positive remarks about the source of the statements (*positive campaign*); for the remaining half, the campaign included negative remarks about the opponent (*negative campaign*). Afterwards, all participants completed measures of explicit and implicit evaluations of the two candidates.

Moreover, because in the previous studies (Chapter 2, Study 1 and 2; Carraro & Castelli, 2008) we demonstrated that the specific type of campaign matters, here we compared two different types of *negative person-based campaigns.* Indeed, we used two negative person-based messages, one attacking the opponent's morality and one attacking the opponent's competence. The two contents were matched with two kinds of positive campaigns, in which the source described himself as either moral or competent.

2. STUDY 5

2.1. Method

Participants and Design

One hundred and thirty summer students at the University of Western Ontario (90 female) took part in a study on political opinions. Subjects received CDN-$ 10 as a compensation for their participation. Age of the participants ranged from 18 to 54 years (M = 25.32, SD = 7.46). The data from three participants who expressed concerns about making personal judgments about the two candidates were excluded from the analyses. This left us with a final sample of 127 participants (88 female).

The experiment consisted of a 2 (candidate: source candidate vs. opposing candidate) × 2 (campaign: positive vs. negative) × 2 (topic: competence vs. morality) × 2 (political affiliation of candidates: source-liberal, opponent-conservative vs. source-conservative, opponent-liberal) × 2 (order of measures: implicit first vs. explicit first) factorial design, with the first factor varying within participants and the remaining ones varying between participants.

Materials

The stimulus materials consisted of two pictures of middle-aged men (the same pictures used in the studies presented in Chapter 2) who were presented as two provincial candidates of the Conservative versus Liberal party in Ontario, Canada. The political affiliation of the two candidates was counterbalanced across participants. The same was true for their particular role in the presentation (source vs. opponent). In addition, the stimulus material included twelve sentences in which the alleged source described himself, and twelve sentences in which he criticized the opposing candidate. Half of these sentences addressed the candidates' competence; the remaining half concerned the candidates' morality (see Appendix C).

Measures

The explicit measure consisted of two likeability ratings, asking participants how much they liked each of the two candidates on 5-point rating scales ranging from 1 (i.e., "I absolutely do not like him") to 5 (i.e., "I like him very much"). As an implicit measure, we employed the Affective Misattribution Procedure (AMP; Payne et al., 2005; see also Appendix G). On each trial of the task, participants were first presented with a fixation cross for 1000 ms, which was replaced by a prime stimulus for 75 ms. As prime stimuli, we used the pictures of the two political candidates, a picture of an unfamiliar male individual, and a grey square, which served as a control prime. The presentation of the prime stimulus was followed by a blank screen for 125 ms, and then by a Chinese ideograph appearing for 100

ms. The Chinese ideograph was subsequently replaced by a black and white pattern mask, which remained on the screen until participants had responded. Participants were asked to press a key on the right side of the computer keyboard (*Numpad 5*) if they considered the Chinese ideograph as more pleasant than the average Chinese ideograph, and a key on the left side (*A*) if they considered the Chinese ideograph as less pleasant than average. Following the instructions employed by Payne et al. (2005), participants were told that the pictures can sometimes bias people's responses, and that they should try their absolute best not to let the pictures influence their judgments of the Chinese ideographs. The AMP consisted of a total of 80 trials, including 20 trials for each of the four primes.
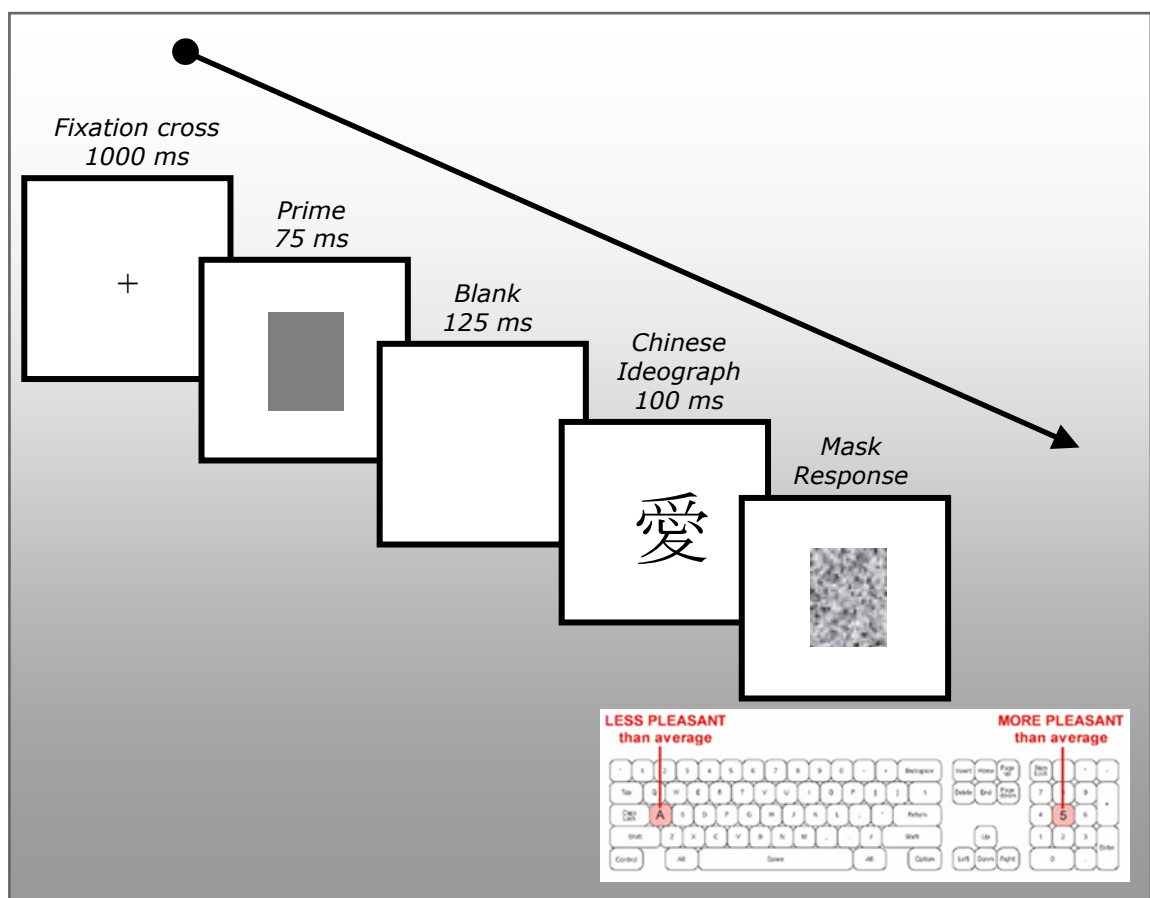
Figure 1. Schematic view and time course of the AMP. In this specific case the prime is a grey square that was a control prime.

Procedure

When participants arrived at the lab, they were welcomed by a female experimenter and seated in front of a computer screen. First, participants were asked to indicate to which political party they felt most strongly connected: (a) Liberal, (b) Conservative, (c) other parties, or (d) undecided. After this first question, written instructions on the computer screen informed participants that they would be presented with some information about two competing political candidates, and that their task was to form an impression about the two

candidates on the basis of the provided information. Participants were then presented with pictures of the two candidates, one on the left and one on the right side of the computer screen. Below each picture, a label indicated the political affiliation of the respective candidate (i.e., Liberal vs. Conservative). The combination of pictures and political affiliation as well as the position of each picture on the computer screen (left vs. right) was counterbalanced across participants. After the presentation of the two candidates, participants were told that they were going to read some sentences that one of the two candidates said during his last political campaign either about himself or about the opposing candidate. Participants were then presented with six slides, each of which displayed the picture of the source, his political affiliation, and a speech-bubble including a sentence ostensibly said by the displayed candidate (see Appendix C for the sentences and Figure 2 for an example of the presentation). Participants were asked to read each sentence carefully and to press the space bar to continue with the following sentence. After participants completed the impression formation task, they were asked to complete the two measures of implicit and explicit evaluations. The order of the two measures was counterbalanced across participants. At the end of the study, participants were asked to indicate their gender, age, and ethnicity, after which they were fully debriefed and thanked for their participation in the study.
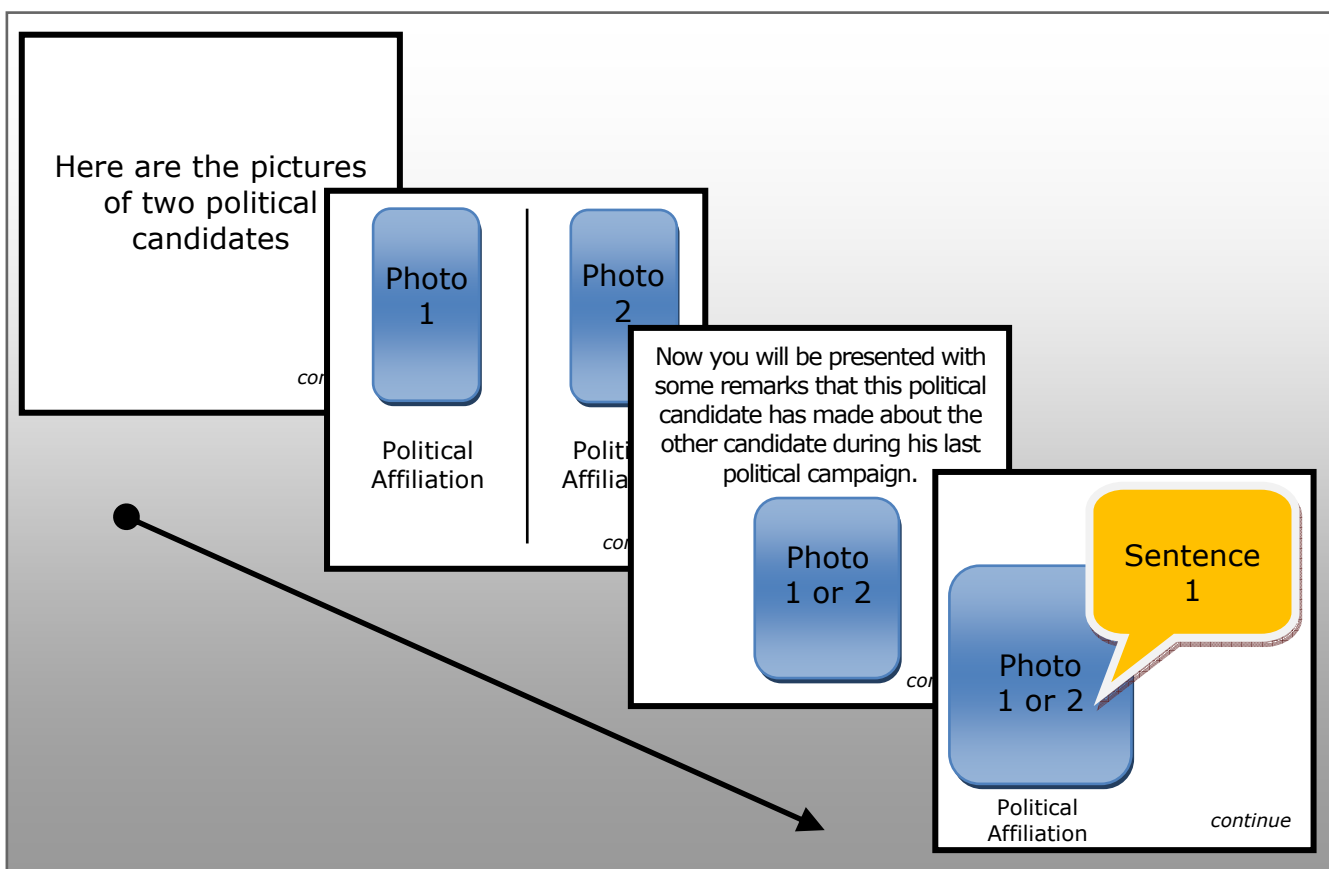
Figure 2. Schematic view of the presentation of the two candidates and of the statements.

The Implicit and Explicit Effects on Perceived Likeability According to Dual Sistems Models: Loosing on All Fronts

2.2. Results

Explicit Likeability

To investigate the effects of positive versus negative political campaigns on explicit evaluations of the two candidates, the corresponding scores were submitted to a 2 (candidate: source candidate vs. opposing candidate) × 2 (campaign: positive vs. negative) × 2 (topic: competence vs. morality) mixed-model ANOVA, with the first factor varying within participants and the remaining ones between participants. This analysis revealed a significant main effect of the type of campaign, $F(1, 123) = 32.25$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .208$, indicating that both candidates were rated as less likeable after a negative campaign as compared to a positive campaign. This main effect was qualified by a significant two-way interaction between type of campaign and candidate, $F(1, 123) = 20.10$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .140$ (see Figure 3). In the positive campaign condition, the source was evaluated more favourably than the opposing candidate, $t(63) = 2.97$, $p = .004$. Conversely, in the negative campaign condition, the source was evaluated less favourably than the opposing candidate, $t(62) = -3.34$, $p < .001$. Consistent with our predictions, further analyses revealed that negative campaigns led to less favourable evaluations of the source than positive campaigns, $F(1, 126) = 43.23$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .260$. In contrast, explicit evaluations of the opposing candidate were unaffected by the type of campaign, $F(1, 126) = 0.05$, $p = .82$, $\eta_p^2 < .001$. The particular topic of the campaign (competence vs. morality) did not qualify any of these effects (all Fs < 1). No other main or interaction effect reached statistical significance (all Fs < 1.9). Taken together, these results are consistent with our prediction that negative (as compared to positive) campaigns may lead to less favourable explicit evaluations of the source of that campaign, and that potentially negative effects may be attenuated for the opposing candidate.

Figure 3. Explicit likeability of source candidate and opposing candidate as a function of campaigning strategy (positive vs. negative).

Baseline-corrected priming indices of implicit evaluations were calculated by computing the proportion of *more pleasant* responses to the Chinese ideographs for each of the employed prime stimuli, and then subtracting the proportion of *more pleasant* responses on trials with a grey square prime from the proportion of *more pleasant* responses on trials with the source and the opposing candidate, respectively (see Payne et al., 2005). Submitted to the same 2 (candidate: source candidate vs. opposing candidate) × 2 (campaign: positive vs. negative) × 2 (topic: competence vs. morality) mixed-model ANOVA, these indices revealed a significant main effect of the candidate, $F(1, 123) = 7.35$, $p = .008$, $\eta_p^2 = .056$, indicating that the source elicited less favourable evaluations than the opposing candidate [$t(63) = -2.05$, $p = .045$ in the positive campaign condition; $t(62) = -1.78$, $p = .080$, in the negative campaign condition]. More importantly, there was a significant main effect of the type of the campaign, $F(1, 123) = 3.77$, $p = .05$, $\eta_p^2 = .030$, indicating that both candidates were evaluated less favourably in the negative campaign condition compared to the positive campaign condition (see Figure 4). Consistent with our predictions, the two-way interaction of candidate and type of campaign was far from statistical significance, $F(1, 123) = .001$, $p = .972$, $\eta_p^2 < .001$, indicating equally negative effects of negative campaigns for both the source and the target[4]. As with explicit evaluations, the particular topic of the campaign (competence vs. morality) did not qualify any of these effects (all Fs < 2.66). No other main or interaction effects reached statistical significance (all Fs < 2.66). These results are consistent with our prediction that the effects of negative campaigns on implicit evaluations may be equally negative for the source and the target, such that both will become associated with the negative content of the message.

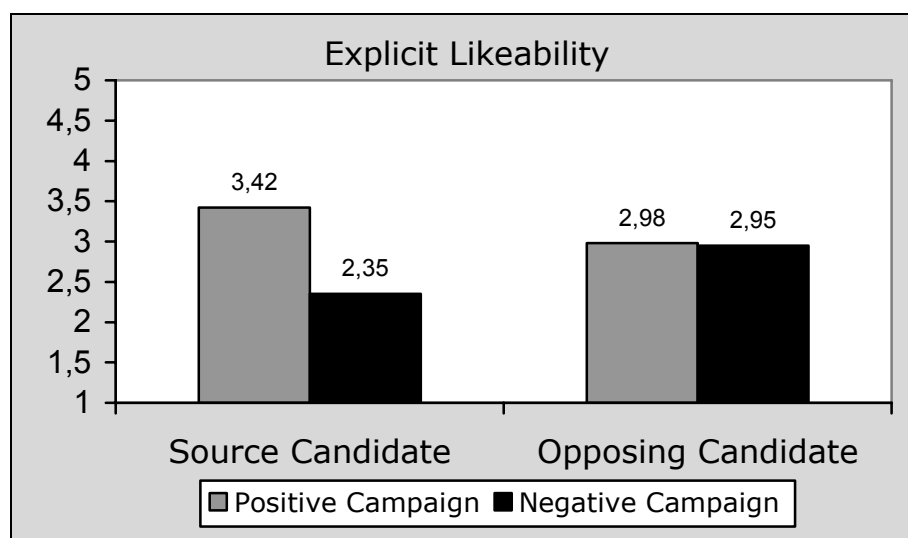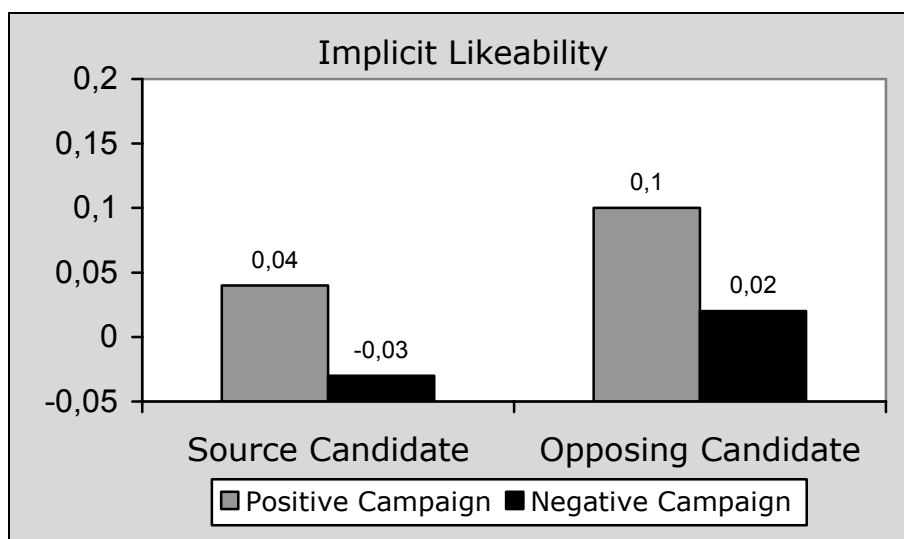**Figure 4.** Implicit likeability of source candidate and opposing candidate as a function of campaigning strategy (positive vs. negative).

---

[4] Implicit evaluations of the unfamiliar control face were not affected by the type of campaign, $F(1, 123) = 1.72$, $p = .19$, $\eta_p^2 = .014$, indicating that the obtained negativity was specific to the two candidates.

3. Discussion

The current findings indicated a partial dissociation between explicit and implicit evaluations as a result of different campaigning strategies. At the explicit level, only evaluations of the source, but not of the opponent, were affected by the type of campaign. In contrast, at the implicit level, evaluations of both the source and the opponent were influenced by the type of campaign. More specifically, we found that explicit evaluations of the source were less favourable when the campaign was negative than when it was positive; explicit evaluations of the opponent remained unaffected by the type of campaign. These findings differ from the ones obtained at the implicit level, where evaluations of both the source and the opponent were less favourable when the campaign was negative than when it was positive. These results were independent of the specific contents of the employed campaigns (morality vs. competence), supporting the generality of the obtained effects.

Our results are in line with the prediction that associative processes may create mental links to the contents of a negative campaign for both the source and the opponent. For the source, such processes of associative linking resemble the notion of STT (*spontaneous trait transference*), in which communicators become associated with the traits they ascribe to others (e.g., Carlston & Skowronski, 2005; Mae et al., 1999; Skowronski et al., 1998). Moreover, the differential effects of negative campaigns at the explicit level are in line with our prediction that propositional processes may lead recipients to infer a less favourable evaluation of the source, but discount the negative message about the opponent for the presumed ulterior motivation of the source. The former effect resembles the notion of TAR effects, in which sources acquire the valence of the attitude they communicate about others (Gawronski & Walther, 2008).

Overall, the present results indicate that the widespread use of negative campaigning in the political field can have detrimental effects for the various actors who are involved. Of course, one of these negative effects is intended. Politicians who convey negative messages aim at devaluing the perceptions of the opposing candidate, and the current findings suggest that they may actually be successful in this regard. However, negative campaigns also influence evaluations of the source, and this influence clearly works against the source's intentions. As a consequence, the intended and obtained benefits for the source are counteracted by unintended side-effects that undermine the electorate's perceptions of the source. These effects involve both explicit disapproval, as demonstrated by the studies presented in Chapter 2, as well as by other studies in literature (e.g., Budesheim, et al., 1996; Roese & Sande, 1993), but also spontaneous negative responses in relation to both a specific dimension, such as warmth (Chapter 2), and a general overall evaluation, as revealed here by

our measure of implicit evaluations (Payne et al., 2005). In the current study, these effects were independent of the specific content area that was addressed in the attacks (i.e., competence or morality), demonstrating the general nature of the obtained findings, at least for negative person-based messages. In sum, the clear message that emerges from the present study is that both actors—the source and the target of negative campaigns—will experience negative outcomes. However, considering the relative difference in likeability of both candidates an opposite pattern emerged between implicit and explicit evaluations. Indeed, the explicit evaluation of the source candidate was more positive as compared to the opposing candidate in the positive condition, whereas in the negative campaign condition the source was evaluated as less likeable as compared to the opposing candidate. Conversely, at the implicit level the opposing candidate was always evaluated as more likeable than the source candidate. In sum, as for explicit results negative campaigns are less effective as compared to positive campaigns, whereas as for the implicit level there is no evidence that one strategy is more effective as compared to the other.

A more general consequence of these negative outcomes in the associative system may be reflected in an overall distancing from the political domain. Generalized negative perceptions may create a halo of negativism around the political field, strengthening the association between negativity and politics. Such halo effects might partially explain the impact of negative ads on voter turnout often described in literature. Indeed, both survey research and experimental studies suggest that negativism can decrease voter turnout (e.g., Ansolabehere & Iyengar, 1995; Ansolabehere, Iyengar, Simon, & Valentino, 1994; Kahn & Kenney, 1999; Lau & Pomper, 2001; but see Goldstein & Freedman 2002; Martin, 2004). If there are only two political candidates competing for the same position, and negative ads create negative associations to both candidates, the likely result is that voters will not vote for any of them, implying reduced voter turnout if there is no alternative candidate. This scenario seems particularly likely for undecided voters, whose voting decisions have been shown to depend more strongly on implicit as compared to explicit evaluations (e.g., Arcuri et al., 2008; Galdi et al., 2008).

An interesting question in this context concerns the consequences of negative ads in cases of multiple candidates. Most of the empirical studies conducted so far focused on the perceptions of two opposing candidates. However, in several contexts, such as in the American primary elections or in European countries, the competitions often include several candidates that are running against each other. In such contexts, reciprocal attacks between two candidates could possibly become an advantage for a third party, if negative campaigning creates negative associations toward both the source and the target. Paradoxically, two parties

that compete for votes from the same electoral basis might be especially motivated to differentiate each other by means of negative campaigns, providing an advantage for parties with a far more distant ideology.

Despite the aforementioned negative effects on the perception of politicians and politics in general, one may wonder whether negative campaigns are inevitably harmful. On the one hand we have already demonstrated (Chapter 2; see also Carraro & Castelli, 2008) that they increase the perceived competence of the source candidates. On the other hand, some authors have argued that negative campaigns have another possible advantage: they could potentially be useful for increasing and stimulating public knowledge about the candidates and their agenda (see Goldstein & Freedman 2002; Martin, 2004). Moreover, if the attacks are centred on the specific political programs rather than on personal characteristics, they seem less likely to backfire against the source candidate, as emerged in the previous chapter. Another intriguing possibility derives from the application of the APE model (Gawronski & Bodenhausen, 2006, 2007): if attacks are carried out by staff members or organizations that support a given candidate, their personal image may suffer, but the perception of the candidate could remain unaffected. In other words, the "dirty job" could be done by partisans, in which case the partisans and the attacked candidate may acquire negative valence without backfiring against the candidate supported by the partisans. However, to the degree that the partisans are strongly associated with the candidate, processes of spreading activation may still lead to an associative transfer of negative partisan associations to the candidate (see Gawronski, Strack, & Bodenhausen, 2009). In this case, negative campaigns by partisans may be as detrimental for the source as negative campaigns run by the candidate him- or herself.

4. Conclusion

Overall, the current findings suggest that political campaigners should be cautious with the use of negative campaigns. Specifically, the current study indicates that negative campaigns can have dysfunctional effects for the source of negative campaigns, and these effects were evident for both explicit and implicit attitudes. Recent studies suggest that future voting decisions of undecided voters are better predicted by their automatic associations rather than explicit beliefs (Arcuri et al., 2008; Galdi et al., 2008). To the degree that negative campaigns create negative associations to both the source and the target of the campaign, the detrimental impact of such campaigns may be most pronounced for undecided voters. At the same time, the obtained effects on explicit evaluations may be most relevant for voting decisions of decided voters, whose decisions are more strongly related to explicit evaluations

(Galdi et al., 2008). Taken together, the evidences that both types of evaluations play a significant role in decision making, negative campaigns may have more risks than benefits.

The current findings give support also for the primary role of warmth over competence in shaping the overall impression toward a social target. Indeed, results from Study 5 (this Chapter) are more consistent with the previous results (Chapter 2, Study 2) emerged about the perceived sociability of the source candidate rather than the perceived competence. Moreover, as above said, the performed behaviour or the political choice may be well predicted by the overall implicit and explicit attitudes. However, the current rationale may be considered as partially at odds with some other evidence in the literature. Indeed, as already mentioned in the current work, inferences about competence from facial appearance (e.g., Todorov et al., 2005) are good predictors of the real outcomes of the elections, whereas conversely the perceived sociability is more likely to decrease the probability of winning (Castelli, Ghitti, & Carraro, 2008). In other words, even if the use of negative messages might boost the perceived competence, that is positively related to the real outcomes of the election, and at the same time lessen the perceived warmth, that is negatively related to the real outcomes of the election (see also Chapter 6; Castelli et al., 2008), in the end they may have a negative influence on the overall attitudes that are positively related to the real choice. One possible explanation in order to disentangle the described puzzle may be related to the different role of warmth and competence in the impression formation process. Indeed, probably warmth has a greater influence in shaping the very initial impression (such as in the current case with unknown candidates), whereas competence probably has a stronger influence in guiding the subsequent impression formation process, and thus, in the end, has a direct influence on the overall attitudes and on the real outcomes of the elections. This hypothesis is also in line with the described results obtained by Galdi and colleagues (Galdi et al., 2008): the choices of undecided people are more related to implicit attitudes because they are probably made at the moment, they are elaborated on line and thus they are more affected by perceived warmth as compared to perceived competence. Conversely, the choices of decided people are already well elaborated and thus they are more related to explicit attitudes that may be closer to competence dimension rather than warmth. In conclusion, it may be of some interest to further analyze longitudinally the influence of negative political campaigning in impression formation processes and not only immediately after the presentation of a negative message.

Chapter 4

THE IMPLICIT AND EXPLICIT EFFECTS
ON POLITICAL IDENTIFICATION:
The role of pre-existing implicit attitudes

1. General Introduction

In the two previous chapters we delineated some variables that may account for the opposing findings described in literature about the consequences of negative campaigns. One of the factors that we took into account was related to the mere definition of negative campaigns, and thus we distinguished between different types of negative messages, showing that they actually lead to different outcomes. In Chapter 2 we distinguished between *negative ideological*, *negative person-based* and *negative issue-based* messages. Subsequently, in Chapter 3 we further distinguished within *negative person-based* campaigns between two different types of messages on the basis of the specific content: about the opposing candidate's competence or morality. Here we will analyze the effects of another type of negative remarks: an attack against the opposite electorate. What might happen when voters are directly criticized because of their political affiliation? This empirical question was raised by a real episode happened during the 2006 Italian campaign: the right-wing candidate as prime Minister (i.e., Silvio Berlusconi) some days before the Election Day, during a public speech, used a very negative adjective talking about the electorate of the opposite coalition (left-wing voters). He expressed his incredulity in thinking that in Italy there could have been so many *stupid* people that in the end decide to vote against their own personal interests, voting for the left-wing coalition. This expression, manifestly led up left-wing voters to show their grudge for the negative expression stressing their pride for their political affiliation: in that period t-shirts or pins with the writing *orgoglioni* became very popular. *Orgoglioni* is a neologism created ad hoc from the fusion of the initial letters of the Italian word *orgoglio* (i.e., pride) and the final letters of the negative Italian adjective used by Berlusconi. At the light of the showy consequences of this specific type of attack against the electorate, it seems clear that being the target of a negative remark from an outgroup member might have a

straight impact on another essential dimension that has not yet studied in this field: the political identification. In the current chapter we will not analyze the consequences on the evaluation of the involved politicians, but we will take into account another variable that may be influenced by negative messages and have afterwards influences in the subsequent impression formation and attitudes change processes toward political leaders.

1.1. Social Identity and Political Identification

People, during their daily life, usually belong to different groups and the membership to a given social group is essential for every individual because from this partisanship they could infer information about the self. Indeed, the self is tightly connected with group membership. Tajfel (1981) defined social identity as "*that part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his membership of a social group (or groups), together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership*" (Tajfel, 1981, p. 63). Therefore, people build a crucial part of their identity directly from their affiliation to one or more social groups.

In order to achieve and preserve a positive social identity, it is crucial to belong to positively evaluated groups. However, this goal is sometimes difficult to be achieved because factual information (e.g., losing the election) may threaten the image of the ingroup. Therefore, individuals adopt coping strategies in order to defend their social identities and manage the disadvantaged position of the group (Abrams & Hogg, 1988; Marques et al., 1988; Mummendey, Kessler, Klink, & Mielke, 1999). Among these strategies, individuals may try to oppose the attack to the image of the group by strengthening the positive aspects of the ingroup. Thus, group members may enhance their focus on those positive aspects, remark them during interpersonal communications, and ultimately increase their perceived distance from the outgroup. In line with this idea, Livingston (2002) has recently demonstrated that perceived negativity from the outgroup increased explicit ingroup bias. In other words, participants, who were Blacks in that study, reported to like the racial ingroup more than the White outgroup after being aware that Whites were devaluing Blacks (i.e., extropunitive hypothesis; Allport, 1954). Similarly, research has demonstrated that patriotism and pride in one's national citizenship represent manifestations of collective identity that people try to defend, particularly when their country is under threat (Cohen & Garcia, 2005). However, Livingston (2002) demonstrated that quite a different pattern of findings emerges from a more indirect attitudes measure.

Indeed, the implicit attitude toward the ingroup tended to be more negative after the image of the ingroup had been threatened (i.e., intropunitive hypothesis; Allport, 1954). In sum, an attack toward the ingroup increased explicit liking but had an opposite impact on more spontaneous responses.

The same rationale can be extended to the political domain, and, more specifically, to the attacks toward the electorate. Being the target of a negative remark from the leader of the outgroup poses a threat. Drawing on Livingston's (2002) results, we argue that exposure to a negative remark about one's own political affiliation might lead voters to adopt a coping strategy to defend their social group from the external threat (Cohen & Garcia, 2005; Doosje, Spears, & Ellemers, 2002; Mummenday et al., 1999). In this specific situation, we expect that participants will increase their self-reported identification with the political ingroup. According to the extropunitive hypothesis (Allport, 1954), participants, in order to defend their social identities, might reject the negativity from the outgroup and report strengthened bonds with the ingroup. This would account for the interesting phenomenon described earlier where Berlusconi's attack toward the left-wing electorate gave rise to a massive need among such electorate to express the proud associated to their political affiliation. However, paralleling the analysis by Livingston (2002), we predict an opposite pattern of results in relation to implicit measures.

1.2. The associative system and the role of pre-existing implicit attitudes

This expected asymmetric pattern of results could also be accounted for the operation of two different judgmental systems. As fully described in Chapter 3, recently, Gawronski and Bodenhausen (2006) have proposed a dual system model, named associative-propositional evaluation (APE) model, which assumes that explicit judgments are the outcome of a specific system called *propositional* (see also Gawronski & Bodenhausen, 2007). According to the APE model, the propositional system is primarily characterized by truth validation: individuals examine the truth value of each piece of information and integrate into the final evaluation only information which is considered to be valid and reliable. As such, an attack towards one's own group might be considered as groundless, setting into motion the retrieval from memory of other propositions aimed at disconfirming the content of the attack and reinforcing the positive aspects of being a member of the group. The final result would thus be an explicit stronger identification with the ingroup. According to the same APE model (Gawronski & Bodenhausen, 2006, 2007), more spontaneous responses, usually called

implicit, are the outcomes of a different system which is associative in nature and operates independently from any truth value. Associations are created and reinforced merely on the basis of spatial and temporal contiguity. This implies that attacks toward the ingroup may strengthen negative associative links and give rise to subsequent more negative implicit attitudes toward the ingroup, as demonstrated by Livingston (2002). These negative associations with the ingroup may shrink the association between the same group and the self, and thus decrease the spontaneous ingroup identification. Indeed, one main feature of the associative system is that the associations occur only as a consequence of a simultaneous activation. As a direct consequence, the negative links remain restricted to the group while the self remains more likely connected in the associative system with positive concepts (e.g., Gawronski, Bodenhausen, & Becker, 2007; Nuttin, 1985). As a result, after a negative attack against our own group, the self and the group will be associated with two opposite links, namely positive vs. negative respectively, and thus these two opposite connections may weaken the associative link between the self and the group. In other words, the group, associated with negative concepts in mind as a consequence of a negative remark, may be contrasted away from the self that remains strongly connected with positive concepts.

However, this effect is likely to be more pronounced for group members who do not hold strong and well-established associative networks in relation to their group. When people have firm and secure implicit attitudes, additional information that associates the ingroup to negative features should produce limited effects. In those people the ingroup is strongly connected both with the self and positive features, and thus an attack toward the group should not damp these strong pre-existing links. On the other hand, when people's implicit attitudes toward the ingroup are not particularly polarized, signalling some uncertainty about the value of the ingroup, the attacks are expected to be more likely to impact onto the responses of the associative system. In the current chapter, we will test this hypothesis expecting that attacks toward one's own electorate will have opposite effects at the implicit and explicit level and that their magnitude will be modulated by pre-existing implicit attitudes. Specifically, we predict a shift in the implicit political identification only in voters with weak implicit political attitudes and no effect for participants with strong and clear implicit political attitudes. Indeed, in the latter sample of respondents the positive bonds with the group party are stronger and more widespread as compared to the negative bonds. Consequently, a negative remark toward the political party may activate the association between this concept and the negative adjective, but this link remains weak and counterbalanced by the stronger and

widespread positive associations. Conversely, people with weak positive implicit attitudes toward their own political party, have few and less accessible positive associations with the group. For this reason, a negative remark about the political party may activate the associations with negative concepts and these activations cannot be counterbalanced or even nullify by the positive side. In conclusion, we argue here that a negative remark against one's own political party may have an influence especially in participants with weak implicit attitudes toward their group. Moreover, in these participants we predict, as discussed above according to the intropunitive hypothesis (Allport, 1954; Livingston, 2002), an increase of the implicit distance between the self and the political party.

1.3. Overview of the present study

In sum, we predict that especially participants with weak pre-existing implicit attitudes toward their own political group will be affected by the content of the campaign used by a candidate of the opposite coalition. Moreover, we argue that in these people, an attack against them (toward the electorate) may increase the explicit political identification with their own political group, but at the same time decrease the implicit identification. To test these assumptions, we compared the effects of a positive campaign with two different types of negative campaigns, namely an attack against the electorate (i.e., the group) and an attack against a political candidate. The consequences were measured both on implicit and explicit identification with the political party, on the basis of the pre-existing implicit attitudes toward the political party.

In this study, we first assessed whether participants considered themselves as closer to the right-wing or to the left-wing coalition. Next, we measured their implicit attitudes toward the two coalitions, and then their self-reported strength of identification with the preferred coalition. Afterwards, all participants were presented with the political campaign of a candidate belonging to the opposite coalition. The content of the messages was manipulated so that to create three conditions. The campaign could either be positive or negative, attacking either a candidate of the coalition liked by the participant or the very same electorate the respondents belonged to. After this manipulation, participants' implicit and explicit political identification was assessed.

2. STUDY 6

2.1. Method

Participants and Design

Ninety-four participants (63 female) took part in the experiment on a voluntary basis. They were between 18 and 36 years old ($M = 20.60$, $SD = 4.89$). The experiment consisted in a 3 (communication strategies: *positive campaign* vs. *attack to the opposing candidate vs. attack to the electorate*) × 2 (pre-existing implicit attitudes: weak vs. strong) design with all factors varying between participants.

Materials

In the current experiment we used twelve logos of political parties, half belonging to left-wing parties and half to right-wing parties. Moreover, thirty sentences were employed: ten for each condition. The first condition consisted of a *positive* campaign: the ostensible candidate promoted his political plans without making any reference to the opposing candidate or to the opposite coalition (e.g., "We fight every day for democracy and for a free society"). In the other two conditions, the candidate adopted a mixed campaign strategy (i.e., 5 positive and 5 negative remarks). In one mixed condition, the remarks were about an alleged candidate of the opposite coalition and were therefore against a politician supported by the participant: this condition was named *attack to the opposing candidate* (e.g., "The right-wing/left-wing candidate is unsuccessful"). The other mixed condition was named *attack to the electorate*: the remarks were about the electorate of the opposite coalition and, therefore, could be perceived by the respondents as an attack toward themselves (e.g., Right-wing / Left-wing voters are unsuccessful"). As shown in the provided examples, the remarks in the two negative conditions were about the same topic, and the only difference was the target of the attack (see Appendix D for the full materials).

Measures

For each participant we recorded both the implicit and the explicit political affiliation (party evaluation), and the implicit and explicit political identification.

As for the *explicit political affiliation* (explicit attitudes) participants were presented in a counterbalanced order with two continua (17 cm) and asked to indicate how far/close (1 = very far, 17 = very close) they felt toward the two Italian coalitions (i.e., right-wing and left-wing). As for the implicit political affiliation (party evaluation, implicit pre-existing implicit attitudes) we adopted the Implicit Association Task (IAT, Greenwald et al., 1998) in order to assess the

automatic evaluative associations toward the two coalitions. In the course of the IAT, participants were presented on a computer screen with four different types of stimuli: 6 logos of parties belonging to the right-wing coalition (i.e., Alleanza Nazionale, Alternativa Sociale, Forza Italia, La Casa delle Libertà, Lega Nord, UDC), 6 logos of parties belonging to the left-wing coalition (i.e., Comunisti Italiani, Democratici di Sinistra, La Margherita, La Rosa nel Pugno, L'Ulivo, L'Unione), 6 positive words (pleasure, happiness, heaven, wonderful, joy, love), and 6 negative words (pain, horrible, terrific, disaster, ugly, death). Participants went through a sequence of 5 blocks (3 learning blocks and 2 critical blocks) during which they had to classify logos as referring to the right or to the left coalition and words as either positive or negative (see Greenwald et al., 1998; see also Appendix H). This task enables to assess the relative strength of association of the two coalitions with positive and negative features and it has been already widely used to assess political attitudes (e.g., Arcuri et al., 2008; Galdi et al., 2008).

As for the *explicit political identification* a scale comprising 16 items was created. Items tapped the subjective importance attributed to being a member of the preferred political group (e.g., "I am proud to be a left-wing / right-wing voter"; "My political affiliation is very important for me"). The 16 items were then randomly divided in two different subscales: one was administered before the experimental manipulation; whereas, the second was administered after the manipulation. For each item participants were asked to indicate their degree of agreement along 7-point Likert scales (1 = I strongly disagree; 7 = I strongly agree). The *implicit political identification* was measured through a modified version of the Go/No-go Association Task very similar to the one used in Chapter 2 (GNAT; Nosek & Banaji, 2001). This task is conceptually similar to the previous implicit measure, the IAT (Greenwald et al., 1998), and it also assesses the automatic associations between concepts. In our study, we specifically measured the associations between the self and the two political coalitions. In the course of this task, participants were presented on the computer screen with 4 different types of stimuli: 6 left-wing and 6 right-wing logos used also in the IAT, 6 self-relevant words (i.e., I, My, Me, Self, Myself, Mine) and 6 others-relevant words (i.e., They, Them, Their, He, It, His). The GNAT consisted of 8 blocks: 4 practice and 4 critical blocks. Initially, each participant went through the four practice blocks to get acquainted with the task. In two of these blocks participants had to discriminate between the logos of the two coalitions. In the other two learning blocks participants had to discriminate between self-relevant words and other-relevant words. Next, the four critical blocks were introduced. In each block, participants were presented with all four types of stimuli, and their task was to press a key on the computer keyboard any time a right-wing (or left-wing) logo – or a self-relevant word (or other-relevant) appeared. No

response was required to the other stimuli. Importantly, the four blocks were administered in a randomized order and there was no response deadline[5] (see also Appendix I).

Procedure

The experiment was run individually in a laboratory setting and it was divided into two phases, pre- and post-manipulation. In the pre-manipulation phase, participants were asked to indicate their explicit political affiliation along the two continua. While the experimenter scored these answers, participants performed the Implicit Association Task in order to measure their implicit attitudes toward the two coalitions, and then they filled in the first explicit political identification scale.

Next, the critical manipulation was introduced. Participants were placed in front of the computer screen, and they were then introduced with a political candidate. For all participants, the politician belonged to their own opposite coalition. At the beginning, some personal information about the political candidate was provided (e.g., the name, place of birth, hobbies, family status). Moreover, it was indicated that he was a candidate for the last European Election. Then, participants were presented on the screen with ten remarks, one after the other, that the candidate made during his last political campaign. Importantly, the content of the sentences was manipulated between participants creating three conditions: *positive campaign* vs. *attack to the opposing candidate* vs. *attack to the electorate.*

At the end of this presentation, participants were asked to complete the Go/No-go Association Task and to fill in the second explicit political identification scale. Finally, participants were thanked and fully debriefed.

2.2. Results

Preliminary analyses

First, the difference between the responses to the two continua concerning the explicit political affiliation was calculated. Specifically, we subtracted the responses provided along the continuum about the right-wing coalition from the responses provided along the continuum about the left-wing coalition. In such a way, positive values indicated that participants felt closer to the left-wing coalition as compared to the right-wing coalition. We decided *a priori* to consider as undecided or with an unclear political affiliation those respondents showing a difference of less than 2 cm. No participant emerged as undecided, thus indicating that respondents clearly sided for one specific coalition. In particular, 53

---

[5] In the standard GNAT there is a response deadline and therefore scores are based on error rates and signal detection analyses. Our modified version of GNAT based on latency of responses.

participants felt closer to the left-wing coalition ($M = 10.37$, $SD = 3.97$) whereas 41 felt closer to the right-wing coalition ($M = -11.24$, $SD = 5.12$).

As said, we aimed to analyze the effects of negative messages on explicit and implicit identification with the political ingroup as a function of the polarization of prior implicit attitudes. Therefore, following the indication by Greenwald and colleagues (Greenwald, Nosek, & Banaji, 2003), we calculated a D score for each participant, so that higher scores indicated more positive perceptions toward the left-wing coalition as compared to the right-wing coalition. Both left-wing ($D = .52$, $SD = .85$) and right-wing respondents ($D = .-68$, $SD = .61$) showed more positive evaluations toward their own ingroup as compared to the opposite coalition. In both cases the observed means were significantly different than zero, $t(52) = 4.42$, $p<.001$ and $t(40) = -7.11$, $p<.001$, respectively. Moreover, the correlation between explicit political affiliation (responses along the two initial continua) and implicit party evaluation was positive and significant, $r(94) = .625$, $p<.001$ (see Nosek et al., 2007).

Then, for the subsequent analyses, the sample was split in two groups on the basis of the strength of the implicit party evaluation, and thus on the basis of the observed D scores we created two numerically equivalent groups, so that to distinguish respondents with the most positive implicit evaluations toward their group and those with weak positive evaluations. One group included participants with a D score higher than $+0.74$ (left-wing) and lower than -0.74 (right-wing): those are participants with a strong implicit preference for one of the two coalitions. The second group included participants with a weak implicit preference for one of the two coalition (i.e., a D score between -0.73 and $+0.73$).

As dependent variables we considered the implicit identification with the ingroup, as derived from responses in the GNAT, and the shifts in the explicit identification (i.e., changes between the pre- and post-manipulation assessments).

Implicit identification

For each participant we obtained four variables derived from the mean latency of correct answers in the GNAT. The four variables were: 1) left-wing logos + self-relevant words, 2) left-wing logos + others-relevant words, 3) right-wing logos + self-relevant words, 4) right-wing logos + others-relevant words. In our sample, for some people the left-wing coalition represented the ingroup, whereas for other participants the same coalition represented the outgroup. In order to eliminate this difference, we calculated a single index in which higher values indicated a stronger self-association with the ingroup coalition over the outgroup coalition. Thus, positive values indicated an ingroup bias; whereas negative values indicated a stronger self-association with the outgroup coalition over the ingroup. This index

was submitted to a 3 (content of the message: positive, attack to the opposing candidate, attack to the electorate) × 2 (pre-existing implicit attitudes: weak vs. strong) ANOVA with all the factors varying between participants. The main effect of the content of the message approached the conventional level of significance, $F(2, 88) = 2.56$, $p = .082$, $\eta_p^2 = .055$. The implicit identification with the ingroup was slightly weaker after an attack toward the electorate, $M = 112$, $SD = 225$, than after a positive message or an attack toward the opposite candidate, Ms = 182 and 199, SDs = 262 and 169, respectively. The main effect of attitude polarization was not significant, $F(2, 88) = 1.44$, $p = .23$. Most importantly, a significant two-way interaction emerged, $F(2, 88) = 5.03$, $p < .01$, $\eta_p^2 = .103$.

In order to better understand the meaning of this interaction, two separate analyses of variance were performed on data from respondents with weak and strong pre-existing implicit attitudes. As for respondents with strong implicit political attitudes, the message did not alter implicit identification, $F(2, 46) = 1.66$, $p = .20$. In sharp contrast, the type of message significantly affected the implicit identification of respondents with weaker implicit party evaluation, $F(2, 42) = 6.21$, $p < .005$, $\eta_p^2 = .228$ (see Figure 1). Post-hoc analyses showed that implicit identification was indeed lower when exposed to an attack toward the electorate ($M = -4.48$; $SD = 168$) than toward the opposing candidate [$t(27) = -2.80$, $p = .009$; $M = 144$, $SD = 118$], or to a positive message [$t(26) = -3.01$, $p < .006$; $M = 249$, $SD = 252$]. The difference between these two last conditions, namely negative toward the opposing candidate and positive, emerged to be not significant, $t(31) = -1.54$, ns.
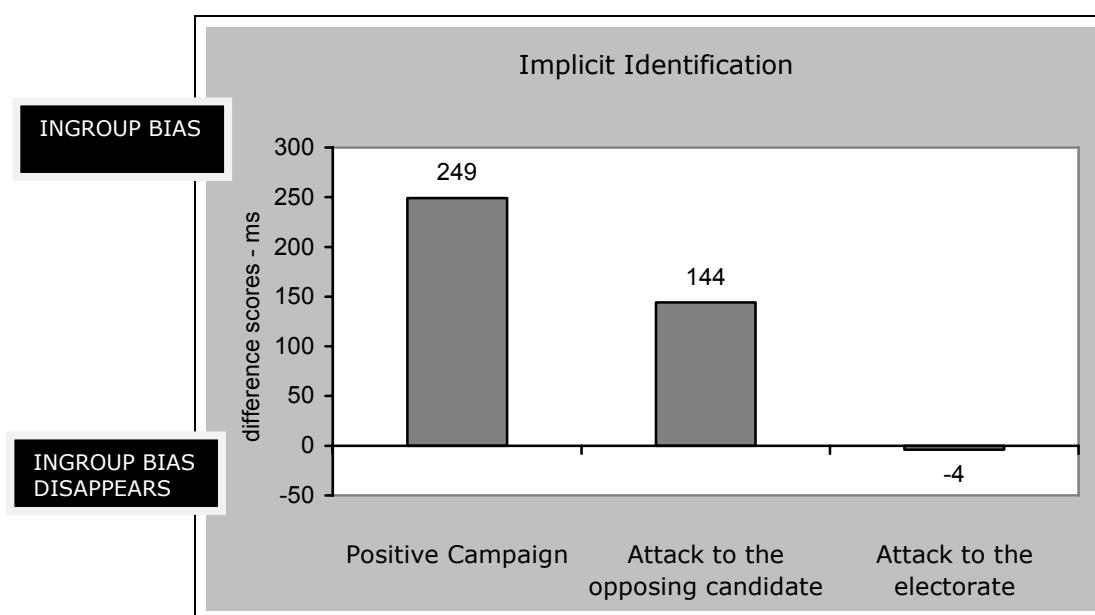
Figure 1. Implicit political identification as measured from the modified version of GNAT as a function of campaigning strategy. High scores indicate stronger implicit identification with one's own ingroup over the outgroup.

Explicit identification

A difference score between the two subscales (as for the pre-manipulation subscale α = .88; as for the post-manipulation subscale α = .84) was calculated in order to analyze the influence of the manipulation on explicit political identification. Positive values indicated that the manipulation increased the political identification, whereas negative values indicated a decrease of the political identification after the manipulation. The shift in explicit identification was submitted to a 3 (content of the message: positive, attack to the leader, attack to the electorate) × 2 (pre-existing implicit attitudes: weak vs. strong) ANOVA with all the factors varying between participants. No main effect emerged to be significant (p's > .12). The expected two-way interaction, however, was significant, $F(2, 88) = 4.87$, $p < .05$, $\eta_p^2 = .10$. As before, two separate analyses of variance were performed on data from respondents with weak and strong pre-existing implicit attitudes. In the case of respondents with polarized pre-existing implicit political attitudes no effect of the message was observed, $F(2, 46) < 1$, $p = .47$. A different picture emerged in the case of respondents characterized by weak pre-existing implicit political attitudes. Indeed, the type of message significantly altered the reported explicit identification, $F(2, 42) = 5.37$, $p < .01$, $\eta_p^2 = .204$ (see Figure 2).
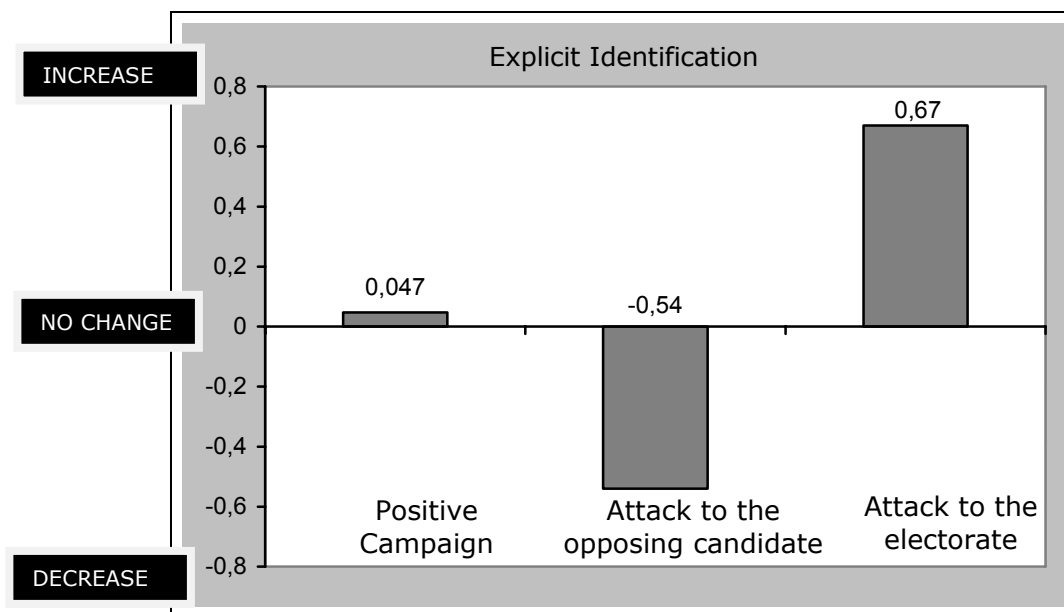
Figure 2. Explicit political identification as a function of campaigning strategy. High scores indicate an increase of the political identification after the manipulation.

Post-hoc analyses showed that the shift in the explicit identification observed after an attack toward the electorate was significantly different from the one observed after an attack toward participants' ingroup candidate, $t(27) = 3.06$, $p < .005$, but it was not significantly different as compared to the shift in the positive message condition, $t(26) = 1.64$, $p = .11$.

Changes in explicit identification after positive messages and attacks toward the opponent were marginally different, $t(31) = -1.84$, $p = .075$. Further analyses were carried out comparing the observed means against zero (i.e., no change). Such analyses showed that explicit identification increased when exposed to an attack toward the electorate, $M = .67$, $SD = 1.14$, $t(11) = 2.02$, $p = .07$. In contrast, an attack toward the candidate of the ingroup tended to decrease explicit identification, $M = -.54$, $SD = .97$, $t(16) = -2.3$, $p = .03$. A positive campaign carried out by the outgroup candidate did not affect the explicit identification with one's own political coalition, $M = .047$, $SD = .86$, $t(15) = .22$, ns.

3. Discussion

Many interesting findings emerged from the current investigation about the consequences of negative political campaigning. Indeed, here we examined the effects of a new kind of negative campaigning, an attack against the electorate actually used in the Italian scenario, on a new variable: the identification with a political group. Moreover, the consequences were analyzed as a function of the polarization of the pre-existing implicit attitudes toward one's own political group.

First of all, the current investigation has given support to the idea that the ambiguity described in the literature about the consequences of negative campaigning may be due to the problem that the outcomes are modulated by several factors. In the previous two Chapters (Chapter 2 and 3) we have already taken into account some factors, such as the specific type of attack, the evaluated dimensions (competence vs. warmth) and the level of measurement (implicit vs. explicit). Here we have not only taken into account another type of negative campaigning, namely an attack against the opposite electorate, analyzing both implicit and explicit consequences, but also stressed the influence of some specific features of recipients in modulating the likely consequences. Indeed, in the current study, the communication strategies had a direct impact only for participants with weak pre-existing implicit attitudes toward their political ingroup, whereas participants with polarized implicit attitudes were not affected. In other words, it seems that participants holding strong attitudes are somehow inoculated against persuasive attempts. Interestingly, political messages are usually devoted to persuade not this specific part of population but conversely those people who have not already made up a clear decision. Moreover, the current investigation gives further support also to the importance of the investigation of implicit attitudes in the political domain. Indeed, all the people considered in the current study were explicitly decided voters, with a clear explicit political affiliation, but the underlying attitudes were not homogeneous among those people.

In other words, not all recipients are affected by the same persuasive message, and, most important, not all decided people are actually comparable.

Another relevant indication that came out from the current study is related to the importance of considering some other variables, such as the political identification, that may be affected by a political communication. Indeed, as aforementioned, the research about the consequences of negative political campaigning has primary focused on the effects on voter turnout and on the evaluation of the involved politicians (see Lau at al., 1999, 2007 for reviews). A persuasive message may have multiple effects on a plurality of elements, that one after the other will direct the final decision. In this specific investigation we have analyzed the consequences on the strength of the identification with own political ingroup. This variable is very important for the subsequent evaluations of other social actors, in this case of other politicians, as well as for the effectiveness of subsequent political messages. Indeed, in general, people evaluate more positively ingroup members as compared to outgroup members (e.g., Brewer & Brown, 1998; Tajfel, 1981); moreover, at the same, time people are more motivated in paying close attention and elaborating the messages expressed by ingroup members, and thus persuasive attempts from the opposite coalition are usually vanished (e.g., Budesheim et al., 1996). In other words, decreasing the political identification of the opposite electorate probably leads to a decrease of ingroup bias, and at the same time facilitates the subsequent persuasive attempts from the outgroup.

In the study presented here, an attack against the candidate supported by the recipients did not influence the implicit identification, but decreased the explicit identification. More interestingly, only for some people on the basis of their pre-existing implicit attitudes, the new kind of negative campaign analyzed, namely an attack against the opposite electorate as a group, increased the explicit political identification but decreased the implicit identification as compared to a positive campaign. As expected, according to the extropunitive hypothesis (Allport, 1954) and in line with the results described by Livingston (2002) with Black people, suffering an attack from an outgroup politician increased the identification with one's own ingroup, but only at the explicit level. This result is line also with what actually happened after Berlusconi's attack against left-wing voters: these voters stressed the pride related to their political affiliation. However, even if left-wing voters wore t-shirts and pins publicly showing their pride for their political affiliation, we actually do not know the hidden consequences of suffering such an attack. The current study has revealed what probably happened at the implicit level. Indeed, according to the intropunitive hypothesis (Allport, 1954) and the results described by Livingston (2002) with Black people, and also in line with the APE model (Gawronski & Bodenhausen, 2006,

2007), the political identification of people with weak pre-existing implicit attitudes probably decreased after the attack.

The discrepancy between implicit and explicit outcomes further highlights the importance of studying the effects of negative campaigning not only at the explicit level (that is usually showy such as here with the *orgoglioni* phenomenon) but also at the implicit level. As said, nowadays there is a lively interest also in the political psychology field in the use of indirect measures. Recently, the importance has been further stressed by the evidence that implicit attitudes may predict the future choice of undecided people (Galdi et al., 2008): the basic idea is that probably the pre-existing implicit attitudes may guide the subsequent elaboration processes of new information. Also, here, the strength of pre-existing implicit political attitudes had a strong influence in determining the worth of a persuasive message from the outgroup. Following this rationale, as aforementioned, the negative consequences at the implicit level may account for the subsequent elaboration process and thus have a direct influence in the final decision. As said, in this specific case, the long run consequence may be a decrease of ingroup bias and a facilitation of subsequent persuasive messages from the outgroup.

4. Conclusion

The described scenario is another small chip of what usually happens during a political race. The process that guides a person to make up a political decision is a complicate route and it is the sum of several little pieces that taken together guide the overall path. With the current investigation we have added some important plugs in explaining the likely consequences of negative advertising. First of all, we have remarked once again that not all negative messages lead to the same consequences. Secondly, not all attitude measures detect the same pattern of effects. Finally, and most importantly, not all voters are influenced in the same way by the same message.

In conclusion, coming back to the real episode that has inspired the current investigation, probably Berlusconi attacking the opposite electorate really achieved his purpose. Indeed, his attack probably moved away left-wing voters from their coalition, even if apparently the *orgoglioni* phenomenon suggested the opposite outcome. However, these consequences probably turned out only for some voters, namely those with weak pre-existing implicit attitudes toward the left-wing coalition.

SESSION B

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE TWO WINGS: LEFT VS. RIGHT

Chapter 5

LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES: LEFT-WING AND RIGHT-WING POLITICIANS SPEAK DIFFERENTLY

Whereas the previous session was primarily focused on the effects of different types of negative political campaigns used by politicians, here the main focus is to analyze the features of the language used by politicians, highlighting the eventual differences between left-wing and right-wing politicians, especially in the Italian scenario. Even if a source candidate may use several codes and channels in order to reach and persuade the electorate, the main code of communication remains the verbal one, both oral and written. For this reason, in the first part of this chapter the main purpose is to simply analyze the features of the verbal language of the two Italian coalitions, both in terms of linguistic wordiness and syntactic complexity (Study 1a & 1b; Carraro et al., 2008). Then, in the second part, the aim is to specifically analyze whether politicians actually use negative political campaigning and which types (ideological, person and issue-based), taking into consideration that, as demonstrated in previous chapters, not all negative messages lead to the same consequences (Study 2a & 2b; Castelli et al., 2007).

> STUDY 1

1. General Introduction: The simplification wave

Some years ago, Umberto Eco (1973) said that the language of the Italian politicians was very difficult, and thus he ironically suggested that probably it was created ad hoc in order to pass over the voters' heads, such that electorate could not understand what politicians were saying and then they could not express their personal opinion. In such a way, the political language supplied only the purpose to connect different politicians without interfere with the *normal* people: politicians represented an unquestioned caste very far from citizens. Their language was very difficult, lengthy, with a complex structure, ambiguous, tedious, with a lot

of technical terms (Scianò, 1989). However, during the last decades, something in the described scenario has changed.

Indeed, nowadays, politicians seem primarily focused not only in speaking within their caste, but more and more often they address their efforts in speaking directly to the voters. Many authors agree that probably this transformation in Italy happened after Berlusconi's candidature for 1994 election. Indeed, he asserted that one of his purposes was to change the language and the communication style of the Italian politics (Berlusconi, 2001, p. 38). He has introduced a simple and easy language accessible to all citizens with the intention of speaking directly to them and with them, especially with undecided voters who probably haven't already expressed their opinion only because the previous political debate was too complicate and too far from their real life (Amadori, 2002; Giglioli, 1989).

This transformation route has been encouraged also by the new mass-media, in particular by the television. This media requires a new communication style: incisive, brief and effective (Mazzoleni, 2004; Novelli, 2006). For this reason, the simplification wave was not bordered only in Italy but it has been described in other countries, such as in the US arena (Hallin, 1992; Patterson, 1993) and it has reached also the other politicians both of right-wing and left-wing coalition. However, this simplification process was not homogeneous among the two political parties, at least in the Italian scenario.

1.1. Differences between the two coalitions

Albeit the simplification wave, pushed by the new mass media and initially rode in Italy only by Berlusconi (a right-wing candidate) has reached also left-wing coalition, the impact for this group was weaker and slower as compared to the opposite coalition. The language of left-wing politicians seems still anchored to the past complicate communication, the one that passed over the voters' heads (Eco, 1973; Ricolfi, 2005). For instance, left-wing politicians have introduced new words as replacements for other popular and familiar but less polite words (politically correct); moreover, they have continued to use a more complex communication style and language. For these reasons, left-wing politicians are sometimes perceived as unpleasant by the audience: they speak differently from the majority of society, and thus they seem very far from people and from their daily life problems.

Regardless this spread awareness concerning the differences between left- and right-wing politicians, there is still no empirical demonstration about the real differences in the language used by the two Italian coalitions. Some researchers have highlighted semantic differences between the two coalitions (Catellani, 1997; Mazzoleni, 2004), differences in the complexity of the words used in their speeches (Bolasco, Giuliano & Galli de'Paratesi, 2006) and in the

complexity of the thematic maps of their political programs (Gattino & Tartaglia, 2006, 2008). Left-wing programs usually touch several topics, whereas right-wing programs are usually focused on few topics. In Study 1a and 1b the main aim is to extend the studies about the differences between the two coalitions analyzing the mere grammatical and syntactic structure, following the hypothesis that the right-wing language is less wordiness and complex as compared to the left-wing language.

2. STUDY 1a *the 2001 Italian political campaign*

2.1. Method

Materials

Some weeks before 2001 elections (May 13th, 2001) the newspaper *Corriere della Sera* published seventy questions that were previously sent by mail directly to the two candidates as Prime Minister: Francesco Rutelli (for the left-wing coalition) and Silvio Berlusconi (for the right-wing coalition). The two candidates were invited by the journal to send their answers by mail to the editorial board of the newspaper. The questions were about general issues and about their political programs.

Procedure

Overall, the responses to the seventy questions from the two political leaders were analyzed: for each answer we counted the amount of sentences and of clauses, and then the number of main clauses and of subordinate clauses. Finally, we also counted the number of the words employed. Then, from these raw scores a relative score was calculated: the proportion of subordinate as compared to the total amount of clauses. This index is able to grasp the syntactic complexity of the speech; whereas, as for the linguistic wordiness we considered the absolute indices concerning the number of the words and of clauses employed in each answer by the two politicians.

2.2. Results

Linguistic wordiness

As for the absolute number of words, clauses and sentences used in each answer, paired-samples t-tests revealed significant differences between the two leaders: the left-wing leader (i.e., Rutelli) used more sentences as compared to the right-wing leader (i.e., Berlusconi), $t(138) = -4.47$, $p < .001$ ($M_{left-wing} = 4.94$, $SD = 3.24$; $M_{right-wing} = 3.39$, $SD = 2.06$). The same

difference emerged also for the number of clauses, $t(138) = 4.76$, $p < .001$ ($M_{left-wing} = 6.81$, $SD = 2.60$; $M_{right-wing} = 4.77$, $SD = 2.48$), and for the number of words, $t(138) = 5.05$, $p < .001$ ($M_{left-wing} = 85.33$, $SD = 24.20$; $M_{right-wing} = 61.59$, $SD = 31.01$).

Syntactic complexity

As for the complexity in their answers we analyzed the total amount of subordinate clauses and the proportion between the total amount of subordinate clauses and the total amount of clauses. As for the raw scores, paired-samples t-tests revealed that the left-wing leader (Rutelli) used more subordinate clauses as compared to the right-wing leader (Berlusconi), $t(138) = -3.03$, $p < .01$ ($M_{left-wing} = 4.37$, $SD = 4.58$; $M_{right-wing} = 2.92$, $SD = 2.67$). As for the relative indices, the same pattern of results emerged, $t(138) = 2.21$, $p < .05$ ($M_{left-wing} = .48$, $SD = .16$; $M_{right-wing} = .40$, $SD = .24$).

2.3. Discussion

Overall, results from Study 1a empirically demonstrated that the language used by the two Italian candidates as Prime Minister for 2001 election was very different, both quantitatively and qualitatively. Indeed, the left-wing candidate was more prolix and used a more complex language as compared to the opposite candidate. However, before generalizing the current results, it is necessary to further investigate whether the described pattern of results is bordered to the written language, probably less spontaneous as compared to the oral production, and whether it is bordered to personal features of the two specific candidates or, conversely, it is reflected also in the language of other politicians within same coalitions. Moreover, in order to exclude the hypothesis that this pattern of results may be related only to a specific episode, it is interesting and necessary to further investigate what might happen in another period.

Given these open questions and in order to generalize the results emerged from Study 1a, the subsequent study will analyze the same variables (linguistic wordiness and syntactic complexity) in some oral interviews of several politicians of both coalitions before the 2006 elections. Changing the sources of the answers (a single candidate vs. the entire coalitions), the channel of communication (written vs. oral) and the period of time (2001 election vs. 2006 election) will provide evidence able to disentangle previous issues and to generalize the results emerged from Study 1a.

3. STUDY 1b   *the 2006 Italian political campaign*

3.1. Method

Materials

Twenty interviews published by the two most popular Italian newspapers, *Il Corriere della Sera* and *La Repubblica,* were analyzed: half of the interviews were from left-wing politicians (Amato, Bindi, Bonino, Bertinotti, D'Alema, Fassino, Mastella, Melandri, Pannella and Rutelli) and half were from right-wing politicians (Alemanno, Calderoli, Fini, Formigoni, Gasparri, Maroni, Mussolini, Tremonti and Urso). For every interview we considered each specific answer to a precise question, thus we obtained 92 answers from right-wing politicians and 98 from left-wing.

Procedure

As made in Study 1a, as for linguistic wordiness, the total amount of sentences and clauses were considered; whereas, as for syntactic complexity, the number of subordinate clauses and the ratio between subordinate and the total amount of clauses were analyzed. In this specific study the total amount of words was not considered because the answers from the two coalitions were not about the same topic like in Study 1a, and thus they were not perfectly comparable.

3.2. Results

Linguistic wordiness

The same pattern of results described in Study 1a emerged: left-wing answers had more sentences than right-wing answers, $t(188) = 2.41$, $p < .05$ ($M_{left-wing} = 4.63$, $SD = 2.59$; $M_{right-wing} = 3.75$, $SD = 2.44$). The same was true for the number of clauses used in each answer, $t(188) = 4.02$, $p < .001$ ($M_{left-wing} = 10.50$, $SD = 6.27$; $M_{right-wing} = 7.29$, $SD = 4.53$).

Syntactic complexity

Also for this second dependent variable Study 1b replicated the same pattern of results emerged in Study 1a: more complexity emerged in the left-wing answers. Specifically, left-wing politicians used more subordinate clauses as compared to right-wing politicians both at the absolute level, $t(188) = 4.12$, $p < .001$ ($M_{left-wing} = 4.07$, $SD = 3.51$; $M_{right-wing} = 2.34$, $SD =$

2.07) and in relative terms, $t(188) = 2.62$, $p < .01$ ($M_{\text{left-wing}} = .36$, $SD = .16$; $M_{\text{right-wing}} = .29$, $SD = .19$).

3.3. Discussion

At the end of the second study it is allowed to generalize previous conclusions emerged from the first study. Indeed, the differences concerning linguistic wordiness and syntactic complexity are not restricted to the written language of a specific politician in a specific context, but they emerged also in the spontaneous language during oral interviews of other politicians some years later.

4. General Discussion

Overall, results emerged from Study 1 clearly indicated that, despite the specific content of the speech, despite the specific historical period, despite the specific channel used (oral vs. written) and despite the specific source candidate within the coalition, the language used by the two Italian political parties is different both quantitatively (i.e., linguistic wordiness) and qualitatively (i.e., syntactic complexity). Results then confirmed the widespread awareness that left-wing politicians are not completely touched by the simplification wave. Probably they show a slower change process as compared to the opposite coalition, or even a resistance to change for some reasons. Left-wing speeches are still far away by the common language used by some citizens, and thus probably less effective than the language used by right-wing politicians. Moreover, citizens are aware about this difference between the two coalitions. Indeed, when they are asked to guess which is the source of a simple or of a complex sentence, they do not hesitate in answering (Carraro et al., 2008).

However, in spite of these differences in linguistic wordiness and syntactic complexity, the most important thing is that the communication strategy must be effective in order to communicate with the electorate. At this point one may argue that probably the two different strategies of communication may be effective for two different types of electorate. However, despite this logical argument, politicians must be primarily focused in communicating to undecided voters, and less to those that have already a clear political orientation. As for those last people, at the one hand one may argue that probably it is better to use a complex language. Indeed, when people do not have enough time or motivation in engage into careful processing, they may simple use the cue about the length of the message and think that a person who says something longer and more complicate is unquestionably more competent as

compared to the source of a simple and shorter message (e.g., Petty e Cacioppo, 1981, 1984, 1986). Following the peripheral route of persuasion, people may use this heuristic.

On the other hand, some other studies have underlined that a simple and brief communication style may be more effective because short messages are better decoded, recorded in memory and recalled. For instance, Beniger & Jones (1990) have analyzed the political headlines showing that they became shorter and shorter from 1800 to 1984, and that the number of the words is usually lower than 6. Interestingly, this number is included in the range described by Miller (1956) as the optimal number that our system is able to elaborate. Moreover, with a correlational analysis Beniger & Jones (1990) demonstrated that the candidates who used more than 9 words in their headlines did not win the election in 65% of the cases. Interestingly, also in the recent 2004 US campaign, G. W. Bush in the television spots used headlines shorter as compared to his opposing candidate, J. F. Kerry (Carraro, Castelli, Passarelli, & Arcuri, 2006). This result is not only consistent with the aforementioned correlation between the length of the headline and the probability of winning (Beninger & Jones, 1990), but it is also in line with the current results about the linguistic wordiness of the two coalitions. Also in the US scenario the left-wing candidate used more words as compared to the right-wing politician.

Far from generalize these differences outside from the Italian political arena and to assert that these discrepancies may be decisive in order to win the election, it is important to recognize that every component of the communication style may represent an advantage or a disadvantage; it may increase or decrease the likelihood to reach and persuade the electorate, and then the probability to win the election. Another component that has a direct impact in the persuasion process and that is differently used among the two coalitions is related to the use of negative campaigning. We will examine this issue in the following studies.

1.   General Introduction: The negativity wave

As discussed in the general introduction (Chapter 1), the use of negativism during the last decades and the most recent political races is increasing almost in all democratic countries around the word. From 1964, the year in which Lyndon Johnson attacked Barry Goldwater with the famous *Daisy spot*, the wave of negativity in the political field is became bigger and pervasive. However, despite this general trend, also in this case, the wave has not reached the two coalitions and all politicians with the same strength and in the same way. Also in choosing which kind of political messages to use, some differences between the two coalitions are usually detected. For instance, during 2004 US election, G.W. Bush primarily focused his political campaigning in devaluating his opponent, J.F. Kerry. Indeed, the majority of his television spots were negative advertising aimed at attacking the opposing candidate and persuade the electorate that Kerry would not be a good president (i.e., 54%). Also J. F. Kerry adopted negative messages but only in 24% of his television spots (Passarelli, Castelli, Carraro, & Arcuri, 2006).

The negativity wave is not only increased during the last decades but it seems to increase also during the same campaign, probably motivated by a widespread insight that negative messages may be effective. Indeed, candidates are more likely to increase the number of negative remarks during the last moments of the campaign, the closer to the Election Day (Passarelli et al., 2006). However, as we have largely discussed in the previous session and in the general introduction, this trustfulness in the effectiveness of negative campaigns over positive campaigns is probably an unfounded wisdom, maybe based on the fact that they are well recalled in memory and they are able to shake the audience (Brians & Wattenberg, 1996; Fiske, 1980; Lemert et al., 1991; Meffert et al., 2006; Shapiro & Rieger, 1992). Indeed, as aforementioned, there is still no empirical demonstration that they are more or less effective than positive ads (Lau et al., 1999, 2007). Moreover, also here in the current work, we have demonstrated that it is not possible to assert in general that they are effective. Indeed, their outcomes may be very dissimilar on the basis of some important factors that modulate the likely effects (see Chapter 2, 3 and 4). One important factor that we have taken into account is related to the mere definition of *negative campaigns* (see details in Chapter 2). Indeed, this is a general and overall definition that includes different types of negativism, and they actually lead to dissimilar consequences. One major distinction was made on the basis of the target of the attack: a single challenger (*person or issue-based attack*) or against the opposite coalition in general (*ideological attack*). The former may be considered more dangerous as compared

to the latter, because they are more likely to backfire against the source (see Chapter 2 and 3). Moreover, another distinction that we have made in the previous session (Session A of this work) was within the attacks against a single challenger. Indeed, they may be either about personal features (*person-based*) or about the political program (*issue-based*). Again, the former attacks are more dangerous as compared to the latter (see Chapter 2).

The aim of the next two studies is to directly investigate the real use of negative campaigns in general, and of these different types of negative campaigns, specifically. In the first study (Study 2a; Castelli et al., 2007) the aim is to analyze the use of attacks against a single challenger vs. attacks against the opposite coalition in the Italian scenario. Indeed, during a political race in the Italian political arena two general ideologies are usually completely involved and not only two competing candidates. Conversely, a US political race is primarily characterized by the presence of two competing candidates. For this reason, in a second study (Study 2b) we will further investigate the real use of the two types of attacks against a single candidate in the US political scenario: *issue-based* vs. *person-based*.

2. STUDY 2a *the 2006 Italian political campaign*

2.1. Method

Materials

We analyzed some articles published before 2006 election (specifically from February 2006 to March 2006) by six Italian newspapers: two right-wing (i.e., *Il Giornale* and *Il Secolo d'Italia*), two left-wing (i.e., *L'Unità* and *Il Manifesto*) and two neutral newspapers (*Il Corriere della Sera* and *La Repubblica*). Moreover, only the direct attacks from one politician were taken into account, and not those carried out from journalists. Overall 212 articles that contained overall 658 negative messages were analyzed (400 from right-wing politicians and 258 from left-wing politicians). Ninety-eight negative messages were from *Il Corriere della Sera*, 82 from *La Repubblica*, 152 from *Il Giornale*, 99 from *Il Secolo d'Italia*, 104 from *Il Manifesto,* and 123 from *L'Unità*.

Procedure

For each article we counted the total amount of negative messages. Then, we made a distinction on the basis of the political affiliation of the source candidate (left-wing vs. right-wing), and then on the basis of the target of the attack: a specific candidate (i.e., *person* or *issue-based attacks*) or the opposite coalition in general (i.e., *ideological attacks*). These classifications were carried out first by one single judge, and then by another independent evaluator (the degree of agreement was 92%).

2.2. Results

A 2 (political affiliation of the source candidate: left- vs. right-wing) × 2 (type of attack: *person or issue-based* vs. *ideological*) mixed-model ANOVA was performed on the number of negative messages in each article. Only a two-way interaction between the two factors emerged [$F(1, 211) = 52.29$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .198$]. Left-wing politicians were more likely to use *person or issue-based attacks* [$M_{\text{person or issue-based}} = .86$, $SD = 1.35$, $M_{\text{ideological}} = .36$, $SD = .72$ $t(211) = 4.69$, $p < .001$]; whereas, right-wing politicians were more likely to attack not a specific candidate but the opposite coalition in general [$M_{\text{person or issue-based}} = .61$, $SD = 1.05$, $M_{\text{ideological}} = 1.27$, $SD = 1.54$, $t(211) = -5.38$, $p < .001$]. The overall percentages of negative person or issue-based messages and negative ideological attacks used by the two Italian coalitions are reported in Figure 1.
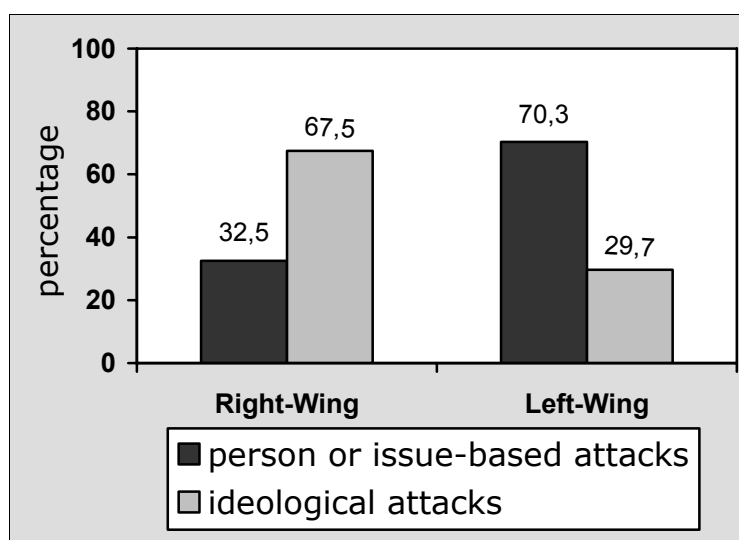
Figure 1. Percentages of negative person or issue-based messages and negative ideological messages used by the two Italian coalition before 2006 election.

Moreover, this two-way interaction did not change on the basis of the newspaper analyzed, and thus it may be considered a general pattern not related to any specific journal. However, an alternative explanation may involve the specific actors who were challenging during the campaign. Indeed, one possibility is that left-wing politicians engaged into personal attacks because of a specific hostility against the right-wing leader Berlusconi. If so, it would be inappropriate to generalize the finding to intrinsic characteristics of the two political coalitions. In order to disentangle this alternative explanation, we counted how many attacks from each coalition were addressed toward the leader of the opposite coalition, namely Berlusconi for the right-wing coalition and Prodi for the left-wing coalition, and how many toward other politicians. No difference between the two coalitions emerged ($\chi^2_{(1)} = .014$, $p >$

.9): both left-wing and right-wing politicians were more likely to attack the opposite leader rather than the other politicians in general.

2.3. Discussion

Overall, the described results clearly indicated that the two Italian coalitions adopted different communication strategies, namely a different use of negative political campaigns. Indeed, right-wing politicians were more likely to use a generic attack against the opposite coalition in general, whereas left-wing politicians were more likely to attack specific candidates of the opposite coalition, not only the leader but also the other politicians. One may argue that probably this difference was caused by the different position of the two coalitions during 2006 elections. Indeed, the right-wing leader was the ex-Prime Minister, and thus the opposite coalition probably preferred to attack directly him and the other right-wing politicians because they were well known by the voters on the basis of their previous legislation (Skaperdas & Grofman, 1995). However, despite this assumption, the described pattern of results was almost the same also before 2001 election in which the relative position of the two coalitions was reversed (Castelli & Carraro, unpublished manuscript). At the light of the results emerged from the studies presented in the first session of this work (Chapter 2 and 3), one may argue that probably the negative campaign strategy used by right-wing politicians may be less dangerous as compared to the strategy used by left-wing coalition. However, as for communication in general, the two different strategies may be useful for two dissimilar types of recipients: left-wing and right-wing voters may prefer different types of negative advertising.

The subsequent study aims at analyzing the use of negative political campaigning during 2008 US election, in which the two candidates were B. Obama for the Democratic Party and J. McCain for the Republican Party. One aim of the next study is to analyze the frequency in the use of negative messages in television spots. Moreover, because in the US campaign there is an open debate primarily between two candidates, and then all the negative messages are addressed toward a single candidate and not toward the opposite coalition in general, another aim of the next study is also to individuate the diffusion of two different types of attacks against a single challenger. Indeed, in the previous session about the effects of negative campaigning we have distinguished the attacks against a single challenger on the basis of the specific content: on the one hand they may be based on the political program of the opponent (*negative issue-based*), whereas on the other hand they may be based on personal features (*negative person-based*). Finally, another aim of the next study is to analyze whether the scenario described during the 2004 US campaign (Carraro et al., 2006; Passarelli et al., 2006) was replicated also four years later.

3.   STUDY 2b   *the 2008 US political campaign*

3.1. Method

Materials

We analyzed the television spots sponsored by the two competing candidates, namely B. Obama for the Democratic coalition and J. McCain for the Republican Party. Overall, we analyzed 151 television ads appeared on US television after the primary election, and thus from the beginning of June to the end of October 2008. Seventy-eight spots were sponsored by Obama (http://pcl.stanford.edu/campaigns/2008/bogen.html), whereas seventy-two were supported by McCain (http://pcl.stanford.edu/campaigns/2008/jmgen.html).

Procedure

First, for each television ad we simply reported on a SPSS sheet its sponsor and the month in which the spot appeared. Moreover, we also reported the valence of the campaign. We considered as *positive* those ads in which there were only positive sentences about the supported politician. We called *negative* the ads aimed at devaluating the opposing candidate; moreover, we called *mixed* those ads with both positive and negative messages. Finally, in another column we reported for the negative campaigns whether they were about the challenger's political program (i.e., *negative issue-based*) or about his personality (i.e., *person-based*).

3.2. Results

As for the republican candidate, McCain, the number of negative ads was greater as compared to the number of positive ads (67.1 % and 24.7 % respectively) and as compared to the number of mixed campaigns (8.2 %; $\chi^2_{(2)}= 40.47$, $p < .001$). The same pattern emerged for the democratic candidate, namely Obama: in 67.9 % of his television spots Obama attacked the opposing candidate ($\chi^2_{(2)} = 43.00$, $p < .001$). Only 20.5 % of his ads were positive and 11.5% mixed ads. Moreover, during the last US campaign there was no difference between the two candidates in the use of negative campaigning ($\chi^2_{(2)} = .157$, $p = .692$).

In addition, in order to analyze differences on the basis of the temporal distance from the Election Day, we divided the spots into three temporal periods: initial (June, July and August; 17 spots for McCain and 24 for Obama), intermediate (September; 26 spots for McCain and 20 for Obama) and final (October; 24 spots for McCain and 25 for Obama). In all the three periods both candidates used more negative campaigns as compared to positive campaigns. However, the only difference that we detected was related to the initial period. Indeed, in this

case, McCain used statistically the same number of positive and negative ads ($\chi^2_{(1)} = 1.47$, $p = .225$), whereas Obama used more negative campaigns as compared to positive campaigns from the very beginning ($\chi^2_{(2)} = 4.17$, $p = .04$). Moreover, the use of negative ads slightly increased in the intermediate and in the final period for both candidates (see Figure 2).
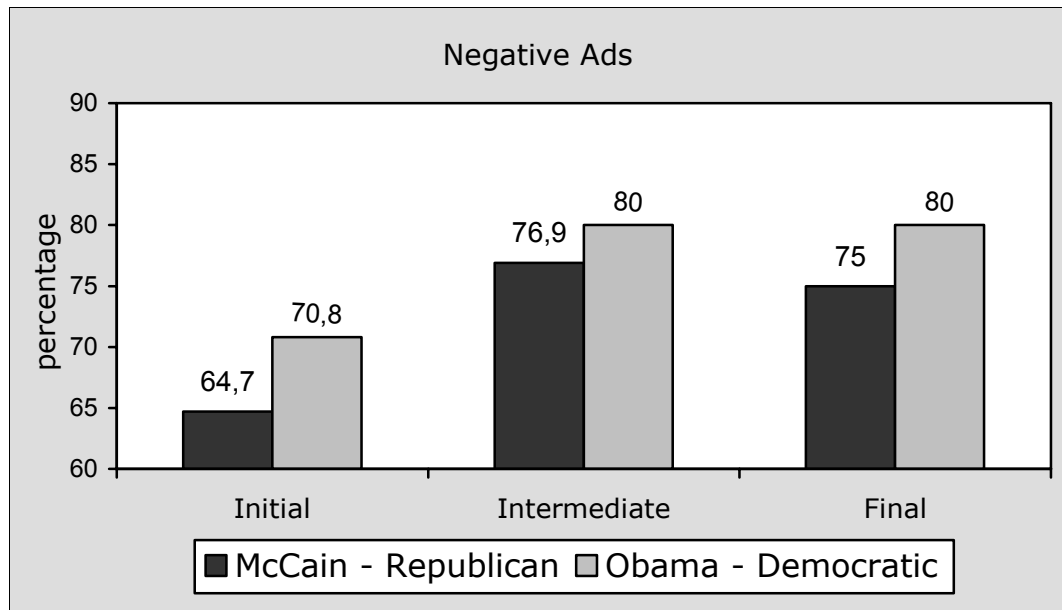
Figure 2. Percentages of negative television ads (as compared to positive and mixed ads) used by the two competing candidates for 2008 US presidential election as a function of the temporal period.

As said above, the aim of the present study was not only to analyze the use of negative over positive campaigns, but also to analyze the presence of two different types of negative campaigning, namely *person-based* and *issue-based*. In the *negative person-based ads* the source attacks the challenger about his/her personal features; whereas, in the negative *issue-based ads* the source hits the political program of the challenger. Both candidates here, used the two types of negative campaigning in a balanced way. Fifty-one percent of McCain's negative ads were person-based: he said that Obama was inexpert, a liar and with negative friendships. Obama in 47.2 % of his negative campaigns attacked his own challenger about his lack of morality and competence, and his strong bonds with the old politics. The frequency of the two types of negative campaigns is statistically homogenous between the two candidates and the three temporal periods described above. However, as we can see in Figure 3, the percentage of *negative person-based* messages increased in the intermediate period and then decreased again in the final period for both candidates. However, from a statistically

point of view, only the republican candidate, McCain, used more *negative person-based* messages in the intermediate period as compared to other periods ($\chi^2_{(2)} = 7.28$, $p = .03$).
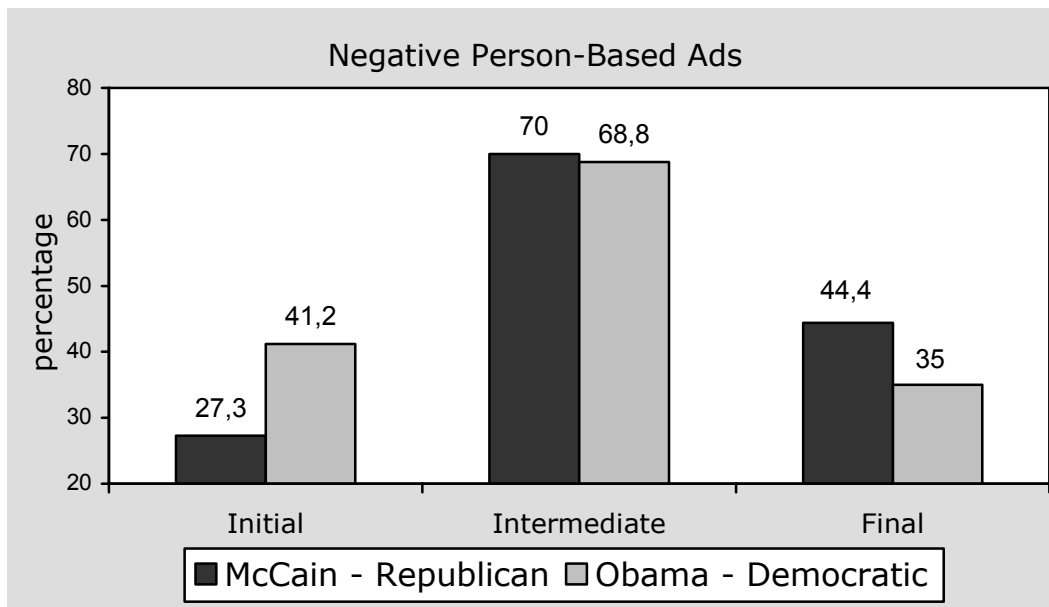
Figure 3. Percentages of negative person-based television spots (as compared to negative issue-based ads) used by the two competing candidates for 2008 US presidential election as a function of the temporal period.

3.3. Discussion

Overall, the described results clearly indicated that the use of negative political campaigns was very widespread during the last US presidential race. Indeed, both candidates used more negative than positive messages in their television ads. Moreover, the use of negative campaigns slightly increased close to the Election Day. However, this increase did not reach the statistical significance. This pattern of results is very important in relation to the previous pattern about 2004 US election. Indeed, in that case, the democratic candidate (i.e., J. F. Kerry and here is B. Obama) used few negative messages in the television spots (only 24 %).

Another important result emerged here is about the use of two different types of attacks against a single challenger. Indeed, the opposing candidate may be attacked either because of his/her political program (i.e., *negative issue-based*) or because his/her personal feature (i.e., *negative person-based*). Both candidates used more *negative person-based* messages as compared to *negative issue-based* only in the intermediate period, whereas in the initial and final period they preferred to attack the challenger about his political program. This pattern of results is very interesting. Indeed, also from our studies (see Session A) *negative person-based* messages emerged as the most dangerous because they may backfire against their source. However, this increase is statistically significant only for McCain, whereas Obama

probably adopted a more homogeneous strategy along all the campaign. Indeed, also for the use of negative campaigning over positive campaigning, he always preferred the former over the latter; whereas his opponent in the initial period used negative and positive campaigns indistinctly.

4. General Discussion

In Study 2 we investigated the real use of negative campaigns during political races both in the Italian scenario (Study 2a) and in the US scenario (Study 2b). More specifically, as for the Italian political arena we analyzed the use of two different types of negative campaigns: against a single opposing candidate or against the opposite ideology in general. From Study 2a a difference between right-wing and left-wing politicians emerged: the former are more likely to attack the opposing ideology in general, whereas the latter are more likely to attack a single opposing candidate. In the second study (Study 2b) we investigated the actual use in the US political arena of two types of attacks against a single candidate: *person-based* or *issue-based*. In general, from this second study it emerged a strong tendency for both candidates in the use of negative campaigning over positive campaigning. Moreover, both candidates used almost homogenously the two kinds of attacks: there is an increase of *negative person-based* messages over *negative issue-based* in the intermediate period. *Negative person-based messages* are usually depicted as the most dangerous, and thus both candidates have probably preferred to attack the opposing candidate about his personal features far from the Election Day.

In the end, the current investigation about the real presence of negative messages in the political arena has stressed how widespread these messages are and, most importantly, that their use probably is not accidental: there are differences between the two coalitions and there are differences related to the distance from the Election Day.

Chapter 6

PERSONALITY:

THE RIGHT-WING IS MORE COMPETENT THAN WARM, THE OPPOSITE FOR THE LEFT-WING

Given the strong but opposite effects of negative political campaigns on the two dimensions of social judgment, namely competence vs. warmth (Chapter 2 of this work), the main aim of the present chapter is to analyze the relation between these two dimensions (e.g., Fiske et al., 2002) and the politicians of the two coalitions. In the first part of this chapter the aim is to analyze the implicit and explicit importance of these dimensions for people with different political orientations; secondly, the aim is to further analyze the spontaneous associations between the two dimensions and the politicians of the two coalitions (Study 1 and 2). Finally, this relation is further investigated according to the spatial agency bias (Study 3 and 4).

1. General Introduction

So far, the focus of the attention was on the communication style of the two coalitions and the related effects on impression formation and attitude change processes. However, another important topic that must be taken into account in order to understand the decision making process and the political preferences, is related to the personal features of the politicians. Indeed, regardless of the specific content of a message and the specific way used in order to convey it, also the specific personality features of politicians may increase or decrease their perceived likeability, and thus their match with right- vs. left-wing voters. Indeed, some studies have underlined the importance of the perceived similarity between politicians and the likely voters: in general people like more who is more similar to themselves. Interestingly, this math emerged both as for mere exterior physical features (Bailenson, Garland, Iyengar, & Yee, 2006) and as for more internal personality features (Caprara, Barbaranelli, & Zimbardo, 2002; Caprara, Vecchione, Barbaranelli, & Fraley, 2007;

Caprara & Zimbardo, 2004). In other words, both left- and right-wing voters perceived themselves as closer to politicians of their own coalition as compared to the opposite coalition. Moreover, a projection process has been described (Castelli, Arcuri, & Carraro, 2008; Krosnick, 2002;) in overcompensating the gap of missing information: when people are asked to guess omitted information about a politician of their supported coalition, they are more likely to fill in the gap projecting information from the self. Given the importance of the match between voters and politicians, what are the main differences between people with different political ideologies?

1.1. Personality differences between people with different political ideologies

Over the last decades, many authors have started to investigate the likely differences between voters and politicians of the two coalitions in order to explain the nature of the political affiliation. For instance, Tesser (1993) has supported the idea that some attitudes, such as political attitudes, are probably genetic based. Recently, also Oxley and colleagues (Oxley et al., 2008) have argued that political attitudes may have a biological basis. Indeed, they demonstrated that people who support political ideas closer to the left-wing coalition (i.e., liberal) than to the right-wing coalition (i.e., conservative) showed lower physical sensitivities to sudden noises and threatening visual images. Even if that study (Oxley et al., 2008) relied only on correlational evidence and it is not conclusive about the specific causal process, it is important to note how deep and pervasive the differences between people supporting different political ideologies may be.

The aforementioned difference in physical reactions to sudden and threatening stimuli (Oxley et al., 2008) may be considered very close to another concept studied in the literature and which proved to be different among the two coalitions: *need for closure* (Kruglanski, 1980, 1996, 2004). Indeed, the right-wing coalition, that is characterized by more conservative ideas and positions, is represented by people high in need for closure (Jost, Glaser, Kruglanski, & Sulloway, 2003; Jost, Kruglanski, & Simon, 1999). These people are usually very anchored and attached to their values and beliefs in order to reduce the problem of ambiguity and confusion (Kruglanski, 1980, 1996, 2004): for this reason, they may have a stronger physical reaction toward sudden and menacing stimuli. Other studies have stressed that those people are also characterized by an authoritarian personality (Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson, & Sanford, 1950) and by a *right-wing authoritarianism,* that is a predisposition to be submissive to political and societal authorities, to endorse traditional norms of society, and to react aggressively against minorities (Altemeyer, 1981). Very close to these personality features, there is also another concept, widely diffuse in social

psychology, the *social dominance orientation* (SDO, see Sidanius & Pratto, 2001). It is a measure of an individual preference for hierarchies within any given social system, the desire that some categories of people dominate over others. People high in SDO and authoritarian personalities are theorized to be relatively conservative, racist, ethnocentric, and prejudiced. Moreover, they also show little empathy for lower status people (Pratto, 1994), and thus they are more likely right-wing politically oriented.

Interestingly, all these personal features of right-wing oriented voters are also in line with the studies conducted by Caprara and colleagues (Caprara, 2003; Caprara, Barbaranelli, Consiglio, Picconi, & Zimbardo, 2003; Caprara & Zimbardo, 2004) about the Big Five Personality traits and political candidates. Indeed, they asserted that right-wing politically oriented people have higher scores in the factors regarding *extraversion* (related also to energy) and *conscientiousness* (self-discipline, achievement); conversely, left-wing politically oriented people have higher scores in the subscales concerning *openness* (related to emotion, adventure, curiosity) and *agreeableness* (related to be compassionate, cooperative). Intriguingly, all the aforementioned distinctions in personality between left- and right-wing politically oriented people may be somehow summarized along the two fundamental axes used in evaluating social groups: competence and warmth (e.g., Cuddy et al., 2008).

1.2. Competence and Warmth in the political field

In 1968, Rosenberg and colleagues (Rosenberg, Nelson & Vivekananthan, 1968) argued that a two-dimensional representation well summarizes the general traits used in person judgments. They depicted two fundamental axes: *intellectual* (good/bad) and *social* (good/bad). These two dimensions are very close to the two axes that underline the evaluation of social groups: *competence* and *warmth*. As previously discussed, the former dimension is positively related to the perceived status / power of the evaluated target; whereas the latter is negatively related to the perceived competition (Cuddy et al., 2008). Moreover, some recent studies have underlined that these two dimensions are not only negatively related one to each other (Judd, James-Hawkins, Yzerbyt, & Kashima, 2005), but there is also a compensation effect (Kervyn, Judd, & Yzerbyt, in press).

The relevance of these two dimensions has emerged also in studies about politics and the perception of political candidates in different countries, such as in the United States (Abelson et al., 1982) as well as in Poland (Wojciszke & Klusek, 1996). Indeed, research in the political field suggests that in the evaluation of political leaders three dimensions are usually reported, namely competence, warmth and trustworthiness (Funk, 1996; Kinder, Peters, Abelson, & Fiske, 1980), although the former is usually described as the most

important in order to be a good politician. Moreover, also in the current work we demonstrated that these two different dimensions may be differently affected by the same type of communication. Indeed, the use of a negative message could increase the perceived competence of the source candidate but at the same time decrease his/her perceived sociability (Chapter 2; Carraro & Castelli, 2008). This opposite effect allows us to think that these two dimensions are widely diffuse and pervasive in the evaluation of political candidates.

However, until now there has been no direct evidence about the differences in the perceived competence and warmth of a politician according to his/her political ideology. Here we argue that, according to the aforementioned personality differentiations between people with a different political orientation, right-wing politically oriented people – described as higher in need for closure, higher in authoritarianism, more social dominance oriented, more extrovert and more conscientiousness – will be perceived as people with an higher status and very competitive, and thus more competent than warm. Conversely, left-wing politically oriented people will be perceived as warmer than competent because of their lower status and their minor competition.

Given the pervasive relevance of competence and warmth in evaluating social targets and at the light of the importance of perceived competence in the prediction of the outcomes of real elections (Funk, 1996, 1997; Todorov et al., 2005), here our aim is to further investigate the evaluation of people belonging to different political parties along the two aforementioned axes of social judgment. Specifically, driven by the negative relation between the two dimensions (Judd et al., 2005) and by the compensation effect (Kervyn et al., in press), in the first study the main aim is to directly compare two politicians: one high in competence but low in warmth and another one high in warmth but low in competence. We argue that the first may be described as a better politician by right-wing participants, the second by left-wing participants. However, we predict that, regardless of their political affiliation, overall participants will depict the first as a typical right-wing politician and the second as a typical left-wing politician. Finally, because, as above said, competence is usually described as the most important dimension in the political field, in order to eliminate the problem that the answers may be affected by social desirability concerns (that is an ingroup bias for the more competent candidate) we will test our predictions in an indirect way.

2.   STUDY 1

2.1. Method

Participants and Design

Ninety-two students (73 female) at the University of Padova participated in the experiment in a laboratory setting. Participants were aged between 18 and 36 years ($M = 20.60$, $SD = 4.89$). The experiment consisted of a 2 (high in competence but low in warmth candidate vs. low in competence but high in warmth candidate) × 2 (participants' political affiliation: left- vs. right-wing) design with the first factor varying within participants and the second varying between participants.

Materials

The stimulus material consisted of two descriptions of two ostensible political candidates (see Study 3 and 4, Chapter 2): one was described as a competent but not warm candidate (i.e., high in competence and low in warmth); whereas, the other one was described as a warm but not competent candidate (i.e., high in warmth and low in competence, see Appendix B for the descriptions). Moreover, we used the same pictures of two middle-age men used in the previous experiments of the previous session (3 pictures for each candidate).

Measures

A Single Category IAT (SC-IAT; Karpinski & Steinman, 2006; see also Appendix L) was used. This measure is a timed procedure adapted from the Implicit Association Test, but it permits to assess separately associations toward an object, namely in absolute and not in relative terms as in the case of the IAT (Greenwald et al., 1998). Specifically, after a first practice block in which participants were asked to distinguish between stimuli belonging to the two political candidates (3 pictures and 3 labels with names and surnames for each, 24 trials), there were two critical blocks (48 trials each). In these blocks participants first used one key on a computer keyboard to respond both to words referring to "*being the best*" (i.e., the best, preferable, advantageous, major, successful, better) and to the stimuli regarding one specific candidate. In the same block they were asked to use a different key to respond to the stimuli regarding the other candidate. Then, in the subsequent block the task was reversed.

One questionnaire with 30 adjectives related to three dimensions of social judgments, namely competence, warmth and morality, was administered. Participants were asked to indicate how important each adjective was in order to be a good politician (from 1 = not

important at all, to 6 = very important). Moreover, the political affiliation was recorded along a continuum (15 cm. length, from 0 = left-wing, to 15 = right-wing).

Procedure

The first part of the experiment is described in details in Chapter 2 (Study 4 - Session A). In sum, at the beginning participants were seated in front of a computer screen in a laboratory setting and then they were presented with two political candidates. Afterwards, they were asked to evaluate some modern art paintings (i.e., spontaneous conformity measure), a GNAT and an IAAT (described in details in Chapter 2, Study 4). After these tasks, participants were asked to complete the Single Category IAT and the questionnaire described in this chapter. Finally, they were thanked and fully debriefed. Here we will report only the data from the SC-IAT and from the questionnaire (the results from the other measures are reported in Chapter 2, Study 4).

2.2. Results

Single Category IAT

The SC-IAT was scored by subtracting the response times when the competent but not warm candidate was paired with the words regarding to "*being the best*" from the response times when the warm but not competent candidate was paired with the words regarding to "*being the best*". Finally, this difference score was divided by the standard deviation of the response times (Karpinski & Steinman, 2006). The *D* indices were then created in a way that positive scores indicated a stronger association between the words related to "*being the best*" and the *competent but not warm candidate*. From a preliminary one-sample t-test, the index (D = - .06, SD = .36) was not different from zero, $t(88)$ = -1.56, p =.123. Then, an ANOVA with only one factor between participants, namely the political affiliation[6] of the participants, was performed. From this analysis a marginal main effect emerged, $F(1, 74)$ = 3.26, p = .07, η_p^2 = .043. Left-wing participants were more likely to associate the warm but not competent candidate with the words related to "*being the best*" [D = -.13, SD = .36, $t(45)$ = -2.52, p = .04]; the opposite but not significant pattern emerged for right-wing participants [D = .02, SD = .37, $t(28)$ = .32, ns].

---

[6] We considered as undecided those participants that in the final continuum had a score close to the mean point of the continuum. It was 15 cm. length, and thus we considered undecided who signed a value between 7 and 8 along the continuum. Overall, 46 participants were left-wing and 29 were right-wing.

Which is the most important dimension in politics?

A factor analysis (Varimax rotation) was carried out on responses to the 30 adjectives: three major factors emerged that accounted for about 46% of the variance. The first factor comprised the following adjectives: friendly, charming, kind, warm, cheerful, generous, pleasant, sweet and lovable. This subscale was assumed to measure the dimension of perceived warmth / sociability (α = .88). The second factor comprised the following items: honest, sincere, reliable and fair. This subscale was assumed to measure the dimension of perceived morality (α = .75). The third subscale comprised the following items: diligent, efficient, responsible and competent; it was supposed to capture a dimension of competence (α = .71). We focused here on the first and on the third dimensions that are the closer to the two most important dimensions of social judgment that we would like to analyze here (e.g., Fiske et al., 2002). A 2 (evaluated dimension, warmth vs. competence) × 2 (political affiliation of the participants) mixed-model ANOVA with the first factor varying within participants and the second between participants was performed. Only a main effect of the factor within participants emerged [$F(1, 74)$ = 499.97, p < .001, η_p^2 = .87], namely competence was depicted as more important than warmth both by right-wing and left-wing participants [$M_{competence}$ = 5.45, SD = .58; M_{warmth} = 2.90, SD = .80]. Moreover, the first dimension was described as more important than the midpoint (i.e., 3.5), $t(76)$ = 29.56, p < .001; whereas, the other dimension related to warmth was described as less important as compared to the midpoint, $t(76)$ = -6.54, p < .001. However, while as for warmth there was no difference on the basis of the political affiliation of the voters, competence was described as slightly more important by right-wing participants rather than by left-wing participants, $F(1, 74)$ = 2.78, p = .099, η_p^2 = .036 [$M_{right-wing}$ = 5.59, SD = .43; $M_{left-wing}$ = 5.37, SD = .64]. Moreover, analyzing only the adjective *competent* the difference between right- and left-wing voters was significant, $F(1, 74)$ = 5.00, p = .02, η_p^2 = .063 [$M_{right-wing}$ = 5.90, SD = .31; $M_{left-wing}$ = 5.60, SD = .681].

Guess the political affiliation

At the end of the experiment participants were asked to guess which candidate was a left-wing politician and which one was a right-wing politician. Overall, participants (66.6%) were more likely to indicate the competent but not warm politician as a right-wing candidate and the warm but not competent candidate as a left-wing politician, $\chi^2_{(1)}$ = 10.00, p = .002. Interestingly, this pattern of results emerged both for left-wing (59%) and for right-wing

participants (93%), but is was stronger for the latter group [$\chi^2_{(1)} = 1.72$, $p = .19$; $\chi^2_{(1)} = 18.24$, $p < .001$, respectively]. This result may be partially explained by the findings on the previous variable about the importance of these dimensions in the political field, and thus on the basis of social desirability concerns. Indeed, despite their political affiliation, all the participants asserted that competence is much more important as compared to warmth in the political field.

2.3. Discussion

First, the current results indicated that left-wing voters and right-wing voters implicitly prefer two different types of politicians: the former implicitly depicted as better a warmer than competent candidate, the latter preferred the opposite. Moreover, they associated to a left-wing politician the image of a warm but not competent leader, and at the same time they associated to a right-wing politician the image of a competent but not warm leader. However, this attribution seems to be less evident for left-wing voters probably because of the greater importance of competence dimension as compared to warmth in the political field. Indeed, all the participants depicted competence as more important as compared to warmth in order to be a good politician; although competence is even more important for right-wing participants as compared to left-wing participants.

However, in this first experiment the two dimensions were not independent from each other. Indeed, the two politicians were described as high in one dimension but low in the other dimension, according to the new evidence in the literature about a negative relation and a compensation effect between the two dimensions (Judd et al., 2005; Kervyn et al., in press). For this reason, it would be interesting to see what might happen in a more natural evaluation task about left- and right-wing politicians. In other words, asking to participants to evaluate candidates of both coalitions along the two dimensions, the two provided evaluations may not be negatively related. For instance, a candidate could be described as high or low on both dimensions. Finally, because the use of negative political messages seems to increase the perceived competence and at the same time to decrease the perceived warmth of the source candidate (Chapter 2; Carraro & Castelli, 2008), in the subsequent study the aim is also to analyze the role of different types of negative campaigns in changing the pattern of results described here.

3.   STUSY 2

3.1. Method

Participants and Design

Eighty students at the University of Padova participated in the experiment during a class session. The experiment consisted of a 2 (evaluated dimensions: competence vs. warmth) × 2 (political affiliation of the participants) × 2 (political affiliation of the source candidate) × 3 (types of negative messages: *ideological* vs. *issue-based* vs. *person-based*) mixed-model design with the first factor varying within participants, the second varying between participants, and the last two were manipulated between participants.

Materials

In this study we employed the same presentation of an ostensible political candidate used in Study 1 and 2 presented in Chapter 2 (involved in politics for twenty years, married, with two children, an expert of modern art) and three different types of negative messages: *negative ideological*, *issue-based* and *ideological-based* (see Chapter 2; see Appendix A for the sentences). Moreover, we used six photos (half-length) of six middle-aged men presented as alleged political candidates.

Measures

The political affiliation of the participants was recorded along a continuum from 0 (= left-wing) to 15 (= right-wing). As for dependent variable, participants were asked to indicate how much each of the six middle-aged men portrayed in the photos was far or close to the mental image that they had in mind about the presented source candidate. The scale ranged from 1 (= not at all) to 6 (= very similar). Moreover, for each picture they were asked to indicate the perceived competence and warmth along a 6-points scale from 1 (= not at all competent / warm) to 6 (= very competent / warm).

Procedure

Data were collected during two distinct class sessions. A questionnaire was distributed to the participants: in the first page they were asked to indicate their political affiliation along the continuum. Then, in the second page there was a description of a political candidate and ten sentences that he said during his last political campaign. The political affiliation of the ostensible candidate (right- vs. left-wing), as well as the content of the sentences was manipulated between participants (*negative ideological* vs. *negative issue-based* vs. *negative person-based*. After this presentation, in the third page of the questionnaire there were six

pictures portraying six middle-aged men, and below each picture there was a rating scale: participants were asked to indicate how much the candidate portrayed in the picture was far or close to the mental image that they formed in mind reading the presentation and the remarks made by the politician. Then, in a fourth page they were presented again with the six pictures and they were asked to evaluate the perceived competence and sociability of each portrayed men. Finally they were thanked and fully debriefed.

3.2. Results

First, we created an SPSS file for each participant in order to calculate the correlations between the evaluations about how far or close each picture was from the mental image about the ostensible political candidate, and the two evaluations about competence and warmth. In other words, for each participant we had 6 repeated measures (one for each picture) × 3 variables: the similarity between the picture and the mental image, the perceived competence and the perceived warmth of the portrayed candidate. Then, we calculated the correlations between the first variable and the other two variables. As a result, 2 indices of correlations were obtained for each participant: one for competence and one for warmth. Then, these indices were added together in a SPSS sheet.

After a z-score transformation (Fisher, 1936), the two indexes were then submitted to a 2 (evaluated dimension: competence vs. warmth) × 2 (political affiliation of the source candidate: left- vs. right-wing) × 2 (political affiliation of participant[7]: left- vs. right-wing) mixed-model ANOVA with the first factor varying within participants. A two-way interaction between the evaluated dimensions and the political affiliation of the politician emerged, $F(1, 57) = 4.08$, $p = .05$, $\eta_p^2 = .067$ (see Figure 1).

In general, a right-wing politician was considered as more competent than warm [$t(34) = 1.63$, $p = .11$], the opposite emerged for a left-wing candidate [$t(25) = -1.57$, $p = .13$]. Moreover, a left-wing candidate was described as warmer than a right-wing candidate [$t(60) = -2.50$, $p = .015$]; whereas as for competence no difference emerged between the two coalitions [$t60) = -.05$, ns]. Interestingly, this two-way interaction was not qualified by the political affiliation of the participants, $F(1, 57) < .001$, ns. Moreover, there was a significant two-way interaction between the political affiliation of the participants and that of the source, $F(1, 57) = 8.07$, $p = .006$, $\eta_p^2 = .124$. Overall, participants described more positively, both in competence and in warmth, the source candidate when he was presented as an ingroup member rather than when he was presented as an outgroup member.

---

[7] We considered as undecided those participants that in the final continuum had a score close to the mean point of the continuum. It was 15 cm. length, and thus we considered undecided who signed a value between 7 and 8 along the continuum. Overall, 15 participants were undecided, 30 were left-wing and 33 were right-wing.
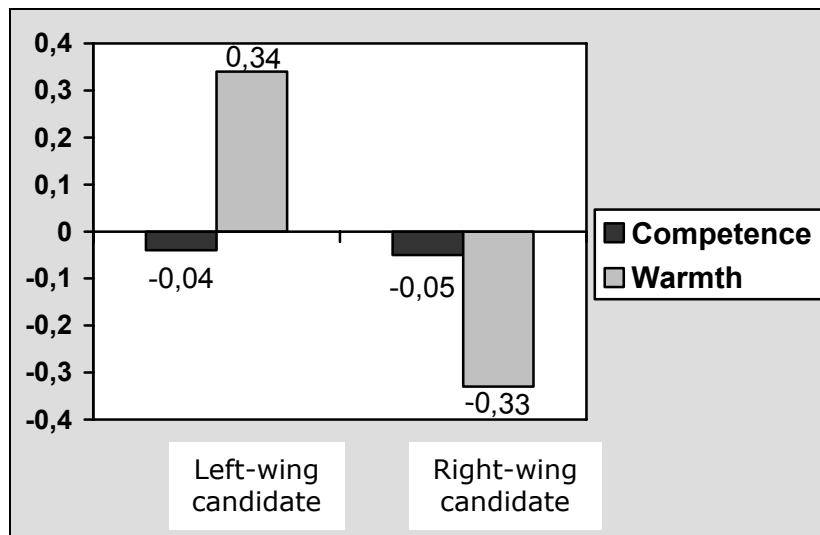
Figure 1. Perceived competence and warmth of the ostensible political candidate as a function of his political affiliation.

Subsequently, in order to analyze potentially differences on the basis of the type of negative message conveyed by the source, we performed a 2 (evaluated dimension: competence vs. warmth) × 2 (political affiliation of the source candidate: left- vs. right-wing) × 3 (type of the message: *negative ideological* vs. *issue-based* vs. *person-based*) mixed-model ANOVA with the first factor varying within participants. In this case we considered all the sample, and thus both decided and undecided participants. The same two-way interaction described above (see also Figure 1) between the evaluated dimension and the political affiliation of the source approached significance, $F(1, 70) = 3.31$, $p = .07$, $\eta_p^2 = .045$, and it was not qualified by the type of negative message, $F(2, 70) = .29$, $p = .76$, $\eta_p^2 = .008$.

3.3. Discussion

At the end of this second study we can generalize the previous conclusion: also in an open evaluation of a right-wing and of a left-wing politician, participants differently attributed the two dimensions of social judgment. Specifically, they attributed more competence than warmth to the right-wing politician and the opposite to the left-wing politician. Interestingly, however, from this study it emerged that the difference between the two coalitions was not carried out by both dimensions but only by one dimension, namely warmth.

Moreover, this pattern of results was qualified neither by the political affiliation of the participant, nor by the content of the negative remarks conveyed by the source candidate. Given these results in the two subsequent studies, the main aim is to further investigate the differences in attributing these two dimensions to the two coalitions, analyzing some other subtle features: specifically, according to the *spatial agency bias* (e.g., Chatterjee, 2002). The position of some elements in the visual space is not chosen by chance but it is related to a specific implicit

meaning of that position, both in the horizontal trajectory (left vs. right) and in the vertical trajectory (up vs. down). As for the former, which is here more relevant, the distinction between left and right position has a meaning strictly related to the movement and to the action. Indeed, when people are asked to portray an active action performed by one subject toward an object, they usually indicate a movement that evolves from left to right, positioning the agent in the left side (Chatterjee, Southwood, & Basilico, 1999; Maass & Russo, 2003). For this strong relation with actions, according to Chatterjee (2002), people who stay in the far left position may be considered as more agentic (Maass, Suitner, Favaretto, & Cignacchi, in press), because it is more likely that they will be the starting point of an action, and thus they may be agents. This bias has been confirmed even in the drawing of children about their parents (Carraro, Maass, Suitner, & Castelli, 2007) and even in the television cartoons (Maass et al., 2008; Suitner, Carraro, & Maass, 2008). As for the theoretical explanation about this bias, at the one hand initially some authors (e.g., Chatterjee et al. 1999) have suggested that the directionality bias in the perception of action is linked to the fact that the left hemisphere deploys spatial attention with a vector from left to right. However, on the other hand, more recently, another alternative explanation has been taken into account encouraged by the opposite findings emerged in different cultures: an embodiment explanation driven by the writing direction (Maass & Russo, 2003). The day after day movement to write and to read from left to right may have such a pervasive influence also in the perception of other stimuli, such as social actors.

Despite the theoretical reasons staying beyond this bias, following the same trajectory from left to right, people portrayed as right-facing oriented (from the observer point of view) may be considered as more agentic as compared to people left-facing oriented, because they are more likely the subject of an action, they are more active, more dominant but less warm in comparison to a person left-ward oriented. For instance, men, who are stereotypically more agentic and dominant as compared to women, are more likely to be portrayed right-ward oriented than women, who are conversely portrayed left-ward oriented (Chatterjee, 2002; Suitner & Maass, 2007). According to these results, one may argue that given the demonstrated differences between left-wing and right-wing coalitions along the two fundamental axes of social judgment, namely competence or agency vs. warmth or communality (e.g., Fiske et al., 2002), also their spatial representation may reflect the same difference.

Specifically, the third study will explore the hypothesized association between the spatial representation (i.e., the direction of the target's profile) and the perception of the political attitude of a target person. We expect that targets whose face profile is right-ward oriented (from the observer point of view) are more likely to be associated to a right-wing political attitude than left-ward oriented targets. This pattern is because right-wing politicians are perceived as more competent than warm, whereas the opposite occurs for left-wing politicians.

4.1. Method[8]

Participants and Design

Ninety-six Italians (55 female), with a mean age of 26.02 years (ranging from 18 to 58) volunteered for this study. In this sample 44 were students and 52 were employed; none was left-handed. The study consisted in a 2 (face profile orientation of the pictures from the observer point of view: right-ward oriented vs. left-ward oriented) × 2 (original faces vs. mirror faces) × 2 (gender of the person portrayed in the picture: male vs. female) × 2 (gender of the participants: male vs. female) mixed-model design with the first factor varying within-participants.

Material

In this study we employed two descriptions of two alleged political parties in Croatia. One of the parties (*Lista Unita, United List*) was described as close to the topics of right-wing parties: "*mainly interested in economic issues, the stock market, and the economic and financial development of the country, thus adopting policies to foster the competitiveness and economic interests, rather than the social realm*". The other political party (*Democrazia Sociale, Social Democracy*) was described as close to the topics of left-wing parties: "*paying great attention to environmental protection, to the integration of immigrants into society, and to inter-culturalism, and as being oriented towards social welfare*". The two descriptions were pre-tested in a sample of 47 participants (29 female, with a mean age of 27.11 years): 90% of them indicated the former description as closer to right-wing ideology and the latter closer to the left-wing ideology.

Moreover, in this study 16 faces with a neutral emotional expression from KDEF (Karolinska Directed Emotional Faces; Lundqvist, Flykt & Öhman, 1998) were employed. The faces were selected after two pre-tests. In the first pre-test, 12 participants (6 female) rated the attractiveness of a large sample of photos (fully facing) on a 7-point scale (from 1 = beautiful to 7 = ugly). Subsequently, the pictures with values between 4 and 5.6 for attractiveness were pre-tested also for perceived agency (frenetic vs. calm, dynamic vs. static, fast vs. slow, active vs. passive) and dominance (strong vs. weak, dominant vs. submissive, powerful - mighty vs. fragile, vulnerable vs. invulnerable) on a sample of 24 participants (13 female, mean age 24.88, SD = 2.86). Photos were included in the final material only if agency and dominance felt in the intermediate range of the 7-point scale. The final material consisted of 8 male faces and 8 female faces of similar attractiveness (males = 4.93, females = 4.90), agency (males = 4.00, females = 4.10), and dominance (males = 4.38, females = 3.80).

---

[8] The study was conducted in collaboration with Prof. Anne Maass and Caterina Suitner.

Finally, for each profile picture the mirror image was created, thus 32 pictures were used: 16 left-ward and 16 right-ward oriented persons (half original and half mirror image; see Figure 2 for examples of the pictures).

Figure 2. A male right-ward oriented and a female left-ward oriented. The coloured frame was added for Study 4.

Procedure

In the first page of the questionnaire, participants were informed about the existence of two ostensible political parties in Croatia: *Lista Unita* (*United List*) and *Democrazia Sociale* (*Social Democracy*). Then, they were provided with a brief description about the main interests of both parties (see above in the material section). The order of presentation of the two parties was counterbalanced across participants.

Participants then viewed 8 close-up photos, either portraying all male or all female targets, moreover either original or mirror image. Importantly, 4 of the 8 faces were three-quarter profiles left-ward oriented, the remaining 4 right-ward oriented. Participants were asked to indicate for each photo whether the person belonged to the *socially oriented* (left-wing, *Social Democracy*) or to the *competitive and economy-oriented* party (right-wing, *United List*). Finally, participants were thanked and fully debriefed.

4.2. Results

Data were coded so as to obtain two scores for each participant: how many times they assigned a right-ward oriented person to the right-wing party, and how many times they assigned a left-ward oriented person to the right-wing party. Both scores ranged from 0 (= never to the right-wing party) to 4 (= always to the right-wing party). Then[9], these two scores varying within participants were submitted to a 2 (gender of participants) × 2 (gender of the

---

[9] A preliminary ANOVA involving original vs. mirror photo as an additional factor showed that this variable played no role either in itself or in interaction with the remaining variables. This factor was therefore dropped from the analysis.

person portrayed in the photo) × 2 (order of presentation of the description of the two parties: first left-wing vs. first right-wing) mix-model ANOVA with all the other factors varying between participants. First, a main effect of the participants' gender emerged, $F(1, 88) = 4.57$, $p = .035$, $\eta_p^2 = .05$: overall men showed a tendency to assign photos more to the right-wing party than to the left-wing party as compared to women ($M_{male} = 2.08$, $SD = .07$; $M_{female} = 1.88$, $SD = .06$). Secondly, also the main effect of the factor varying within-participants emerged, $F(1, 88) = 17.96$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .17$. In general, right-ward oriented photos ($M = 2.32$) were more frequently assigned to the right-wing party than left-ward oriented photos ($M = 1.59$). Moreover, one-sample t-tests indicated that right-ward oriented photos were assigned to the right-wing party more frequently than would be expected by the midpoint (i.e., 2), $t(95) = 3.52$, $p = .001$; the opposite emerged for left-ward oriented targets, $t(95) = -4.31$, $p < .001$. These two main effects were not qualified by any interaction with other variables.

4.3. Discussion

The obtained results supported the hypothesized relation between the spatial direction of the face and the expected political affiliation of the portrayed person. The spatial bias is interpreted in terms of agency, namely a right-ward oriented target is more likely to be thought as right-wing politically oriented because he/she is perceived as more agentic than a left-ward oriented target. Conversely, a left-ward oriented target is more likely thought as left-wing politically oriented because he/she is perceived warmer than a right-ward oriented target. The subsequent study is aimed at assessing this hypothesis. Specifically our goal is to test whether the previous patter of results may be explained in terms of differences in the perceived agency, dominance and warmth of the two types of targets (left-ward vs. right-ward oriented), but not on the basis of the perceived competence. Indeed, from Study 2 (current Chapter) it emerged that the differences between the two coalitions were concerning only warmth and not competence, even though within the two coalitions the two dimensions were in opposite direction. A right-wing politician was described as more competent than warm, moreover a right-wing candidate was described as less warm than a left-wing candidate. However, as for competence no difference between the two coalitions emerged.

Moreover, another aim of Study 4 is to replicate the results of Study 3 at a group level situation: a group whose members are mainly right-ward oriented will be probably perceived as more agentic / dominant but less warm than a group whose members are mainly left-ward oriented. No difference is predicted in relation to perceived competence.

5. STUDY 4

5.1. Method[10]

Participants and Design

Thirty-two Italians (16 female), with a mean age of 27.78 years (ranging from 18 to 65) volunteered for this study. All participants reported to be right-handed. The experiment consisted in a 2 (majority of the group left-ward vs. right-ward oriented) × 2 (gender of the person portrayed in the photo) × 2 (gender of the participants) × 2 (political affiliation of the participants)) design with the first and the second factors varying within participants.

Material

The same faces used in Study 3 (this Chapter, see Figure 2) were divided in order to create two different groups. One group consisted of a majority of people facing right-ward (6 photos, including 3 males and 3 females) and a minority of people facing left-ward (2 photos, including one male and one female), whereas facial orientation was reversed for the other group (6 left-ward and 2 right-ward oriented persons). Moreover, in order to create these two groups of people a coloured (blue vs. green, see Figure 2) frame was added to each picture so that one group of people had a green frame and the other one a blue frame (counterbalanced across participants). Moreover, participants were presented with the same descriptions of two ostensible political parties (*United List* and *Social Democracy*) used in Study 3 (this Chapter).

Measures

There were three different dependent variables: *a trait attribution*, *a group-based party assignment*, and *an individual-based party assignment*. As for the former participants were asked to compare along 8-point scales (from 1 = definitely the green/blue group to 8 = definitely the blue/green group; the anchors of the scale were counterbalanced across participants) the two presented bunches of people along 4 dimensions: agency (frenetic, dynamic, fast, active, still, static, slow, passive), dominance (strong, dominant, powerful, invulnerable, weak, submissive, fragile, vulnerable), warmth (warm, sweat, extraverted, sociable, unsociable, cold, aggressive, cross) and competence (competent, intelligent, skilled, capable, incompetent, stupid, incapable, scanty).

As for the *group-based party assignment* participants were asked to which political party (left-wing vs. right-wing) the two groups of portrayed people belonged to (one group was mainly right-ward oriented and the other group was mainly left-ward oriented). The

---

[10] The Study was conducted in collaboration with Prof. Anne Maass and Caterina Suitner.

answers were provided along 4-point scales (1 = absolutely the blue/green group, 2 = probably the blue/green group, 3 = probably the green/blue group, 4 = absolutely the green/blue group; the anchors of the scale were counterbalanced across participants).

The third depend variable consisted in the same task but toward the single portrayed persons and not toward the group level as assessed in the second task. Indeed, participants were presented with each picture (without the coloured frame and thus without any information about the membership) and asked to indicate the political affiliation of the portrayed person in a forced choice: left-wing or right-wing. The political affiliation of the participants was recorded along a continuum (15 cm length, 0 = left-wing; 15 = right-wing).

Procedure

Participants were approached by a female experimenter and asked to participate in a study on "visual perception and impression formation". Then, they were seated in front of a computer screen and asked to view 16 faces (8 males and 8 females), presented one at a time at the centre of the screen. Moreover, they were informed that the portrayed persons actually belonged to two different groups and for this reason the photos had different coloured frames: either blue or green. Pictures (11 cm. × 15 cm.) were presented in random order twice: a first time each picture remained visible for 200 ms, followed by a 1500 ms interval with a blank screen. Then, they were presented a second time with all the photos for a briefer interval (100 ms each for each photo, followed by a blank screen of 500 ms between one photo and the other).

After this computerized presentation, participants were first asked to compare the two groups of people along several dimensions (*traits attribution task*). Then, there was the *group-based party assignment*: they were informed that the two groups of people were actually people belonging to two political parties (*United List* vs. *Social Democracy*) and then they were provided with a brief description about the main interests of both parties. The order of presentation of the two descriptions was counterbalanced. After the two presentations, participants were asked to indicate which of the two groups represented the "socially oriented" political party (*Social Democracy*) along a 4-points scale (absolutely the blue group, probably the blue group, probably the green group, absolutely the green group; the anchors of the scale, namely the colour of the frame, were counterbalanced across participants) and, subsequently, which represented the "competitive and economy-oriented" party (*United List*). The order of the two questions was counterbalanced across participants.

Finally, there was an *individual-based party assignment*: participants were presented again with the previous pictures (each for 300 ms) but without coloured frame, and thus in the pictures there was no information about the group affiliation (green or blue group). For each picture they were asked to indicate in a forced choice whether the portrayed person was a member of one or the other political party (*United List* vs. *Social Democracy*). Then, they were asked some demographic information (sex and age) and their political orientation along a continuum from 1 (left-wing) to 15 (right-wing). At the end of the experiment, participants were thanked and fully debriefed.

5.2. Results

Traits attribution assignment

First, we analyzed to what degree participants attributed *agency* ($\alpha = .50$), *dominance* ($\alpha = .55$), *warmth* ($\alpha = .68$), and *competence* ($\alpha = .69$) to groups composed of a majority of left- vs. right-ward oriented members. Responses were rescaled so that higher values indicated that greater agency, dominance, warmth, or competence was attributed to the right-ward rather than to the left-ward oriented group. A series of one-sample t-tests was performed in order to compare the obtained means with the midpoint (i.e., 4.5): participants attributed greater agency [$M = 4.92$, $SD = .84$, $t(31) = 2.82$ $p = .008$] and greater dominance [$M = 5.08$ $SD = .76$, $t(31) = 4.33$, $p < .001$] to the right-ward oriented group than the midpoint. In contrast, they attributed more warmth to the left-ward oriented group than the midpoint [$M = 3.86$, $SD = 1.05$, $t(31) = -3.44$, $p = .002$]. Moreover, as predicted, competence ratings did not differ from the midpoint [$M = 4.75$, $SD = .93$, $t(31) = 1.49$, $p = .146$]. Thus, in line with our hypotheses, right-ward oriented targets were judged as more dominant and agentic, but less warm than left-ward targets, but both were perceived as equally competent. These results were not affected by the political affiliation of the participants (all F's < 1.18 and all p's $> .32$), by participants' gender (all F's $< .70$ and all p's $> .40$) or by the frame color assigned to right-ward vs. left-ward oriented group (all F's $< .85$ and all p's $> .36$).

Group-based party Assignment

Responses to the two questions were exactly complementary, and thus only one of the two items was analyzed, namely which of the two groups was seen as the right-wing party. Responses were scored so that higher scores indicated that the right-ward oriented group was seen as right-wing. However, the obtained values did not prove to be different from the

midpoint (2.5), $M = 2.62$, $SD = .97$, $t(32) = .72$, $p = .47$. These results were not affected by the political affiliation of the participants ($F < .45$) or by participants' gender ($F < .13$).

Individual-based party Assignment

Overall participants were presented with 8 left-ward and 8 right-ward oriented pictures. Moreover, in half of them a male was portrayed, whereas in the other half a female was portrayed. For each picture participants were asked to indicate the political affiliation of the portrayed person: left-wing vs. right-wing. Then, for each participant we obtained 4 scores: how many times they indicated a male (or a female) left-ward (or right-ward) oriented as a right-wing support. In such a way responses were coded so that higher values indicated a higher likelihood of belonging to a right-wing party (values from 0 = never to the right-wing party, to 4 = always to the right-wing party). Then, a 2 (gender of participants) × 2 (gender of the person portrayed in the photo) × 2 (orientation of the person portrayed in the photo: right-ward vs. left-ward) mixed-model ANOVA with the last two factors varying within participants was performed. First, a main effect of the gender of the portrayed persons: overall male targets ($M = 2.17$) were more often assigned to the right-wing party than female targets [$M = 1.75$, $F(1, 30) = 5.08$, $p = .03$, $\eta_p^2 = .15$]. Second, and most importantly, a main effect of the facial orientation of the portrayed persons emerged: right-ward oriented targets ($M = 2.34$) were more likely to be assigned to the right-wing party than left-ward oriented targets ($M = 1.58$), $F(1, 30) = 24.29$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .45$. From one-sample t-tests both male and female faces right-ward oriented provided to be higher than the midpoint (i.e., 2), $M_{male} = 2.37$, $SD = .91$, $t(31) = 2.34$, $p = .026$; $M_{female} = 2.31$, $SD = .99$, $t(31) = 1.77$, $p = .086$. The opposite emerged for left-ward portrayed persons, $M_{male} = 1.97$, $SD = 1.06$, $t(31) = -.17$, $p = .87$; $M_{female} = 1.19$, $SD = .69$, $t(31) = -6.63$, $p < .001$.

Finally, a two-way interaction emerged between the two previous factors, $F(1, 30) = 4.74$, $p = .038$, $\eta_p^2 = .14$. Indeed, for right-ward oriented pictures, there was no difference between males and females in party assignment, $t(31) = -.26$, $p = .80$. In contrast, left-ward oriented pictures were more likely to be assigned to the left-wing party when they were females rather than males, $t(31) = -3.04$, $p = .005$. Moreover, the difference between right-ward and left-ward oriented faces was stronger for female pictures, $t(31) = 5.64$, $p < .001$, than for male pictures, $t(31) = 1.60$, $p = .12$.

5.3. Discussion

In sum, in Study 4 the spatial bias related to political attitudes found in Study 3 (this Chapter) was replicated, with right-ward spatially oriented persons more likely to be

perceived as more right-wing politically oriented than left-ward oriented targets. More importantly, there is evidence for a direct relation between the direction of a social target and its perceived agency. In fact, a group whose members were mainly right-ward oriented was perceived as more agentic than a group whose members were mainly left-ward oriented. However, a spatial bias at the group level failed to be shown. Because the task of political assignation to the group was done after the rating of agency, it is possible that the delay between the presentation of the pictures and the task was too long and the direction of the group members was not salient anymore.

6. General Discussion

In general these results stressed how important are the two dimensions of social judgment in the political field. Moreover, overall, the results clearly indicated that people with different political ideologies preferred two different types of politicians: left-wing voters preferred a candidate warmer than competent, the opposite for right-wing voters (Study 1 this Chapter). Moreover, independently of their political orientation, people described a right-wing candidate as more competent than warm, the opposite for a left-wing candidate (Study 1 and 2 this Chapter). In addition, a right-wing candidate was described as less warm as compared to a left-wing candidate, whereas for competence no difference emerged between the two coalitions (Study 2 this Chapter). Finally, this pattern of results appeared to be stable. Indeed, it emerged from a personal evaluation (Study 1 and 2 this Chapter) and it was reflected also in the spatial agency bias (Study 3 and 4 this Chapter). Indeed, people portrayed right-ward facing oriented (from the observer point of view) were more likely to be associated with right-wing political attitudes as compared to left-ward facing oriented people. Given the widespread and important presence of competence and warmth in the evaluation of political candidates, at this point it may be interesting to understand which is the actual most influential dimension in the political domain, and in shaping the overall impression toward a political candidate.

Research in group and person perception has indicated that warmth judgments have a primary role in driven the whole impression formation process. Indeed, warmth is usually evaluated before competence; moreover affective and behavioural reactions are usually carried by evaluations regarding warmth (Cuddy et al., 2008). More specifically, warmth judgments are more likely to predict the valence (positive vs. negative) of the overall evaluation (Wojciszke, Bazinska & Jaworski, 1998). One of the first evidence reported in the literature about the strong role of warmth in guiding the valence of the evaluation is the famous study made by Asch (1946) in which participants were asked to form an impression toward two described persons. He presented a list of adjectives for each target of evaluation

changing only one adjective between the two descriptions: *warm* vs. *cold*. Participants who saw on the list of adjectives the word *warm* formed a more positive impression of the described person as compared to those who saw the adjective *cold*.

Despite this supposed and demonstrated primacy of evaluations about warmth in driving the subsequent whole impression of a target, in the political field several studies have demonstrated that competence is more important in the prediction of the real outcomes of the elections (see also Chapter 2 and 7 of the current work). Probably, the greater value assigned to warmth may not necessarily apply to all social contexts: in the professional domain, such as the political profession, competence is likely to be more relevant than warmth. For instance, Todorov and colleagues (2005) recently found that participants' inferences about competence based on politicians' faces predicted the actual outcomes of political races. Specifically, participants were presented for only one second with the pictures of two political candidates (the winner and the challenger). Then, they were asked to evaluate the perceived competence of each candidate: this judgment not only predicted the winner but was also related to the specific margin of victory. Other judgments, such as perceived age, attractiveness, likeability, honesty, did not predict the election outcomes. However, more recently another study (Castelli et al., 2008) has not only confirmed that the perceived competence of a politician positively predicts the real outcome of the elections, but also that the perceived warmth negatively predicts the outcome of a political race. In this case, participants were asked to evaluate the competence and the sociability of several couples of opposing candidates that were running in Italy. Again, the differences in the evaluations not only predicted the real outcomes but also the margin of victory.

In conclusion, from those results one may argue that probably right-wing politicians are more likely to win as compared to left-wing politicians because of their differential association to the two dimensions, competence vs. warmth. However, it must be taken into account that also the relative primacy of competence evaluation in determining voting choices is also related to the specific socio-cultural context and situation. Recently, Little and colleagues (Little et al., 2007), suggested that competence may be the most important dimension in conflict periods because in these cases the need for power and agency may be higher. Conversely, the same dimension emerged as less crucial in a period of peace and prosperity in which other traits related to cooperation and warmth (such as likeability and altruism) may be more relevant. It could be of some interest to see whether the aforementioned opposite role of competence and warmth in the prediction of the real outcome of the election may be reversed in a different context.

CHAPTER 7

GENERAL DISCUSSION
AND FINAL CONCLUSION

1. General Discussion

The present work came to light with the aim to further investigate and better understand some research topics within Political Psychology, by including methodologies and theories from the Social Cognition perspective, under the vision of a reciprocal exchange and enrichment, both for political science and for psychology. More specifically, we tried to depict a picture of impression formation and attitude change towards ostensible political candidates following two parallel experimental routes.

In the first experimental session of the current work (Session A; Chapter 2, 3 and 4) we analyzed in depth the likely consequences of a communication strategy largely used in the political arena: negative campaigns. This expression indicates all negative remarks that a political candidate says in order to devalue the opposing candidate or the opposing ideology. During the last decades, as demonstrated also by our findings about the Italian and the US scenario presented in Chapter 5, the occurrence of this communication strategy is increasing, and with it also the research aimed at analyzing the actual consequences is increasing. However, the literature about such a topic still shows a puzzling scenario: for each empirical finding there is also the opposite one (Lau et al. 1999, 2007 for reviews). In the first experimental session our aim was specifically to understand why researchers were not able to depict a clean painting about the likely consequences of saying something negative toward others in the political field. The core idea that ran along the studies presented in the current work is that one possibility to disentangle the ambiguity described in the literature could be to take into account that several factors may modulate the likely consequences.

A first factor taken into account was concerning the mere definition of *negative campaigning*. Indeed, as with other past studies in the literature (e.g. Budesheim et al., 1996; Kahn & Geer, 1994; Lau & Pomper, 2001), we pointed out that this expression may be considered as a super-ordinate category that includes different shades of negative messages.

Moreover, and most importantly, we argued that different types of negative remarks probably lead to different outcomes. More specifically, in Chapter 2 we distinguished negative campaigns both on the basis of the target of the attack and on the basis of the specific content of the attack. We labelled *negative ideological* those messages whose target is the opposite ideology in general. Moreover, we called *negative person-based* those messages against the personal features of one specific opposing candidate, and *negative issue-based* those messages against the political proposals of one specific candidate. These different types of negative campaigns are actually used in the political arena, but differently among different coalitions, at least in the Italian scenario (Chapter 5). For instance, left-wing politicians are more likely to attack a single opposite candidate, whereas right-wing candidate are more likely to attack the general ideology (Chapter 5, Study 2a). Moreover, in the US political arena the involved politicians used both negative person-based and issue-based messages (Chapter 5, Study 2b). Given the described widespread but not homogeneous use of different types of negative campaigns, it is important to outline their own specific consequences.

After this first distinction in three different types of negative campaigns, in Chapter 3 we further divided negative person-based messages in two additional shades on the basis of the specific topic of the attack. Indeed, candidates have the possibility to attack their own challengers either about their competence or about their morality (Chapter 3, Study 5). These dimensions are usually described as the most common and important in the political domain. Finally, the last type of negative campaigns that we examined here was an attack against the opposite electorate as a group (Chapter 4, Study 6). This specific typology was inspired by its real use during the 2006 Italian political campaign.

However, in order to describe the specific consequences of each type of negative campaigns, other important factors must be taken into account because they may modulate the likely outcomes. In fact, another core idea that run along the studies presented in the current work, is that different outcomes emerge from the use of different types of measurement: *explicit vs. implicit measures*. The so-called *explicit measures* are able to tap the more controlled and conscious responses, the outcomes of the propositional system (Gawronski & Bodenhausen, 2006, 2007). However, as explained in the general introduction (Chapter 1), the explicit measures are affected by some problems, such as their incapacity to tap more unconscious and spontaneous reactions. Moreover, they are affected by social desirability and self-presentation concerns (see Gawronski et al., 2007 for a discussion). These gaps are compensated by the so-called *implicit measures*, able to detect the outcomes of the associative system (Gawronski & Bodenhausen, 2006, 2007). In the current work, we have always

compared implicit and explicit measures in order to delineate a clear picture of the actual consequences of negative campaigns.

So far, we have described two factors that may help to disentangle the puzzling scenario described in the literature. However, before to delineate clear implicit and explicit outcomes for each type of negative campaign, we have to take into consideration other two important factors. The first regards the personal features of the recipients: not all people are the same and their qualities may have a strong influence in the likely consequences of negative campaigning. One main distinction is between people with a clear political preference and those who have not already made up a clear preference. In Chapter 2, for instance, we analyzed the consequences only on decided participants. Such sample enabled us to examine also some intergroup and intragroup dynamics. Indeed, as aforementioned in Chapter 1 and 2, being a member of a specific political group may have strong influence in the evaluation of the source of a political message, both in a positive and in a negative direction. Indeed, ingroup members were evaluated more positively as compared outgroup members, despite the specific content of the expressed remarks. Moreover, in Chapter 2 we found that in some specific cases such ingroup bias may decrease, specifically when the ingroup politician attacked the opposing candidate about mere personal features. Indeed, only at the explicit level, participants condemned someone who used such a type of negative campaign, probably because this behaviour was seen as unfair and politically untied. However, the source candidates were even more doomed when they were ingroup members. People, in order to preserve their social identity and underline that they are very far from such ingroup members, over-condemn ingroup members who perform negative behaviours (i.e., *black sheep effect*; e.g., Marques & Yzerbyt, 1988; Marques et al., 1988). However, as said, this happened only at the explicit level, whereas at the implicit level such *black sheep effect* was not detected (Chapter 2, Study 1 and 2).

Another personal quality of recipients that may account for variability on the likely consequences of negative campaigning is related to the pre-existing implicit attitudes toward one's own political group. Indeed, in Chapter 4 (Study 6) we analyzed the role of the polarization of pre-existing implicit attitudes: participants with strong positive implicit attitudes toward their political group were not affected by the persuasive messages carried out by an outgroup member. Conversely, participants with weak positive initial implicit attitudes toward their own coalition, were deeply affected by the negative remarks made by a candidate of the opposite coalition about their own electorate as a whole.

The second and last dimension that we took here into account in order to disentangle the ambiguity in the literature about the effectiveness of negative campaigns, regards the

specific evaluated dimensions analyzed as dependent variables. Indeed, the same communication strategy may lead to different outcomes on different dimensions and variables. In Chapter 2 we considered the consequences on the two most important dimensions of social judgments, namely competence and warmth (e.g., Fiske et al., 2002). These are described as the core dimensions underlying social evaluations. The former is positively predicted by the perceived power, whereas the latter is negatively predicted by the perceived competition. Moreover, these two dimensions are usually described in the literature as negatively correlated, or even related by compensation (Judd et al., 2005; Kervyn et al., in press). A person who lacks in competence is probably warm; conversely, a person who lacks in warmth is probably very competent. Also in the political field a negative relation between the two dimensions emerged. Indeed, people ascribed to a right-wing politician more competence than warmth, the opposite to a left-wing politician (Chapter 6, Study 1 and 2). Moreover, the described pattern emerged also in subtle differences such as the orientation of the face profile in a picture. People portrayed right-ward oriented were more likely described as right-wing politically oriented (Chapter 6, Study 3 and 4). Finally, we found that the two dimensions of social judgment were differently influenced by negative and positive campaigns. Indeed, as emerged from studies presented in Chapter 2, the use of a negative campaign determined an implicit aversion toward the source candidates because they were perceived as more competitive as compared to the source candidates of positive campaigns. However, at the same time, people complied with the source candidates of negative messages because they were perceived as more competent as compared to the source candidates who used positive campaigns. In other words, negativism in the political domain may increase the perceived competence but at the same time it may decrease the perceived warmth of the source candidate.

As said, the likely consequences of negative campaigns may be studied on different dimensions, such as competence and warmth described above, and on different variables. Another dimension that we took into account in the current work was related to the general evaluation of both the involved politicians, either as the source candidate and the target of the attack (Chapter 3, Study 5). Indeed, as said in the general introduction (Chapter 1) an attitude is defined as a general predisposition to evaluate an object either as positive or negative, either as likeable or unlikeable. It is an overall evaluation without any distinction between perceived competence and warmth. From our studies it emerged that, at the explicit level, only the general evaluations of the source, but the opponent, were affected by the type of campaign. More specifically, the source candidate of a negative person-based campaign was evaluated less likeable as compared to the source candidate of a positive campaign. In

contrast, at the implicit level, evaluations of both the source and the opponent were influenced by the type of campaign. Indeed, the implicit likeability of both the source and the opponent decreased after a negative person-based campaign as compared to a positive campaign.

Finally, another important dependent variable that we analyzed here was the political identification (Chapter 4, Study 6). This expression indicates how far or close people feel themselves in relation to a specific political group. Our study demonstrated that being the target of an attack from a candidate of the opposite coalition may be perceived as a threat and thus it increased political identification, but only at the explicit level. Similarly, research has demonstrated that patriotism and pride in one's national citizenship represent manifestations of collective identity that people try to defend, particularly when their country is under threat (Cohen & Garcia, 2005). However, using implicit measures an opposite pattern of results emerged: a threat from an outgroup decreased the political identification because of the negative links created in the associative system. Moreover, as said above about the influence of recipients' features, the described results were true only for people with weak pre-existing implicit attitudes.

Concluding, overall, we considered four factors that may help to explain the intricate scenario described in the literature about the consequences of negative political campaigns. The first was related to the mere definitions: not all negative campaigns lead to the same consequences. The second was related to the level of measurement: not all instruments are able to detect the same consequences. The third was related to the specific features of the recipients: not all participants are the same and they are not affected in the same way by the same message. Finally, the fourth factor was related to the specific analyzed dependent variables: negative campaigns may have different consequences on different evaluated dimensions.

In our opinion, from the current investigation two important final messages and advices come out: the importance of competence and of implicit measures in the political field.

2. The importance of perceived competence in Political Psychology

The first important message emerged from the current work is about the important role of perceived competence in the political field. We have already largely asserted in the previous chapters (Chapter 2 and 6), that one of the core motives of social psychological research now is to investigate in depth how the basic dimensions of competence and warmth affect social judgments in general and decision making specifically (e.g., Cuddy et al., 2008). Individuals and social groups can be placed in a two dimensional space given by the relative

presence of warmth and competence. As previously affirmed, usually warmth is depicted as the most important dimension, the one that mostly guides the subsequent overall evaluations. However, the greater value assigned to warmth does not necessarily apply to all social contexts. For example, in the professional domain, as well as in the political domain, competence is likely to be more relevant than warmth. Indeed, research in the political field suggests that competence is a maximally valued factor. Indeed, even if also in the evaluation of political leaders three dimensions are often reported, namely competence, warmth and trustworthiness (Funk, 1996; Kinder et al., 1980; Miller et al., 1986), the former dimension is usually indicated as the most important and the most related to the overall evaluations of politicians (Markus, 1982). Competence emerged as the core dimension both from self-reports about the evaluations of candidates (Kinder et al., 1980; Miller et al., 1986) but also through the adoption of less direct procedures. Indeed, the perceived competence of a candidate from his/her representation in a picture positively predicts the real outcomes of the elections (Todorov et al., 2005). Conversely, perceived warmth negatively predicts the real outcomes (Castelli et al., 2008). However, the relative relevance of competence in determining voting choices is also related to the specific socio-cultural context and situation (Little et al., 2007).

In the current work, even if the use of a negative campaign decreased the overall likeability of the source candidate (Chapter 3) and the perceived sociability (Chapter 2), people decided to comply with such a candidate because of the perceived competence (Chapter 2). Thus, in the end, it is important to stress how important is not considered only one general evaluation toward a social target but also several dimensions that added together may better delineate the overall impression. It may be of some interest in the future, to further investigate the precise role of perceived warmth and competence in shaping the overall impression formation and attitude change processes.

3. The importance of implicit measures in Political Psychology

The second important message emerged here is about the key role of implicit measures in explaining some phenomena in the political field. Indeed, in the presented studies different outcomes emerged employing different types of measures, specifically implicit vs. explicit. This inconsistency underlines the importance of implementing the research in the political field with less direct measures. Indeed, previous research in the literature on the effects of political campaigning has mainly focused on controlled responses toward politicians who made use of either positive or negative messages. However, as suggested by the current studies, it appears necessary to go beyond the explicit level of evaluation by investigating also more spontaneous responses. In many contexts, these measures can provide deeper insights by

means of their ability to discover hidden associative links that have been shown to influence human behavior and decision making (for a review, see Friese, Hofmann, & Schmitt, in press).

Recently, research has started to investigate the automaticity of political attitudes (see Lodge et al., 2005; Morris et al., 2003) and the possibility that implicit attitudes might also be used as predictors of voting behaviours in addition to traditional explicit measures (Arcuri et al., 2008). According to Burdein and colleagues (2006), the implicit experimental approach can definitely open new windows on the comprehension of political cognition. Therefore, implicit measures may be used both to investigate, from a different perspective, well-developed attitudes in the political domain, and also attitudes toward novel exemplars (Castelli et al., 2004), as in the case of unknown political candidates. This implies that such implicit attitude measures may also prove to be particularly useful in order to understand attitude formation and attitude change processes that occur in the political domain. Indeed, as emerged from the current studies, variations in the communication style of the candidate may give rise to different automatic reactions toward the politician.

Taken together, these results suggest that including implicit measures in studies within Political Psychology may provide deeper insights that go beyond the information provided by traditional self-reported measures. The most meaningful example emerged in the presented studies is the one about the *orgoglioni* phenomenon. Apparently people under threat moved to one direction showing pride for their political affiliation, however, implicitly they moved to the opposite direction: they moved away from their group. In conclusion, implicit measures help to go beyond the showy consequences of a communication strategy.

4. Limitations

Reading the current work one may observe some limitations. First of all, one could argue that evaluations and decisions in the real word are quite different from the ones in laboratory settings, which may undermine the generalizability of the current findings to real world contexts. However, in response to this concern, it is worth noting that such differences might indeed be detected more for explicit evaluations, but probably less for implicit evaluations. According to the APE model (Gawronski & Bodenhausen, 2006), implicit evaluations are driven by the mere activation of concepts and their associations without any assignment of truth values. As such, previously existing attitudes toward well known politicians and subjective beliefs about the truth or falsity of their claims may be more relevant for explicit compared to implicit evaluations. Nevertheless, it would be useful to

replicate in the future the current findings in a real-world context using real campaigns and actually existing politicians.

Finally, another limitation could come from the fact that in the most part of our studies participants were actually students. One could argue that the topics investigated in the current work would benefit from the use of a more heterogeneous community sample instead of a college student sample. The latter type of samples is quite useful for laboratory studies that aim at providing evidence for theoretically derived predictions, which was the primary goal of the current investigation. However, the ultimate goal of such studies is to bring theory-based knowledge acquired in the lab back into the field to gain a deeper understanding of decision-making processes in the real-world. As for implicit evaluations, there is preliminary evidence from field studies with community samples showing that such evaluations indeed play a significant role in real-world voting decisions (e.g., Arcuri et al., 2008; Galdi et al., 2008). The present study expands on these findings by providing important information about the determinants of implicit evaluations. Future research combining the two approaches may provide deeper insights into the differential role of explicit and implicit evaluations in impression formation and attitude change in the political field.

5. Final Conclusion

Along with the described studies we brought to light several factors that may be useful in order to depict a clear painting about impression formation and attitude change in the political field. In the end, it appears as a very complicate painting, an intricate cobweb, because of the parallel presence and influence of several factors. However, the bond between Political Psychology and Social Cognition may actually help the understanding of such intricate scenario. Moreover, this collaboration is also able to lead important gains for both the involved parts. Indeed, in this specific work, with theories and methodologies drawn from the Social Cognition angle we were able to somehow disentangle the described puzzling scenario in the Political Psychology literature. Moreover, at the same time, the political field is doubtless a very interesting and promising setting for social psychologists in which to study intergroup and intragroup relations, as well as attitude formation and attitude change routes.

REFERENCES

Abelson, R. P., Kinder, D. R., Peters, M. D., & Fiske, S. T. (1982). Affective and semantic components in political person perception. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 42*, 619-630.

Abrams, D., & Hogg, M. (1988). Comments on the motivational status of self- esteem in social identity and intergroup discrimination. *European Journal of Social Psychology, 18*, 317-334.

Adorno, T. W., Frenkel-Brunswick, E., Levinson, D. J., & Sanford, R. N. (1950). *The authoritarian personality*. New York: Harper & Row.

Allport, G. W. (1935). Attitudes. In C. Murchison (Ed.), *Handbook of social psychology* (pp. 798-844). Worcester, MA: Clark University Press.

Allport, G. W. (1954). *The nature of prejudice*. Cambridge, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Altemeyer, R. (1981). *Right-wing authoritarianism*. Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press.

Amadori, A. (2002). *Mi consenta*. Milano: Scheiwiller.

Anderson, N. H. (1965). Averaging versus Adding as a Stimulus-Combination Rule in Impression Formation. *Journal of Experimental Psychology*, *70*, 394-400.

Ansolabehere, S., & Iyengar, S. (1994). Riding the wave and claiming ownership over issues: The joint effects of advertising and news coverage in campaigns. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, *58*, 335-357.

Ansolabehere, S., & Iyengar, S. (1995). *Going negative: How political advertisements shrink and polarize the electorate*. New York: Free Press.

Ansolabehere, S., Iyengar, S., & Simon, A. (1999). Replicating experiments using aggregate and survey data: The case of negative advertising and turnout. *American Political Science Review, 93*, 901-909.

Ansolabehere, S., Iyengar, S., Simon, A., & Valentino, N. (1994). Does attack advertising demobilize the electorate? *American Political Science Review, 88*, 829-838.

Arcuri, L, Castelli, L., Galdi, S., Zogmaister, C., & Amadori, A. (2008). Predicting the vote: Implicit attitudes as predictors of the future behavior of decided and undecided voters. *Political Psychology, 29,* 369-387.

Aron, A., McLaughlin-Volpe, T., Mashek, D., Lewandowski, G., Wright, S. C., & Aron, E. (2005). Including others in the self. *European Review of Social Psychology, 15*, 101-132.

Asch, S. E. (1946). Forming impressions of personality. *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, 41*, 258-90.

Banaji, M. R. (2001). Implicit attitudes can be measured. In H. L. Roediger III, J. S. Nairne, I. Neath, & A. Surprenant (Eds.), *The nature of remembering: Essays in remembering Robert G. Crowder* (pp. 117-150). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Bailenson, J. N., Garland, P., Iyengar, S., & Yee, N. (2006). Transformed Facial Similarity as a Political Cue: A Preliminary Investigation. *Political Psychology, 27*, 373-386.

Bargh, J. A., Chaiken, S., Govender, R., & Pratto, F. (1992). The generality of the automatic attitude activation effect. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 62*, 893-912.

Beniger, J. R., & Jones, G. (1990). Changing technologies, mass media, and control of the picture in people's heads: A preliminary look at US presidential campaign slogans, 1880-1984. In S. Kraus (Ed.), *Mass communication and political information processing* (pp. 149-169). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Benson, P. L., Karabenic, S. A., & Lerner, R. A. (1976). Pretty pleases: The effects of physical attractiveness on race, sex, a receiving help. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, *12*, 409-415.

Berlusconi, S. (2001). *Una storia italiana*. Milano: Mondadori.

Bolasco S., Giuliano, L., & Galli de' Paratesi, N. (2006). *Parole in libertà. Un'analisi statistica e linguistica*. Roma: Manifestolibri.

Brader, T. (2005). Striking a responsive chord: How political ads motivate and persuade voters by appealing to emotions. *American Journal of Political Science, 49*, 388–405.

Branscombe, N. R., Wann, D. L., Noel, J. G., & Coleman, J. (1993). In-group or out-group extremity: Importance of the threatened social identity. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *19*, 381-388.

Brewer, M. B. (1988). A dual process model of impression formation. In T. K. Srull, & R. S. Wyer (Eds.), *Advances in social cognition. A dual process model of impression formation* (pp.1-36). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Brewer, M. B., & Brown, R. J. (1998). Intergroup relations. In D. T. Gilbert, S. T. Fiske, & G. Lindzey (Eds.), *The handbook of social psychology* (pp. 554-594). New York: McGraw Hill.

Brians, C. L., & Wattenberg M. P. (1996). Campaign issue knowledge and salience: Comparing reception from TV commercials, TV news, and newspapers. *American Journal of Political Science, 40,* 172–93.

Budesheim, T. L., Houston, D. A., & DePaola, S. J. (1996). Persuasiveness of in-group and out-group political messages: The case of negative political campaigning. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 70*, 523-534.

Burdein, I., Lodge, M., & Taber, C. S. (2006). Experiments on the automaticity of political beliefs and attitudes. *Political Psychology*, *27*, 359-372.

Campbell, D. T., Kruskal, W. H., & Wallace, W. (1966). Seating aggregation as an index of attitude. *Sociometry*, *29*, 1-15.

Caprara, G. V. (2003). *Tempi Moderni*. Firenze: Giunti.

Caprara, G. V., Barbaranelli, C., Consiglio, C., Picconi, L., & Zimbardo, P. G. (2003). Personality of Politicians and Voters: Unique and Synergistic Relationships. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 84,* 849-856.

Caprara, G. V., Barbaranelli, C., & Zimbardo, P. G. (2002). When parsimony subdues distinctiveness: Simplified public perceptions of politicians' personality. *Political Psychology, 23*, 77-95.

Caprara, G. V., Vecchione, M., Barbaranelli, C., & Fraley, R. C. (2007). When likeness goes with liking: The case of political preference. *Political Psychology, 28*, 609-632.

Caprara, G. V., & Zimbardo, P. G. (2004). Personalizing politics: A congruency model of political preference. *American Psychologist, 59*, 581-594

Carlston, D. E., & Skowronski, J. J. (2005). Linking versus thinking: Evidence for the different associative and attributional bases of spontaneous trait transference and spontaneous trait inference. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 89*, 884-898.

Carraro, L., & Castelli, L. (2008). The implicit and explicit effects of negative political campaigns on the perception of candidates: Decreasing liking but increasing conformity. Manuscript submitted for publication.

Carraro, L., & Castelli, L. The explicit and implicit effects of attacking the electorate of the opposite party: Different outcomes based on the polarization of pre-existing implicit attitudes. Unpublished manuscript. University of Padova.

Carraro, L., Castelli, L., & Arcuri, L. (2008). Parliamoci chiaro: un'analisi della complessità del linguaggio dei due schieramenti politici italiani. *Psicologia Sociale, 1*, 95-108.

Carraro, L., Castelli, L., Passarelli, G., & Arcuri, L. (2006). Bush e Kerry 2004: un'analisi degli spot televisivi. In G. Gangemi (Ed.), *Le elezioni come processo. Nuove tecniche d'indagine e nuovi ambiti di ricerca* (pp. 89-110). Milano: Franco Angeli.

Carraro, L., Gawronski, B., & Castelli, L. (2008). Loosing on all fronts: The effects of negative versus positive person-based campaigns on implicit and explicit evaluations of political candidates. Manuscript submitted for publication.

Carraro, L., Maass, A., Suitner, C., & Castelli, L. (2007). *Direzione della scrittura e percezione sociale: il bias di posizionamento nei bambini.* Oral communication presented at the second workshop "Psycholinguistics and Cognition", Rovereto - Italy, May 25th.

Castelli, L., Arcuri, L., & Carraro, L. (2008). Projection processes in the perception of political leaders. Manuscript submitted for publication.

Castelli, L., Arcuri, L., & Zogmaister, C. (2003). Perceiving ingroup members who use stereotypes: Implicit conformity and similarity. *European Journal of Social Psychology, 33*, 163-175.

Castelli, L., & Carraro, L. (2008). Striving for difference: On the spontaneous preference for ingroup members who maximize ingroup positive distinctiveness. Manuscript submitted for publication.

Castelli, L., & Carraro, L. Uso dei messaggi negativi negative durante la campagna politica 2001. Unpublished manuscript. University of Padova.

Castelli, L., Carraro, L., Tondini, G., & Arcuri L. (2007). Le campagne negative: diverse strategie tra destra e sinistra? *Polena, 1,* 73-81.

Castelli, L., Ghitti, C., & Carraro, L. (2008). The effects of perceived competence and sociability on electoral outcomes. Manuscript submitted for publication.

Castelli, L., Tomelleri, S., & Zogmaister, C. (2008). Implicit ingroup metafavoritism: On the spontaneous preference for ingroup members showing ingroup bias. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *34*, 807-818.

Castelli, L., Vanzetto K., Sherman, S. J., & Arcuri L. (2001). The explicit and implicit perception of in-group members who use stereotypes: Blatant rejection but subtle conformity. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 37*, 419-426.

Castelli, L., Zecchini, A., Sherman, S. J., & De Amicis, L. (2005). The impact of implicit prejudice about the elderly on the reaction to stereotype confirmation and disconfirmation. *Current Psychology, 24*, 134-146.

Castelli, L., Zogmaister, C., Smith, E. R., & Arcuri, L. (2004). On the automatic evaluation of social exemplars. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 86*, 373-387.

Catellani, P. (1997). *Psicologia politica*. Bologna: Il Mulino.

Chaiken, S. (1986). Physical appearance and social influence. In C. P. Herman, M. P. Zanna, & E. T. Higgins (Eds.), *Physical appearance, stigma and social behaviour: The Ontario Symposium* (pp. 143-177). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Chaiken, S. (1987). The heuristic model of persuasion. In M. P. Zanna, J. M. Olson, & C. P. Herman (Eds.), *Social influence: The Ontario Symposium* (pp. 3-39). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Chatterjee, A. (2002). Portrait profiles and the notion of agency. *Empirical Studies of the Arts, 20*, 33-41.

Chatterjee, A., Southwood, M. H., & Basilico, D. (1999). Verbs, events and spatial representations. *Neuropsychology, 37*, 395-402.

Chang, C. (2001). The impacts of emotion elicited by print political advertising on candidate evaluation. *Media Psychology, 3,* 91-118.

Chen, S., & Chaiken, S. (1999). The heuristic-systematic model in its broader context. In S. Chaiken, & Y. Trope (Eds.), *Dual-process theories in social and cognitive psychology* (pp. 73-96). New York: Guilford Press.

Cicero, Q. T. (65-64 AC). *Commentariolum petitionis.*

Clifford, M. M. (1975). Physical attractiveness and academic performance. *Child Study Journal, 5*, 201-209.

Cohen, G. L., & Garcia, J. (2005). "I am us": Negative stereotypes as collective threats. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 89*, 566-582.

Cuddy, A. J. C., Fiske, S. T., & Glick, P. (2008). Warmth and competence as universal dimensions of social perception: The stereotype content model and the BIAS map. *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology, 40*, 62-149.

De Houwer, J., Thomas, S., & Baeyens, F. (2001). Associative learning of likes and dislikes: A review of 25 years of research on human evaluative conditioning. *Psychological Bulletin, 127,* 853-869.

Dermody, J., & Scullion, R. (2000). Perceptions of negative political advertising: Meaningful or menacing? An empirical study of the 1997 British general election campaign. *International Journal of Advertising, 19*, 201-23.

Deutsch, M., & Kinnvall, C. (2002). What is Political Psychology. In K. R. Monroe (Ed.), *Political Psychology* (pp. 15-42). Mahwah, HJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Diamond, E., & Bates, S. (1992). *The spot: The rise of political advertising on television*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Doosje, B., Branscombe, N. R., Spears, R., & Manstead, A. S. R. (1999). Guilty by association: when one's group has a negative history. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 75,* 872-886.

Doosje, B., Spears, R., & Ellemers, N. (2002). Social identity as both cause and effect: the development of group identification in response to anticipated and actual changes in the intergroup status hierarchy. *British Journal of Social Psychology, 41*, 57-76.

Downs, A. C., & Lyons, P. M. (1991). Natural observations of the links between attractiveness and initial legal judgment. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 17*, 541-547.

Druckman, J. N. (2003). The power of television images: The first Kennedy-Nixon debate revisited. *The Journal of Politics, 65,* 559-71.

Druckman, J. N. (2004). Political preference formation: Competition, deliberation, and the (ir)relevance of framing effects. *American Political Science Review, 98,* 671-86.

Druckman, J. N., Jacobs, L. R., & Ostermeier, E. (2004). Candidate strategies to prime issues and image. *The Journal of Politics, 66,* 1205-1227.

Dunn, S. (2004). *Jefferson's second revolution: The election crisis of 1800 and the triumph of Republicanism*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company.

Eco U. (1973). Il linguaggio politico. In G. L. Beccaria (Ed.), *I linguaggi settoriali in Italia* (pp. 91-105). Milano: Bompiani.

Eagly, A. H., & Chaiken, S. (1993). *The psychology of attitudes*. Fort Worth, TX: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich.

Eagly, A. H., & Chaiken, S. (2007). The advantages of an inclusive definition of attitude. *Social Cognition, 25*, 582–602.

Engell, A. D., Haxby, J. V., & Todorov, A. (2007). Implicit trustworthiness decisions: Automatic coding of face properties in the human amygdale. *Journal of Cognitive Science, 19*, 1508-1519.

Entman, R. M., & Rojecki, A. (2000). *The black image in the white mind: Media and race in America*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Fazio, R. H. (1995). Attitudes as object–evaluation associations: Determinants, consequences, and correlates of attitude accessibility. In R. E. Petty, & J. A. Krosnick (Eds.), *Attitude strength* (pp. 247-282). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Fazio, R. H. (2007). Attitudes as object-evaluation associations of varying strength. *Social Cognition, 25*, 603-637.

Fazio, R. H., Chen, J., McDonel, E. C., & Sherman, S. J. (1982). Attitude accessibility, attitude-behavior consistency and the strength of the object–evaluation association. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, *18*, 339-357.

Fazio, R. H., Jackson, J. R., & Dunton, B. C., Williams, C. J. (1995). Variability in automatic activation as an unobstrusive measure of racial attitudes: A bona fide pipeline? *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 69*, 1013-1027.

Fazio, R. H., & Olson, M. A. (2003). Implicit measures in social cognition research: Their meaning and use. *Annual Review of Psychology, 54*, 297-327.

Fazio, R. H., & Williams, C. J. (1986). Attitude accessibility as a moderator of the attitude perception and attitude-behavior relations: An investigation of the 1984 presidential election. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 51*, 505-514.

Fisher, R. A. (1936). *Statistical methods for research workers*. Edunburgh: Oliver & Boyd.

Fiske, S. T. (1980). Attention and weight in person perception: The impact of negative and extreme behavior. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *38*, 889-906.

Fiske, S. T., Cuddy, A. J. C., & Glick, P. (2006). Universal dimensions of social cognition: warmth and competence. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences, 11*, 77-83.

Fiske, S. T., Cuddy, A. J. C., Glick, P., & Xu, J. (2002). A model of (often mixed) stereotype content: Competence and warmth respectively follow from status and competition. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 82*, 878-902.

Fiske, S. T., & Neuberg, S. L. (1990). A continuum model of impression formation from category-based to individuated processes: Influences of information and motivation on attention and interpretation. In M. P. Zanna (Ed.), *Advances in experimental social psychology* (pp. 1-74). New York: Academic Press.

Fiske, S. T., & Taylor, S. E. (1991). *Social Cognition*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Friese, M., Hofmann, W., & Schmitt, M. (in press). When and why do implicit measures predict behavior? Empirical evidence for the moderating role of opportunity, motivation, and process reliance. *European Review of Social Psychology*.

Funk, C. L. (1996). The impact of scandal on candidate evaluations: An experimental test of the role of candidate traits. *Political Behavior, 18*, 1-24.

Funk, C. L. (1997). Implications of political expertise in candidate trait evaluation. *Political Research Quarterly, 50*, 675-697.

Galdi, S., Arcuri, L., & Gawronski, B. (2008). Automatic mental associations predict future choices of undecided decision-makers. *Science, 321*, 1100-1102.

Gattino, S., & Tartaglia, S. (2006). I programmi politici delle elezioni 2006: un'analisi lessicale. *Polena*, *2*, 77-85.

Gattino S., & Tartaglia S. (2008). Elezioni politiche 2006 e 2008: programmi a confronto. *Polena, 1*, 169-176.

Gawronski, B., & Bodenhausen, G. V. (2006). Associative and propositional processes in evaluation: An integrative review of implicit and explicit attitude change. *Psychological Bulletin, 132*, 692-731.

Gawronski, B., & Bodenhausen, G. V. (2007). Unravelling the processes underlying evaluation: Attitudes from the perspective of the APE Model. *Social Cogniton, 25*, 687-717.

Gawronski, B., Bodenhausen, G. V., & Becker, A. P. (2007). I like it because I like myself: Associative self-anchoring and post-decisional change of implicit attitudes. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 43,* 221-232.

Gawronski, B., Geschke, D., & Banse, R. (2003). Implicit bias in impression formation: Associations influence the construal of individuating information. *European Journal of Social Psychology, 33,* 573-589.

Gawronski, B., & LeBel, E. P. (2008). Understanding patterns of attitude change: When implicit measures show change, but explicit measures do not. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 44,* 1355-1361.

Gawronski, B., LeBel, E. P., & Peters, K. R. (2007). What do implicit measures tell us? Scrutinizing the validity of three common assumptions. *Perspectives on Psychological Science, 2,* 181-193.

Gawronski, B., Peters, K. R., Brochu, P. M., & Strack, F. (2008). Understanding the relations between different forms of racial prejudice: A cognitive consistency perspective. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 34,* 648-665.

Gawronski, B., & Strack, F. (2004). On the propositional nature of cognitive consistency: Dissonance changes explicit, but not implicit attitudes. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 40,* 535-542.

Gawronski, B., Strack, F., & Bodenhausen, G. V. (2009). Attitudes and cognitive consistency: The role of associative and propositional processes. In R. E. Petty, R. H. Fazio, & P. Briñol (Eds.), *Attitudes: Insights from the new implicit measures* (pp. 86-117). New York: Psychology Press.

Gawronski, B., & Walther, E. (2008). The TAR effect: When the ones who dislike become the ones who are disliked. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 34,* 1276-1289.

Geer, J. G., & Geer, J. H. (2003). Remembering attack ads: An experimental investigation of radio. *Political Behavior, 25,* 69-95.

Giglioli, P. (1989). I due codici comunicativi. In J. Jacobelli (Ed.), *La comunicazione politica in Italia* (pp. 121-145). Roma: Laterza.

Gilliam, F. D. Jr., & Iyengar, S. (2000). Prime suspects: The influence of local television news on the viewing public. *American Journal of Political Science, 44*, 560-573.

Girotto, V. (1996). Introduzione alla teoria del prospetto e alle sue applicazioni in ambito politico. In P. Legrenzi, & V. Girotto (Eds.), *Psicologia e politica* (pp. 19-41). Milano: Raffaello Cortina Editore.

Goldstein, K., & Freedman P. (2002). Campaign advertising and voter turnout: New evidence for a stimulation effect. *The Journal of Politics, 64*, 721-740.

Granberg, D., & Holmberg, S. (1990). The person positivity and principal actor hypotheses. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 20,* 1879-1901.

Greenwald, A. G., & Banaji, M. R. (1995). Implicit social cognition: Attitudes, self-esteem, and stereotypes. *Psychological Review, 102*, 4-27.

Greenwald, A., McGhee, D. E., & Schwartz, J. L. K. (1998). Measuring individual differences in implicit cognition: The implicit association test. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 74*, 1464-1480.

Greenwald, A. G., Nosek, B. A., & Banaji, M. R. (2003). Understanding and using the Implicit Association Test: An improved scoring algorithm. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 85*, 197-216.

Haddock G., & Zanna, M. P. (1997). Impact of negative advertising on evaluations of political candidates: The 1993 Canadian Federal Election. *Basic and Applied Social Psychology, 19*, 204-223.

Hallin, D. C. (1992). Sound bite news: Television coverage of elections, 1968-1988. *Journal of Communication*, *42*, 5-24.

Heider, F. (1958). *The psychology of interpersonal relations*. New York: Wiley.

Hill, R. P. (1989). An exploration of voter responses to political advertisements. *Journal of Advertisements, 18*, 14-22.

Hitchon, J. C., & Chang, C. (1995). Effects of gender schematic processing on the reception of political commercials for men and women candidates. *Communication Research, 22*, 430-458.

Hovland, C. I., Lumsdaine, A. A., & Sheffield, F. D. (1949). *Experiments on mass communications.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Hugenberg, K., & Bodenhausen, G. V. (2003). Facing prejudice: Implicit prejudice and the perception of facial threat. *Psychological Science, 14,* 640-643.

Iyengar, S. (1991). *Is Anyone Responsible? How Television Frames Political Issues*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Iyengar, S., & Kinder, D. (1985). Psychological accounts of agenda-setting. In S. Kraus, & R. M. Perloff (Eds.) *Mass Media and Political Thought: An Information-Processing Approach,* (pp.117-140). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications.

Iyengar S., & Kinder, D. (1987). *News that matters: Television and American opinion*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Iyengar, S., & McGrady, J. (2005). Mass media and political persuasion. In T. C. Brock, & M. C. Green (Eds.), *Persuasion: Psychological insights and perspectives* (pp. 225-248). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Iyengar, S., & McGuire, W. J. (1993). *Interdisciplinary Cross-Fertilization: Explorations in Political Psychology*. Duke: University Press.

Jacobs, L. R., & Shapiro, R. J. (1994). Issues, candidate image, and priming: The use of private pools in Kennedy's 1960 presidential campaign. *American Political Science Review, 88*, 527-540.

Johnson-Cartee, K. S., & Copeland, G. A. (1991). *Negative political advertising: Coming of age*. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Jost, J. T., Glaser, J., Kruglanski, A. W., & Sullaway, F. J. (2003). Exceptions that Prove the Rule: Using a Theory of Motivated Social Cognition to Account for Ideological Incongruities and Political Anomalies. *Psychological Bulletin, 129*, 383-393.

Jost, J. T., Glaser, J., Kruglanski, A. W., & Sullaway, F. J. (2003). Political conservatism as motivated social cognition. *Psychological Bulletin, 129*, 339-375.

Jost, J. T., Kruglanski, A. W., & Simon, L. (1999). Effects of epistemic motivation on conservatism, intolerance, and other system justifying attitudes. In L. Thompson, D. M. Messick, & J. M. Levine (Eds.), *Shared knowledge in organizations* (pp. 91-116). Hillsdale, N.J.: Erlbaum.

Jost, J. T., & Sidanius, J. (2004). *Political Psycgology*. New York & Hove: Psychology Press.

Judd, C. M., James-Hawkins, L., Yzerbyt, V. Y., & Kashima, Y. (2005). Fundamental dimensions of social judgment: Understanding the relations between competence and warmth. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *89*, 899-913.

Kahn, K. F., & Geer, J. G. (1994). Creating Impressions: An Experimental Investigation of Political Advertising on Television. *Political Behavior, 16*, 93-116.

Kahn, K. F., & Kenney, P. J. (1999). Do negative campaigns mobilize or suppress turnout? Clarifying the relationship between negativity and participation. *American Political Science Review*, *93*, 877-890.

Kaid, L. L. (1997). Effects on the television spots on images of Dole and Clinton. *American Behavioural Scientist, 40*, 1085-1094.

Kamber, V. (1997). *Poison politics: Are negative campaigns destroying democracy?* New York: Insight Books.

Karpinski, A., & Steinman, R. B. (2006). The Single Category Implicit Association Test as a Measure of Implicit Social Cognition. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 91*, 16-32.

Kervyn, N., Judd, C. M., & Yzerbyt, V. Y. (in press). You want to appear competent? Be mean! You want to appear sociable? Be lazy! Group differentiation and the compensation effect. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*.

Kinder, D. R. (2003). Communication and Politics in the Age of Information. In D. O. Sears, L. Huddy, & R. Jervis (Eds.), *Oxford Handbook of Political Psychology* (357-393). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Kinder, D. R., Peters, M. D., Abelson, R. P., & Fiske, S. T. (1980). Presidential prototypes. *Political Behavior, 2*, 315-337.

Kinder, D. R., & Sears, D. O. (1981). Prejudice and politics: Symbolic racism versus racial threats to the good life. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 40*, 414-431.

Klar, Y., & Giladi, E. E. (1997). No one in my group can be below the group's average: A robust positivity bias in favor of anonymous peers. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 73,* 885-901.

Krosnick, J. A. (2002). The challenges of political psychology: lessons to be learned from research on attitude perception. In J. H. Kuklinski (Ed.), *Thinking about political psychology* (pp. 115-152). New York: Cambridge University Press.

Krosnick, J. A., Lacy, D., & Lowe, L. (1998). When is environmental damage Americans' most important problem? A test of agenda-setting vs. the issue-attention cycle. Paper presented at the International Society of Political Psychology Annual Meeting, Montreal, Quebec, Canada.

Krosnick, J. A., & McGraw, K. M. (2002). Psychological political science versus political psychology true to its name: A plea for balance. In K. R. Monroe (Ed.), *Political Psychology* (pp. 79-94). Mahwah, HJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Kruglanski, A. (1980). Lay epistemologic process and contents: Another look at attribution theory. *Psychological Review, 87*, 70-87.

Kruglanski, A. W. (1996). Motivated gatekeeper of our minds: Need for closure effects on interpersonal phenomena. In E. T. Higgins, & R. M. Sorrentino (Eds.), *The Handbook of Motivation and Cognition* (pp. 465-496). New York: Guilford.

Kruglanski, A. W. (2004). *The psychology of Closed Mindedness*. New York: Psychology Press.

Kruglanski, A. W., & Thompson, E. P. (1999). Persuasion by a single route: A view from the unimodel. *Psychological Inquiry, 10*, 83-110.

Lau, R. R., & Pomper, G. M. (2001). Effects of negative campaigning on turnout in U.S. Senate Elections, 1988-1998. *The Journal of Politics, 63*, 804-819.

Lau, R. R., Sigelman, L., Heldman, C., & Babbitt, P. (1999). The effects of negative political advertisements: A meta-analytic assessment. *American Political Science Review, 93*, 851-875.

Lau, R. R., Sigelman, L., & Rovner, I. B. (2007). The effects of negative political campaigns: A meta-analytic reassessment. *The Journal of Politics, 69*, 1176-1203.

Legrenzi, P., & Girotto, V. (1996). *Psicologia e politica*. Milano: Raffaello Cortina Editore.

Lemert J. B., Elliot, W. R., Bernstein, J. M. Rosenberg, W. L., & Nestvold, K. J. (1991). *News Verdicts, the Debates, and Presidential Campaigns*. New York: Praeger.

Likert, R. (1932). A technique for the measurement of attitudes. *Archives of Psychology, 140*, 1-55.

Little, A. C., Burris, R. P., Jones, B. C., & Roberts, S. C. (2007). Facial appearance affects voting decisions. *Evolution and Human Behavior, 28*, 18-27.

Livingston, R. W. (2002). The role of perceived negativity in the moderation of African American's implicit and explicit racial attitudes. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 38*, 405-413.

Lodge, M., & Taber, C. S. (2005). The automaticity of affect for political leaders, groups, and issues: An experimental test of the hot cognition hypothesis. *Political Psychology, 26*, 455-482.

Lundqvist, D., Flykt, A., & Öhman, A. (1998). *The Karolinska Directed Emotional Faces - KDEF*. Stockholm: Karolinska Institutet.

Maass, A., Castelli, L., & Arcuri, L. (2000). Measuring prejudice: Implicit versus explicit techniques. In D. Capozza, & R. Brown (Eds.), *Social Identity processes: Trends in theory and research* (pp. 96-116). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publication.

Maass, A., & Russo, A. (2003). Directional bias in the mental representation of spatial events: Nature or culture? *Psychological Science, 14*, 296-301.

Maass, A., Suitner, C., Favaretto, X. & Cignacchi, M. (in press). Groups in space. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*.

Macrae, C. N., Bodenhausen, G. V., & Milne, A. B., & Jetten, J. (1994). Out of mind but back in sight: Stereotypes on the rebound. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 67,* 808-817.

Mae, L., Carlston, D. E., & Skowronski, J. J. (1999). Spontaneous trait transference to familiar communicators: Is a little knowledge a dangerous thing? *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 77,* 233-246.

Maio, G. R., & Haddock, G. G. (2007). Attitude change. In A .W. Kruglanski, & E. T. Higgins (Eds.), *Social psychology: Handbook of basic principles* (pp. 565-586). New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Markus, G. (1982). Political attitudes during an election year: A report on the 1980 NES panel study. *American Political Science Review, 76*, 538-560.

Marques, J. M., & Yzerbyt, V. Y. (1988). The black sheep effect: Judgmental extremity toward ingroup members in inter- and intra-group situations. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, *18*, 287-292.

Marques, J. M., Yzerbyt, V. Y., & Leyens, J.-Ph. (1988). The "Black-Sheep Effect": Extremity of judgments toward ingroup members as a function of group identification. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, *18*, 1-16.

Martin, P. S. (2004). Inside the black box of negative campaign effects: Three reasons why negative campaigns mobilize. *Political Psychology, 25*, 545-562.

Matthews, D., & Dietz-Uhler, B. (1998). The black-sheep effect: how positive and negative advertisements affect voters' perception of the sponsor of the advertisement. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 28*, 1903-1915.

Mazzoleni, G. (2004). *La comunicazione politica*. Bologna: Il Mulino.

McGuire, W. J. (1968). Personality and attitude change: An information processing theory. In A. G. Greenwald, T. C. Brock, & T. M. Ostrom (Eds.), *Psychological foundations of attitudes* (pp. 171-196). San Diego, CA: Academic Press.

McGuire, W. J. (2004). The Poly-Psy relationship: Three phases of a long affair. In J. T. Jost, & J. Sidanius (Eds.), *Political Psychology* (pp. 22-31). New York & Hove: Psychology Press.

Meffert, M. F., Chung, S., Joiner, A. J., Waks, L., & Garst, J. (2006). The effects on negativity and motivated information processing during a political campaign. *Journal of Communication*, *56*, 27-51.

Merritt, S. (1984). Negative political advertising: Some empirical findings. *Journal of Advertising*, *13*, 27-38.

Miller, S. (1956). The magical number seven, plus or minus two: Some limits on your capacity of processing information. *Psychological Review*, *63*, 81-97.

Miller, J. M., & Krosnick, J. A. (2000). News media impact on the ingredients of presidential evaluations: Politically knowledgeable citizens are guided by a trusted source. *American Journal of Political Science*, *44*, 295-309.

Miller, A. H., Wattenberg, M. P., & Malanchuck, O. (1986). Schematic assessment of presidential candidates. *America Political Science Review, 80*, 521-540.

Monroe, K. R. (2002). *Political Psychology*. Mahwah, HJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Montepare, J. M., & Zebrowitz, L. A. (1998). Person perception comes of age: The salience and significance of age in social judgment. In M. P. Zanna (Ed.) *Advances in experimental social psychology* (pp. 93-161). New York: Academic Press.

Morris, P. J., Squires, N. K., Taber, C. S., & Lodge, M. (2003). Activation of political attitudes: A psychophysiological examination of the hot cognition hypothesis. *Political Psychology, 24*, 727-745.

Mummendey, A., Kessler, T., Klink, A., & Mielke, R. (1999). Strategies to cope with negative social identity: predictions by Social Identity Theory and Relative Deprivation Theory. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 76*, 229-245.

Nilsson, I., & Ekehammer, B. (1987). Person-positivity bias in political perception? *European Journal of Social Psychology, 17,* 247-252.

Niven, D. (2006). A field experiment on the effects of negative campaign mail on voter turnout in a municipal election. *Political Research Quarterly*, 59, 203–210.

Nosek, B., & Banaji, M. R. (2001). The go/no-go association task. *Social Cognition*, 19, 625-664.

Nosek, B. A., Smyth, F. L., Hansen, J. J., Devos, T., Lindner, N. M., Ranganath, K. A., Smith, C. T., Olson, K. R., Chugh, D., Greenwald, A. G., & Banaji, M. R. (2007). Pervasiveness and correlates of implicit attitudes and stereotypes. *European Review of Social Psychology, 18*, 36-88.

Novelli, E. (2006). *La turbopolitica. Sessant'anni di comunicazione politica e di scena pubblica in Italia, 1945-2005*. Milano: Bur.

Nuttin, J. (1985). *Future time perspective and motivation: Theory and research method*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Osgood, C. E., Sucu, G. J., & Tannenbaum, P. H. (1957). *The measurement of meaning*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press.

Oxley, D. R., Smith, K. B., Alford, J. R., Hibbing, M. V., Miller, J. L., Scalora, M., Hatemi P. K., & Hibbing, J. R. (2008). Political attitudes vary with physiological traits. *Science, 321*, 1667-1670.

Paladino, P., & Castelli, L. (2008). On the immediate consequences of intergroup categorization: Activation of approach and avoidance motor behaviour toward ingroup and outgroup members. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 34,* 755-768.

Passarelli, G., Castelli, L., Carraro, L., & Arcuri, L. (2006). Le campagne negative e la realtà politica americana: le elezioni presidenziali del 2004. In G. Gangemi (Ed.), *Le elezioni come processo. Nuove tecniche d'indagine e nuovi ambiti di ricerca* (pp. 73-88). Milano, Franco Angeli.

Payne, B. K., Cheng, C. M., Govorun, O., & Stewart, B. (2005). An inkblot for attitudes: Affect misattribution as implicit measurement. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 89*, 277-293.

Patterson, T. E. (1993). *Out of order*. New York: Knopf.

Peeters, G. (1983). Relational and informational pattern in social cognition. In W. Doise, & S. Moscovici (Eds.), *Current Issues In European Social Psychology* (pp. 201-237). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Petty, R. E., & Cacioppo, J. T. (1981). *Attitudes and persuasion: Classic and contemporary approaches*. Brown: Dubeque.

Petty, R. E., & Cacioppo, J. T. (1984). The effect of involvement on responses to argument quantity and quality: Central and peripheral routes to persuasion. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *46*, 69-81.

Petty, R. E., & Cacioppo, J. T. (1986) *Communication and persuasion: Central and peripheral routes to attitude change,* New York: Springer-Verlag.

Petty, R. E., Cacioppo, J. T., Strathman, A. J., & Priester, J. (2003). To think or not to think: Exploring two routes to persuasion. In T. Brock, & M. Green (Eds.), *Persuasion: Psychological Insights and Perspectives* (pp. 81-116). Thousand Oaks, California: Sage.

Petty, R. E., Fazio, R. H., & Briñol, P. (2008). *Attitudes: Insights from the new implicit measures*. New York, NY: Psychology Press.

Petty, R. E., & Wegener, D. T. (1999). The Elaboration Likelihood Model: Current status and controversies. In S. Chaiken, & Y. Trope (Eds.), *Dual process theories in social psychology* (pp. 41-72). New York: Guilford Press.

Phillips, J. M., Urbany, J. E., & Reynolds, T. J. (2008). Confirmation and the effects of valenced political advertising: A field experiment. *Journal of Consumer Research, 34*, 794-806.

Pinkleton, B. E., & Garramone, G. M. (1992). A survey of responses to negative political advertising: Voter cognition, affect, and behavior. *Proceedings of the 1992 Conference of the American Academy of Advertising*, 127-133.

Pratto, F. (1994). Consciousness and automatic evaluation. In P. Niedenthal, & S. Kitayama (Eds.), *The heart's eye: Emotional influences on perception and attention* (pp. 115-143). San Diego, CA: Academic Press.

Purdum, T. S. (1998). Money politics wasn't defeated in California. *New York Times*, June 7th, section 4, 1-4.

Richardson, G. W. (2001). Looking for meaning in all the wrong places: Why negative advertising is a suspect category. *Journal of Communication, 51*, 775-800.

Ricolfi, L. (2005). *Perché siamo antipatici? La sinistra e il complesso dei migliori*. Milano: Longanesi.

Rydell, R. J., & McConnell, A. R. (2006). Understanding implicit and explicit attitude change: A systems of reasoning analysis. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 91*, 995-1008.

Rydell, R. J., McConnell, A. R., Strain, L. M., Claypool, H. M., & Hugenberg, K. (2007). Implicit and explicit attitudes respond differently to increasing amounts of counterattitudinal information. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 37, 867-878.

Roddy, B. L., & Garramone, G. M. (1988). Appeals and strategies of negative political advertising. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media, 32*, 415-427.

Roese, N. J., & Sande, G. N. (1993). Backlash effects in attack politics. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 23*, 632-653.

Rosenberg, S. W., Bohan, L., McCafferty, P., & Harris, K. (1986). The image and the vote: The effect of candidate presentation on candidate preference. *American Journal of Political Science, 30*, 108-127.

Rosenberg, S., Nelson, C., & Vivekananthan, P. S. (1968). A multidimensional approach to the structure of personality impressions. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 9*, 283-294.

Ross, L., Lepper, M. R., & Hubbard, M. (1975). Perseverance in self perception and social perception: Biased attributional processes in the debriefing paradigm. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 32*, 880-892.

Scianò, F. (1989). Una comunicazione bloccata. In J. Jacobelli (Ed.), *La comunicazione politica in Italia* (pp. 181-202). Roma: Laterza.

Sears, D. O. (1983). The person-positivity bias. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 44,* 233-250.

Sears, O. D., Huddy, L., & Jervis, R. (2003). The psychologies underlying political psychology. In O. D. Sears, L. Huddy, & R. Jervis (Eds.), *Oxford handbook of Political Psychology* (pp. 3-16). Oxford: University Press.

Sears, O. D., Huddy, L., & Jervis, R. (2003). *Oxford handbook of Political Psychology*. Oxford: University Press.

Shah, J. Y., Brazy, P. C., & Higgins, E. T. (2004). Promoting us or preventing them: Regulatory focus and manifestations of intergroup bias. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 30,* 433-446.

Shapiro, M. A., & Rieger, R. H. (1992). Comparing positive and negative political advertising on radio. *Journalism Quarterly,* 69, 135-145.

Sherif, M., & Sherif, C. W. (1967). Attitudes as the individual's own categories: The social-judgment approach to attitude and attitude change. In C. W. Sherif, & M. Sherif (Eds.), *Attitude, ego-involvement and change* (pp. 105-139). New York: Wiley.

Sidanius, J., & Pratto, F. (2001). *Social Dominance: An Intergroup Theory of Social Hierarchy and Oppression.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Sigelman L., & Kugler, M. (2003). Why is research on the effects of negative campaigning so inconclusive? Understanding citizens' perception of negativity. *The Journal of Politics, 65*, 142-160.

Sigelman, L., Sigelman, C. K., & Fowler, C. (1987). A bird of a different feather? An experimental investigation of physical attractiveness and the electability of female candidates. *Social Psychological Quarterly, 50*, 32-43.

Skaperdas, S., & Grofman, B. (1995). Modelling negative campaigning. *The American Political Science Review, 89*, 49-61.

Skowronski, J. J., Carlston, D. E., Mae, L., & Crawford, M. T. (1998). Spontaneous trait transference: communicators take on the qualities they describe in others. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology. 74,* 837-848.

Solomsen, F. (1954). *The rhetoric and the poetics of Aristotele*. New York: Random House.

Stewart, J. E. (1985). Appearance and punishment: The attraction-leniency effect in the courtroom. *Journal of Social Psychology, 125*, 373-378.

Strack, F. & Deutsch, R. (2004). Reflective and impulsive determinants of social behavior. *Personality and Social Psychology Review, 8,* 220-247.

Suitner, C., Carraro, L., & Maass, A. (2008). *The positioning bias in representations of couples.* Oral communication presented at the General Meeting of the European Association of Social Psychology. Opatija - Croatia, June 10th-14th.

Tajfel, H. (1981). *Human groups and social categories*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Tajfel, H., Billig, M. G., Bundy, H. P., & Flament, C. I. (1971). Social categorization and intergroup behavior. *European Journal of Social Psychology, 1*, 149-178.

Tesser, A. (1993) On the importance of heritability in psychological research: The case of attitudes. *Psychological Review, 100*, 129-142.

Thurstone, L. L. (1928). Attitudes can be measured. *American Journal of Sociology, 33,* 529–554.

Todorov, A., Mandisoza, A. N., Gore, A., & Hall, C. C. (2005). Inferences of competence from faces predict election outcomes. *Science, 308*, 1623-1626.

Tversky, A., & Kahneman, D. (1981). The Framing of Decisions and the Psychology of Choice. *Science, 211*, 453-458.

Vaes, J., Paladino, M. P., Castelli, L., Leyens, J-Ph., & Giovanazzi, A. (2003). On the behavioral consequences of infra-humanization: The implicit role of uniquely human emotions in intergroup relations. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 85*, 1016-1034.

Wadsworth, A. J., Patterson, P., Kaid, L. L., Cullers, G., Malcomb D., & Lamirand, L. (1987). 'Masculine' vs. 'feminine' strategies in political ads in political ads: Implication for female candidates. *Journal of Applied Communication, 15*, 77-94.

Walther, E., Nagengast, B., & Trasselli, C. (2005). Evaluative conditioning in social psychology: Facts and speculations. *Cognition and Emotion, 19*, 175-196.

Weinberger, J., & Westen, D. (2008). RATS, we should have used Clinton: Subliminal priming in political campaigns. *Political Psychology, 29*, 631-651.

Willis, J., & Todorov, A. (2003). First impressions: Making up your mind after a 100-Ms Exposure to a face. *Psychological Science, 2006*, 17, 592-598.

Wilson, T. D., Lindsey, S., & Schooler, T. Y. (2000). A model of dual attitudes. *Psychological Review*, *107*, 101-126.

Wittenbrink, B., Judd, C. M., & Park, B. (1997). Evidence for racial prejudice at the implicit level and its relationship with questionnaire measures. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 72,* 262-274.

Wittenbrink, B., & Schwarz, N. (2007). *Implicit measures of attitudes*. New York: Guilford Press.

Wojciszke, B., Bazinska, R., & Jaworski, M. (1998). On the dominance of moral categories in impression formation. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 24*, 1245-1257.

Woijciszke, B., & Klusek, B. (1996). Moral and competence-related traits in political perception. *Political Psychology Bulletin, 27*, 319-324.

Word, C. O., Zanna, M. P., & Cooper, J. (1974). The nonverbal mediation of self-fulfilling prophecies in interracial interaction. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 10,* 109-120.

Zebrowitz, L. A., & Montepare, J. M. (1992). Impressions of babyfaced individuals across the lifespan. *Developmental Psychology, 28,* 1143-1152

Zebrowitz, L. A., & Montepare, J. M. (2005). Appearance DOES Matter. *Science, 308*, 1565-1566.

Other Sources:

The comics used in page V are from two websites:

http://images.google.it/imgres?imgurl=http://blogs.indystar.com/varvelblog/10242006.jpg&imgrefurl=http://blogs.indystar.com/varvelblog/archives/2006/10/bad_ads.html&usg=__xiCY3CaX5L5eBzURQjkDjb4DB9A=&h=302&w=425&sz=76&hl=it&start=6&um=1&tbnid=8rM6iA8ODx_JKM:&tbnh=90&tbnw=126&prev=/images%3Fq%3Dcomics%2Bnegative%2Bpolitical%2Bcampaign%26um%3D1%26hl%3Dit

http://images.google.it/imgres?imgurl=http://farm3.static.flickr.com/2309/1805383449_a3b046b308.jpg&imgrefurl=http://stushietoon.blogspot.com/2007_10_01_archive.html&usg=__FK4Y6lhLUrPYfGsxC7ztJakVRtA=&h=380&w=500&sz=171&hl=it&start=4&um=1&tbnid=lBuKMPvEV8ezKM:&tbnh=99&tbnw=130&prev=/images%3Fq%3Dcomics%2Bnegative%2Bpolitical%2Bcampaign%26um%3D1%26hl%3Dit

The spots analyzed in Chapter 5 are from two websites:

http://pcl.stanford.edu/campaigns/2008/bogen.html

http://pcl.stanford.edu/campaigns/2008/jmgen.html

POSITIVE CAMPAIGN

1. We fight every day for democracy and for a free society.
2. We work in compliance with legality that is a warranty of a democratic system.
3. In the past years our Country has had a large progress thanks to our reforms.
4. Our project of stability and progress will develop our Country.
5. Our coalition has a firm tradition and a long history in the Italian political scenario.
6. In the past legislation we have always done our duty toward the citizens.
7. We have in mind a big project of innovation for our Country.
8. Our political project is in line with the politics of the most prominent European Countries.
9. We have always kept our words.
10. Together we will build a better Country.

NEGATIVE IDEOLOGICAL CAMPAIGN (from a Right-wing source candidate)

1. We fight every day for democracy and for a free society.
2. The Left-wing coalition is dishonest and it distorts the truth as none else.
3. The Left-wing coalition does not have a real leader and it is exclusively interested in achieving the political power.
4. Our project of stability and progress will develop our Country.
5. Communism foments the hostility between different social classes.
6. The Left-wing coalition foments dissident groups, fanatics and false pacifists.
7. We have in mind a big project of innovation for our Country.
8. Our political project is in line with the politics of the most prominent European Countries.
9. Nowadays, the Left-wing is usually a political mask for no-global criminals who like terrorists.
10. I make a stand against the cultural monopoly of Communism that aims at forcing an illiberal regime.

NEGATIVE IDEOLOGICAL CAMPAIGN (from a Left-wing source candidate)

1. We fight every day for democracy and for a free society.
2. The Right-wing coalition is a everyday threat for democracy in our Country.
3. The Right-wing coalition aims only at implementing the interests of the upper classes, and it adopts pitiless behaviours toward lower classes.
4. Our project of stability and progress will develop our Country.
5. The Right-wing starves poor people, it thinks only about its own interests. It does not respect human rights.
6. The Italian Right-wing respects neither the Law nor the Institutions.
7. We have in mind a big project of innovation for our Country.
8. Our political project is in line with the politics of the most prominent European Countries.
9. We are in front of a racist and xenophobic Right-wing coalition.
10. I make a stand against the fascist right-wing coalition that proclaims laws in order to defend only its' own interests.

NEGATIVE ISSUE-BASED CAMPAIGN

1. We fight every day for democracy and for a free society.
2. His economical reforms will force the businessman to carry abroad their own enterprises, and thus he will cause a widespread poverty in our Country.
3. In his political program he has included nothing about the pension system, and thus he has given prove of his insensibility toward such an important issue.
4. Our project of stability and progress will develop our Country.
5. His political program is obsolete: he will make us the tail lamp of our Continent.
6. His economical program will not give prosperity and stability to our Country.
7. We have in mind a big project of innovation for our Country.
8. Our political project is in line with the politics of the most prominent European Countries.
9. His proposals about immigration will increase delinquencies and crime in our cities.
10. His declarations indicate his inability in planning effective solutions to the problem of air pollution.

NEGATIVE PERSON-BASED CAMPAIGN

1. We fight every day for democracy and for a free society.
2. He seems to be interested only in how to gain power and how to make a lot of money in this new political role.
3. He never worked a single day in his life; he has always managed to find support from someone else: he is a social parasite.
4. Our project of stability and progress will develop our Country.
5. I am sure that he will not be able to revive our economy; he just doesn't have the intellectual skills to understand the economical complexities of our country.
6. He isn't a real leader. He is not skilled enough to tackle difficult situations with courage and devotion
7. We have in mind a big project of innovation for our Country.
8. Our political project is in line with the politics of the most prominent European Countries.
9. He is a dishonest person who has completely lost his moral consciousness: he is not able to distinguish between what is moral and what is immoral.
10. He is a self-seeker, an egoist person. He thinks only about his own interests and those of his own family.

DESCRIPTION OF THE COMPETENT BUT NOT WARM CANDIDATE

He has been involved in politics for 20 years. He has been a city councilmen for several times in his native town. Moreover, he has been once an alderman, and now he is the outgoing Major. His colleagues describe him as a skilled and efficient person. He has good knowledge about environmental, economical and financial politics. During his last political role he gave prove to be a very rational person and confident in his own capacities and knowledge. Without any help he made the right decisions for his own town and his citizens. Many people attend his political meetings because his proposals are usually bright: he is described as a person very intelligent and able in suggesting ideas and solutions for every kind of problem.

However, specifically in these public situations another image emerges: the one of a person not at all warmth and likeable. He answers promptly to the questions from the public, but he is not able to be kind and gentle with others. Frequently he works alone; he does not like to have many colleagues proving that he is not friendly. His fellow citizens remember him as a very competent and wise Major, but not as a lovable person.

DESCRIPTION OF THE WARM BUT NOT COMPETENT CANDIDATE

He has been involved in politics for 20 years. He has been a city councilmen for several times in his native town. Moreover, he has been once an alderman, and now he is the outgoing Major. His colleagues describe him as a warmth and friendly person. His colleagues love him because he is always able to motivate them to do their own best: he is a kind and pleased person who likes working in team. Many people think that he is a perfect colleague and leader because of his lively sense of humour. Indeed, he is able to minimize every situation and he is always happy. He is very gentle, kind and nice with others. He pays close attention to social politics helping the needy people.

Many people attend his political meetings because of his social talent. However, the public is usually disillusioned by the content of his political meetings. Indeed, he is not efficient and confident in his own proposals. He usually seems not at all a rationale and self-sufficient person, able to alone suggest valuable ideas. Very often he is not able to answer to the public giving prove that he is not competent about several topics. His fellow citizens remember him as a lovable and sensitive Major, but not as an intelligent person.

APPENDIX C

STATEMENTS ABOUT CHALLENGER'S COMPETENCE (negative campaign)

1. Giving our country to him will be a big mistake: he is not able to propose the innovations our country needs in order to develop a flourishing economy.

2. His agenda is completely inconsistent. In one moment, he says something and two minutes later he says exactly the opposite. And this is true not only for one topic, but for everything.

3. So far, he has lost every political race and therefore has never held any important political position. I am sure that he has no idea what this new political role could mean, as he does not have any prior experience.

4. If you look at his life you can see that he has moved from one job to another. He is proud of this because he says that he is an eclectic person with a lot of experience. But what he doesn't tell us is that every time he switched his job, he was actually fired from the previous one.

5. In his last appearance on a political TV show, a journalist asked him about his ideas on global warming and he was just astonished; he didn't even answer the question. Probably he has never even thought about it.

6. I am sure that he will not be able to revive our economy; he just doesn't have the intellectual skills to understand the economical complexities of our country.

STATEMENTS ABOUT OWN COMPETENCE (positive campaign)

1. Immediately after I graduated, I was contacted by a major company and they offered me a job that was related to the topic of my thesis. Even though I was very young at that time, they were very satisfied with my work, and they promoted me to the level of a junior manager after my first three months on the job.

2. I have been involved in politics for more than 15 years now. During these years of legislation, I have learned many important things and I have gained a lot of experience in this field.

3. I like to improve my knowledge in every field. I am an eclectic person. I have a lot of interests, and I will be able to implement the necessary solutions for the problems we currently face in our country.

4. During my last legislation, I was able to revive the economy in my hometown. I also introduced a tax bill that provided significant support for the average family.

5. My political program for the next legislation is rich in new ideas and full of innovative suggestions for every field: economy, environment, and social welfare.

6. Some years ago, the Mayor of another city called me to get some information on what to do in his town about public security. They have now introduced a model that I have proposed during my last legislation, and the success rate is just remarkable.

STATEMENTS ABOUT CHALLENGER'S MORALITY (negative campaign)

1. He seems to be interested only in how to gain power and how to make a lot of money in this new political role.
2. He never worked a single day in his life; he has always managed to find support from someone else: he is a social parasite.
3. He is a dishonest person who has completely lost his moral consciousness: he is not able to distinguish between what is moral and what is immoral.
4. He has no interest in helping others; he only thinks about his own interests. For example, in his program he proposed a salary increase for himself that is disproportionately higher compared to any other job in this country.
5. In order to win this political race, he is promising incentives to individual companies that he will probably pay with public money. In fact, his political campaign is supported by some pretty dubious corporations.
6. Some years ago, a journalist caught him cheating on his wife. She thought that he was out of town for a political meeting. Instead, he went on a personal trip to Mexico with his secretary.

STATEMENTS ABOUT OWN MORALITY (positive campaign)

1. I am married for 25 years and I have a daughter and a son. I very much enjoy spending time with my family, which is very important for me.
2. When I went to college, I always worked night-shifts in a local factory to help my parents to pay for my tuition. I did every kind of job because I did not want to be a financial burden to my family.
3. Last year someone tried to bribe me with cash and other favours, but I have never accepted. I have always refused to play this game, and that will never change.
4. I am a hardworking man and I stick to my word. I will always try everything that is possible to do what I promised.
5. My wife and I regularly organize charity events to support our local community. The last one we organized supported people who have lost their homes during the recent flood. To my knowledge, that one was the biggest charity event ever in the history of our community.
6. I think that I am good father who taught his children the importance of moral values. My daughter recently found a wallet on the street with all sorts of documents and a lot of money. She immediately called the owner to return the wallet. He was so happy that he wanted to give her a big reward, but she didn't accept it. He insisted, so in the end, she proposed to donate the reward to a charity.

POSITIVE CAMPAIGN

1. We fight every day against the racquet.
2. We are working in order to solve the problem of unemployment.
3. Our political project is in line with the politics of the most prominent European Countries.
4. We will do something in order to reduce the red tape.
5. Our coalition has a firm tradition and a long history in the Italian political scenario.
6. We fight every day for democracy and for a free society.
7. We have in mind a big project of innovation for our Country.
8. We will fight against the tax evasion.
9. In the past legislation we have always done our duty toward the citizens.
10. Together we will build a better Country. Our cities will be more liveable.

ATTACK TO THE OPPOSING CANDIDATE

1. We fight every day against the racquet.
2. The right- (or left-) wing candidate is a fanatic person.
3. Our political project is in line with the politics of the most prominent European Countries.
4. The political program proposed by the right- (or left-) wing candidate will not get better our Country.
5. Our coalition has a firm tradition and a long history in the Italian political scenario.
6. The right- (or left-) wing candidate does not know the meaning of make a sacrifice and he does not have sense of duty.
7. The right- (or left-) wing candidate is unsuccessful.
8. Together we will build a better Country. Our cities will be more liveable.
9. In the past legislation we have always done our duty toward the citizens.
10. The right- (or left-) wing candidate is an eternal loser. He is an hollow and shallow person.

ATTACK TO THE ELECTORATE

1. We fight every day against the racquet.
2. The right- (or left-) wing voters are fanatic persons.
3. Our political project is in line with the politics of the most prominent European Countries.
4. The right- (or left-) wing voters will not get better our Country.
5. Our coalition has a firm tradition and a long history in the Italian political scenario.
6. The right- (or left-) wing voters do not know the meaning of make a sacrifice and they have not the sense of duty.
7. The right- (or left-) wing voters are unsuccessful.
8. Together we will build a better Country. Our cities will be more liveable.
9. In the past legislation we have always done our duty toward the citizens.
10. The right- (or left-) wing voters are eternal losers. They are hollow and shallow persons.
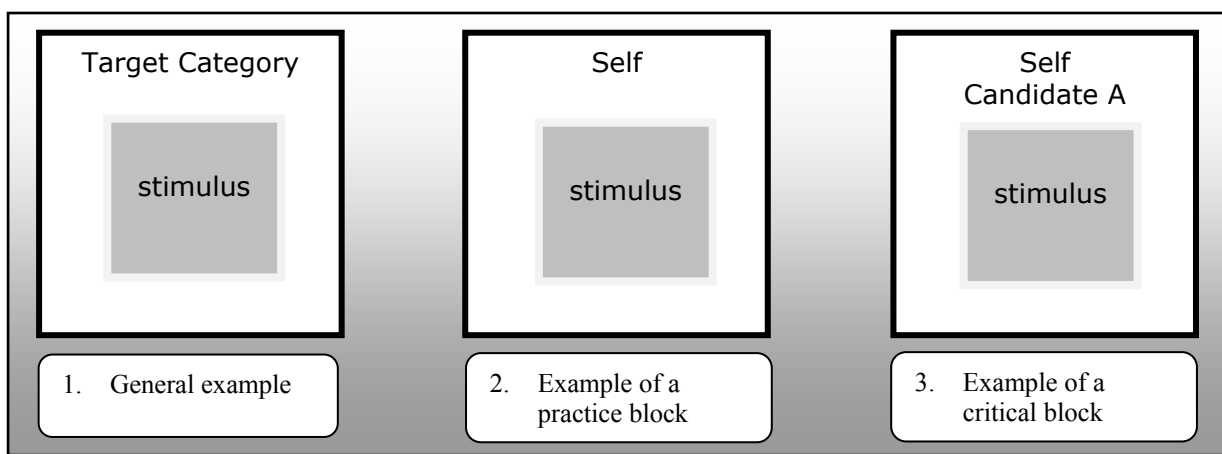
- Stimuli:

  - Self Relevant words: I, My, Me, Self, My, Self, Mine

  - Others Relevant words: They, Them, Their, He, It, His

  - Three pictures of two ostensible candidates (for private reasons the pictures are not included here)

- Task:

Participants were asked to press the space bar on the computer keyboard every time that the stimulus presented at the centre of the computer screen belonged to the category that was written at the top of the screen (see the examples below). When the stimulus did not belong to such category, participants were asked to give no answer. Three examples of the task are reported in the picture below. The blocks of tasks are reported in the table.

Target Category	Self	Self Candidate A
stimulus	stimulus	stimulus
1. General example	2. Example of a practice block	3. Example of a critical block

Task	Target Category	Presented stimuli	Number of trials
4 practice blocks in a random order	Self relevant words	Self relevant words + others relevant words	25
	Other relevant words	Self relevant words + others relevant words	25
	Candidate A	Candidate A + Candidate B	25
	Candidate B	Candidate A + Candidate B	25
4 critical blocks in a random order	Self relevant words + Candidate A	Self relevant words + others relevant words + Candidate A + Candidate B	76
	Self relevant words + Candidate B	Self relevant words + others relevant words + Candidate A + Candidate B	76
	Others relevant words + Candidate A	Self relevant words + others relevant words + Candidate A + Candidate B	76
	Others relevant words + Candidate B	Self relevant words + others relevant words + Candidate A + Candidate B	76

- Indices: **Study 2 (Chapter 2):** For each participant we calculated the mean latencies for   correct responses in each of the four critical blocks. Then, a difference score for each candidate   was calculated in such a way that high values indicated high self association with the candidate: (others relevant words + Candidate A or B) – (self relevant words + Candidate A or B).

  Study 4 (Chapter 2): For each participant we calculated four indices based on the latencies of correct responses in the 4 critical blocks.

APPENDIX F:
Implicit Approach/Avoidance Task (Paladino & Castelli, 2008)
Chapter 2 - Study 4

- Stimuli:

  ▪ Three pictures of two ostensible candidates (for private reasons the pictures are not included here)

- Task:

Participants were presented on the computer screen with pictures of the two political candidates, and they were required to press a forward key (i.e., approach) on a modified computer keyboard every time they saw a picture of one candidate, and to press a backward key (i.e., avoidance) when they saw a picture of the other candidate. Every participant performed two blocks of trials: in one block participants were required to approach one candidate and avoid the other; whereas in the other block the key assignment was reversed. The order of the two blocks was counterbalanced across participants.
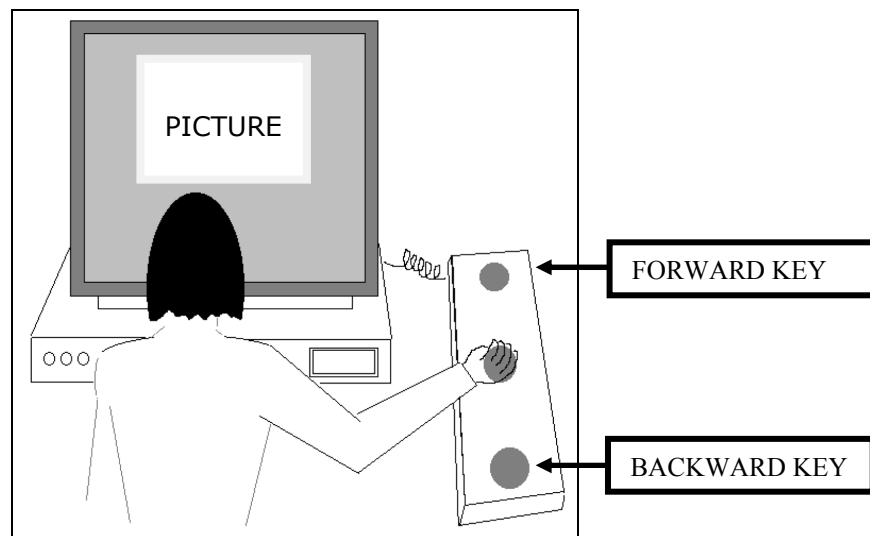
Example of the task (picture from Paladino & Castelli, 2008)

Task	Presented stimuli	Number of trials
Approach Candidate A & Avoid Candidate B	Pictures of the two candidates	46
Approach Candidate B & Avoid Candidate A	Pictures of the two candidates	46

- Indices: For each participant we calculated four indices based on response latencies (high values indicated a slow movement).

  The four variables were: 1) approaching Candidate A;
  2) avoiding Candidate A;
  3) approaching Candidate A;
  4) avoiding Candidate B.

# APPENDIX G:
Affective Misattribution Procedure (Payne et al., 2005)
Chapter 3 - Study 5

♦ Stimuli:

- Primes: One picture × 3 ostensible political candidates (for private reasons the pictures are not included here) and a grey square;

- 80 Chinese ideographs

♦ Task:

Participants were asked to press a key on the right side of the computer keyboard (*Numpad 5*) if they considered the Chinese ideograph as more pleasant than the average of Chinese ideographs, and a key on the left side (*A*) if they considered the Chinese ideograph as less pleasant than the average. An example of the task is reported in the figure below.
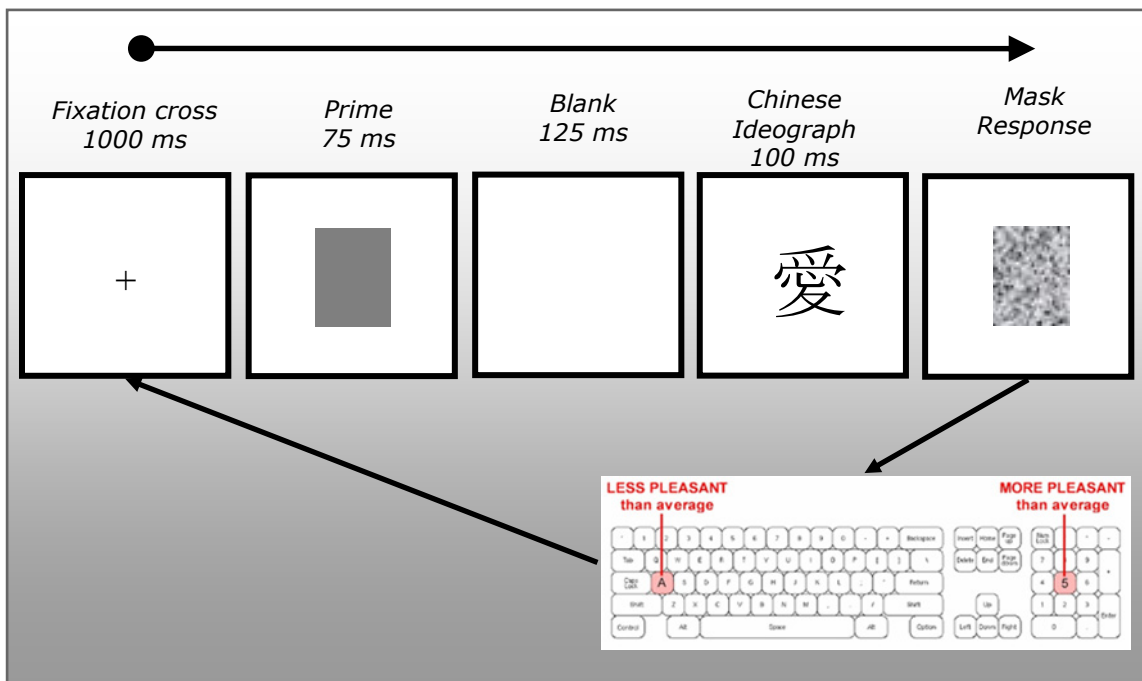
	Prime	Number of trials
random order	Candidate A	20
	Candidate B	20
	Unfamiliar man	20
	Grey square	20

♦ Indices: First, we calculated the proportion of *more pleasant* responses for each prime. Then baseline-corrected priming indices were calculated by subtracting the proportion of *more pleasant* responses on trials with a grey square prime from the proportion of *more pleasant* responses on trials with the pictures of the three ostensible candidates.

APPENDIX H:
Implicit Association Task (Greenwald et al., 1998)
Chapter 4 - Study 6

◆ Stimuli:

- Positive words: pleasure, happiness, heaven, wonderful, joy, love

- Negative words: pain, horrible, terrific, disaster, ugly, death

- 6 logos of Left-wing parties: Comunisti Italiani, Democratici di Sinistra, La Margherita, La Rosa nel Pugno, L'Ulivo, L'Unione

- 6 logos of Right-wing parties: Alleanza Nazionale, Alternativa Sociale, Forza Italia, La Casa delle Libertà, Lega Nord, UDC

◆ Task:

Positive	Negative
Right-wing	Left-wing
stimulus	
Example of a critical block	
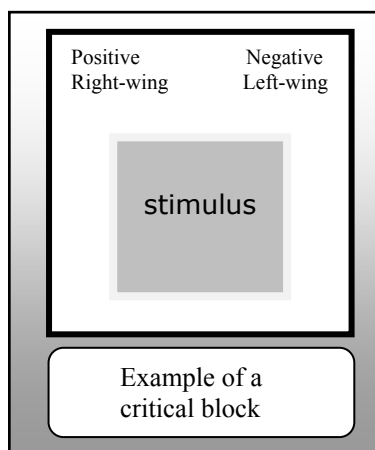
Participants went through a sequence of 5 blocks (3 learning blocks and 2 critical blocks, see the table below) during which they had to classify logos as referring to the right- or to the left-wing coalition and words as either positive or negative pressing a key on the right (*K*) or left (*D*) side of the computer keyboard as soon as possible. In the picture there is an example of the computer screen in a critical block. The five blocks are reported in the table below. The order of the second and the fourth learning blocks were counterbalanced across participants, as well as the order of the two critical blocks.

Task	Description: Participants were asked to classify between:		Presented stimuli	Number of trials
1. **Learning block**	positive words (D)	negative words (K)	Positive + negative words	20
2. **Learning block**	Right-wing parties (D)	Left-wing parties (K)	Logos of right- and left-wing parties	20
3. **Critical block**	positive words or Right-wing parties (D)	negative words or Left-wing parties (K)	Positive and Negative words Logos of right- and left-wing parties	40
4. **Learning block**	Left-wing parties (D)	Right-wing parties (K)	Logos of right- and left-wing parties	20
5. **Critical block**	positive words or Left-wing parties (D)	negative words or Right-wing parties (K)	Positive and Negative words Logos of right- and left-wing parties	40

◆ Indices: First, we calculated the mean of the latencies of correct responses and of the standard deviation of the two critical blocks. Then, for each participant we calculated an index in such a way that positive scores indicated a stronger association between positive words and left-wing coalition as compared to the right-wing coalition. For instance, in the example reported in the table we subtracted the mean of correct responses of the fifth block from the mean of the third block and then divided by the standard deviation (Greenwald et al., 2003)

APPENDIX I:
Go/ No-go Association Task (Nosek & Banaji, 2001)
Chapter 4 - Study 6

- Stimuli:

    - Self Relevant words: I, My, Me, Self, My, Self, Mine

    - Others Relevant words: They, Them, Their, He, It, His

    - 6 logos of Left-wing parties: Comunisti Italiani, Democratici di Sinistra, La Margherita, La Rosa nel Pugno, L'Ulivo, L'Unione

    - 6 logos of Right-wing parties: Alleanza Nazionale, Alternativa Sociale, Forza Italia, La Casa delle Libertà, Lega Nord, UDC

- Task: Participants were asked to press the space bar on the computer keyboard every time that the stimulus presented at the centre of the computer screen belonged to the category that was written at the top of the screen. When the stimulus did not belong to such category, participants were asked to give any answer. Three examples of the task are reported in the picture in appendix E. The tasks are reported in the table.

Task	Target Category	Presented stimuli	Number of trials
4 practice blocks in a random order	Self relevant words	Self relevant words + others relevant words	25
	Other relevant words	Self relevant words + others relevant words	25
	Left-wing parties	Left-wing + Right-wing parties	25
	Right-wing parties	Left-wing + Right-wing parties	25
4 critical blocks in a random order	Self relevant words + Left-wing parties	Self relevant words + others relevant words Left-wing + Right-wing parties	76
	Self relevant words + Right-wing parties	Self relevant words + others relevant words Left-wing + Right-wing parties	76
	Others relevant words + Left-wing parties	Self relevant words + others relevant words Left-wing + Right-wing parties	76
	Others relevant words + Right-wing parties	Self relevant words + others relevant words Left-wing + Right-wing parties	76

- Indices: For each participant we obtained four variables derived from the mean latencies of responses in the four critical blocks. Then, we calculated two indices for each participant: one regarding the self association with the outgroup and the other one with the ingroup (in both cases: party and other relevant words - party and self relevant words). Finally, we calculated a single index in which higher values indicated a stronger self-association with the ingroup coalition over the outgroup coalition (ingroup – outgroup).
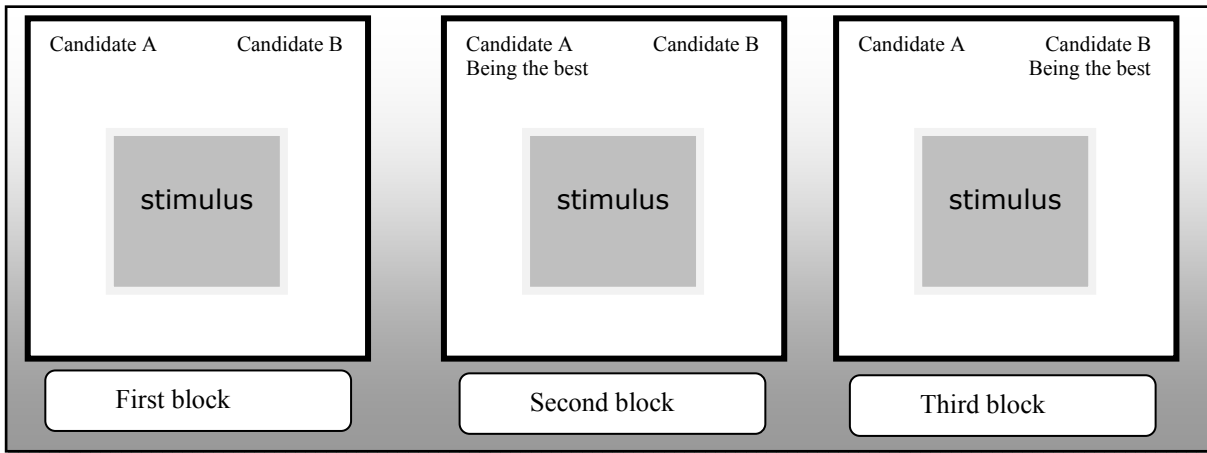
APPENDIX L:
Single Category IAT (Karpinski & Steinman, 2006)
Chapter 6 - Study 1

• Stimuli:

- Candidate A: 3 photos and 3 labels with name and surname

- Candidate B: 3 photos and 3 labels with name and surname

- 6 words referring to "*being the best*"   the best, preferable, advantageous, major, successful, better

• Task: Participants went through a sequence of 3 blocks (1 learning blocks and 2 critical blocks, see the table below) during which they had to classify stimuli referring to the two candidates and the words pressing a key on the right (*K*) or left (*D*) side of the computer keyboard as soon as possible. In the picture below there is an example of the computer screen for each block. The three blocks are reported in the table below. The order of the second and the third blocks were counterbalanced across participants

Candidate A Candidate B	Candidate A Candidate B Being the best	Candidate A Candidate B Being the best
stimulus	stimulus	stimulus
First block	Second block	Third block

Task	Description: Participants were asked to classify between:		Presented stimulus	Number of trials
First Block	Candidate A (D)	Candidate B (K)	Candidate A and Candidate B	24
Second block	Candidate A Being the best (D)	Candidate B (K)	Candidate A and Candidate B + words referring to *being the best*	48
Third block	Candidate A (D)	Candidate B Being the best (K)	Candidate A and Candidate B + words referring to *being the best*	48

• Indices: The SC-IAT was scored by subtracting the response times between the second and the third block. Then, this difference score was divided by the standard deviation of the response times. In our study the *D* indices were created in a way that positive scores indicated a stronger association between the words related to "*being the best*" and the *competent but not warm candidate*.