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**« When Your Culture Advocates You: The Effect of Cultural Work
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THESE

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Résumé Général en Français

“La France est une République indivisible, laïque, démocratique et sociale. Elle assure l'égalité devant la loi de tous les citoyens sans distinction d'origine, de race ou de religion. Elle respecte toutes les croyances.”¹

Comment la version française de le sécularisme, Laïcité, interagir avec les identités religieuses? Est-ce que Laïcité est en conflit avec les croyances religieuses? Comment la culture française réussie à créer un équilibre entre les valeurs de la République, parmi eux la laïcité est le plus important, et les valeurs religieuses? Est-ce que cet équilibre existe? Comment les individus en France perçoivent la société, ses valeurs, sa structure, et comment interagissent-ils avec ces éléments dans l'environnement de travail?

Ce sont les questions que à l'origine j'avais dans la tête, tout en commençant la thèse. À évidence, trouver les réponses à ces questions nécessite beaucoup plus de ressources et de connaissances interdisciplinaires. Dans cette thèse j'essaie d'explorer certains aspects dans les quels les croyances, les identités et les perceptions des individus contribuent à leur comportement, en particulier dans le contexte des valeurs culturelles françaises. Principalement, des valeurs telles que la laïcité et de l'égalitarisme sont les grands intérêts dans la recherche actuelle. Cette thèse vise à explorer la mesure dans laquelle ces valeurs influencent les perceptions

¹ CONST. art. 2 (1958) (Fr.)

des gens et leurs croyances implicites, et par conséquent les effets de ces croyances sur leurs attitudes au travail et de la motivation.

Tout d'abord, l'importance de la Laïcité dans la culture française et les perceptions de la méritocratie et de la mobilité en France sont discutées. Et enfin, le contour de chaque essai serait décrit.

SECULARISME EN FRANCE

Nous devons rechercher les origines de la laïcité française à la Révolution française et son conflit avec la tradition catholique. Dans ce conflit, la révolution, d'abord, a essayé de contrôler le catholicisme (1790), puis de se transformer en une religion (les cultes révolutionnaires de 1793, accompagnés par la persécution politico-religieuse), avant d'établir une courte durée de séparation l'Église et l'État (1795). Cependant, coexister avec la ferveur révolutionnaire quasi-religieuse, n'a pas résolu le conflit (Baubérot, 2000a, 2000b).

Napoléon a essayé de stabiliser les principes de la laïcité en excluant dispositions religieuses du Code civil français. Par exemple, l'enregistrement des naissances, des mariages et des décès a été sécularisé et l'Église catholique a dû accepter un régime d'égalité avec le protestantisme et Judaïsme- les «autres religions officielles». Toutefois, la société française ne pouvait pas maintenir sa pluralité religieuse, plutôt a tourné à être plus dichotomique à la suite d'un conflit entre deux groupes: le «camp clérical» qui soutenaient la France de redevenir "la fille aînée de l'Église», et le «camp anticlérical" qui a considéré que la France soit la «fille de la révolution" sur la base des «valeurs de 1789" (Baubérot, 2000a). En d'autres termes, la France comme une nation catholique oppose la France comme une nation moderne qui n'a pas s'identifier en termes d'engagement religieux.

Alors que la transition vers une séparation complète de l'Église et de l'État est passé, pacifiquement et lentement, à travers la liberté de conscience et la liberté de l'éducation, il est resté loin de l'idéal. Bien que le catholicisme est pas considéré comme la religion officielle de la France, les traditions catholiques laissés par le rôle public de la religion sont toujours traçables dans le calendrier officiel. Dans la troisième république, "le lundi de Pâques" et "Lundi de Pentecôte " ont été ajoutés à la précédente jours fériés religieuses- Noël , Toussaint, l'Ascension et l'Assomption. "La France, donc, n'a pas se couper de ses racines religieuses, mais les jours sacrés des autres religions- comme le judaïsme, l'islam ou bouddhisme- ne sont reconnus que dans l'octroi d'un congé individuel pour les fonctionnaires et les écoliers" (Baubérot, 2000b, p. 4).

À cet effet, la laïcité en France ne peut pas être réduit à un système juridique et politique, "il est aussi une culture, une philosophie, une émancipation de tous « cléricisme », entendu comme le contrôle de l'esprit par un discours établi qui rejette tout débat" (Baubérot, 2000b , p. 6). Cette philosophie a été loué, admiré et même aimé par les dirigeants français et par la société (Gunn, 2004). Par exemple, dans un discours sur la prévention des écoliers de porter des vêtements religieux, le président Jacques Chirac a déclaré: « La laïcité est inscrite dans nos traditions. Il est au cœur de notre identité républicaine [...] Ces valeurs fondent la singularité de notre Nation. Ces valeurs portent notre voix haut et loin dans le monde.

Ce sont les valeurs qui font France [...] La laïcité garantit la liberté de conscience. Elle protège la liberté de croire ou de ne pas croire. Elle assure à chacun la possibilité d'exprimer et de pratiquer sa foi, paisiblement, librement, sans la menace de se voir imposer d'autres convictions ou d'autres croyances ».

Ainsi, en France sa compréhension particulière de la laïcité est liée à un sentiment

de s'identification (Gunn, 2004, p. 429) et il ne doit pas être confondue avec la «liberté des religions". Bien que la liberté de conscience est le principe de la laïcité, il a souvent été critiqué pour ne fournir pas un environnement convivial pour l'établissement et la pratique de la liberté des religions, ni la «culture de la religiosité» (Norris et Inglehart, 2011). Par exemple, la France et les Etats-Unis sont très similaires dans leur attitude envers les droits de l'homme et de sa supposition courante- l'homme a des droits hérités. Ainsi, en ce qui concerne les croyances absolues et les dossiers des droits de l'homme, les Américains et les Français sont fiers qu'ils sont des modèles pour le reste du monde. De même, les deux nations croient en la laïcité, mais dans les façons différentes -laïcité pour les français et « liberté de religion » pour les Américains.

Bien que ces concepts semblent partager les mêmes valeurs, il y a une différence fondamentale culturelle entre les façons conçoive à la française et les Américains conçoivent ces valeurs. Par exemple, les votes législatifs écrasants sur les vêtements religieux en France et le Serment d'allégeance aux États-Unis, initialement suggèrent une différence frappante entre les deux pays. En 2004, l'Assemblée nationale et du Sénat français ont voté de façon disproportionnée pour l'adoption d'une nouvelle loi interdisant les enfants dans les écoles publiques de porter des vêtements et insignes que « manifester ostensiblement une appartenance religieuse. »²

Deux ans plus tôt, La Chambre des Représentants et le Sénat des États-Unis ont voté, fortement, à réaffirmer la langue de Serment d'Allégeance au drapeau des États-Unis en gardant les mots «sous l'autorité de Dieu» (Gunn, 2004). Ainsi, en France, les écoliers sont interdits de se livrer à l'expression religieuse dans leur choix de vêtements, tandis qu'aux Etats-Unis, le Congrès a insisté pour que le langage religieux

² Law No. 2004-228 of Mar. 15, 2004, J.O., Mar. 17, 2004, at 5190

reste dans le Serment, qui vise à être récité dans les écoles publiques à travers le pays.

La culture française pourrait être considérée laïque à la fois dans les aspects politiques et sociétaux. Bien que la culture française est très influencée par les traditions catholiques, les fêtes catholiques, -les fêtes du prénom basé sur le calendrier, etc.- la pratique de la religion dans la société est principalement limitée à l'espace privé et la publicité de toutes les traditions religieuses dans les organismes publics, y compris les écoles, sont interdits par la loi et non tolérés par les normes sociales.

En termes de déclaration de croire en Dieu, pratiques, et l'engagement religieux personnelle, la France est classée beaucoup plus proche des pays laïques d'Europe du Nord (soit la Grande-Bretagne, le Danemark et Pays-Bas) que de ceux du Sud (Willaime, 1998). En ce sens, la France semble être l'un des pays les plus laïques en Europe. En d'autres termes, la laïcité, est devenue une religion civile dans ce pays (Chelini-Pont, 2009). Pendant ce temps, l'islam est la deuxième religion en France (Willaime, 1998) et environ huit à dix pour cent de la population est constituée d'origine musulmane d'Afrique du Nord et sub-saharienne et de Moyen-Orient (United States Department of State, 2012), pour lesquels les valeurs religieuses ont été profondément intériorisées par les coutumes et les traditions de la famille, les médias et les études religieuses dans les écoles ou les collèges.

À cet égard, la France fournit un contexte ambigu pour l'étude de l'identité religieuse. Dans le premier essai de cette thèse, je tente de saisir l'impact des croyances religieuses sur les attitudes et le comportement de travail dans un cadre comparatif culturel - la culture de la religiosité contre la laïcité.

STRUCTURE SOCIALE EN FRANCE

Basé sur la théorie de la classe de Bourdieu (1977; 1990) - l'une des théories les plus influents sur la mobilité sociale en France - Goux et Maurin (1997) ont analysé l'Enquête nationale française sur l'éducation et la qualification et ont découvert une interaction à trois entre l'origine sociale, éducation, et la destination sociale en France. En d'autres termes, leurs résultats montrent que les personnes ayant une éducation identique commencent avec plus ou moins le même niveau social, mais leurs cheminements de carrières pourraient être très différents selon qu'ils proviennent de les couches supérieures ou les couches inférieures de la société. De plus, «la manière dont les membres d'une cohorte de naissance spécifique atteignent leur destination- d'abord à l'école, puis dans la société- a peu évolué pendant du XXe siècle» (Goux et Maurin, 1997, p. 173). Ainsi, la France ne correspond ni à l'hypothèse du modèle inégalitaire méritocratique, ni l'hypothèse d'un modèle non-méritocratique. Le développement du système éducatif français n'a pas été accompagnée par une augmentation de la malléabilité de la structure sociale.

La méritocratie est un système social "dans lequel les individus aller de l'avant et de gagner des récompenses en proportion directe de leurs efforts et de capacités individuelles" (McNamee & Miller, 2009, p. 2). Le cœur de cette idéologie est de croire que le système social fournit toutes les chances de la réussite, étant donné le travail acharné. Ainsi, la méritocratie guide les gens à croire que la mobilité ascendant est réalisable se ils investissent suffisamment d'efforts et travaillent dur, qui peut être conceptualisée comme éthique de travail. On définit la mobilité sociale comme un mouvement vers le haut ou vers le bas au long de l'échelle sociale. Dans les différentes sociétés, les personnes qui appartiennent à une strate socio-

économique spécifique ont l'opportunité d'améliorer leur situation socio-économique et passer à une classe sociale supérieure. Ces opportunités varient en qualité et en quantité, en fonction des caractéristiques culturelles, politiques et socio-économiques de la société (Andrews et Leigh, 2009; Causa et Johansson, 2010).

Des recherches en ce sens ont révélé que dans les pays comme la France, la Norvège, la Suède, l'Israël et l'Irlande, les gens perçoivent le gouvernement à être plus responsable de la fourniture des besoins par rapport à des pays comme les Etats-Unis et l'Australie; et cette perception est médiée par des conceptions de causalité externes, à savoir, les causes structurelles et fatalistes (Shirazi & Biel, 2005). Remarquablement, comparé à la moyenne, la relation entre l'attribution de causalité externe des causes de la pauvreté et de la responsabilité du gouvernement est beaucoup plus forte pour les Américains. Cette perception signifie que «l'importance attachée à possibilités offertes par la société a déterminé support attendu du gouvernement plus que les attributions internes de la pauvreté" (Shirazi & Biel, 2005). On peut se attendre que les gens attribuent une importance particulière aux facteurs structurels dans la société, par exemple, la réussite et l'échec.

Dans cette thèse, je explore la façon dont les gens perçoivent la réalité de la structure sociale en tant que malléable contre fixé et son impact sur leurs attitudes envers la méritocratie.

Est-ce que les gens travailleraient plus fort si elles croient que la structure sociale est malléable? En substance, le plus les gens croient qu'ils ont la possibilité de briser la structure sociale, le plus ils cherchent mérite grâce au travail acharné comme un moyen pour l'accomplissement. Les gens augmenteraient leur effort si elles croient que le déplacement vers le haut dans la hiérarchie sociale est probable parce qu'ils se rendent compte que le travail est la clé qui ouvre les portes et les déplace vers le

haut. Cependant, lorsque les individus estiment que la structure sociale est rigide, ils ont tendance à l'auto-handicap et retiennent leur effort. Croyant qu'ils ne seraient jamais en mesure d'améliorer leur situation socio-économique, ils retirent leur effort.

GRANDES LIGNES DE LA THÈSE

Essai 1

Cette recherche tente de se lancer dans une nouvelle perspective sur la notion d'éthique de travail: l'impact positif des croyances religieuses qui ne tient que dans les cultures qui adhèrent aux valeurs de la foi. Prenant la culture nord-africaine comme l'un des contextes les plus idéologiques et orienté vers la religion, et la culture française comme l'un des plus laïques, j'examine cette hypothèse de découvrir si dans les cultures religieuses telles que la culture nord-africaine, ci-après dénommés _ maghrébin, par rapport aux cultures les plus laïques européennes, les croyances religieuses seraient prédiraient l'éthique de travail individuel. Ainsi, je suggère et soutiens que la culture interagit avec des pensées religieuses, de prédire l'attitude et le comportement des individus concernant le travail. Plus précisément, je prends une approche différente de fournir des preuves pour les hypothèses ci-dessus en réalisant des expériences de laboratoire dans lequel je contrôle les variables socio-économiques et d'évaluer le sens de la causalité.

Ainsi, à travers trois études, cette recherche vise à éclairer la relation causale entre les croyances religieuses et l'éthique de travail. En adoptant une approche interculturelle, on compare des individus du Maroc et de la France (étude 1) et franco-maghrébine biculturels (Étude 2) par l'impact des pensées religieuses sur leur éthique de travail. Dans l'étude 3, nous faisons un étape en avant pour explorer l'impact des pensées religieuses et l'identité culturelle sur le comportement de travail,

à savoir les efforts sur l'exécution d'une tâche. Je crois que l'impact de la spiritualité est limité au milieu culturel, que ce soit en étant extrêmement laïque dans le cas des normes sociétales français, ou plutôt religieuse dans le cas de la culture maghrébine. Par conséquent, je prédis que la spiritualité mène à un niveau plus élevé de l'éthique de travail uniquement lorsque la culture intègre et intériorise les valeurs religieuses.

Essai 2

Dans cette recherche, je explore la relation entre les causes structurelles (par exemple, l'échec de la société à fournir l'égalité des chances de réussir) et les croyances pro-méritocratie (i.e. répartition de la valeur de l'effort et la réussite est le résultat du travail dur). La mesure dans laquelle la structure sociale est considérée comme favorable à la mobilité conduirait les individus à être plus méritocratique. Plus précisément, j'examine si les individus français qui croient en la malléabilité, pas la rigidité, de la structure sociale répartiraient plus d'importance aux éléments primaires de la méritocratie, à savoir, l'éthique du travail et de l'effort. Je soutiens que, indépendamment des taux réels de la mobilité sociale, les individus perçoivent la structure de la société d'être sur une gamme allant de très rigide à très malléable, et cette perception aura un impact significative sur leurs attitudes envers le travail et le comportement au travail. Notamment, je prédis que ceux qui éprouvent la mobilité et ceux qui ont une opinion plus malléable de la société endossent les attitudes méritocratiques plus fortes et par conséquent attachent plus d'importance et de valeur pour le travail acharné et investissent plus d'efforts dans l'exécution d'une tâche.

Essai 3

L'objectif de cette recherche était d'étudier les conséquences de l'activation des valeurs implicites liés au travail concernant l'attitude et le comportement de travail

des individus. De plus, ce travail examine les conséquences cognitives de l'activation de croyances religieuses. Il démontre que les pensées religieuses sont capables de déclencher des niveaux plus élevés de construal qui peuvent conduire les individus à traiter l'information et prendre des décisions d'une manière plus abstraite. Selon la théorie du niveau de construal, la mentalité abstraite conduit les individus à se concentrer davantage sur l'objectif de niveau supérieur et de se comporter en plus de manière autoréglementation. Ainsi, il est proposé que le niveau de construal se fait le médiateur entre les valeurs de travail activés et le comportement au travail.

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When Your Culture Advocates You: The Effect of Cultural Work Values on Performance

Cultural values and their impact on people's attitudes and behavior have long been a place for debate. Globalization, migration and expatriation have contributed to the conflict caused by the interaction among multiple cultural identities, particularly when it comes to organizations with diverse workforce. Specifically, France is a unique case that provides a historically and culturally rich, yet very ambiguous context for studying this topic. The dominant culture in France emphasizes on *egalitarianism* and *secularism*. However, a great part of the population has adopted distinct cultural values with regard to their religious beliefs. Moreover, the perception about 'equal opportunities' provided by the society varies considerably across the cultures. The topic is specifically important at workplace, where individuals with diverse and sometimes divergent beliefs take part in collective activities.

The objective of this dissertation is to discover the mechanisms by which cultural attributes predict work ethic and productivity- first, through their interaction with religious beliefs; and second through the implicit theories about the societal structure.

Specifically, **chapter 2, The Impact Of Religious Beliefs And Cultural Identity On Work Ethic**, attempts to explore the impact of religious beliefs on work ethic, with an emphasis on the moderating effect of culture. In this chapter, three studies provide evidence that thoughts related to religiosity impact individuals' work ethic. In a comparative setting, Moroccan participants who were primed with religious thoughts exhibited greater work ethic, while French participants endorsed lower degree of work ethic in the religious condition (*study 1*). For North African-French participants, religious stimuli interacted with cultural identity to predict work ethic (*study 2*). Moreover, we found a significant effect of the religious thoughts and cultural identity on work behavior, namely the level of effort (*study 3*). Religious thoughts influenced work ethic and behavior positively when the North African cultural identity, *a culture of religiosity*, was salient and negatively when the French cultural identity, *a laïque culture*, was salient. In **chapter 3, How do Beliefs about the Malleability of Social Structure Impact Meritocratic Attitudes and Behavior?**, I try to explore the link(s) between beliefs about the malleability of social structure and individuals' attitudes towards meritocracy. When individuals believe that the society in which they live offers them developmental and fair opportunities, are they more likely to adopt meritocratic attitudes and behavior? Individuals who have actually experienced progression in the social hierarchy tend to perceive society as meritocratic and express the desire to be meritocratic (*study 1*). Those who believed that social structure is flexible, rather than rigid, endorsed a stronger work ethic and valued hard work as the key to success (*study 2a*) and invested more effort on a given task (*study 2b*). Study 3 manipulated beliefs about social structure and demonstrated that these beliefs are changeable. Finally, **chapter 4, Religious Stimuli at Workplace and Individual Performance: The Role of The Abstract Mindset**, is a conceptual paper in which I tried to explore the psychological mechanism that underlies the link between religious thoughts and work attitudes. I propose that religious stimuli activate the abstract mindset, resulting in conceiving concepts related to work in a higher level of construal.

Across three essays, this dissertation addresses a particularly important issue as faced by employers and policy makers, specifically in France. It provides a compelling understanding about a number of antecedents of work ethic and work behavior; namely, the cultural and religious values, perceptions about the malleability of social structure, and mindsets.

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S.T.

Dedication

*I dedicate this thesis to
my family.*

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Chapter 1

When Your Culture Advocates You: An Introduction

*“La France est une République indivisible,
laïque, démocratique et sociale. Elle assure
l'égalité devant la loi de tous les citoyens sans
distinction d'origine, de race ou de religion.
Elle respecte toutes les croyances.”³*

How does the French version of secularism, *Laïcité*, interact with values of people who strongly believe in religion and how does this interaction predict attitudes and behaviors? How does the French culture manage to create a balance between the values of French republic, among them *Laïcité* is the most important, and the religious values? How do individuals in France perceive the society, its values, its structure, and how do they interact with these elements in work environment?

These are the questions I originally had in mind while started writing this thesis. Clearly, addressing these questions requires much more resources and interdisciplinary knowledge. In this dissertation I attempt to explore some aspects

³ “France is a Republic that is indivisible, laïc, democratic, and social. France assures the equality before the law of all its citizens without any distinction based on origin, race, or religion. It respects all beliefs.”
CONST. art. 2 (1958) (Fr.)

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in which individuals' beliefs, identities and perceptions contribute to their behavior, specifically in the context of the French cultural values. Mainly, values such as secularism and egalitarianism are of great interests in the current research. This dissertation aims at exploring the extent to which these values influence people's perceptions and implicit beliefs, and consequently the impacts of these beliefs on their work attitudes and motivation.

Work Ethic has been a topic of research for many years. Enormous amount of research have been dedicated in discovering its religious vs. secular nature. However, the debate is still alive and it is even more important given that globalization, migration and expatriation contribute to the increased complexity of the cultural-religious elements in the society. In my dissertation I began with comparing French and North-African cultures in the way they attribute religion to work attitude- considering one as a '*secular culture with Catholic background*' and the other as a '*culture of religiosity*'. However, the French version of secularism appeared to be much more influential on the implicit beliefs people hold about religion. Thus, it is important to have a better insight about the difference between secularism as it is implied in other countries and Laïcité as it is practiced in France. The first part of this chapter is dedicated to this topic.

As part of this dissertation, I also explored the different perceptions of the social structure and their impact on meritocratic attitudes. Once more, studying this topic in France sheds light to the different mechanisms in which social mobility works through. Values of French republic emphasize on socialist and egalitarian attitudes, yet, France appears to be elitists and to some extent rigid in

its social structure. Although, in my dissertation I mainly explore people's perceptions, rather than the real rate of social mobility, having a better understanding of the social structure in France seems to be important. In the second part of this chapter, I try to describe how French social structure manages issues such as equality of opportunities.

Following, the importance of Laïcité in the French culture and the perceptions of malleability of social structure, meritocracy and mobility in France are discussed. And finally, I briefly describe the outline of each essay in this dissertation.

A. Secularism In France

We need to search for the origins of French secularism in the French Revolution and its conflict with the Catholic tradition. In that conflict, the revolution tried first to control Catholicism (1790), then to turn itself into a religion (the revolutionary cults of 1793, accompanied by politico-religious persecution), before establishing a short-lived separation of Church and State (1795). However, coexisting with the quasi-religious revolutionary fervor, did not resolve the conflict (Bauberot, 2000a, 2000b).

Napoleon tried to stabilize principles of secularism by excluding religious provisions from the French Civil Code. For example, the registration of births, marriages and deaths was secularized and the Catholic Church had to accept a regime of equality with Protestantism and Judaism- the "other official religions". However, French society could not maintain its religious plurality; instead, turned

to be more dichotomous as a result of a conflict between two groups: the “clerical camp” who argued for France to once again become “the elder daughter of the church”, and the “anticlerical camp” who considered France to be the “daughter of revolution” based on the “values of 1789” (Bauberot, 2000a). In other words, France as a Catholic nation opposed France as a Modern nation that did not identify itself in terms of religious commitment.

While the transition to a complete separation of church and state happened, peacefully and slowly, through freedom of conscience and freedom of education, it remained far from ideal. Although Catholicism is not considered as the official religion of France, catholic traditions are still traceable in the official calendar. In the third republic, “Easter Monday” and “White Monday” were added to the previous religious holidays- Christmas, All Saint Day, Ascension and Assumption. “France has not therefore cut herself off from her religious roots, but the holy days of other religions- such as Judaism, Islam or Buddhism- are recognized only in the granting of individual leave of absence for civil servants and school children” (Bauberot, 2000b, p. 4).

Therefore, Laïcité in France cannot be reduced to a legal and political system, “it is also a culture, an ethos, an emancipation from all ‘clericalism’ understood as control of the mind by an established discourse rejecting all debate” (Bauberot, 2000b, p. 6) that has been praised, admired and even loved by the French leaders and consequently the society (Gunn, 2004). For example, in a speech about preventing schoolchildren from wearing religious clothing, President Jacques Chirac stated, “Laïcité is inscribed in our traditions. It is at the heart of our

republican identity [...] Its values are at the core of our uniqueness as a Nation. These values spread our voice far and wide in the world. These are the values that create France [...] Laïcité guarantees freedom of conscience. It protects the freedom to believe or not to believe. It assures everyone of the possibility to express and practice their faith peaceably, freely, though without threatening others with one's own convictions or beliefs."

Thus, in France one's particular understanding of Laïcité is tied to one's sense of identity (Gunn, 2004, p. 429), yet it should not be confused with "freedom of religions". Although freedom of conscious is the main tenant of Laïcité, it has been often criticized as not being able to provide a friendly environment for establishing and practicing the freedom of religions, nor the "culture of religiosity" (Norris & Inglehart, 2011). For example, France and the United States are very similar in their attitude towards the human rights and its common assumption- the human beings have inherent rights. Thus, regarding the absolute beliefs and records of the human rights, both Americans and French take pride that they are models for the rest of the world. Similarly, both nations believe in secularism but in different ways- Laïcité for French and "Freedom of Religion" for Americans.

Although these concepts appear to share the same values, there is fundamental cultural difference in the way French and Americans conceive these values. For instance, the overwhelming legislative votes on religious clothing in France and the Pledge of Allegiance in the United States initially suggest a striking difference between the two countries. In 2004, French National Assembly and Senate voted disproportionately for adopting a new law prohibiting children in public schools

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from wearing clothing and insignia that “conspicuously manifest a religious affiliation.”⁴

Two years earlier, the American House of Representatives and Senate voted strongly to reaffirm the language of the American Pledge of Allegiance by keeping the words “under God” (Gunn, 2004). Thus, in France, schoolchildren are prohibited from engaging in religious expression in their choice of clothing, while in the United States, Congress has insisted that religious language remains in the Pledge, which is designed to be recited in public schools throughout the country.

French culture could be considered as secular both in political and societal aspects. Although French culture is extremely influenced by catholic tradition- catholic holiday, name days based on the catholic calendars, etc.- the practice of religion in the society is mostly limited to the private space and advertising any religious tradition in public organizations including the schools are forbidden by law and not tolerated by social norms. France is ranked much closer to the northern European secular countries (i.e. Great Britain, Denmark, and Holland) than to the southern ones in terms of declaration of believing in God, practices, and personal religious commitment (Willaime, 1998). In this sense, France appears to be one of the most secular countries in Europe. In other words, *Laïcité*, has become a civil religion in this country (Chelini-Pont, 2009). Meanwhile, Islam is the second religion in France (Willaime, 1998) and about eight to ten percent of the population consists of Muslim background from North and Sub-Saharan Africa and Middle East (United States Department of State, 2012), for whom the

⁴ Law No. 2004-228 of Mar. 15, 2004, J.O., Mar. 17, 2004, at 5190

religious values have been deeply internalized through the family customs and traditions, media and religious studies at schools or colleges.

In this regard, France provides an ambiguous context for studying religious identity. In the first essay of this dissertation, I attempt to capture the impact of religious beliefs on work attitudes and behavior in a comparative cultural setting- culture of religiosity vs. Laïcité.

B. Social Structure In France

Based on Bourdieu's Class theory (1977; 1990) - one of the most influential theories about social mobility in France - Goux and Maurin (1997) analyzed the National French Survey on Education and Qualification and discovered a three-way interaction between social origin, educational attainment, and social destination in France. In other words, their findings exhibit that individuals with identical education begin with more or less social level, but their career paths might be quite different depending on whether they come from the upper or the lower strata of the society. Moreover, "the manner in which members of a given birth cohort reach their destination- first in school, then in society- has barely evolved during the twentieth century" (Goux & Maurin, 1997, p. 173). Thus, France fits neither the assumption of inegalitarian meritocratic model nor the assumption of non-meritocratic model. The development of French educational system has not been accompanied by an increased malleability of social structure.

Meritocracy is a social system "in which individuals get ahead and earn rewards in direct proportion to their individual efforts and abilities" (McNamee & Miller,

2009, p. 2). The core tenet of this ideology is to believe that the social system provides every opportunity for success, given hard work. Thus, meritocracy leads people to believe that upward mobility is achievable if they invest sufficient effort and work hard, which can be conceptualized as work ethic. We define social mobility as upward or downward movement along the social ladder. In different societies, individuals who belong to a specific socio-economic stratum are given the opportunity to improve their socio-economic situation and move up to a superior social class. These opportunities vary in quality and quantity, depending on the cultural, political and socio-economical characteristics of the society (Andrews & Leigh, 2009; Causa & Johansson, 2010).

Past research revealed that in countries such as France, Norway, Sweden, Israel and Ireland, people perceive the government to be more responsible for the provision of needs compared to countries such as the United States and Australia; and this perception is mediated by external causal conceptions, i.e., structural causes (Shirazi & Biel, 2005). Remarkably, compared to the average, the relationship between the external causal attribution of the causes of poverty and the government's responsibility is significantly stronger for Americans. This perception means that "importance attached to opportunities provided by society determined support expected from the government more than the internal attributions for poverty" (Shirazi & Biel, 2005). We can expect that people allocate particular importance to the structural factors in society.

In this dissertation, I explore the way people perceive the reality of the social structure as malleable vs. fixed, and its impact on their attitudes towards

meritocracy.

In essence, the more people believe that they have the likelihood to break through the social structure, the more they seek merit through hard work as a means for achievement. People would increase their effort if they believed that moving upward in the social hierarchy is likely because they realize that hard work is the elemental key that opens doors and moves them upward. However, when individuals believe that the social structure is rigid, they tend to self-handicap and withhold their effort. Believing that they would never be able to improve their socio-economic situation, they would withdraw their effort.

This dissertation is composed of three standalone papers.

C. Thesis Structure

Chapter 2

This research attempts to venture into a new perspective on the very notion of work ethic: the positive impact of religious beliefs that holds only within the cultures that embrace values of faith. Taking the North-African culture as one of the most ideological and religious oriented contexts, and French culture as one of the most secular ones, I test this hypothesis to discover whether in religious cultures such as North-African culture, hereafter referred as Maghrebian⁵, compare to the more secular European cultures, religious beliefs would predict

⁵ Maghrib, (Arabic: “West”), also spelled Maghreb, region of North Africa bordering the Mediterranean Sea. It comprises essentially the Atlas Mountains and the coastal plain of Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, and Libya.

individual's work ethic. Thus I suggest and argue that culture interacts with religious thoughts, to predict individuals' attitude and behavior regarding work. More specifically, I take a different approach to provide proofs for the above hypotheses by conducting lab experiments in which I control for socio-economic variables and assess the causality direction.

Thus, across three studies, this research aims to shed light on the causal relationship between religious beliefs and individual's work ethic. By taking a cross-cultural approach, we compare individuals from Morocco and France (*study 1*) and Franco-Maghrebian biculturals (*Study 2*) in the way religious thoughts impact their work ethic. In study 3, we take a step ahead to explore the impact of religious thoughts and cultural identity on work behavior, namely effort on performing a task. I believe that the impact of spirituality is limited to the cultural milieu, whether being extremely secular in the case of French societal norms, or rather religious in the case of Maghrebian culture. Therefore, I predict that spirituality results in a higher level of work ethic only when the culture incorporates and internalizes the religious values.

Chapter 3

In this research, I explore the relationship between structural causes (e.g., failure of society to provide equal opportunity to succeed) and pro-meritocracy beliefs (i.e., allocation of value to effort and success is a result of hard work). The extent to which the social structure is viewed as supportive of mobility would lead individuals to be more meritocratically oriented. More specifically, I examine whether French individuals who believe in the malleability, not the rigidity, of the

social structure would allocate greater importance to the primary elements of meritocracy, namely, work ethic and effort. I argue that regardless of the actual rates of social mobility, individuals would perceive the structure of society to be on a spectrum ranging from very rigid to very malleable, and this perception will significantly impact their attitudes towards work and work behavior. I particularly predict that those who experience mobility and those who hold a more malleable view of society endorse stronger meritocratic attitudes and consequently attach more importance and value to hard work and invest more effort in performing a task.

Chapter 4

The goal of this research was to explore the consequences of activating the implicit values related to work regarding individuals' work attitude and behavior. Furthermore, this work examines the cognitive consequences of activating religious beliefs. It demonstrates that religious thoughts are able to trigger higher levels of construal that can lead individuals to process information and make decisions in a more abstract way. According to construal-level theory, the abstract mindset leads individuals to focus more on the superordinate goal and behave in more self-regulatory manner. Thus, it is proposed that the construal level will mediate the link between activated work values and work behavior.

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Chapter 2

The Impact Of Religious Beliefs And Cultural Identity On Work Ethic

A. Abstract

The cultural and religious antecedents of work ethic have long been a place for debate. This research attempts to explore the impact of religious beliefs on work ethic and the moderating effect of culture. Three studies provide evidence that thoughts related to religiosity impact individuals' work ethic. In a comparative setting, Moroccan participants who were primed with religious thoughts exhibited greater work ethic, while French participants endorsed lower degree of work ethic in the religious condition (*study 1*). For North African-French participants, religious stimuli interacted with cultural identity to predict work ethic (*study 2*). Moreover, we found a significant effect of the religious thoughts and cultural identity on work behavior, namely the level of effort (*study 3*). Specifically, religious thoughts influenced work ethic and behavior positively when the North African cultural identity was salient and negatively when the French cultural identity was salient. We argue that implicit religious beliefs can predict work ethic; however the effect is contingent on cultural setting. In cultures that historically embrace and encourage religious values, work ethic can be considered as a religious construct. In the secular cultures, however, religiosity diminishes work ethic. The contributions and implications are further discussed.

Keywords: Work Ethic, Religious Beliefs, Secular Culture, Franco-Maghrebian Biculturalism, Experimental Method

B. Introduction

Cross-cultural psychology has long been interested in how different cultures influence the way individuals construe the work values. Research on work ethic, following the tradition inspired by Max Weber (Weber, 1905), has focused on the impact of religiosity and religious values on the way individuals perceive work values.

Although this trend of research has discovered significant correlations between religious affiliations and work ethic, it mainly concentrated on specific religious denominations and did not take into account the role of the cultural settings. More specifically, the impact of believing in spirituality on individuals' work attitude and behavior has remained relatively unexplored. Moreover, almost all of these studies concentrated on the correlation between religiosity and work ethic and left the question of causality unanswered. We are interested in inquiring whether implicit beliefs in religion predict work ethic. Specifically, this research is trying to investigate the nature of work ethic and its religious and cultural antecedents.

Beliefs in religion and spirituality have always been recognized as drives for various attitudes and behaviors (Saroglou, 2011). Particularly, research on cultural and social psychology has revealed that ideological values are associated with many positive and negative psychological and behavioral outcomes. For instance, there are evidences that religious thoughts and values would directly impact psychological well-being, prosocial behavior and altruism, and self-

regulatory behavior (Laurin, Kay, & Fitzsimons, 2011; Norenzayan & Shariff, 2008; Pichon, Boccato, & Saroglou, 2007). Moreover, research has shown that religiosity not only could shape, be part of, and be influenced by culture, it could interact with cultural values to influence cognition, emotions and actions (Saroglou & Cohen, 2011).

This research attempts to venture into a new perspective on the very notion of work ethic: the positive impact of religious beliefs that holds only within the cultures that embrace values of faith. Taking the North-African culture as one of the most ideological and religious oriented contexts, and French culture as one of the most secular ones, we test this hypothesis to discover whether in religious cultures such as North-African culture, hereafter referred as Maghrebian⁶, compare to the more secular European cultures, religious beliefs would predict individual's work ethic. Thus we suggest and argue that culture interacts with religious thoughts, to predict individuals' attitude and behavior regarding work. More specifically, we take a different approach to provide proofs for the above hypotheses by conducting lab experiments in which we control for socio-economic variables and assess the causality direction.

Thus, across three studies, this research aims to shed light on the causal relationship between religious beliefs and individual's work ethic. By taking a cross-cultural approach, we compare individuals from Morocco and France (*study 1*) and Franco-Maghrebian biculturals (*Study 2*) in the way religious

⁶ Maghrib, (Arabic: "West"), also spelled Maghreb, region of North Africa bordering the Mediterranean Sea. It comprises essentially the Atlas Mountains and the coastal plain of Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, and Libya.

thoughts impact their work ethic. In study 3, we take a step ahead to explore the impact of religious thoughts and cultural identity on work behavior, namely effort on performing a task. We believe that the impact of spirituality is limited to the cultural milieu, whether being extremely secular in the case of French societal norms, or rather religious in the case of Maghrebian culture. Therefore, we predict that spirituality results in a higher level of work ethic only when the culture incorporates and internalizes the religious values.

C. Conceptual Background

a. Is Work Ethic Religious, Secular Or Culture-Specific Construct?

Meriac et al. (2010) define work ethic as “a set of beliefs and attitudes that reflects the fundamental values of work”. This definition originated from Weber’s classification of “Protestant Work Ethic” (Weber, 1905). He established the association between religion and work values by incorporating the Protestant values into the perception of prosperity and economic growth. Based on Weber’s thesis, Protestantism is the only religion that can provide its believers with enough level of awareness to positively influence economic emergence. A great deal of empirical studies has been devoted to exploring the dimensions of Protestant Work Ethic (PWE), its measurement, its antecedents and consequences (Arslan, 2001; A. Furnham, 1984; Meriac et al., 2010).

According to Weber’s thesis the puritan belief system of Protestantism, and specifically Calvinism, encourages interaction with the divine not through clergy but by taking the responsibility for one’s own actions. Weber argues that

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Protestantism differs significantly on this dimension from other western religions, and that provides foundations for a belief system in which work is seen as an instrument that gives meaning to life and contributes to the morals of the individual.

Despite Weber's emphasis on the role of Protestant beliefs, current conceptualizations tend to consider work ethic as an attitudinal construct pertaining to work-oriented values such as hard work, autonomy, fairness, wise and efficient use of time, delay of gratification, and the intrinsic value of work. Furnham (1990) argues that Protestant work ethic is not a unilateral belief system but a multidimensional construct. The factor analysis of several instruments exhibited that the fundamental dimensions of PWE emphasize on need for achievement and improvement, time management to improve effectiveness, anti-hedonic lifestyle, competition, self-discipline, diligence, and teamwork. Although most of the previous research took a Weberian view and emphasized on Protestant values, others have raised the question in comparative religious settings. Arslan (2001) for instant, compared samples of Protestant, Catholic and Muslim managers on five dimensions of PWE, namely: "Hard work brings success", "work as an end itself", "attitude towards saving money and time", "internal locus of control", and "negative attitude towards leisure". The results demonstrate that there are significant differences among three samples on various dimensions, and in general, Muslim managers endorsed a higher level of PWE compared to their Protestant and Catholic counterparts. Arslan (2001)

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argues that the Sufi-Muslim tradition encourages a puritan lifestyle similar to Protestantism.

Similarly, recent studies attempted to apply the theoretical framework and measures of PWE in different cultural and religious contexts (A. J. Ali & Al-Owaidan, 2008; Arslan, 2001; Yousef, 2001; Zulfikar, 2011). This body of research either finds no effect of religion, or significant effects of religious affiliations other than Protestantism, on work ethic. For instance, Islamic Work Ethic Scale has been developed by Ali (1988) in order to measure Muslim individual's orientation toward work ethic. Although the research on cultural dimensions categorizes Islamic nations as highly collectivist (Hofstede, 1983; S. H. Schwartz, 1999; S. Schwartz, 1992), research on Islamic work ethic demonstrates that it is highly correlated with Protestant work ethic, job involvement and work individualism (A. J. Ali, Falcone, & Azim, 1995), as well as job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Yousef, 2001). These contradicting effects of religious affiliation on work ethic could draw more attention to the fundamental impact of religion on individual's beliefs about work. More specifically, one could be concerned whether religion at all could have any effect on work ethic, or this construct is more embedded in characteristics of the cultural setting.

Research on work-centrality, as being one of the most important dimensions of work ethic construct (Arslan, 2001; Meriac et al., 2010; Meriac, Woehr, Gorman, & Thomas, 2013), reveals that part of the variance on this dimension could be traced to cultural and ethnic differences. In one study, Israeli Muslim and Jewish

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participants exhibited significantly different attitudes towards work (Moshe Sharabi, 2009). Although the participants are of the same nationality, Sharabi (2009) emphasizes on the role of fundamental values in ethnic subcultures. Specifically, among all the other variables, Muslim participants exhibited higher degrees of work-centrality and negative attitudes towards leisure. Muslim and Jewish participants differ significantly on their attitude towards religious-cultural values. The author argues that in the Islamic subculture there is a tendency to allocate more importance to religion and community compared to the Jewish subculture. One could wonder if there is a link between the attitude towards religion in a given cultural setting and work-oriented behavior. In other words, does the importance of religion in any subculture interfere with the impact of religious values on individual's work behavior? As Weber also posits that although Protestant values are fundamental to work ethic, "once the values are established in the society and therefore considered expected behavior, they are not aligned with any one set of religious beliefs" (Weber, 1905). Considering that most religious traditions have come to share the values and attributes of work ethic (Ray, 1982), the extent to which these religious attributes are prominent among the cultural values could predict the impact of religious beliefs on work ethic.

Despite the interest in exploring the nature of this construct, it appears this body of literature does not clarify the link between religion and work ethic with regard to the cultural values. First, it is not clear whether work ethic is a religious or a secular construct. Second, the importance of cultural setting,

whether being hospitable or unreceptive of religious values, is ambiguous. This paper is trying to shed light to question of work ethic when it is traced back to its religious and cultural roots. More specifically we argue that religion can predict work ethic, however, this effect is contingent to the cultural context. Cultures differ in their attitude towards religion on a scale from extremely secular to extremely religious (Norris & Inglehart, 2011). This dimension moderates the effect of religion on work ethic in a sense that the more the cultural values embraces religious belief, the more the work ethic is influenced by religious stimuli. Figure 1 provides a schematic view of this hypothesis.

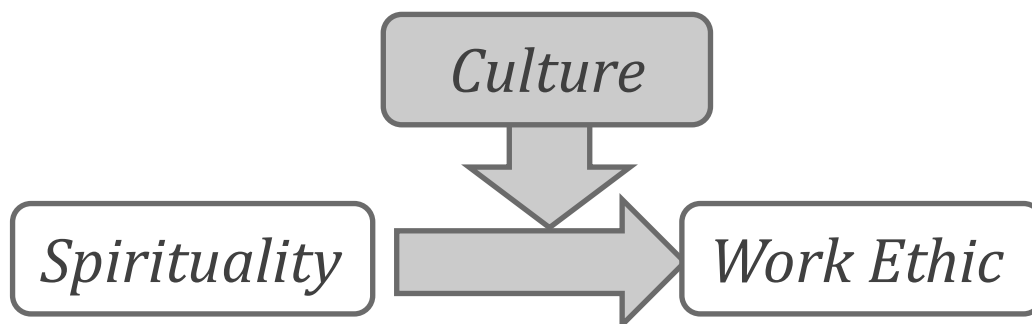


Figure 1 Schematic review of the hypothesis

b. Implicit Impact of Religious Thoughts on Behavior

Recently, many scholars tried to elaborate on the influence of religious values on individual's behavior by conducting laboratory experiments. For instance, explicitly and implicitly priming with religious ideas triggered higher levels of public self-awareness and lead individuals to respond more socially desirable

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(Gervais & Norenzayan, 2011) and remembering God as a punishing agent decreased the cheating behavior in an anonymous setting (Shariff & Norenzayan, 2011). Many studies exhibit that religious beliefs go beyond consciously accessible cognitive domain and can act in a more implicit way (Boyer, 2003). Individuals who have been primed with concepts related to God, behaved more prosocially and generously and allocated more money to anonymous strangers (Shariff & Norenzayan, 2007). Laurin, Kay and Fitzsimons (2011) argue that because God is considered as an omnipotent, controlling force, and at the same time an omniscient, all-knowing force, priming by God concepts affects self-regulatory behavior, by increasing self-control and temptation resistance.

Furthermore, research on implicit beliefs reveal that values and belief systems are associated with their environmental features such as settings, individuals and behaviors. Encountering these environmental factors will automatically evoke the value system. Thus, there will be an automatic association between value and characteristics of the environment in which they are being frequently pursued. Once the value system is triggered, and during the time it remains salient, it drives individual's behavior without the individual's awareness, and thus unlikely to be controlled (Tanya L. Chartrand & Bargh, 2002). Accordingly, one could argue that religious beliefs, when activated, are influential as far as they are in congruence with the environmental and cultural setting.

A recent study by Uhlmann et al. (2011) reveals that religious values can also be activated and operated unconsciously to influence work performance.

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Americans who were primed with words related to salvation and divinity performed significantly better on the task than Canadians. The fact that even non-protestant Americans exhibited a strong priming effect confirms that the cultural heritage of Protestantism is chronically accessible for all the members of the American society regardless of individuals' conscious beliefs and awareness.

In order to activate the cultural and religious values, they need to first, be available by having been internalized and extensively experienced by the individual. Second, the cultural knowledge elements have to be chronically accessible i.e. widely shared, frequently used and cognitively accessible to members of the group. Finally, the cultural knowledge and values are to be applicable to that very situation (Hong, Wan, No, & Chiu, 2007).

c. Importance of Cultural Setting

The social psychologists and organizational scholars have vastly explored work ethic in the western cultures, particularly the Protestant Work Ethic in the American culture. There are, however, few studies referring to the impact of religious and spiritual beliefs on work ethic in other cultures. In this vein, we argue that the impact of religion on attitudes towards work is not limited to Protestantism but could expand to any culture that encourages internalizing spiritual values.

It is noteworthy that the “culture of religiosity” may or may not exist in any secular and unsecular society (Norris & Inglehart, 2011). Many cultures do not appreciate religious values as much as the others. Specifically, in the modern secular cultures, religion is not practiced as widely as it used to be practiced and

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appreciated. It is noteworthy that secularism in its political sense does not necessarily result in a non-religious culture. The United States, for example, is a secular country as the separation of church and state is the first amendment to the constitution. Yet, the American culture cherishes religion and spirituality. The congressional session, many government meetings, many meetings in public and private organizations, and many school days begin with the Pledge of Allegiance to “one nation under God”, and the currency of the United States is inscribed with the motto “In God We Trust”. While the Americans try to ensure the separation of church and state, the private life of a vast majority of Americans is influenced by religion (Rifkin, 2013).

France, on the other hand, provides an ambiguous context. French culture, could be considered as secular both in political and societal aspects. Although French culture is extremely influenced by catholic tradition- catholic holiday, name days based on the catholic calendars, etc.- the practice of religion in the society is mostly limited to the private space and advertising any religious tradition in public organizations including the schools are forbidden by law and not tolerated by social norms. France is ranked much closer to the northern European secular countries (i.e. Great Britain, Denmark, and Holland) than to the southern ones in terms of declaration of believing in God, practices, and personal religious commitment (Willaime, 1998). In this sense, France appears to be one of the most secular countries in Europe. In other words, *Laïcité*⁷, has become a civil religion in this country (Chelini-Pont, 2009). In French culture,

⁷ Laicism

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religious studies and religious symbols are banned in public organizations and media. Ironically, French culture respects Laïcité as a 'holy' ideology. Meanwhile, Islam is the second religion in France (Willaime, 1998) and about eight to ten percent of the population consists of Muslim background from North and Sub-Saharan Africa and Middle East (United States Department of State, 2012), for them the religious values have been deeply internalized through the family customs and traditions, media and religious studies at schools or colleges.

In Islamic cultures, spiritual beliefs are chronically accessible and hence, can be activated by situational cues and guide individuals' work attitude and behavior. Moreover, the results of studies on Islamic work ethic (A. Ali, 1988; A. J. Ali & Al-Owaihan, 2008; Moayedi, 2010; Yousef, 2000, 2001) reveal that Islamic culture extremely inspire people to commitment to work and sincerity. Islamic work values encourage individuals to work in order to develop self-interest and social prestige, and moreover, to promote societal welfare. Islam invites people to persist on learning and working. Quran considers poverty as the promise of the Devil (Quran 2;268) and Prophet Mohammed emphasized that "*hardwork caused sins to be absolved*" and that "*to work is to worship*"(A. J. Ali & Al-Owaihan, 2008, p. 10).

In Middle-Eastern and North-African countries the Islamic values are vastly presented and respected, regarding the high degree of identification with religion (Sidani & Thornberry, 2010). Although in many societies, practicing religion is not part of the everyday life of many Muslims, the Islamic values have been highly internalized thanks to the traditional rituals, family-oriented

customs, educational systems⁸ and media. As a result, individuals in many Arab countries are expected to be highly committed to ethic of work (A. Ali, 1988; A. J. Ali, 1992; A. J. Ali & Al-Owaihian, 2008).

Given the highly secularized cultural values in France, and highly religious values among North-African countries, these societies provide a comparative context for studying the impact of religion and culture on work ethic. In this regard, we conducted three studies in order to compare these cultural settings and their impact on the way spirituality influences work ethic.

d. Overview of the Studies

In these studies, rather than restraining the research to correlational studies, we aim at identifying the causal effect of spirituality and religion on work ethic by conducting three laboratory experiments. In the first study, to assess the secular or religious nature of work ethic construct, we compare Moroccan and French participants in their implicit work ethic while the religious thoughts are activated. Taking into account that religious beliefs is vastly internalized among North African nations and considering the work as being highly valued in Islamic cultures we expect a high and positive correlation between religious thoughts and work ethic for Moroccans but not for the French participants. In the second study we take a sample of Franco-Maghrebian participants and manipulate both religious thoughts and cultural identity in order to check for the moderating impact of culture on the link between religion and work ethic. In the third study, we replicated the second study with bicultural participants in order to examine

⁸ The Islamic studies are being taught in schools and families in almost all these countries.

the impact of the religious thoughts and cultural identity on work behavior. Specifically, we measured participants' level of effort on an anagram task.

We expect religious thoughts to positively and significantly correlate with work ethic and level of effort, in Maghrebian culture but not in French culture.

D. Empirical Design

Measuring Work Ethic: Pilot Study

There exists several short and long scales for measuring Protestant Work Ethic (Meriac et al., 2013). We decided to develop a new implicit measure for two reasons. First, all the previous measures consist of self-reported questions that could endanger the reliability due to social desirability phenomenon. Second, research on implicit religious cognition reveals that individuals who are primed with concepts related to God and spirituality are more self-aware and are more likely to respond in a socially desirable manner (Gervais & Norenzayan, 2011). Considering the nature of our studies, in which we manipulate the religious thoughts, in order to diminish the shortcomings of the self-reported scales, particularly social desirability bias, we developed a more implicit scale based on the existing explicit scales and conducted a pilot study to assess its reliability and validity.

Implicit Measure of Work Ethic: We developed an implicit measure of work ethic, based on the well-known scale of Protestant Work Ethic (Mirels & Garrett, 1971) that has five main dimensions (Arslan, 2001). These dimensions that incorporate the frequently used PWE characteristics in many studies are:

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(1) Work as an end itself, (2) Attitude toward saving money and time, (3) Hard work and success, (4) Negative attitude toward leisure, (5) Internal locus of control.

The implicit measure of work ethic consists of five short scenarios. Each scenario is designed based on one dimension and describes a person in a hypothetical work situation and his/her attitude towards work highlighting one of the above dimensions. Participants were asked to first, on a scale from 1 to 4, describe how similar they think the main character of the scenario is to their personality. Second, on a scale from 1 to 6, participants are asked to rate the main character of each scenario on five different adjectives.

Participants were fifty-two MBA students (Mean age = 30.6, SD = 3.39, 43 males) from a large business school in France. Students participated in the study in exchange for extra credit for the Business Ethics class. Participants were asked to respond to an electronic questionnaire that lasts about 20 minutes. Table 1 provides the mean and standard deviation for each scenario, as well as the overall measure.

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics of each dimension and the over measure of implicit work ethic

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
'Hard Work Brings Success'	3.282051	.7005588	.491
'Internal Locus Of Control'	4.072115	.6393566	.409
'Negative Attitude Toward Leisure'	3.192308	.6827190	.466
'Attitude Towards Saving Money and Time'	4.006410	.7729506	.597
'Work As An End Itself'	3.336538	.9762933	.953
Overall Implicit Work Ethic	3.577885	.3844148	.148

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An example of the scenario related to the dimension 'work as an end itself' looks like this:

Some people feel uncomfortable when there is little work to do. Sabrina is one of them. She looks for extra tasks to take on at work, even if the tasks are boring and she will get no reward for her extra effort.

To what extent you believe Sabrina is similar to you in her attitude towards work?

(1) Not similar to me at all- (4) just like me.

To what extent you feel Sabrina is: Foolish (vs. Wise), Rational (vs. Irrational), Happy (vs. Unhappy), Boring (vs. Interesting), Secure (vs. Unsecure).

Measures:

Protestant Work Ethic: was measured using the Mirels and Garette's (1971) scale of PWE. Participants answered 19 questions regarding their attitude towards work on a 7-point Likert scale. An example of the items is "*If one works hard enough he/she is likely to achieve a good life for himself/herself.*" We expected the implicit measure to correlate positively with the explicit measure.

Locus of Control: Rotter's (1966) well-known 27-item Locus of Control Scale (LOC) was used to measure perceived locus of control. A high score on the scale suggests more external locus of control. Scores on this scale were hypothesized to correlate negatively with implicit work ethic.

Just World Beliefs: The Just World Belief Scale (JWB) is a 17-item measure that examines the tendency to believe people usually get what they

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deserve and deserve what they get (Rubin & Peplau, 1973). Participants indicated their agreement with each item on a 7-point scale, where a high score suggests stronger beliefs in a just world. Scores on this scale were hypothesized to correlate positively with implicit work ethic.

Internal Validity:

A principal components factor analysis with a Varimax rotation was conducted on data gathered from 52 participants. The results of an orthogonal rotation of the solution are shown in Table 2. Items related to each scenario are perfectly loaded on five factors explaining 58 per cent of observed variance. The reliability coefficient for each scenario is greater than .7 and the overall reliability coefficient is $\alpha = .77$.

External Validity:

Table 3 exhibits the correlations between the implicit measure of work ethic and PWE, Locus of Control and Just World Beliefs. As predicted, the implicit measure correlates positively and significantly with PWE ($r = .36$) and JWB ($r = .32$) and negatively with external LOC ($r = -.30$).

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Table 2 Principal components factor analysis with varimax rotation.
K-M-O measure of sampling adequacy = 0.511.
Barlett test of sphericity = 435, significance = 0.00000.

	Component				
	Factor Loading	Eigen Value	% Variance Explained	Cumulative %	Cronbach-Alpha
<i>(1) Work as an end itself</i>		4.247	14.157	14.157	.86
Scenario 1-2	.886				
Scenario 1-1	.831				
Scenario 1-3	.797				
Scenario 1-4	.783				
Scenario 1-0	.748				
Scenario 1-5	.732				
<i>(2) Attitude toward saving money</i>		3.447	11.491	25.648	.82
Scenario 2-1	.881				
Scenario 2-2	.806				
Scenario 2-0	.758				
Scenario 2-5	.684				
Scenario 2-3	.613				
Scenario 2-4	.492				
<i>(3) Hard work and success</i>		3.338	11.127	36.775	.80
Scenario 3-3	.835				
Scenario 3-2	.722				
Scenario 3-0	.679				
Scenario 3-4	.648				
Scenario 3-5	.636				
Scenario 3-1	.599				
<i>(4) Negative attitude toward</i>		3.237	10.790	47.564	.77
Scenario 4-2	.798				
Scenario 4-5	.746				
Scenario 4-1	.708				
Scenario 4-0	.693				
Scenario 4-4	.682				
Scenario 4-3	.481				
<i>(5) Internal locus of control</i>		3.143	10.475	58.040	.72
Scenario 5-3	.717				
Scenario 5-1	.690				
Scenario 5-5	.679				
Scenario 5-2	.651				
Scenario 5-0	.556				
Scenario 5-4	.452				

Table 3 Correlations

	Implicit Work Ethic	PWE	LOC-External	JWB
Implicit Work Ethic	1			
PWE	.360**	1		
LOC-External	-.301*	-.278*	1	
JWB	.324*	.504**	-.372**	1

Study 1

To identify the causal link between spirituality and work ethic, in an experiment with Moroccan and French participants, thoughts related to religious beliefs were activated for the participants. They were asked to answer the implicit work ethic questionnaire.

We expect that stimuli related to God, salvation, and afterlife would impact work ethic. Consequently, we would expect a higher level of work ethic among individuals for whom the religious thoughts, implicitly and unconsciously, are activated, in the Moroccan Sample but not in the French sample.

Participants: We chose two different samples for this study. In the first sample, participants were thirty-six students (Mean age = 22.72, SD = 1.41, 24 females) from University of Casablanca. The majority of participants in the first sample were Muslim (2 Catholics and one unspecified). One participant was removed from the sample because he guessed the aim of the manipulation. In

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the second sample participants were fifty-six French students (Mean age = 23.63, SD = 1.27, 39 females) from a public business school in Paris. In both samples the students participated in the study as an extra activity of the Human Resources Management class. Participants were asked to respond to an electronic questionnaire that lasted about 20 minutes.

Procedure: Participants entered the lab in groups of five and were placed in front of computers. Manipulation material was printed and placed on their desk. Participants first, started working on the workbook that consisted of a word-search puzzle aimed at subliminally priming religion-related versus religion-unrelated words.

After doing the puzzle they were asked to put the workbook on the floor and continue on the screen. Next, they answered the implicit work ethic questionnaire. To measure their memory of the words in the puzzle and awareness of a theme behind the words in the puzzle, participants completed an awareness questionnaire (Bargh & Chartrand, 2000). Finally, they answered demographics questions regarding the degree of religiosity, political orientation and education. Religiosity was measured by a self-report 3-item questionnaire regarding the degree of religiosity, frequency of doing the prayers and frequency of attending the mosque or church. All the materials were presented in French that is the language of all of the instructed courses in the universities in Morocco and France, and all the participants are fluent.

Manipulation: As per the previous studies in activating goals and values (Bargh & Chartrand, 2000; Uhlmann et al., 2011), we used a word processing

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task to prime the participants with spirituality. Participants had to solve a word-search puzzle borrowed from Pichon et al. (2007). A 12X12 matrix of letters was presented, and a list of twelve words was shown; instructions specified that the objective of the task is to evaluate their cognitive, linguistic and spatial capacity and that the twelve words below were included in the matrix. Words could appear with letters in a straight line either from left to right or from right to left, reading down or reading up. Eight words were specific for each condition. In the control condition, we provided the words *wardrobe*, *flower*, *metallic*, *rime*, *tap*, *document*, *window* and *mountain*. In the prime condition, we presented the words *angel*, *paradise*, *eternal*, *virtuous*, *prayer*, *miracle*, *tradition* and *grace*. Finally, in each condition, a list of words unrelated to religion and neutral in valence were added in order to distract participants' attention from the real purpose of the task (*news*, *smile*, *ladder* and *shirt*).

After receiving the prime manipulation, participants were asked to fill up the implicit work ethic scale.

Results and Discussion:

The dependent variable consisted of five scenarios and individuals' associations to the behavior described in each scenario. In order to get the overall measure of the implicit work ethic, we first aggregated the scores of each scenario and second all the scores of the five scenarios. In this way, we ended up with one single measure for each participant's work ethic.

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A one-way between subjects ANOVA was conducted to compare the effect of religious thoughts on work ethic in prime and control conditions. For the Moroccan participants, there was a significant effect of religious beliefs on work ethic at the $p < .05$ level for the two conditions; $F(1, 33) = 5.121, p = 0.03$. Participants in the prime condition demonstrate greater work ethic ($M = 3.88, SD = 0.49$) than the participants in the control condition ($M = 3.50, SD = 0.51$).

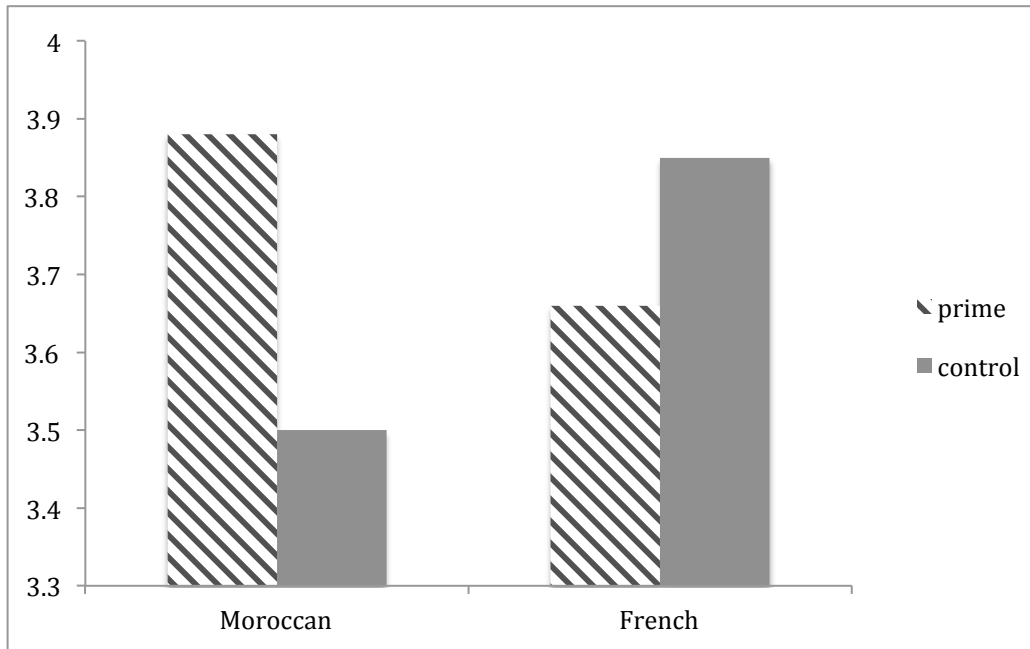


Figure 2 Spirituality has positive and significant effect on work ethic for Moroccan participants, but not for the French participants. Higher numbers indicate more positive attitude towards work ethic

Similarly, but in a different direction, for the French participants there was a significant effect of spirituality on work ethic for the two conditions; $F(1, 54) = 4.679, p = 0.034$. The results as illustrated in Fig. 2, show that, contrary to Moroccan participants, French participants in the prime condition endorsed

lower work ethic ($M = 3.66$, $SD = 0.31$) than the participants in the control condition ($M = 3.85$, $SD = 0.34$).

Moderator Analysis of Religiosity, Political Orientation and Education

We examined whether religiosity, political orientation and education moderate the impact of priming spirituality on work ethic by regression. We measured religiosity by aggregating the responses to three questions regarding the degree of religiosity, frequency of doing the prayers and frequency of attending the mosque or church. Political orientation was measured by a single-item question meant to specify the participant orientation on scale from 1 (*Extremely Left*) to 7 (*Extremely Right*).

The analysis revealed that none of these variables are significant moderator. There was no significant two-way interaction between religiosity and religious prime neither for the Moroccan sample, $b = -.087$, $t(34) = -.78$, $p = .44$, nor for the French sample, $b = .006$, $t(55) = .054$, $p = .96$. There was no significant two-way interaction between political orientation and religious prime neither for the Moroccan sample, $b = -.059$, $t(34) = -.79$, $p = .43$, nor for the French sample, $b = -.031$, $t(55) = -.33$, $p = .75$. Finally, There was no significant two-way interaction between education and religious prime neither for the Moroccan sample, $b = .122$, $t(34) = .715$, $p = .48$, nor for the French sample, $b = -.106$, $t(55) = -.533$, $p = .60$. These analyses show that individual differences in religiosity, political orientation and educational background have no significant effect on the impact of priming religious thoughts on work ethic.

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In sum, the results of study 1 confirm our expectations. Priming with the words related to religious beliefs, significantly influences work ethic. Study 1, not only established the link between religious beliefs and work ethic, it demonstrated the moderating effect of cultural background. The fact that French participants endorsed lower work ethic while primed with religion compare to the Moroccan participants brings to light the role of cultural setting in determining the nature of work ethic.

In study 2 we replicate study 1 by employing participants from a more homogenous background.

Study 2

In order to control for unmeasured demographic variables, and verify the moderating effect of culture on the link between religious beliefs and work ethic, the participants of this study were chosen among students with Maghrebian ancestors in France. Prior research on multicultural individuals shows that biculturals who have extensively internalized two sets of cultural knowledge access different culture-specific cognitive structures, or mental frames. Depending on the socio-cultural context, any of these mental frames can be activated and provide the related knowledge structure. This process is called cultural frame switching (Hong, Morris, Chiu, & Benet-Martinez, 2000; Luna, Ringberg, & Peracchio, 2008). Frame switching makes one set of cultural knowledge temporary accessible when being activated by the situational cues.

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We hypothesize that priming religious thoughts would affect work ethic and a Maghrebian vs. French cultural identity would moderate this effect. Specifically, we expect participants for whom the French identity is made salient to show a contrast effect while being exposed to the religious stimuli. Conversely, we expect priming spirituality to have a positive impact on work ethic for participants with a salient Maghrebian identity.

Participants: Sixty-nine Franco-Maghrebian students (Mean age = 22.86, SD = 2.86, 38 females) participated in the lab study in exchange for twelve euros. Students with Maghrebian origin who were born to Maghrebian families in France or who have lived in France for more than 3 years were invited to participate in a 30-minute study. The majority of participants were Muslim (3 Jews, 2 Christians, 3 Agnostics, 12 Atheists and 4 unspecified). Participants were from three different ancestries: Algeria (48%), Morocco (28%) and Tunisia (24%). Most of the participants speak Maghrebian dialects with their parents and friends (71%). They identified with both French culture (M = 4.2, SD = 1.50) and Maghrebian culture (M = 3.6, SD = 1.63) on a scale from 1 (*very weak*) to 6 (*very strong*).

Procedure: First, participants were primed with either French or Maghrebian cultural identity. Participants were asked to look at five pictures aimed at stimulating either Maghrebian or French culture and write down ten sentences to introduce this culture to a stranger.

Second, they solved a word-search puzzle that was aimed at subliminally

priming religion-related versus religion-unrelated thoughts. Third, they answered the implicit work ethic scale. Finally, they filled an awareness questionnaire to measure the participants' memory of the words in the puzzle and awareness of a theme behind the words in the puzzle (Bargh & Chartrand, 2000), and the demographics questionnaire.

Results and Discussion:

The study employed a 2 (Maghrebian vs. French cultural identity activated) X 2 (prime with religious words vs. neutral words) between subjects design. In line with our prediction, Franco-Maghrebian participants primed with religious thoughts exhibited a more positive attitude towards work while their Maghrebian cultural identity (but not the French cultural identity) was salient. A 2(cultural identity) X 2(religious prime vs. neutral words) ANOVA revealed a significant interaction effect $F(1,65) = 4.427, p = .039$. As shown in Fig. 3, participants who were exposed to only neutral words, showed no difference in work ethic between French ($M = 3.73, SD = .42$) and Maghrebian ($M = 3.71, SD = .31$) identity conditions.

In contrast, participants for whom their French cultural identity was made salient were more likely to endorse lower level of work ethic when exposed to the religious stimuli ($M = 3.43, SD = .26$) compared to the participants primed with Maghrebian identity ($M = 3.77, SD = .43$).

We also checked for the moderating effect of religious denomination (believer vs. non-believer). There was no significant three-way interaction found between

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cultural identity prime, religious prime and religious denomination $F(1,65) = 2.655, p = .11$, or two-way interaction between religious prime and religious denomination, $F(1,65)=0.090, p=.76$. Thus, consciously believing in religion has no impact on the link between religion, cultural identity and work ethic. Individuals who believe in different religions do not significantly differ in their attitude towards work ethic when being primed by religious thoughts in the related cultural context.

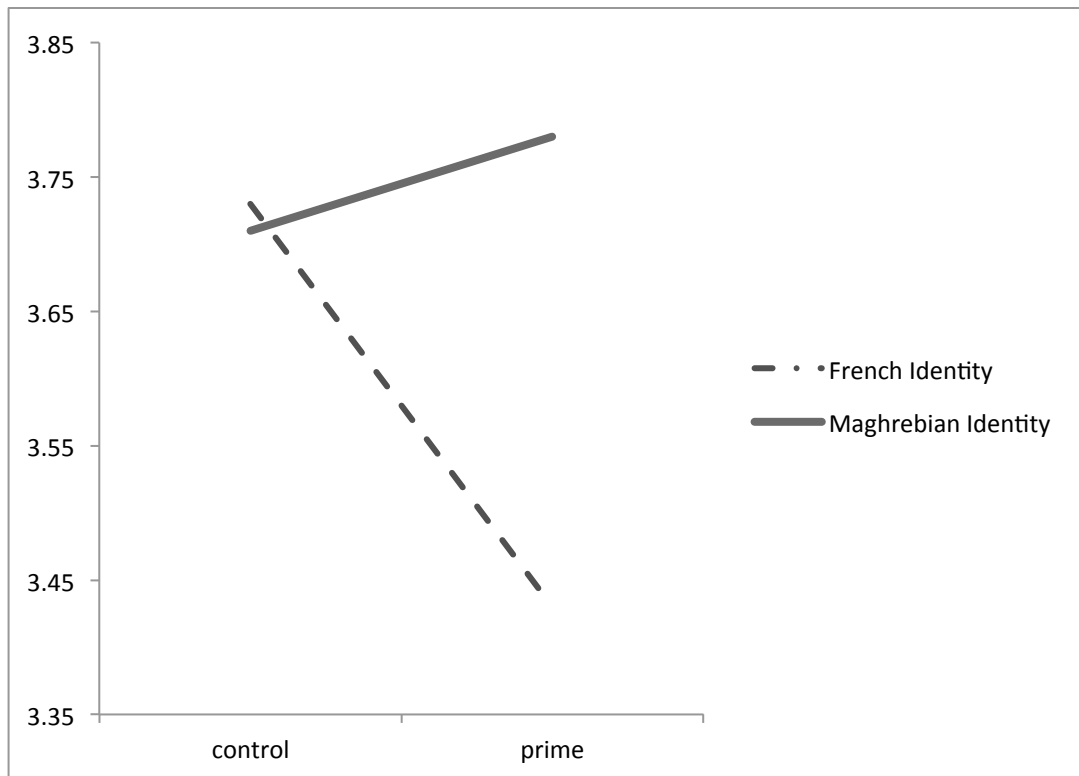


Figure 3 Franco-Maghrebian participants' work ethic after having one of their cultural identities salient and receiving either the religious or neutral prime. Higher numbers indicate more positive attitude towards work ethic.

We examined whether religiosity and education moderate the impact of priming spirituality on work ethic by regression. The analysis revealed that none

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of these variables are significant moderator. There was no significant three-way interaction between religiosity, religious prime and cultural identity prime, $b = -.003$, $t(68) = -.078$, $p = .94$, or two-way interaction between religiosity and religious prime, $b = -.041$, $t(68) = -.463$, $p = .65$. Finally, There was no significant three way interaction between education, religious prime and cultural identity prime, $b = .098$, $t(68) = 1.064$, $p = .30$, or two-way interaction between education and religious prime, $b = -.109$, $t(68) = -.965$, $p = .34$. These analyses show that individual differences in religiosity and educational background have no significant moderating effect on the priming effects.

In sum, implicitly priming Franco-Maghrebian participants with religious thoughts resulted in greater degrees of work ethic when their Maghrebian identity was activated. Conversely, when the French identity was activated, priming religious thoughts leads participants to display negative attitudes and lower level of work ethic. This effect might be due to a 'cognitive dissonance' that may result in resource depletion. It could also happen through a process of 'system justification' in which priming French identity activates the defense mechanism. These alternative explanations are further discussed in the conclusion section.

Overall, these results indicate that religious thoughts, independent of individual differences in religiosity, could impact work ethic. However, this effect is more consistent with the cultural contexts in which religious beliefs are appreciated and encouraged.

In study 3 we try to extend the results from attitudes to behavior. We predict individual's work behavior could also be predicted by religious thoughts and cultural identity.

Study 3

So far, the results indicate there is a significant effect of cultural and religious stimuli on work attitude. Study 3 is a replication of study 2 in which we replace the implicit work ethic scale with a task in order to measure the impact of religious and cultural stimuli on work behavior. The procedure was the same as study 2. Participants were first primed with either French or Maghrebian cultural identity and then the religious vs. neutral thoughts were activated. In the next step, they were given a set of anagrams in order to measure the effort they put to the task.

We expect significant positive effect of activated religious thoughts on the level of persistence for participants for whom the Maghrebian cultural identity was activated.

Participants: Seventy-three Franco-Maghrebian students (Mean age = 22.66, SD = 2.78, 39 females) participated in the lab study in exchange for ten euros. All participants were students with North African origin who were born either in a North African country (i.e. Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, and Egypt) or in France. The majority of participants were Muslim (1 Jew, 3 Christians, 10 Agnostics, 8 Atheists and 8 unspecified). Participants were from four different ancestries: Algeria (40), Morocco (19), Tunisia (13), and Egypt (1). Most of the

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participants speak Maghrebian dialect with their parents and friends (74%). They identified with both French culture ($M = 4.36$, $SD = 1.22$) and Maghrebian culture ($M = 4.02$, $SD = 1.40$) on a scale from 1 (very weak) to 6 (very strong).

Procedure: First, participants were primed with either French or Maghrebian cultural identity. Participants were asked to look at five pictures aimed at stimulating either Maghrebian or French culture and write down ten sentences to introduce this culture to a stranger.

Second, they solve a word-search puzzle that is aimed at subliminally priming religion-related versus religion-unrelated thoughts.

Third, participants were given 6 anagrams to solve (5 soluble, 1 insoluble). Participants had limited time (6 min for the whole task) to work on the task. They also had the option to quit the task and move to the next questions. We measured the duration of the task. Anagram task has been proved to be a valid method for measuring motivation, performance, persistence and effort (Erez & Isen, 2002). Also previous research suggest that anagram task could be a reliable proxy for work (T.L. Chartrand, Dalton, & Fitzsimons, 2007). In this study we measured effort by the time they invested in trying to solve the anagrams. All the anagrams were given at one page. To avoid this measure to be influenced by participants' ability in solving anagrams, we included 1 insoluble anagram in the set. Anagrams were in French and have been adapted from a similar study in French (Gillet, Vallerand, Lafrenière, & Bureau, 2013).

Finally, they completed an awareness questionnaire to measure the

participants' memory of the words in the puzzle and awareness of a theme behind the words in the puzzle (Bargh & Chartrand, 2000), and the demographics questionnaire.

Results and Discussion:

The study employed a 2 (Maghrebian vs. French cultural identity activated) X 2 (prime with religious words vs. neutral words) between subjects design. In line with our prediction, Franco-Maghrebian participants primed with spirituality put more effort into the task while their Maghrebian cultural identity (but not the French cultural identity) was salient. We measured the time participants spent on the anagram task and used it as proxy for effort. Since one of the anagrams was insoluble, participants who spent more time on it endorsed higher level of effort. A 2(cultural identity) X 2(religious prime vs. neutral words) ANOVA revealed a significant interaction effect $F(1,69) = 5.056, p = .028$. As shown in Fig. 4, participants who were exposed to only neutral words, showed no significant difference in effort level between French ($M = 172.95, SD = 82.149$) and Maghrebian ($M = 155.42, SD = 82.105$) identity conditions.

In contrast, participants for whom their Maghrebian cultural identity was made salient were more likely to endorse higher level of effort when exposed to the religious stimuli ($M = 183.20, SD = 91.977$) compared to the participants primed with French identity ($M = 114.44, SD = 62.040$).

We checked for the moderating effect of religious denomination (believer vs. non-believer). There was no three-way interaction found between cultural identity, priming spirituality and religious denomination $F(1,65) = .148, p =$

.702. Thus, consciously believing in religion has no impact on the link between religion, cultural identity and effort. Individuals who believe in different religions do not significantly differ in their attitude towards work ethic when being primed by religious thoughts in the related cultural context.

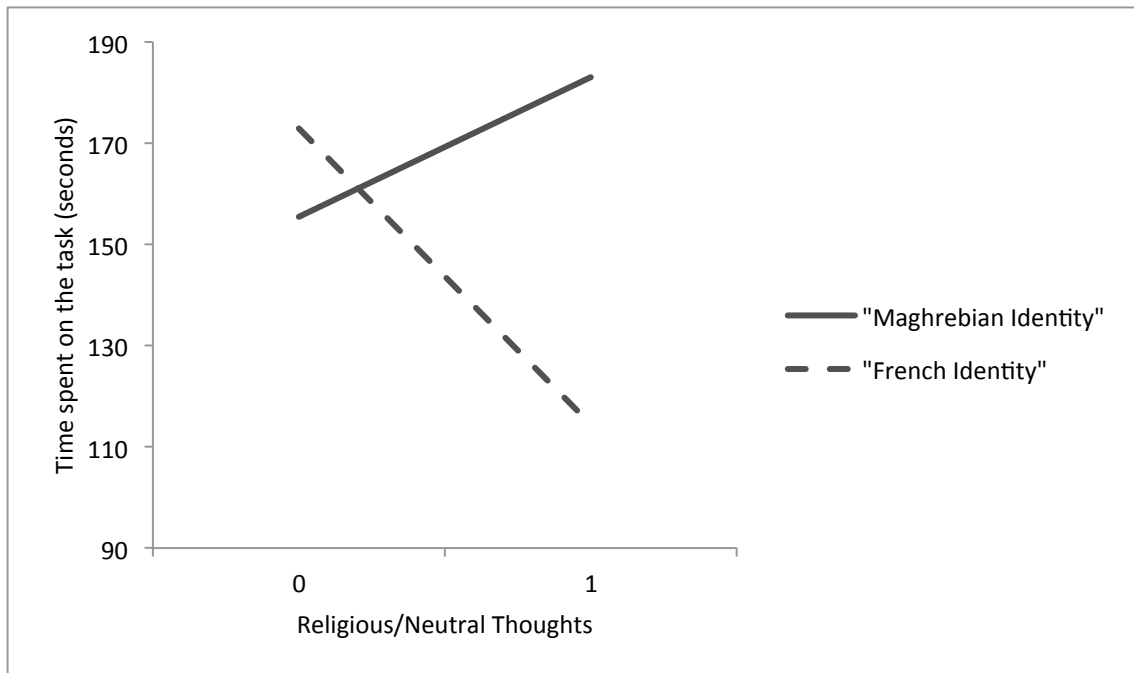


Figure 4 Franco-Maghrebian participants' level of effort after having one of their cultural identities salient and receiving either the religious or neutral prime. Higher numbers indicate more time they spent on the task.

We also examined whether religiosity, political orientation and education moderate the impact of priming spirituality on level of effort. The analysis revealed that none of these variables are significant moderator. There was no significant three-way interaction between religiosity, religious prime and cultural identity prime, $b = -.212$, $t(72) = -.629$, $p = .531$, or two-way interaction between religiosity and religious prime, $b = 25.754$, $t(72) = .466$, $p = .64$. There was no significant three way interaction between education, religious prime and

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cultural identity prime, $b = 8.471$, $t(72) = .378$, $p = .71$, or two-way interaction between education and religious prime, $b = -26.821$, $t(72) = -.776$, $p = .44$.

Finally, There was no significant three way interaction between political orientation, religious prime and cultural identity prime, $b = -23.312$, $t(72) = -.584$, $p = .56$, or two-way interaction between political orientation and religious prime, $b = 30.237$, $t(72) = .480$, $p = .63$. These analyses show that individual differences in religiosity, political orientation and educational background have no significant moderating effect on the priming effects.

The result of study 3 is consistent with the result of study 2. Cultural identity interacts with religious thoughts to impact work behavior. In sum, implicitly priming Franco-Maghrebian participants with religious thoughts resulted in higher level of effort when their Maghrebian identity was activated. Conversely, when the French identity was activated, priming religious thoughts leads participants to put less effort and invest less time on the task. These results indicate that religious beliefs, independent of individual differences in religiosity, could impact work behavior. However, this effect is more consistent with the cultural contexts in which religious beliefs are appreciated and encouraged.

D. GENERAL DISCUSSION

This research suggests that the impact of religion on work ethic is contingent to the cultural values. The results from study 1 reveal that priming with religious thoughts evokes work ethic. Remarkably, this effect is contingent on the cultural

background. Studies 2 and 3 confirm that the effect of spiritual and religious beliefs on work ethic is indeed moderated by individuals' cultural identity. These studies also provide a scale to measure work ethic in a more implicit way and avoid the disadvantages of the traditional scales.

Previous research on work ethic has explored the role of religion and religiosity by using surveys and employing correlational analysis. The present research attempts to uncover the causal impact of religious beliefs on how individuals perceive work by controlling for socio-cultural factors in laboratory experiments.

Moreover, the majority of prior research relies on the Weberian concept of Protestant Work Ethic and limits the findings to mainly Protestant and occasionally other western cultures. Our results suggest that although the impact of religious beliefs on work ethic is contingent on the cultural setting, it is not restricted to Protestant and American culture. In three studies, we demonstrated the causal impact of religious beliefs on work ethic for North African and French participants. Taking into account the importance of religious identity in Maghrebian culture, we believe this research provides a new direction to the very specific characteristics of this culture. Historical evidences show that middle-easterners in the past centuries were deeply committed to the world of profession, science and business. During the Islamic Golden Age, Middle-Eastern and North African nations were pioneers in natural and social sciences, and made huge contributions to trade and agriculture (Khaldūn, 1969). Centuries later, confronted with wars, colonization and modernity, these countries went

through dramatic cultural and economical challenges that resulted in drastic changes in people's lifestyle and behavior (Sidani & Thornberry, 2010). However, it appears that the cultural and behavioral dynamism of the Islamic nations did not attract enough scholarly attention and yet, remained relatively undiscovered and mainly contradicting. This ignorance might partially be related to the complicated socio-political condition in these countries as well as lack of ambition and interest among scholarly institutions in Islamic societies.

Hofstedian analysis of cultural dimensions demonstrates that Arab countries are high in collectivism, power distance, and masculinity (e.g. Hofstede, 1983). Comparably, Schwartz (1994, 1999) has considered the Arab nations high in conservatism that emphasizes on social order, respect for tradition, family security and wisdom. He argues that these cultural values discourage intrinsic values of work (i.e. personal growth, autonomy, interest and creativity), while encouraging extrinsic work values (i.e. pay and security (Surkis, 1992, referred in Schwartz 1999)). Thus, managers in Middle Eastern countries, Schwartz posits, would be more effective in motivating employees through pay and security (extrinsic work goals) than personal growth and creativity (intrinsic work goals) (S. H. Schwartz, 1999). On the other hand, based on Schwartz's national ranking on cultural dimensions, Arab countries are also higher in Hierarchy (vs. Egalitarianism) which encourages "people to devote themselves to world of work" (p. 40) through which extrinsic goals can be attained. These arguments go against the results of studies on Islamic values at workplace. This trend of research demonstrates that work *per se* is highly valued in Islamic culture (A. Ali,

1988; A. J. Ali & Al-Owaihian, 2008). “Work in Islam, therefore, is situated in the core of the faith and is considered as an integral part in life.” (A. J. Ali & Al-Owaihian, 2008, p. 7).

In this regard, although very few studies by Schwartz and his associates argue that monetary rewards are the only tools that can drive individuals’ work behavior in Arab countries, Ali and his colleagues discuss about Muslims’ positive attitudes towards work, rooted in the religious values. The current research aimed to cover the gap between these two trends of research, by suggesting that religiosity interacts with cultural values to predict work ethic.

From a managerial perspective, the novelty of the context provides a practical advantage. Spirituality is recognized to have a solid influence on the members of the relatively religious societies. In essence, individuals identify quite strongly with their religion even though they do not practice regularly. For HR practitioners in societies with considerable religious population, drawing attention to deep beliefs and values would be of great importance. Moreover, in societies with big population of immigrants who are holding different types of religious values compared to the mainstream culture, it is noteworthy to take into account these values and their adaptability to the cultural settings.

Specifically in the case of France, it is important to pay attention to the Muslim population at workplace. The result of this research reveals that for Franco-Maghrebian employees, the presence of any religious stimuli at workplace would be more consistent with their culture of origin. More emphasis on the French cultural identity and/or French secularism, on the other hand,

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would cause inconsistency with religious beliefs and would result in more negative attitude towards work, and diminished effort. Although future research need to explore the impact of immigration process in terms of time spent in France as an immigrant, and importance of French vs. Maghrebian Self on the prime effect.

One very important result of the current research is impact of religious prime on participants with salient French cultural identity. The fact that religious beliefs have a more positive effect on work ethic and work behavior in Maghrebian culture and a less positive effect in French culture does not mean that Maghrebian culture promotes more ethical behaviors than French culture regarding work. It simply implies that spirituality is more consistent with values regarding work and profession in North African culture. Future research is needed to explore the underlying variables of this effect. One possible explanation might be the impact of spirituality on the way individuals construe objects, processes and concepts. It is possible that beliefs in religious values trigger different level of construal in different cultures, i.e. low-level task-focused cognition vs. high-level meaning-oriented cognition.

An alternative explanation could be 'cognitive dissonance' in the form of belief disconfirmation (Burris, Harmon-Jones, & Tarpley, 1997). French secularism is not tolerant of the existence of religious stimuli in public environment. Participants for whom the French identity was made salient might have allocated more value to 'French secularism' in which the presence of religion in public space would not be consistent with values of Laïcité. One way to test this

hypothesis is to include a new condition in which participants are primed with concepts related to secularism.

The cognitive dissonance could impact behavior through different channels. It could be assumed that overcoming this conflict requires cognitive and motivational resources and hence 'resource depletion' could diminish performance.

Moreover, the cognitive dissonance resulted from the salience of the French identity in the presence of religious stimuli, may lead the French-Maghrebian Participants to use 'system justification' as a means to decrease this conflict. In this sense, people are motivated to preserve the beliefs that the current social system is fair, justifiable and necessary (Jost, Blount, Pfeffer, & Hunyady, 2003). In this case, system justification leads people to maintain their beliefs about the fairness and rationality of the French secularism, which includes banning religion from public environment. As a result, participants would diminish effort.

Our research also introduces a new scale for measuring work ethic in a way that is less susceptible to social desirability bias. The Implicit Scale of Work Ethic could replace more explicit tools in order to avoid their shortcomings. One limitation of this study was that not assessing the predictive validity of the scale. Future research could focus on the consequences of work ethic in terms of work behavior and attitudes. In order to examine the validity of the implicit scale one should investigate whether it can predict job involvement, commitment and job satisfaction and eventually performance. Another limitation of this paper is the relatively small sample sizes and student population. Further studies could help

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the generalizability of this research by incorporating larger samples from more diverse cultural background.

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APPENDIX

Implicit Work Ethic Scale

The implicit measure of work ethic consists of five short scenarios. Each scenario is designed based on one dimension and describes a person in a hypothetical work situation and his/her attitude towards work highlighting one of the above dimensions:

(1) Work as an end itself, (2) Attitude toward saving money and time, (3) Hard work and success, (4) Negative attitude toward leisure, (5) Internal locus of control.

(1) Work as an end itself

Some people feel uncomfortable when there is little work to do. S is one of them. She looks for extra task to take on at work, even if the tasks are boring and she will get no reward for her extra effort.

- To what extent you believe she is similar to you in her attitude towards work?
- To what extent you feel S is:
 - Boring/ Interesting
 - Foolish/ Wise
 - Irrational/ Rational
 - Unhappy/ Happy
 - Insecure/ Secure

(2) Attitude toward saving money and time

Working as a sales person, C has reasonably high salary. However he spends most of his salary freely. He doesn't believe in savings. Occasionally, he spends time and money on gambling in which sometimes he wins a lot and sometimes he loses a

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lot. He says: you only live once and the life should be an adventure.

- To what extent you believe he is similar to you in his attitude towards Money?
- To what extent you feel C is:
 - Foolish/ Wise
 - Irrational/ Rational
 - Unreliable/ Reliable
 - Unhappy/ Happy

(3) Hard work and success

Mr. A is a very hardworking sales person. He works consistently from 9h00 to 21h00 everyday including Saturdays. He rarely takes all vacation days to which he is entitled He is very persistent and tries to do his best at his job.

- To what extent you believe he is similar to you in his attitude towards work?
- To what extent you feel Mr. A is:
 - Foolish/wise
 - Lonely
 - Unhappy/ Happy
 - Reliable
 - Successful/ Unsuccessful

(4) Negative attitude toward leisure

Mrs B is an employee in a large company. She is very competent at her job and generally fulfills her duties. She does her work rigorously. However she tends to leave early on many days and she makes sure she uses all her vacation days even when it is inconvenient for her employer. She believes in balance of work and relaxation and that working yourself too hard is crazy.

- To what extent you believe she is similar to you in her attitude towards

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work?

- To what extent you feel Mrs B is:
 - Foolish/ Wise
 - Lazy/ hardworking
 - Opportunistic/ principled
 - Unhappy/ Happy
 - Unmotivated/ Ambitious

(5) Internal locus of control

Mlle M has a low position on her company but she is trying to change her life through education and doing more than what her employer requests. She believes she can do anything if she tries hard enough. No matter what are the circumstances, she feels powerful enough to change it. She does not believe in destiny and luck. She thinks there is no force that can decide her direction of life.

- To what extent you believe she is similar to you in her attitude towards work?
- To what extent you feel M is:
 - Realistic/ unrealistic
 - Foolish/ wise
 - Optimistic/ pessimistic
 - Unintelligent/ Intelligent
 - Lonely

Chapter 3

The American Dream Effect: How do Beliefs about the Malleability of Social Structure Impact Meritocratic Attitudes and Behavior?

A. Abstract

This paper explores the link(s) between beliefs about the malleability of social structure and individuals' attitudes towards meritocracy. When individuals believe that the society in which they live offers them developmental and fair opportunities, are they more likely to adopt meritocratic attitudes and behavior? Across three studies, we tested the hypothesis that a malleable view of society results in more meritocratic attitudes towards work. Individuals who have actually experienced progression in the social hierarchy tend to perceive society as meritocratic and express the desire to be meritocratic (*study 1*). Those who believed that social structure is flexible, rather than rigid, endorsed a stronger work ethic and valued hard work as the key to success (*study 2a*). Similarly, believing in the malleability of social structure resulted in a higher level of effort on a given task (*study 2b*). Study 3 manipulated beliefs about social structure and demonstrated that these beliefs are changeable. Individuals who were led to believe that the social structure is rigid withheld effort and showed lower motivation. The implications of these types of beliefs and attitudes are discussed.

Keywords: *meritocracy; malleability of social structure; motivation.*

B. Introduction

In every society, regardless of the actual intergenerational mobility, people have different perceptions about the malleability of the social structure. The way that people perceive the reality of society is shaped by personal experiences as well as cultural and social values (Chen, Chiu, & Chan, 2009; Chiu, Dweck, Tong, & Fu, 1997). Many Americans, for example, believe in meritocracy, and they justify this belief as the *American Dream* in which anyone, “regardless of ascriptive traits, family background, or personal history,” can pursue “success, however it is defined, through actions and traits under one’s own control” (Hochschild, 1996, p. 18).

In a meritocratic society, opportunities to succeed are provided and “success is determined by individual merit” (McNamee & Miller, 2009, p. 4). Meritocratic beliefs imply that one’s merit, i.e., ability and effort, determines one’s socio-economic situation (Shane & Heckhausen, 2013).

Prior research has revealed that there is a positive relationship between the perceived importance of the external causes of poverty (for example, structural causes) and the government’s responsibility for the provision of basic needs. This relationship is significantly stronger in the U.S. (Shirazi & Biel, 2005). Moreover, American students’ subjective social status is positively related to their goal engagement, and this relationship is mediated by their meritocratic-oriented causal conception (Shane & Heckhausen, 2013).

Individuals in the U.S. rely on the fact that society provides them with

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opportunities in which upward social mobility can be achieved through hard work. Studies have shown that Americans' high scores on the Protestant Work Ethic scale are not necessarily attributed to their religious affiliation; non-Protestant Americans, such as Catholics and non-believers, show the same pattern on the Protestant Work Ethic scale (Mack, Murphy, & Yellin, 1956; Uhlmann et al., 2011). In fact, the inspiring cultural milieu plays a primary role in this regard (Mack et al., 1956). Economical indices reveal that, in fact, American society is now more ineffective in providing opportunities for upward socio-economic mobility compared to many European countries (Causa & Johansson, 2010). In this regard, what motivates the American people to invest effort to move up the social ladder might be their great faith in the 'no longer existing' American dream (Rifkin, 2013). Although intergenerational mobility in the United States does not differ from many European countries (Causa & Johansson, 2010), the majority of Americans continue to believe in the core value of the American dream and meritocracy, inferring that working hard constitutes the most important element for getting ahead (Hanson & Zogby, 2010; Shane & Heckhausen, 2013). In a research on American college students, Shane and Heckhausen discovered that they believe in intergenerational upward mobility based on meritocratic causal factors (ability and effort). This meritocratic attitude positively impacts their goal engagement.

Social psychologists have traditionally been criticized for not incorporating society-level factors in analyzing the impact of social representations on cognition and behavior. The current research aims to address this issue by

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considering the perceptions people hold concerning the social structure that can affect individuals' beliefs about social mobility.

In this research, we explore the relationship between structural causes (e.g., failure of society to provide equal opportunity to succeed) and pro-meritocracy beliefs (i.e., allocation of value to effort and success is a result of hard work). The extent to which the social structure is viewed as supportive of mobility would lead individuals to be more meritocratically oriented. More specifically, we examine whether non-Americans who believe in the malleability, not the rigidity, of the social structure would allocate greater importance to the primary elements of meritocracy, namely, work ethic and effort. We argue that regardless of the actual rates of social mobility, individuals would perceive the structure of society to be on a spectrum ranging from very rigid to very malleable, and this perception will significantly impact their attitudes towards work and work behavior. We particularly predict that those who experience mobility and those who hold a more malleable view of society endorse stronger meritocratic attitudes and consequently attach more importance and value to hard work and invest more effort in performing a task.

C. Conceptual Background

a. Implicit Beliefs and Their Impact on Motivation and Behavior

People perceive the world and individual attributes in different ways. They may conceive any attribute on a continuum from possessing an unfixed or a fixed quality. These beliefs about the malleability and fixedness of personal or

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universal attributes are typically referred to as implicit theories (see C. S. Dweck, C.-y. Chiu, & Y.-y. Hong, 1995). Research on implicit theories has shown that beliefs about innate ability have significant motivational and behavioral consequences (Dweck, 1996, 2000; C. S. Dweck, C. Chiu, & Y. Hong, 1995).

In a series of studies, Dweck and her colleagues demonstrated that students' beliefs about their intelligence impact their achievement goal orientation (Bandura & Dweck, 1985; Dweck & Leggett, 1988). Individuals who believe that intelligence is a fixed quality and that they cannot change it, thereafter referred to as entity theorists, tend to be more performance oriented, and focus on aspects of the task that can prove their ability. Individuals who believe that intelligence can be improved through hard work and learning, thereafter referred to as incremental theorists, are more learning oriented. Therefore, theories of intelligence can predict differences in achievement goals. Entity theorists are more likely to search for tasks that prove them to be smart and to avoid tasks that call into question their intelligence. They tend to get involved with the 'easy to succeed' activities and give up on the tasks that present obstacles; thus, they are vulnerable to helpless respond in the midst of challenges or temporary failure. In contrast, incremental theorists seek to learn and improve their ability, and they tend to engage in challenging activities; in the face of temporary failure, they adopt a mastery-oriented strategy (Dweck, 2000; Hong, Chiu, Dweck, Lin, & Wan, 1999). The impact of failure on the entity theorist is beyond a reaction of simply disengaging with the task and avoiding the task altogether. It causes severe psychological effects, such as

depression and feelings of worthiness.

To discover the causality direction, Dweck and her colleagues manipulated the implicit theory of intelligence by asking the students to read an academic article that proposes either the entity or incremental theory. Aligned with the predictions, the students in the entity theory condition preferred the performance-goal task, whereas the students in the incremental theory condition were interested in choosing the learning-goal task (Dweck & Leggett, 1988).

Although the primary focus of studies on beliefs about the malleability or fixedness of ability was on intelligence, many follow-up studies demonstrated a similar pattern for other attributes, such as personality (Chiu, Hong, & Dweck, 1997), social ability (Goetz & Dweck, 1980), social-moral reality (Chiu, Dweck, et al., 1997), and recently prejudice (Carr, Rattan, & Dweck, 2012).

Furthermore, maintaining an entity theory contributes to developing a self-handicapping behavior. Self-handicapping is referred to a process of intentionally withholding or withdrawing effort when individuals are uncertain about their ability to perform successfully (Rhodewalt, 1994; Rhodewalt & Fairfield, 1991). Research on self-handicapping reveals that high self-handicappers are more inclined with entity theory and tend to adopt performance-goal orientation, whereas low self-handicappers are more likely to maintain an incremental theory and adopt learning-goal orientation.

Individuals with diverse cultural backgrounds differ in their beliefs about the malleability of self and the world (Chen et al., 2009; Rattan, Savani, Naidu, & Dweck, 2012).

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For example, Chen and her colleagues (2009) explored the differences among Asians and Americans in their beliefs about the malleability of the world relative to the individual. Their research exhibited that Chinese participants are more likely to perceive the world as a fixed entity, whereas the individual can change his/her personal attributes. Americans tend to have a more incremental theory of the world and a more entity theory of personal attributes. Therefore, considering a candidate for a specific job, Chinese people assign more weight to the job-personality fit in contrast to Americans.

In another research, Rattan et al. (2012) analyzed the cultural differences among Americans and South Asian Indians and realized that although Americans tended to believe that only some people have the potential to be highly intelligent, Indians are more likely to believe that everybody can be highly intelligent.

These findings emphasize the role of cultural settings in shaping peoples' belief about the malleability of any social reality. Cultural preferences, in turn, have originated from ecological and environmental factors (Triandis, 2004). One of these factors is the structure of society. The social structure and the beliefs people hold about these elements vary dramatically between societies.

b. Beliefs about the Malleability of the Social Structure

The majority of research on implicit beliefs and their effect on behavior have focused on beliefs about the malleability of the self (Chiu, Dweck, et al., 1997; C.S. Dweck et al., 1995) or malleability of an attribute of the self, such as

intelligence (Dweck, 2000; Dweck & Leggett, 1988), personality (Chiu, Hong, et al., 1997), prejudice and stereotyping (Carr et al., 2012), and social skills (Goetz & Dweck, 1980). However, few studies have exhibited the belief about the malleability of the world significantly influences people's attitudes and behaviors (Chen et al., 2009; Chiu, Dweck, et al., 1997). For example, how people conceive the reality of the world would impact their perception of morality. Individuals who believe in a relatively fixed reality focus more on duties as fundamentals of morality, whereas the incremental theorists of the world tend to focus on moral principles around which the world should be organized, such as human rights (Chiu, Dweck, et al., 1997).

Although the present research does not focus on implicit beliefs about the world, as a whole, it does incorporate the beliefs of one specific aspect of the social reality, namely, social mobility, into the current body of research on lay theories.

We define social mobility as upward or downward movement along the social ladder. In different societies, individuals who belong to a specific socio-economic stratum are given the opportunity to improve their socio-economic situation and move up to a superior social class. These opportunities vary in quality and quantity, depending on the cultural, political and socio-economical characteristics of the society (Andrews & Leigh, 2009; Causa & Johansson, 2010).

Past research revealed that in countries such as France, Norway, Sweden, Israel and Ireland, people perceive the government to be more responsible for

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the provision of needs compared to countries such as the United States and Australia; and this perception is mediated by external causal conceptions, i.e., structural and fatalistic causes (Shirazi & Biel, 2005). Remarkably, compared to the average, the relationship between the external causal attribution of the causes of poverty and the government's responsibility is significantly stronger for Americans. This perception means that "importance attached to opportunities provided by society determined support expected from the government more than the internal attributions for poverty" (Shirazi & Biel, 2005). We can expect that people allocate particular importance to the structural factors in society, for example, success and failure.

Would people work harder if they believed that the social structure is malleable? In essence, the more people believe that they have the likelihood to break through the social structure, the more they seek merit through hard work as a means for achievement. People would increase their effort if they believed that moving upward in the social hierarchy is likely because they realize that hard work is the elemental key that opens doors and moves them upward. However, when individuals believe that the social structure is rigid, they tend to self-handicap and withhold their effort. Believing that they would never be able to improve their socio-economic situation, they would withdraw their effort.

Thus, we predict that beliefs in the malleability of the social structure predict individuals' attitudes towards meritocracy and, consequently, work behavior. The incremental theorists of social structure tend to endorse a more positive work attitude and invest more effort in a given task. The entity theorists of social

mobility are more negative in their work attitude and quickly withdraw their effort.

c. Overview of the Studies

First, we used the French government survey data to conduct a preliminary analysis to assess the link between experienced mobility and meritocratic beliefs. Subsequently, we performed three experimental studies to test the impact of beliefs about the malleability of the social structure on work attitudes and behavior among French citizens. In the first experimental study, we examined whether perceptions of the flexibility or rigidity of the social structure correlate with attitudes towards work. In the second study, we replicated the first study in which we used a behavioral task to measure persistence and effort instead of measuring attitude. We hypothesized that the more people perceive society as flexible, the stronger they endorse values of hard work and the more effort they invest in performing a task.

To discover the causal pathway, in the third study we designed an experiment in which we manipulated the beliefs about the malleability of the social structure. We expected that the manipulation might change an individual's beliefs and that the induced beliefs might impact work behavior.

D. Empirical Design

*Study 1*⁹

To conduct a preliminary analysis, we tested our hypothesis using a government survey collected in France called “Perception des Inégalités et Sentiments de Justice” (PISJ)¹⁰ or “Perception of Inequality and Fairness.” The data were collected in September 2009 using face-to-face interview and computer-assisted technology. This survey aimed to capture the perceptions of inequality and social justice in France. In addition to questions on those topics, the survey included a number of socio-demographic variables. The data include a total of 1 711 respondents, which were representative of the French society. We obtained 1 422 observations (and 1 413 in the second model) after removing the observations for which several variables of interest were missing.

Method:

Dependent variables: We tested our hypothesis on two dependent variables: the perception of the *existing meritocracy of the French society*, on the one hand, and the perception of the *desired meritocracy of the French society*, on the other hand. Each of those dependent variables is based on four items, for which they agree (using a 4-point scale from “Totally disagree” to “Totally agree”) whether

⁹The data analysis in study 1 has benefitted enormously from the insights of Dr. Thomas J. Roulet.

¹⁰Perception des inégalités et sentiments de justice (PISJ) - 2009, Académie des Sciences Morales et Politiques, Institut de France, Fondation Simone et Cino del Duca [producers], ADISP-CMH [distributor].

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it reflects their perception of the current situation (*actual meritocracy*) and a desirable situation (*desired meritocracy*). The four items are labeled as follows: In France, (i) the revenues of work depend on the level of education; (ii) the revenues of work depend on the efforts at work; (iii) the revenues of work depend on personal skill; and (iv) the revenues of work depend on the results obtained at work. The four items are averaged for each of the dependent variables.

Independent variables: To measure whether individuals experienced social malleability, we used two items where the respondents are asked to locate their position on the social hierarchy from 1 (the lowest) to 10 (the highest) from 10 years ago and at the current moment. We compute a dummy that is equal to 1 if the difference is positive (i.e., they rank their current position in the social hierarchy as higher than their position 10 years ago).

Control variables: First, we controlled for what they estimate to be their position in the social hierarchy ten years ago, considering that individuals are more likely to feel like they are moving up if they were at the bottom end of the social hierarchy. Prior research has shown that college students' perception of their social status would have a positive impact on meritocratic beliefs (Shane & Heckhausen, 2013). Additionally, we controlled for a number of socio-demographic characteristics, such as salary, gender, age, foreign nationality, employment status, political preference (from 1, being extreme leftist, to 10, being extreme rightist), and whether they live in a populated area (from 1, countryside environment, to 9, populated urban environment). We used 6

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dummies for the types of occupation that respondents had: farmers, self-employed and shop owners, professionals (doctors, lawyers) and high-level executives, mid-management, qualified workers, and unqualified workers. Finally, we computed 9 dummies for each geographical area in France.

Analysis: Despite the low level of correlation between the variables (see Table 1), we calculated the variance inflation factor (VIF) and the condition indices to check for multicollinearity. Excluding the region and occupation dummies, the mean VIF was 1.60 and the condition number was below 20, with all of the VIF values being below 5 (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & William, 1998), which suggests that multicollinearity is not an issue. Additionally, using a one-wave survey may produce common method variance (an inflation of the correlation between dependent and independent variables) (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). To rule out the presence of such a phenomenon, we conducted a confirmatory factor analysis (Podsakoff & Organ, 1986). We input all of the independent variables and each dependent variable using a factor analysis. In each case, the analysis extracted 12 factors with eigenvalues superior to 1. In both cases, the first factor accounted for <15 % of the variance. This confirmatory factor analysis suggested that common method bias is unlikely to affect our results.

According to the hypothesis, we expected that the individuals who subjectively experienced a positive evolution of their position in the social hierarchy tended to perceive society as more meritocratic and also desired a more meritocratic society. To test this proposition, we conducted a multivariate

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analysis using ordinary least square regressions with heteroscedastic robust standard errors of the evolution in social hierarchy on perceived (Model 1) and desired (Model 2) fairness in the French society.

Results and discussion:

Table 1 shows the mean values, standard deviations, minimum and maximum values, and correlations. Observing that our dependent variables are non-correlated, we can thus infer that they do capture a difference, namely, perception vs. expectation. Our independent and dependent variables showed a low level of correlation. The highest correlation was between perceived meritocracy and gender ($r = -0.14$, $p < 0.01$: being a woman is negatively correlated with the perception of meritocracy) and between our two dependent variables and political preferences ($r = 0.12$, $p < 0.01$: being on the right of the political landscape is correlated with both perceived and desired meritocracy).

Table 1 Correlation and descriptive statistics

	Mean	SD	Min	Max	1	2	3	4	5	6
1 Perception of meritocracy in the French society	1.34	0.63	0.00	3.00	1.00					
2 Desired meritocracy in the French Society	2.07	0.48	0.00	3.00	0.06	1.00				
3 Went up in the social hierarchy	0.31	0.46	0.00	1.00	0.02	0.01	1.00			
4 Position in the social hierarchy 10 years ago	4.99	2.06	1.00	10.00	0.09	0.03	-0.56	1.00		
5 Salary	4.43	1.81	1.00	12.00	0.05	0.01	0.10	0.05	1.00	
6 Gender	0.52	0.50	0.00	1.00	-0.14	0.02	-0.01	-0.04	-0.28	1.00
7 Age	47.73	17.84	18.00	99.00	0.08	0.10	-0.33	0.26	0.18	-0.02
8 Foreign nationality	0.04	0.18	0.00	1.00	0.05	-0.03	0.05	-0.06	-0.02	-0.01
9 Employed	0.48	0.50	0.00	1.00	-0.08	-0.04	0.24	-0.22	0.35	-0.05
10 Farmers	0.08	0.27	0.00	1.00	-0.07	-0.06	0.11	-0.06	0.21	0.01
11 Self-employed and shop owners	0.25	0.44	0.00	1.00	-0.02	0.01	0.16	-0.18	0.22	-0.04
12 Professionals and executives	0.06	0.23	0.00	1.00	0.01	-0.03	-0.00	0.02	0.07	-0.06
13 Mid-management	0.09	0.28	0.00	1.00	-0.05	-0.00	0.07	-0.07	0.02	0.01
14 Qualified workers	0.08	0.27	0.00	1.00	-0.03	-0.03	-0.03	0.03	-0.16	-0.03
15 Unqualified workers	0.06	0.23	0.00	1.00	0.03	-0.03	0.07	-0.03	-0.31	-0.02
16 Unemployed	0.26	0.44	0.00	1.00	0.09	0.09	-0.23	0.20	0.11	-0.08
17 Retired	0.02	0.15	0.00	1.00	0.01	0.01	-0.07	0.03	-0.06	-0.02
18 Political preference	4.71	2.04	1.00	10.00	0.12	0.12	0.03	0.07	0.08	-0.01
19 Countryside vs. urban area	5.21	3.13	1.00	9.00	0.08	-0.02	0.00	0.02	0.01	0.01

7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
1.00												
-0.04	1.00											
-0.37	0.07	1.00										
-0.09	-0.04	0.31	1.00									
-0.25	0.04	0.61	-0.17	1.00								
-0.04	0.04	0.25	-0.07	-0.14	1.00							
-0.16	0.07	0.33	-0.09	-0.18	-0.08	1.00						
-0.18	-0.01	-0.28	-0.09	-0.17	-0.07	-0.09	1.00					
-0.36	-0.00	-0.24	-0.07	-0.14	-0.06	-0.08	-0.07	1.00				
0.73	-0.05	-0.57	-0.18	-0.35	-0.15	-0.19	-0.18	-0.15	1.00			
0.03	-0.01	-0.14	-0.04	-0.09	-0.04	-0.05	-0.04	-0.04	-0.09	1.00		
0.10	-0.04	-0.03	-0.06	0.01	0.03	-0.03	-0.07	-0.00	0.08	0.00	1.00	
-0.08	0.14	-0.00	-0.01	0.01	-0.02	0.00	0.03	0.09	-0.05	-0.03	-0.03	1.00

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The results of the OLS regression are reported in Model 1 (looking at perceived meritocracy as the dependent variable) and Model 2 (looking at desired meritocracy as the independent variable) in Table 2. We first evaluated the effect of our control variables. Strangely enough, being employed or self-employed has an opposite effect on the two dependent variables: it was negatively related to perceived meritocracy and positively related to desired meritocracy, with the coefficients being significant at the $p < 0.01$ level. This observation suggests that compared to unemployed individuals, fully employed persons are harsher on the meritocratic nature of their environment and expect more from it. We also observed that right wing political preference is positively related ($p < 0.01$) to both perceived and desired meritocracy in the French society.

Finally, we observed that our dummy representing an upward move in the social hierarchy exhibited a positive and significant coefficient in both Model 1 ($p < 0.01$) and Model 2 ($p < 0.05$). In other words, when an individual has experienced an upward movement in the social hierarchy, he or she perceives the French society as more meritocratic and expects the French society to be more meritocratic. This finding provides support for our hypothesis: experiencing mobility produces a positive attitude towards meritocracy.

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Table 2 OLS regression of positive evolution on the social hierarchy on the perceptions of actual and desired meritocracy in the French society, heteroscedastic robust standard errors

Variables	(1) Perception of existing meritocracy in the French society	(2) Desired meritocracy in the French Society
Went up in the social hierarchy	0.125*** (0.045)	0.071** (0.035)
Position in the social hierarchy 10 years ago	0.026** (0.011)	0.011 (0.008)
Salary	0.012 (0.011)	-0.014 (0.009)
Gender	-0.166*** (0.034)	0.023 (0.027)
Age	0.002 (0.002)	0.003** (0.001)
Foreign nationality	0.231** (0.101)	-0.066 (0.081)
Employed	-0.351*** (0.097)	0.353*** (0.074)
Farmers	0.097 (0.115)	-0.328*** (0.088)
Self-employed and shop owners	0.230** (0.104)	-0.241*** (0.080)
Professionals and executives	0.179** (0.076)	-0.341*** (0.057)
Mid-management	0.184 (0.113)	-0.225*** (0.087)
Qualified workers	-0.156* (0.080)	0.063 (0.070)
Unqualified workers	0.003 (0.087)	0.029 (0.076)
Unemployed	-0.026 (0.077)	0.060 (0.058)
Retired	-0.063 (0.118)	0.058 (0.100)
Political preference	0.028*** (0.009)	0.024*** (0.006)
Countryside vs. urban area	0.012** (0.006)	-0.001 (0.005)
Constant	1.094*** (0.130)	1.889*** (0.111)
Region dummies	Yes	Yes
Observations	1,422	1,413
R-squared	0.082	0.044

Robust standard errors in parentheses.
***p<0.01; **p<0.05; *p<0.1.

Study 2

In this study, we aimed to measure beliefs about the malleability of the social structure and meritocracy. Relying on the notion that ‘hard work leads to success’ is a fundamental belief of the meritocratic belief system, we measured individuals’ work attitudes and work behavior. Similar attitudinal and behavioral measures have been employed in prior research as proxies of meritocratic beliefs (Ledgerwood, Mandisodza, Jost, & Pohl, 2011).

We developed a scale measuring beliefs about the malleability of the social structure (the Theories of Social Structure, see Appendix), adapted from the scales designed for measuring beliefs about the malleability of the world in general (Chiu, Dweck, et al., 1997).

Using this scale, we tested the hypothesis that a more malleable view of the social structure will result in more positive attitudes towards work (study 2a) and higher levels of effort and persistence in performing the task (study 2b).

Study 2a

Method:

Participants: The participants were sixty-nine students (mean age = 20.70 years, SD = 1.07, 24 females) from a major university in France. The majority of the participants had undergraduate degrees (7% had a master’s or equivalent degree). The students participated in the study in exchange for course credit. The

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participants were asked to respond to an electronic questionnaire that lasted for approximately 15 minutes.

Procedure: The participants completed the Theories of Social Structure Scale (Described in detail below).

Next, they answered the Implicit Work Ethic questionnaire. Finally, they answered the demographics questions regarding the degree of religiosity, political orientation and education. All of the materials were presented in English, which is the language of all of the instructed courses, and all of the participants are fluent in.

Measures:

Theories of Social Structure Scale:

We measured the participants' views regarding the fixedness and malleability of the social structure using the four-item measure that we had developed, Theories of Social Structure. The participants rated their agreement on a 6-point scale (ranging from very strongly disagree to very strongly agree) with four statements, three of which expressed a *fixed* view of the social structure (e.g., "People belong to a certain social class and they really can't do much to change it.") and one of which (reverse-coded) expressed a *malleable* view of the social structure (e.g., "There is always a door open for people to be accepted in the upper social class."). We included more fixed than malleable items in the scale because previous research suggested that the malleable items may suppress the variability in the measure because the malleable view may be observed as more socially desirable

and may bias individuals to respond in more malleable terms (Dweck, 2000).

Implicit Work Ethic Scale:

This implicit measure of work ethic, developed and based on the well-known scale of the Protestant Work Ethic (Mirels & Garrett, 1971), has five primary dimensions (Arslan, 2001).

The implicit measure of work ethic consists of five short scenarios. Each scenario is designed and based on one dimension and describes a person in a hypothetical work situation and his/her attitude towards work highlighting one of the above dimensions. The participants were first asked to describe, using a scale from 1 to 4, how similar they think the character of the scenario is to their personality. Second, using a scale from 1 to 6, the participants were asked to rate the character of each scenario using five different adjectives.

The dimensions of the Protestant Work Ethic scale that incorporate the frequently used PWE characteristics in many studies, based on which we developed the scenarios, are as follows:

(1) work as an end in itself; (2) attitude towards saving money and time; (3) hard work and success; (4) negative attitude toward leisure; and (5) internal locus of control.

An example of the scenario related to the dimension ‘work as an end in itself’ appears to be as follows:

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Some people feel uncomfortable when there is little work to do. Sabrina is one of them. She looks for extra tasks to take on at work, even if the tasks are boring and she will get no reward for her extra effort.

To what extent do you believe that Sabrina is similar to you in her attitude towards work?

(1) Not similar to me at all - (4) Just like me.

To what extent do you feel Sabrina is: Foolish (vs. Wise), Rational (vs. Irrational), Happy (vs. Unhappy), Boring (vs. Interesting), and Secure (vs. Insecure).

The scale has been pre-tested and has proven to be internally and externally reliable¹¹.

Results and Discussion:

As hypothesized, the beliefs regarding the fixedness of the social structure ($M = 2.68$, $SD = .87$) is significantly and negatively correlated with attitudes towards work ($M = 3.75$, $SD = .36$): $r = -.404$, $p = .001$. The individuals with a more malleable view of the social structure have more positive attitudes towards work.

Specifically, beliefs of the fixedness of the social structure were significantly and negatively correlated with three of five dimensions of the implicit work ethic scale. Table 3 demonstrates a summary of the results. Consistent with our

¹¹ We tested the internal and external validity of the scale in a pilot study with fifty-two MBA students (mean age = 30.6 years, $SD = 3.39$, $n = 43$ males) from a large business school in France. A principal component factor analysis with a Varimax rotation was conducted on the data and revealed that the items related to each scenario are perfectly loaded on five factors explaining 58 per cent of the observed variance. The reliability coefficient for each scenario is greater than .7, and the overall reliability coefficient is $\alpha = .77$. Moreover, this scale correlates positively and significantly with PWE ($r = .36$) and JWB ($r = .32$) and negatively with the external LOC ($r = -.30$).

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expectations, maintaining a more fixed view of social structure results in lower scores in attitudes towards ‘Hard Work’ ($M = 3.68$, $SD = .66$): $r = -.257$, $p = .036$, ‘Internal Locus of Control’ ($M = 4.35$, $SD = .69$): $r = -.267$, $p = .029$, and ‘Attitudes towards Saving Money and Time’ ($M = 3.99$, $SD = .68$): $r = -.271$, $p = .026$. These findings reveal that individuals who hold a malleable view of the social structure attach greater importance to hard work as a means of success, believe in an internal locus of control and appreciate saving money and time. In other words, the more people perceive the society to be malleable, the more they appreciate meritocracy.

Table 3 *Correlations between beliefs about the fixedness of the social structure and dimensions of implicit work ethic.*

DV	M	SD	Cronbach's <i>a</i>	<i>r</i> (<i>a</i>)
(1) Work as an end in itself	3.22	.91	.77	-.122 (.320)
(2) Attitude toward saving money and time	3.99	.68	.72	-.271** (.026)
(3) Hard work and success	3.68	.65	.70	-.257** (.036)
(4) Negative attitude toward leisure	3.49	.78	.79	-.118 (.341)
(5) Internal locus of control	4.34	.68	.72	-.267** (.029)
Implicit work ethic	3.75	.37	.70	-.404*** (.001)

*** $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.05$; * $p < 0.1$.

There were no two-way significant interactions between theories of social structure and level of family income ($b = .019$, $t = .402$, $p = .69$) or between theories of social structure and educational level ($b = .015$, $t = .153$, $p = .88$).

Thus, family income and education did not moderate the effect of beliefs on malleability or fixedness of social structure on attitudes towards work.

In study 2b, we replicated study 2a but progressed a step ahead by assessing the correlation between theories of social structure and work behavior.

Study 2b

Method:

Participants: The participants consisted of thirty-eight students (mean age = 24.37 years, SD = 1.28, 19 females) from a major university in France. The majority of the participants had a master's degree (13% were at the undergraduate level). The students participated in the study in exchange for a lottery ticket. The participants were asked to respond to an electronic questionnaire that lasted for approximately 20 minutes.

Procedure: The participants completed the Theories of Social Structure Scale.

Next, the participants were given 3 anagrams to solve (2 were soluble, and 1 was insoluble). The participants had a limited time (5 min for the entire task). They also had the option of quitting the task and moving to subsequent questions. We measured the duration of the task. The anagram task proved to be a valid method for measuring motivation, performance, persistence and effort (Erez & Isen, 2002). Previous research suggested that the anagram task could be a reliable proxy for work (T.L. Chartrand et al., 2007). In the present study, we measured effort by the time the participants invested in solving the anagrams. All of the

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anagrams were presented on one page. To prevent this measure from being influenced by the participants' anagram solving ability, we included 1 unsolvable anagram in the set.

We asked the participants if they were willing to spend more time on the task if there was no time limitation.

Results and Discussion:

As hypothesized, belief about fixedness of social structure ($M = 2.99$, $SD = .78$) is significantly and negatively correlated with effort level ($M = 151.12$, $SD = 87.07$): $r = -.352$, $p = .030$. The individuals with malleable view of social structure are more likely to invest more effort and to be more persistent on a given task.

The individuals with fixed view of social structure reported a lower level of motivation to continue working on the task: $r = -.375$, $p = .020$.

There were no two-way significant interactions between the theories of social structure and level of family income ($b = -2.185$, $t = -.076$, $p = .94$) or the between theories of social structure and level of education ($b = -15.265$, $t = -1.121$, $p = .27$). Thus, family income and education did not moderate the effect of beliefs on the malleability or fixedness of social structure with regard to persistence.

Discussion:

The findings of studies 2a and 2b reveal that people's beliefs about the malleability or fixedness of the structure of the society in which they live could significantly impact their meritocratic values and beliefs that appear as motivation to work hard and invest more effort to achieve success. These studies have shown that regardless of the social mobility rate, one's perception about ease of mobility could be a significant source of motivation.

Study 3

Previous studies have demonstrated that there is an association between people's perception of the societal structure and their attitudes and behavior regarding work. Thus far, we have only measured these variables, and thus, the effects remain correlational. In study 3, we adopted a different approach for establishing the causal link between views of the malleability of the social structure and work attitudes and behavior. By manipulating the mindset about the social structure, we could assess the causal role of the theories of social structure. Moreover, we could discover whether changing the mindset regarding society could impact meritocratic beliefs.

Method:

Participants: The participants consisted of sixty students (mean age = 23.83 years, SD = 1.99, 28 females) from a major university in France. All of the participants had a master's degree. The students participated in the study in

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exchange for course credit. The participants were asked to respond to an electronic questionnaire that lasted for approximately 20 minutes.

Procedure: The participants were told that they would be participating in two different studies. They were first asked to read the abstract of an academic article and write two or three sentences regarding their understanding and related experiences concerning the topic. Subsequently, they rated how interesting, useful and easy to understand they found the article on a 7-point scale (rating from not at all to very much).

In the *fixed* condition, the participants read an article that was ostensibly based on a report by *OECD* titled “Social and Economic Immobility: The Social Structure Is Rigid.” The article described a real-life situation, “Imagine you are born in a worker family in a small town” and questioned the reader regarding the difficulty of experiencing “a different quality of life compared to your parents.” The article described the meaning of social mobility. The article also described the findings of the reports by the Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) based on which the society is rigid and immobile.

In the *malleable* condition, the article was titled “Social and Economic Mobility: The Social Structure Is Flexible.” The article was similar to the one in the fixed condition and described the same research but presented that the key result was that the society is flexible and mobile.

Similar to study 2b, the participants were asked to work on the anagram task. In this study, we had 6 anagrams to solve (5 were soluble and 1 was insoluble). The participants had an overall time of 10 minutes to work on the task.

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To confirm the effectiveness of the manipulation, the participants completed the Theories of Social Structure Scale. They were asked to rate the extent to which they believe social mobility exists in France using a scale from 1 to 7 (from extremely low to extremely high).

Results and Discussion:

Manipulation check: The manipulation successfully changed people's beliefs about the malleability and fixedness of the social structure. Those individuals in the *fixed* condition endorsed a more fixed view of the social structure on the Theories of Social Structure Scale ($M = 2.767$, $SD = .86$) than those in the *malleable* condition ($M = 2.367$, $SD = .72$), $F(1,58) = 3.831$, $p = 0.05$. Similarly, the participants in the *fixed* condition rated social mobility in France to be lower ($M = 4.20$, $SD = .93$) than those in the *malleable* condition ($M = 4.58$, $SD = .99$), $F(1,58) = 10.275$, $p = 0.002$.

A one-way between subjects ANOVA was conducted to compare the effects of manipulating the mindset on work behavior. As predicted, the participants in the *malleable* condition invested more time in the anagram task ($M = 350.24$, $SD = 151.59$) than the participants in the *fixed* condition ($M = 267.82$, $SD = 134.83$), $F(1,58) = 4.950$, $p = 0.03$.

Table 4 summarizes the results of study 2b.

We examined whether income level would moderate the link between mindset and behavior. There were no two-way significant interactions between the theories of social structure and level of family income ($b = 24.347$, $t = 1.511$, $p =$

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.14). Thus, family income did not moderate the effect of beliefs in the malleability or fixedness of the social structure on persistence.

Table 4 *Changing people’s view about the social structure would change their work behavior. Participants in the malleable condition are more persistent in performing the task than those in the fixed condition.*

DV	Fixed Mindset		Malleable Mindset		F (a)
	M	SD	M	SD	
Persistence	267.82	134.830	350.24	151.596	4.95** (0.03)
Reported motivation	1.60	.498	1.40	.498	2.417 (0.12)
Manipulation check:— implicit belief of fixedness of social structure	2.767	.8584	2.367	.7184	3.831* (0.05)
Manipulation check:— degree of social mobility in France	4.20	.925	4.97	.928	10.275*** (0.002)

***p<0.01; **p<0.05; *p<0.1.

The results of study 2 revealed the causal role of the theories of social structure in shaping people’s behavior concerning work. Moreover, it demonstrates that these theories and beliefs are changeable. The individuals who were in the fixed condition, indeed, held a more fixed view of the social structure. Additionally, they became less persistent in performing a task. A view that society is flexible and mobile resulted in a higher level of meritocratic beliefs through increased effort.

E. GENERAL DISCUSSION

Across three studies, we found that peoples' view of societal factors could significantly impact their attitudes and behavior regarding meritocratic values. Study 1 revealed that experiencing social mobility led individuals to view and to expect society to be more meritocratic. The individuals who viewed social structure as malleable endorsed a stronger sense of work ethic, attached more importance to hard work and saving money and time, held a more internal locus of control (study 2a), and invested more effort in performing a task (study 2b). Study 3 demonstrated the causal pathway between beliefs of the malleability of the social structure and work behavior. The individuals who were led to believe that the social mobility rate is high were more persistent in performing a task and achieving success through more effort. In other words, subjective experiences of social mobility and conceptualizing the social structure as more receptive to mobility would result in stronger beliefs in meritocracy.

Meritocracy is a social system “in which individuals get ahead and earn rewards in direct proportion to their individual efforts and abilities” (McNamee & Miller, 2009, p. 2). The core tenet of this ideology is to believe that the social system provides every opportunity for success, given hard work. Thus, meritocracy leads people to believe that upward mobility is achievable if they invest sufficient effort and work hard, which can be conceptualized as work ethic.

One of the primary elements of the meritocratic belief system is that ‘hard work results in success’ (Meriac et al., 2013). Our findings suggested that those who believe that society provides its members with equal opportunities endorse a

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higher level of work ethic and rely on their hard work. Holding a rigid view of society, however, inhibits values of hard work.

Previous research revealed that work ethic as an element of a larger belief system, meritocracy, could be considered to be an attitudinal construct that is significantly influenced by social and cultural variables. Social class is one of the important constructs that could predict individual differences in work values (Cokley et al., 2007). Members of ethnic minority groups in the United States are perceived by both ingroup and outgroup members as belonging to a lower social class, and they endorse a lower level of work ethic, although they achieve a higher social status (Cole & Omari, 2003; Wilson, 1996). In one study, Cokley and his colleagues (2007) revealed that the perception of social class mediated the relationship between ethnicity and work ethic in samples of black and white students in the United States. In the current research, we advanced a step ahead and considered perceptions of social mobility as a predictor of work ethic.

Individuals who belong to the underprivileged social stratum may have different life experiences that lead them to believe that societal factors prevent them from achieving their career goals, even if they work harder than their privileged counterparts. Many of these factors have been previously studied, including racial, gender and cultural discriminations. Nonetheless, one of the important factors that influences the values of hard work is the perception of an equal opportunity society. Previous research has demonstrated that for centuries the *American Dream* has lured people to America from all over the world and has been more achievable for the Caucasian-American men than individuals from

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different races, gender and social classes (Hochschild, 1996; Rifkin, 2013). In this sense, the most significant finding of this research is that beliefs and perceptions about rigidity of the social structure are changeable.

The result of this research reveals that to consider hard work as the primary key to success, individuals need to take an incremental view of social structure. That process could occur by changing the mindset regarding the opportunities that society could provide. Our research has suggested that the *American Dream* could exist beyond the white population of the United States, for other ethnic groups and in any society if the policymakers allocate sufficient resources to systemically change people's view of the social structure. Future research is required to emphasize the different approaches for addressing this issue. One way to alter people's beliefs about the malleability of society could be affirmative action in schools. Many members of underprivileged groups view education as "the primary vehicle for upward mobility" (Cole & Omari, 2003, p. 799).

One limitation of this research could be traced to the differences in cultural dimensions. Members of more collectivist cultures may have different perceptions regarding social mobility. It is likely that the interdependency that exists in collectivist cultures affects individuals' perception of reality in a different way compared to more individualistic cultures. Collectivism encourages people to conceive the world as a fixed and stable reality, and individuals in collectivist societies would hold an entity theory of the world and consequently of the social structure (Triandis, 2004). For example, there is evidence that East Asians (very well-proved collectivist nations) believe more strongly in the fixedness of the

world compared to Americans and they prefer to adjust their personal attributes rather than change the environment (Chen et al., 2009; Morling, Kitayama, & Miyamoto, 2002; Su et al., 1999).

Moreover, the American Dream emphasizes economic growth, personal wealth and independence, whereas other cultures may cherish embeddedness more than autonomy (Rifkin, 2013). Therefore, we can assume that an inter/independent cultural orientation could moderate the effect of incremental theories of social structure on attitudes towards work.

Conclusion

Fixed beliefs of social structure may have negative consequences at individual and societal levels. If people hold a fixed view of society, they are less motivated to work hard. If students from underprivileged groups believe that society is not providing them with opportunities to grow, they withdraw all efforts. Our research highlights the perception that people hold regarding the social structure and its impact on motivation, attitudes and behavior. Our results could provide a foundation for future interventions regarding altering educational systems and public policies.

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APPENDIX A

Theories of the Social Structure Scale

1. People's social status is a very fundamental characteristic about them and cannot be changed much.

1	2	3	4	5	6
<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Somewhat Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Somewhat Agree</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>

2. People are born belonging to a certain social class, and no matter how hard they try, they will never be fully received by those of the upper class.

1	2	3	4	5	6
<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Somewhat Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Somewhat Agree</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>

3. There is always a door open for people to be accepted in the upper social class. (R)

1	2	3	4	5	6
<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Somewhat Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Somewhat Agree</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>

4. People belong to a certain social class and they really cannot do much to change it.

1	2	3	4	5	6
<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Somewhat Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Somewhat Agree</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>

APPENDIX B

Manipulation Materials for Study 3

Social and Economic Immobility: The Social Structures Is Rigid

Imagine you are born in a worker family in a small town. Your parents work in the service sector and do their best to provide an acceptable quality of life for you and your siblings.

How difficult would it be for you to experience a significantly different quality of life compared to your parents?

How likely are you, for example, to make it to a top university and find a good job in a large corporation?

The current article provides evidence that moving upwardly is actually quite difficult in our society.

Social mobility refers to how far and how easily a person can move within the social structure. People who gain power and influence or simply have an easier or more luxurious lifestyle are often said to be “upwardly mobile.” A number of events can influence someone’s social status; wealth and access to money are important factors as well as education and occupation.

A new report from the Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) revealed that social mobility between generations is dramatically low in our society. Evidence shows that due to the low level of mobility, the social structure is quite rigid.

A rigid system is a social system wherein there is no mobility. A person remains in the same status their entire life, based on the status in which they were born.

Social movements did not really sweep away the ancient legal privileges enjoyed by the nobility and the clergy. They have failed to erase sharp distinctions among social groups and have not been able to fundamentally alter the distribution of wealth. Society has still retained a rigid structure, with little mobility among social groups.

Upward mobility is the goal of many people in the lower and middle classes, who view higher social classes as more economically and socially secure. However, within the rigid social structure, individuals are prevented from fulfilling their potential because of the circumstances of their birth.

APPENDIX B- continued

Social and Economic Mobility: The Social Structure Is Flexible

Imagine you are born in a worker family in a small town. Your parents work in the service sector and do their best to provide an acceptable quality of life for you and your siblings. You work very hard in school and make it to one of the top universities. After graduation, you find a well-paid job in a large corporation. How likely are you to experience a significantly different quality of life compared to your parents?

The current article provides evidence that moving upwardly is actually quite possible in our society.

Social mobility refers to how far and how easily a person can move within the social structure. People who gain power and influence or have simply an easier or more luxurious lifestyle are often said to be “upwardly mobile.” A number of events can influence someone’s social status; wealth and access to money are important factors as well as education and occupation.

A new report from the Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) revealed that social mobility between generations is dramatically high in our society. Evidence shows that due to the high and varying levels of social mobility, the social structure is quite flexible.

Flexible social structures have become more common since the mid-20th century. In the modern world, people have moved away from the complicated concepts of nobility and have moved towards democratic ideals wherein each citizen has equal privileges under law. Although this view began as a political concept, it has quickly permeated many societies and has greatly relaxed standards of social mobility.

Many people in the lower and middle classes now search to be upwardly mobile because they view higher social classes as more economically and socially secure. Some people attempt to achieve class mobility for themselves by aggressively pursuing educational and social opportunities, whereas others focus on laying the groundwork for future generations.

In many societies, the idea of social mobility is an important concept, with citizens believing that everyone has the opportunity to climb the social ladder.

Chapter 4

Religious Stimuli at Workplace and Individual Performance: The Role of The Abstract Mindset

A. Introduction

Beliefs and ideologies have always been recognized as possible drivers of individuals' behaviors. Thus, exploring the impact of religion as a potential antecedent of work attitude and behavior would be beneficial to managers in religiously diverse environments in order to apply the appropriate practices. In this chapter, we will incorporate a social psychological approach in order to probe the effect of religious thoughts on work attitude and behavior.

People internalize certain types of values based on their religious beliefs. These values when evoked, would impact attitudes and behaviors (Saroglou, 2010; Saroglou, Delpierre, & Dernelle, 2004). Particularly, prior research has shown that religious values are significantly associated with psychological and behavioral outcomes. For instance, priming religious thoughts and values increases the psychological well-being, prosocial behavior, altruism, and self-regulatory behavior (Laurin et al., 2011; Norenzayan & Shariff, 2008).

Religious Stimuli And The Role Of The Abstract Mindset

It is not very clear yet, whether religious beliefs could impact behaviors and attitudes regarding work. Considering the diverse work environment within the multicultural and multinational firms, individuals are encountering various religious cues that could in turn, prime religious values and beliefs regarding work ethic. Moreover, the underlying mechanism is still elusive. A leading inquiry is to discover the fundamental channels that this process works through.

Thus, this research aims to shed light on the relationship between religious cues at the workplace and the individual's work behavior. More specifically, it is expected that, religious stimuli influence attitude towards work and eventually motivation and performance. Moreover, we will propose the underlying psychological variable that may account for this effect. In this regard, we investigate the effect of activated religious values on the construal-level, namely abstract (versus concrete) mindset. This research suggests that activated values trigger an abstract mindset that in turn results in an enhanced attitude towards work. The level of mental construal in which the concept of work is perceived mediates the link between religious values and work behavior.

Figure 1 exhibits the mediating effect of mindset on the relationship between religious stimuli and work attitude and behavior. We begin with the implicit religious beliefs. It is essential to realize how implicit ideological beliefs could form our attitudes and regulate our behavior. We argue that these beliefs, when activated, could guide individual's behavior. Next, we establish the link between religious beliefs and work attitude based on the religious roots of work ethic. Finally, in order to shed light on the underlying mechanism, the role of construal

level will be discussed. We argue that religious stimuli could activate abstract mindset in the sense that concepts would be construed in higher and more abstract level. This process ultimately results in perceiving work in more positive way.

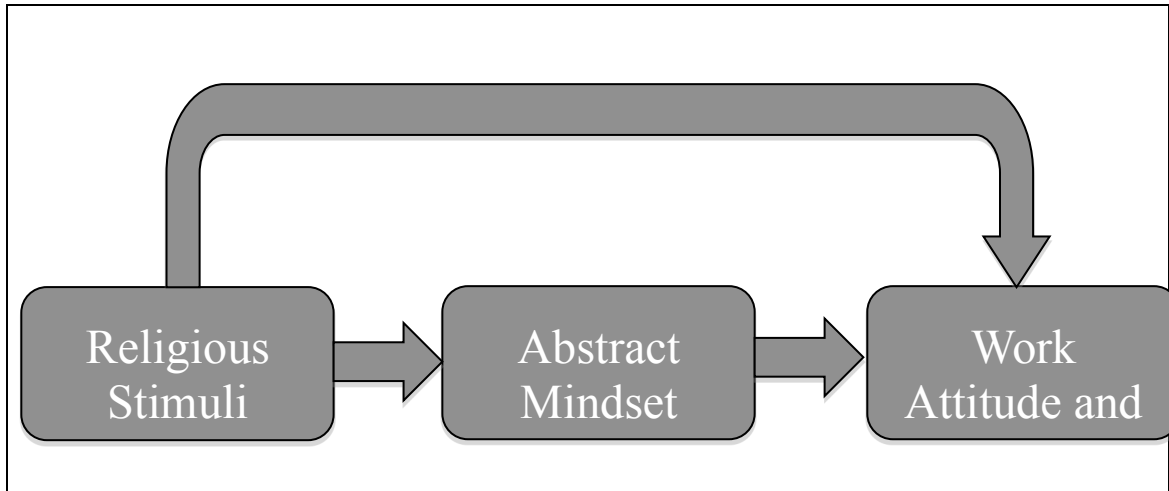


Figure 1 Mindset mediates the link between religious stimuli and work attitude and behavior

B. Implicit Religious Thoughts and Work Attitude

Recently, research has tried to establish the causal effect of religious beliefs on individual's behavior in controlled setting. For instance, explicitly and implicitly priming with religious ideas triggered higher levels of public self-awareness and led individuals to respond in a more socially desirable manner (Gervais & Norenzayan, 2011) and remembering God as a punishing agent decreased the cheating behavior in an anonymous setting (Shariff & Norenzayan, 2011). Many studies exhibit that religious beliefs go beyond the consciously accessible cognitive domain and can act in a more implicit way

(Boyer, 2003). Individuals who have been primed with concepts related to God, behaved more prosocially by allocating more money to anonymous stranger (Shariff & Norenzayan, 2007). Laurin, Kay and Fitzsimons (2011) argue that because God is considered as an omnipotent, controlling force, and at the same time an omniscient, all-knowing force, priming with God concepts affects self-regulatory behavior, by increasing self-control and resistance of temptation but decreasing active goal pursuit.

Although many of these studies addressed the effect of reminding people of divine concepts and religious thoughts on prosocial and cooperative behavior (Atran & Norenzayan, 2004; Norenzayan & Shariff, 2008; Randolph-Seng & Nielsen, 2007; Shariff & Norenzayan, 2007), very few explored the consequences of triggering religious thoughts on individuals' behavior regarding work and profession. A recent study by Uhlmann et al. (2011) reveals that ideological and religious values can also be activated and operated unconsciously to influence work performance. Priming the divine concepts provides proof that the judgments and behaviors of contemporary Americans are implicitly influenced by traditional Puritan-Protestant values. Americans who were primed with words related to salvation and divinity performed significantly better on the task than Canadians (Uhlmann et al., 2011)

Although American culture has been known as having great respect for religious, and mainly Protestant values, the United States is not the only country holding such characteristics. Moreover, even though Protestantism has been cherished as the religion of the greatest work ethic (Weber, 1905), many other

ideologies such as Islam and Judaism have highly appreciated the 'hard work' as a core value (Sharabi, 2010). The fact that these ideologies have never been noticed and researched may be due to the political, economical, or academic concerns. However, some other religions share the same core values regarding the centrality of work. More specifically, in both Islam and Judaism there is an immense emphasis on hard work. However, these value systems differ from Protestantism in taking a more collectivist and family-oriented attitude towards hard work in the form of providing for the family and promoting the society (M. Sharabi, 2010; Sidani & Thornberry, 2010). Thus, it would be of great value to explore the impact of religious beliefs and spirituality in general, on work attitude, among nations of different religions.

It should be noted that in many societies, practicing religion is not part of the everyday life however; the religious values have been internalized due to the tradition, rituals, family-oriented customs, educational systems and media. As a result, individuals in many countries are highly committed to Religious work ethic indicating a set of values associated to work in religious cultures (A. Ali, 1988; A. J. Ali, 1992; A. J. Ali & Al-Owaihian, 2008).

The results of studies on Islamic work ethic (A. Ali, 1988; A. J. Ali & Al-Owaihian, 2008; Moayedi, 2010; Yousef, 2000, 2001), for example, reveal that Islamic culture is extremely inspiring for people to be sincere and committed towards work. In another study, Muslim individuals who were subliminally primed with spirituality exhibited more positive attitude towards work and performed significantly better on a task (Taghavi & Segalla, 2014). The fact that

individual differences in the degree of religiosity and religious affiliation did not moderate the link between religious prime and work ethic indicates that religious cues would stimulate implicit religious thoughts and affect attitudes and behavior.

In this vein, we can deduce that if these implicit values are chronically accessible they can be activated through situational cues to guide individuals' work attitude and performance. Activated religious thoughts lead individuals to connect with the religious values related to work attitude and behavior. Consequently, we expect a more positive attitude toward work and a higher level of motivation among individuals for whom the religious thoughts have been activated.

Situational Religious Cues

Research on implicit cognition demonstrates that goals, motives, stereotypes, and traits can become implicitly and unconsciously active in the presence of situational cues and eventually can drive behavior (Bargh & Chartrand, 1999; Bargh, Chen, & Burrows, 1996; T.L. Chartrand & Bargh, 1996). More specifically, goals are associated with their attainment means, namely, environmental features such as settings, individuals and behaviors. Encountering these means will automatically evoke the goal. The strength of the goal-means association depends on the degree to which the means is perceived to facilitate goal pursuit (Shah, 2005). Thus, there will be an automatic association between goals and characteristics of the environment in which they are being frequently

pursued. Once the goal is triggered, and during the time it remains active, it drives individual's behavior like the consciously aroused goal, but without the individual's awareness, and thus unlikely to be controlled (Tanya L. Chartrand & Bargh, 2002).

With regard to this argument, in a series of studies, Bargh and his associates, unobtrusively primed participants with different specific goals such as the goal to remember information and the goal to form an impression of someone (T.L. Chartrand & Bargh, 1996), and achievement and cooperation goals (Bargh, Gollwitzer, Lee-Chai, Barndollar, & Trötschel, 2001). Results demonstrate that the participants in the primed condition perform in line with the activated goal even in the absence of a conscious goal. The subconsciously primed goals can also interact with conscious ones and affect the performance.

Studies show that values can also invoke behaviors in the similar manner (Verplanken & Holland, 2002), though the effect was not found very strong and in fact, being moderated by variables such as self-centrality, interactions among social values, reasons supporting the importance of the values, and abstract vs. concrete mindset (Darley & Batson, 1973; Maio, Olson, Allen, & Bernard, 2001; Torelli & Kaikati, 2009). Thus, cultural knowledge can be temporally accessible when being activated by the situational cues. However, in order to activate the cultural values, they need to be first, available by being internalized and extensively experienced by the individual. Second, the cultural knowledge elements have to be chronically accessible – widely shared, frequently used and

cognitively accessible to members of the group. Finally, the cultural knowledge and values are to be applicable to that very situation (Hong et al., 2007).

Furthermore, research on implicit beliefs reveal that values and belief systems are associated with their environmental features such as settings, individuals and behaviors. Encountering these means will automatically evoke the value system. Thus, there will be an automatic association between value and characteristics of the environment in which they are being frequently pursued. Once the value system is triggered, and during the time it remains salient, it drives individual's behavior without the individual's awareness, and thus unlikely to be controlled (Tanya L. Chartrand & Bargh, 2002). Accordingly, one could argue that religious beliefs, when activated, are influential as far as they are in congruence with the environmental and cultural setting. In a comparative setting, Taghavi and Segalla (2014) activated religious thoughts for both Moroccan and French participants and measured their work attitude and behavior. The results reveal that religious beliefs when activated would positively influenced work attitude and behavior for Moroccans but not for French participants. Thus, religious thoughts, if in line with the cultural setting, could impact work ethic, job involvement and eventually performance and a religiously diverse environment provides different religious cues that could result in stimulating religious beliefs.

In sum, we propose that religious thoughts could be triggered through the religious stimuli in a religiously diverse environment and affect attitudes and behaviors. Specifically, interacting with religious individuals could activate implicit religious thoughts. Religious thoughts, when triggered, would positively

impact work attitude and motivation, only if the cultural setting incorporates religious values.

C. Religious Thoughts and Mental Construal

In the following section we argue that the ideological values derived from religious beliefs are more concerned about the abstract meanings. Moreover, these values are being perceived in a psychologically distant future. Therefore, they will impact work attitude and motivation in a positive way.

Construal Level Theory

According to construal level theory (Trope & Liberman, 2003), events and objects can be represented at different levels in individual's mind. More distal concepts that are more remote from direct experiences are understood on a higher level and involve more construal. This happens because, normally, we have less knowledge about the more distant future and past, the faraway places and people, and the less imaginable alternatives to reality. This lack of knowledge about the more remote events, places and alternatives results in a more abstract representation of them. More proximal entities, however, involve less construal and are represented in a more concrete way due to the more detailed knowledge in hand and more feasible experimentation.

A high level construal results in an abstract conceptualization of information about the events and objects. A low level construal, in contrast, entails creating concrete conceptualizations. Because abstract representations capture and

highlight the superordinate central features of the objects and events, high-level construals are more concerned about the general meanings. These representations tend to be simpler, less ambiguous, more coherent and more schematic, because the irrelevant and inconsistent details have been omitted. Low-level construals, however, concentrate on the processes, procedures and exemplars by extracting the subordinate peripheral characteristics of the event or object. Thus, while concrete mindset is looking for the *how*, the abstract mindset seeks the *why*. In this regard, psychological distance is one of the core elements of the theory. The farther the event, the more likely is the perceiver to construe the situation on a high, abstract level (Fujita, Trope, Liberman, & Levin-Sagi, 2006; Levin-Sagi, 2006; Trope & Liberman, 2003, 2010).

Religious values are very much related to ideological and spiritual beliefs such as salvation and divinity. These values are abstract and decontextualized in nature and 'are represented in memory at the most abstract level of an organized hierarchy' (Bargh & Chartrand, 1999, p. 469). Moreover, concepts such as 'afterlife' and 'heaven' are psychologically distant and remote from the direct everyday life-experiences. In a series of four studies, Eyal et al. (2009) found a very strong link between activated values and temporally distant future. In this sense, values are more associated with actions and behavior in distant future mainly because they involve more construal and thus, trigger an abstract mindset.

Thus, according to construal-level theory, ideological concepts are construed on a higher level and involve more construals. Religious values essentially focus

on the meanings, purposes and higher-level goals. Thus, activated values related to salvation and divinity, indirectly portray a psychological distant situation and result in a more abstract conceptualization. Thus, religious thoughts, when triggered, would activate an abstract mindset. This abstract mindset would impact motivation and attitude in several ways.

Research on construal level theory demonstrates that there is a positive and significant relationship between high-level construal mindset and self-control (Fujita et al., 2006; Haws, 2007; Levin-Sagi, 2006; Schmeichel, Vohs, & Duke, 2011). In this sense, when there is a conflict between two opposing motivations, for example tendency to take a coffee break every 10 minutes and necessity to work hard to prepare the report on-time, it is actually challenging two levels of mental construals. A series of studies by Fujita et al. demonstrate that activating a higher-level construal mindset increases self-control (Fujita et al., 2006). Thus we can expect that religious thoughts, through activating abstract mindset, would increase self-control.

In a similar way religious thoughts that trigger an abstract mindset would increase the desirability of the action. Studies also show that there is an association between arguments in favor and against an action and the construal level. In a series of experiments, (Eyal, Liberman, Trope, & Walther, 2004)) posit that considerations in favor of an action (pros) are superordinate to considerations against the action. These studies exhibit that individuals in abstract mindset tend to generate more pros than cons for a given action. In another study, Herzog, Hansen and Wange (2007) show that when people

perceive the action in distant future the and therefore in higher construal level, it would be easier for them to generate ideas in favor of the action and more difficult to generate ideas against the action. While the action is being represented on a higher level of mental construal, the individual would automatically give more weight to long-term goals and desirability of the action, and it would be easier for him/her to generate thoughts and arguments in favor of the action.

In general, the abstract mindset boosts the effect of activated value on behavior (Torelli & Kaikati, 2009). Torelli and Kaikati (2009) triggered the values and the abstract mindset simultaneously and observed an augmentation in value-congruent judgments and behaviors. The abstract mindset improves the effect of activated values on behavior. We can expect the same effect while abstract mindset is triggered through religious stimuli. Thus, higher level of construal boosts the consistency between triggered religious values and work behavior. In this sense, we expect individuals on a higher level of mental construal to have more positive work attitude and abstract mindset to increase the effect of religious thoughts on motivation and performance.

In sum, religious stimuli would increase work attitude and motivation through triggering a higher level of mental construal. The abstract mindset increases self-control and desirability of the action and at the same time boosts the value-behavior congruency.

D. DISCUSSION

This chapter seeks to shed light on the effect of activated religious values on work behavior. Religious values have been recognized to have a solid influence on the members of the societies that embrace and cherish religion and spirituality. In these societies, individuals identify strongly with their religion even though they do not practice regularly.

However, the religious values related to work and business, have relatively remained undiscovered. The goal of this research was to explore the consequences of activating the implicit values related to work regarding individuals' work attitude and behavior. Furthermore, this work examines the cognitive consequences of activating religious beliefs. It demonstrates that religious thoughts are able to trigger higher levels of construal that can lead individuals to process information and make decisions in a more abstract way. According to construal-level theory, the abstract mindset leads individuals to focus more on the superordinate goal and behave in more self-regulatory manner. Thus, it is proposed that the construal level will mediate the link between activated work values and work behavior.

The main outcome of this research has both academic and practical implications. It contributes to the literature in work attitude and motivation by establishing the link between religious psychology and work values. From a practical perspective, the results might be extremely constructive in HR practices in religiously diverse environments. It would be important for practitioners to draw on this model to have a better understanding of the psychological impact

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of religious stimuli on employee's motivation in cultures that embrace religious values.

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When Your Culture Advocates You: The Effect of Cultural Work Values on Performance

Cultural values and their impact on people's attitudes and behavior have long been a place for debate. Globalization, migration and expatriation have contributed to the conflict caused by the interaction among multiple cultural identities, particularly when it comes to organizations with diverse workforce. Specifically, France is a unique case that provides a historically and culturally rich, yet very ambiguous context for studying this topic. The dominant culture in France emphasizes on *egalitarianism* and *secularism*. However, a great part of the population has adopted distinct cultural values with regard to their religious beliefs. Moreover, the perception about 'equal opportunities' provided by the society varies considerably across the cultures. The topic is specifically important at workplace, where individuals with diverse and sometimes divergent beliefs take part in collective activities. The objective of this dissertation is to discover the mechanisms by which cultural attributes predict work ethic and productivity- first, through their interaction with religious beliefs; and second through *the implicit theories about the societal structure*. The findings reveal that religious thoughts positively influence work ethic and level effort when a *culture of religiosity* is prominent and negatively when the laïc culture is salient. Furthermore, this research sheds light to the different perceptions about equal opportunities in the society. The meritocratic attitudes are directly influenced by the extent to which people perceive the social structure to be malleable vs. fixed. Across three essays, this dissertation addresses a particularly important issue as faced by employers and policy makers, specifically in France. It provides a compelling understanding about a number of antecedents of work ethic and work behavior; namely, the cultural and religious values, perceptions about malleability of the social structure, and mindsets.

Keywords: *Work Ethic, Religious Identity, Cultural Values, Secularism, Implicit Beliefs, Mindset, Social Mobility, Meritocracy*

Quand Votre Culture Vous Favorise: L'influence des Valeurs Culturelle de Travail Sur la Performance

Les valeurs culturelles et leur impact sur les attitudes et les comportements ont longtemps été un objet de débat. La mondialisation, la migration et l'expatriation ont contribué au conflit provoqué par l'interaction entre les multiples identités culturelles, en particulier lorsqu'il s'agit d'organisations constituées de personnel diversifié. La France est un cas singulier, offrant un contexte historique et culturel particulièrement intéressant pour l'étude de ce sujet. En effet, la culture dominante en France prône l'égalitarisme et la laïcité. Parallèlement, une grande partie de la population française a adopté des valeurs culturelles issues de ses croyances religieuses. De plus, les perceptions au sujet de «l'égalité des chances» offerte par la société varient considérablement selon les cultures. Cette question est particulièrement importante dans un environnement de travail où les individus ayant des croyances diverses et complexes participent à des activités collectives. L'objectif de cette thèse est de découvrir les mécanismes par lesquels les attributs culturels déterminent une éthique de travail - premièrement, à travers leur interaction avec les croyances religieuses; et deuxièmement, à travers les croyances implicites sur la structure de la société. Les résultats révèlent que les pensées religieuses influencent positivement l'éthique de travail et le niveau de l'effort quand une *culture de la religiosité* est prédominante et négativement lorsque la *culture laïque* est saillante. Par ailleurs, cette recherche éclaire les différentes perceptions de l'égalité des chances dans la société. Les attitudes méritocratiques sont directement influencées par la façon dont les gens distinguent la structure sociale : selon qu'elle soit perçue comme rigide ou malléable. Sur trois essais, cette thèse soulève une problématique particulièrement importante à laquelle font face les employeurs et les décideurs politiques, en particulier en France. Elle fournit une explication quant à l'impact des valeurs culturelles et religieuses, des perceptions sur la malléabilité de la structure sociale, et des mentalités, sur la prévision de l'éthique de travail et la motivation.

Mots-clés: *Éthique de travail, Identité religieuse, Valeurs Culturelles, Laïcité, Croyances Implicites, Mentalité, Mobilité Sociale, Méritocratie*