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HOW MEMORABLE SOCIALIZATION MESSAGES FROM WITHIN

CULTURAL COMMUNITIES SHAPE ADULT MEANING ATTRIBUTIONS

ABOUT WORK: THE CASE OF LEBANESE-AMERICANS

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HOW MEMORABLE SOCIALIZATION MESSAGES FROM WITHIN
CULTURAL COMMUNITIES SHAPE ADULT MEANING ATTRIBUTIONS
ABOUT WORK: THE CASE OF LEBANESE-AMERICANS

A DISSERTATION APPROVED FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION

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Dedications

This dissertation is dedicated to Sam, always and forever my rock, and to Zeina, the light of our lives.

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Abstract

This dissertation describes the process by which community messaging

obligates members to perform work behaviors in order to achieve full membership

status—labeled here the *Obligation-based Culturing of Work (OCW)*. The investigation

supports and extends theory regarding the sources and influences of adult meaning

attributions about work, and how those meaning attributions can function as a

mechanism of cultural maintenance. Constant comparative analysis of 31, face-to-face

interviews with members of a Lebanese-American community revealed how

anticipatory work socialization emanates from sources other than organizations and is

an interpretive process through which influential community members inculcate new

generations with memorable messaging. Participants' reported that their community's

messaging encouraged them to make sense of work in ways that invited shared mental

models about the meaning of work behaviors; then, the community's messaging

connected those meanings to the idealized performance of authentic cultural

membership. Therefore, memorable community messages constructed cultural identity

as at least partially performed in work behaviors. Analysis revealed how the seemingly

mundane communication of everyday community and family life is linked to enduring

patterns of meaning attributions and work behaviors. OCW supports and extends

organizational communication theories like anticipatory organizational socialization,

work socialization, and the meaning of work (MOW) as well as intercultural communication theories like cross-cultural adaptation, intercultural fusion, hybridity, and critical cultural transculturation. The dissertation discusses how these findings contribute to knowledge about the interrelationships among messaging about work, cultural maintenance, and community identity.

Keywords: anticipatory socialization, work socialization, memorable messages, community identity, cultural maintenance, intercultural communication

Introduction

Never ever give up. Hard work has never hurt anybody. Early to bed and early to rise makes one healthy, wealthy, and wise. All three messages are often told to young people about work. More specifically, the messages imply the meaning of work is an enterprise that demands perseverance, that challenges, and that requires dedication. The meaning of work is not settled or obvious, but emerges through the sedimentation of messages that are communicated by many sources including family and community. Young people are taught meanings of work through messaging. If memorable, those messages can shape how youngsters work as adults because of the meanings they attribute to work. In order to answer the general question, "Why do we work the way we do?" this study explores the interrelationships among community messaging about work, community members' subsequent meaning attributions about work, their actions at work, and the role of community messaging in cultural maintenance.

Research confirms that generations of the same family often have similar professions and work habits (e.g., Gersick, Davis, McCollom Hampton, & Lansberg, 1997). Perhaps the reason for this intergenerational trend originates from shared memorable messages that encourage familial and community groups to converge on meaning attributions about work and its importance and value. Parents, grandparents, and even community members communicate messages about work to children, grandchildren, and fellow community members. These messages, shared within the family and community, reinforce and challenge cultural assumptions and meaning attributions about work (Cohen-Scali, 2003). These meaning attributions then

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encourage children, grandchildren, and community members to make sense of work in similar ways, and perhaps, encourage themto perform similar work habits as their parents, grandparents, and fellow community members thus maintaining a culture of certain work habits. Consistent community messaging about work behaviors can lead to expectations of such behaviors. If potential members do not meet behavioral expectations through engendered work behaviors, then their identity in the community may not be fulfilled, recognized, or affirmed by other members. To be a member means to act a certain way, as constructed by shared messaging. Language used in its context communicates meaning, which comes to invite future action (Watzlawick, Bavelas, & Jackson, 1967).

It stands to reason that influential familial and community messages can perpetuate success or low achievement, depending on the meanings they reinforce or challenge and the interpretive schemas they encourage. For example, imagine a youngster who hears, "Never, ever give up. Hard work pays off in the end," repeated throughout their lifetime by parents who embody the saying in their own work behaviors. The messages encourage a perseverant work ethic and can lead to diligent actions that culminate in success. Now imagine a youngster who hears, "No matter how hard you work, you will always struggle. Only the rich get richer." This youngster has a different meaning reinforced and can become complacent at work. The youngster could come to construct the locus of control and subsequent success to be outside him or herself.

We learn about the meaning of work through influential messages. Such messages come from many sources. Some sources of influential messages include

vocations, professions (e.g., Russo, 1998), organizations, and families (e.g., Gibson & Papa, 2000). Organizational communication theory does not fully address sources of work socialization outside of vocations, professions, organizations or families. Also, intercultural communication theory does not address the influence of work behaviors on culture. This study bridges the two sub-disciplines as it examines the memorable messaging of a community about work behaviors.

Work behavior is the product of many factors such as financial incentives (Jenkins, Mitra, Gupta, & Shaw, 1998), perceptions of distributive justice (Moorman, 1991), and affective, normative, and continuance commitments (Allen & Meyer, 1990), to name a few. How an individual behaves at work also can be a product of cultural messaging as well as work socialization messaging. Organizational socialization focuses on how organizations shape members' skills, knowledge, and meaning attributions about work (Jablin, 2001; M. W. Kramer, 2010). Shared sets of acceptable skills, knowledge and meaning attributions make up an organization's culture. Organizational culture is taught through organizational socialization (Keyton, 2011; Martin, 2002). Of course, ethnic culture too must be taught through socialization of members. Memorable messaging—whether from organizational or ethnic sources— can teach new members that work behaviors are a part of acceptable cultural behaviors.

This study extends organizational and intercultural communication theories by adding the complementary notion of the *Obligation-based Culturing of Work* and describing the discursive ways in which work socialization is constructed by community messaging as a means of performing cultural identity and cultural

inclusion. The study reveals the ways in which anticipatory socialization emanates from sources other than organizations (Clair, 1999) and is an interpretive process in which influential community members inculcate new generations through memorable messaging and make sense of work in ways that invite shared mental models about work and cultural identity (Hess, 1993). These shared meaning attributions in turn, manifest and perpetuate themselves as similar work choices and behaviors. In other words, meaning attributions about work—a part of organizational culture and ethnic culture—come from messages communicated by influential others, including but not limited to organizations. Sources such as family, friends, media, previous employment, communities, and ethnic identities play a role in the socialization or learning process about work. We learn meaning attributions about work through many sources of socialization (Clair, 1999). And our meaning attributions affect the way we think about and behave at work (Wrzesniewski, Dutton, & Debebe, 2003). In the following paragraphs, I explain how members of organizations learn meaning attributions about work through socialization, more specifically *work* socialization, from more sources than the organization and how memorable messages, created through language and symbols and are processed through sensemaking and interpretation, affect work behaviors and cultural identity.

Organizational Socialization and Organizational Culture

Organizations teach members their culture. This process of teaching culture is socializing members by encouraging them to take up certain sets of values (Keyton, 2011; Martin, 2002; Schein, 2004). Every collective of individuals develops ideas

about what constitutes acceptable and unacceptable behaviors, attitudes, values, and understandings that are explicitly communicated, such as a handbook, and implicitly communicated, such as through unwritten norms (Keyton, 2011).

Culture is invisible and taken for granted but sometimes can be heard through messages like "It's how things are done around here." Members, especially new, do not join an organization already equipped with the requisite knowledge to function effectively within an organization's social environment (M. W. Kramer, Callister, & Turban, 1995). They must be taught according to the organizational culture: "Organizational culture is the set(s) of artifacts, values, and assumptions that emerges from the interactions of organizational members" (Keyton, 2011, p. 28). According to Schein (2004), organizational culture is "a pattern of shared basic assumptions that was learned by a group as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integrations, that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems" (p. 17). The vagaries of the term "correct" problematize its usage, especially in the context of cultural communities. For one community, "correct" is making the most gain for the least work. For another, it is making enough money to share with those in need. Therefore, finding the shared meaning of what is thought to be *correct* is vital to the process of sharing culture within a specific community. The common thread between both definitions is that shared meaning is taught through the messaging that forms group-level interactions or communication.

Such cultural teaching occurs through interaction and is termed socialization.

Organizational socialization is "the process by which an individual acquires the social

knowledge and skills necessary to assume an organizational role" (Van Maanen &

Schein, 1979, p. 211). Members act and teach through communication and messaging.

Teaching about work not only includes knowledge and skills, as the definition of

organizational socialization would suggest, but also meaning attributions. *Work*

socialization adds nuance to the general understanding of organizational socialization

in that it describes a process of converging on meaning attributions about job functions

and responsibilities (Depolo, Harpaz, Jesuimo, & Sarchielli, 1992). The teaching of

knowledge, skills, and meaning attributions, culture, occurs through communication

(Latané, 1996).

The relationship between communication and culture is important in the sense

that we cannot know or enact culture without communication (Geertz, 1973; Latané,

1996; Martin & Nakayama, 2007). Culture encourages us to attribute meaning to the

world around us in particular ways by inviting us to see certain interpretations as

taken-for-granted and incontestably true about the world. Humans are not born with

interpretations but rather are taught how to interpret. Culture is learned through the

process of socialization.

The Process of Organizational Socialization. The life cycle of organizational

socialization is comprised of four phases: anticipatory socialization, initial encounter,

full membership, and exit (Jablin, 1984, 1987, 1994, 2001; M. W. Kramer, 2010). In

anticipatory socialization, individuals form expectations of the culture they will

encounter in a future workplace, termed *organizational anticipatory socialization*, or in a future vocation, termed *vocational anticipatory socialization*, through interactions with friends, family, education, previous employment, and media (M. W. Kramer, 2010). For example, a young girl encounters nurses at her pediatrician's office as well as views depictions of nurses on television. She also hears positive messages when her parents praise the occupation of nursing as a good choice where one can help other people. All of these moments and messages form an anticipatory expectation of what it means to be a nurse before the young girl decides to become one. The initial encounter phase of socialization occurs when an individual joins an organization as a formalized member. For example, the aspiring young nurse finishes nursing school and then is interviewed to become a nurse at the local hospital. Through the interview and site visits, she will begin to sense the culture of the specific nursing position and hospital setting. The encounter marks the point where expectations meet reality. From her first day at work, the woman will realize what it means to be a nurse through her daily interactions with other members and patients.

Full membership in the socialization process is reached when the member has learned the organizational culture to the point where the member can teach others "the ropes." When another nurse comes to the now veteran nurse to ask how forms need to be filled out or how to prepare a room for an incoming patient, our nurse will have reached full membership (Apker, Ford, & Fox, 2003; Messersmith, 2008). Finally, exit is the transition out of the organizational culture through either voluntary or involuntary means. If our nurse decides to retire after a long and prosperous career, she will have exited the socialization process (Jablin, 2001; M. W. Kramer, 2010). The

phases describe a process in situ and do not address how our nurse would go on to discuss her work with future generations. The four phases of socialization are by no means a linear process with set time limits and some members may never reach full membership (M. W. Kramer, 2010). The important point is that organizational culture, including knowledge, skills, and meaning attributions, is learned through the process of socialization. More specifically, it stands to reason that work socialization is learned from a variety of influential sources as well.

Organizational and *Work* Socialization

Research demonstrates there are many sources of member organizational socialization (Clair, 1999), including work socialization (Cohen-Scali, 2003). While organizations are certainly important sources of work socialization, they are not the only sources. In anticipatory socialization, many sources such as friends, family, education, previous employment, and media contribute to an individual's expectations, knowledge, skills, and behavior before the individual ever joins a workplace. "Most of us have developed, prior to entering any particular organization, a set of expectations and beliefs concerning how people communicate in particular occupations and work settings" (Jablin, 1982, p. 680). Expectations and meaning attributions are formed through communication with influential others (Medved, Brogan, McClanahan, Morris, & Shepherd, 2006). For example, Russo (1998) found that journalists established values and expectations through *vocational* anticipatory socialization rather than from the newsroom where they worked at the time. Through a combination of observations, questionnaires, and recorded interviews, respondents reported

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organizational and professional identification. Even as children, respondents claimed

to have fostered the desire to change the world through the press. Meaning attributions

like the presses' power to reveal truth and give voice to the voiceless inspired the

respondents and encouraged them to become journalists. Grand values and ideals of

journalism were communicated from education, family, friends, and media resulting in

specific meaning attributions about work and journalism specifically. The journalists

acquired the knowledge, skills and meaning attributions through communication with

influential others before they became journalists and members of a specific newsroom.

In fact, respondents described themselves as journalists first and employees of the

newsroom second—illustrating meaning attributions about a profession can take

precedent over meaning attributions about a job. While it is unclear whether the

journalists' work socialization originated from family, coworkers, or supervisors, it is

clear that more than one influential source communicated messages that encouraged

the journalists to attribute meaning to their work.

In another study, family members were the source of work socialization and

the convergence of meaning attributions about job function and responsibilities.

Gibson and Papa's (2000) study focused on blue-collar workers who were socialized

by family members to follow in the career paths of their parents and elders.

Ethnographic methods including observations, interviews, and document analysis

resulted in a rich collection of stories and talk. The authors conclude, "Strong familial

ties had an impact on occupational choice" (2000, p. 78). Adolescents were socialized

through communication within the home and in their social lives as their role models

and influential others spoke of not only a certain industry but even a certain

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organization. "In effect, there occurs a sort of 'indoctrination at the dinner table' with these workers" (2000, p. 79). One respondent details his work socialization at the dinner table that emerged through distinctive, direct, and memorable messaging about the meaning of work.

> The whole time I was growing up, I used to sit at the kitchen table and listen to my relatives talk about Industry International. . . . I kinda' understood what it was like to *work* in a factory even before I got there … I had already been told what to do and what not to do by listening to my relatives talk all the time. (p. 79, emphasis added)

Mundane and ordinary familial talk about parental work inculcated children with particular meaning attributions about work. Even before his first day of work, this respondent had a lifetime of work socialization from his family, elders, role models and influential others. The authors coined the term *organizational osmosis* to refer to the "seemingly effortless adoption of the ideas, values, and culture of an organization on the basis of preexisting socialization experiences" (Gibson & Papa, 2000, p. 79). The natural flow of information from family members socialized new members of the plant in a process of *organizational* anticipatory socialization. New members had the knowledge, skills, and meaning attributions to work at the plant because of information communicated through messages at home from the family. The plant was a single target of many sources of work socialization.

Another study found parents to be important sources of work socialization about general meaning attribution about work rather than a specific organization.

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Levine and Hoffner (2006) identified family as an important source of anticipatory socialization. Respondents completed questionnaires asking how different sources contributed to their learning about work. Adolescents in the study called upon advice and information from their parents consistently as a primary and influential source of socialization concerning careers and work. Content such as positive and negative aspects of work, general requirements of work, and overall advice on work, helped adolescents form expectations of their working futures. The research supports the notion that knowledge and skill necessary to navigate successfully an organization's culture primarily came from family members and as well as the organization itself (Hoffner, 2006). Adolescents formed meaning attributions about work through communication with parents, who are influential (Paugh, 2005). Although the method proved useful in identifying parents as influential sources, it did not elaborate on how the sources became important or what specific messages were evoked to adolescents by their parents to become sources of work socialization. This study enhances the understanding of meaning attributions about work by collecting interview data to capture talk and specific messaging as well as the sources of such messaging.

Together, these studies illustrate how work-socializing forces can come from influential others including but not limited to the organization itself. Professions, media, friends, and family act as important sources of work socialization because of the messages they use to talk about meaning attributions about work.

Meaning Attributions about Work

We are socialized not only *unto* organizational skills but also *into* the meaning of work. A discursive view of socialization directs our attention to the ways in which work socialization processes are meaning centric (Allen, 1996; Smith & Turner, 2012). Members of language communities learn from influential others not only how to work but also what meanings to attribute to a given work task, responsibility, or profession (Philipsen, 1975, 1992). Using the example from above, the young woman learned from her family, media, friends, and nurses she had encountered that being a nurse was a meaningful profession in which she could help people. If an ideal is worthy of effort, it is meaningful. In Russo's (1998) article, journalists discussed how they learned the knowledge and skills to become journalists as well as what it *meant to be* a journalist. Here, the meaning of being identified as a journalist is one that must be taught and learned, communicated and accepted. One journalist claimed, "It's something more important and spiritual than a job. It's *who I am*" (p. 88, emphasis added). The profession of journalism gave his life and identity meaning. Other journalists talked about how journalism was vitally important to their city, democracy, and the First Amendment. Some saw it as a service they provided to society. Through their discourse and messaging, it is clear that being identified with the identity of journalist held positive and salient meaning attributions for participants. Being a journalist *meant* to follow a story until the end, it *meant* giving a voice to citizens, and it *meant* not bowing to the corporate goals of a newspaper but to value the ethos of journalism (Russo, 1998). Work socialization not only taught the journalists how to research and write a story but also what those activities meant. The journalistic ethos

described to them as children and young adults represented an interpretive framework through which they could achieve a life of significance.

Gibson and Papa's (2000) article can also be reinterpreted as another example of meaning attributions communicated through work socialization. Manufacturing workers learned how to work at a specific organization while also learning what it meant to work there. One respondent claimed, "I'm not trying to impress you, but I work like a dog" (Gibson & Papa, 2000, p. 76). The respondent's words reveal the complex and often surprising meaning-attribution process of work socialization. To describe one's work as dog-like, could be to suggest negative connotations of grueling conditions, underappreciated effort, and lack of finesse. However, the member of Industry International describes working like a dog is desirable and a central indicator of his hardworking character—a point of pride. Because language is polysemic, the word *dog* can here be interpreted negatively to mean the respondent worked a low-level, physically demanding, and low-paying job. But given the context of the comment, the meaning of the word *dog* was co-opted, re-appropriated, and used as a compliment. There is value at the industrial plant in working harder than the day before, thus the prompt in the quote about not meaning to impress the listener. The more animal-like—or physically rigorous—the behavior, the more significant and meaningful it is. Messages within a culture of machismo taught new members that working like a dog means long hours, piece-rate pay, and physically rigorous work are desirable meaning attributions.

Where Gibson and Papa (2000) studied informal dinner chat as the means in which work socialization occurred, Langellier and Peterson (2006) focused on family storytelling. Stories communicated within the family shared messages about the meaning of work. The authors argue children learned what type of work was meaningful through the narratives told by family members. One of the families in the study had a farm where the children would pick eggs from hens. Picking eggs could be seen as de-*meaning* work but the parents would tell stories to their children to teach them that even small jobs have importance. If no one picked eggs, then no one could eat them. A mother said to her child, "Somebody's got to pick eggs. Somebody's got to shovel manure. If you're in college, you are not out shoveling manure. So those poor guys that are out there doing it, hey, that's a job we don't have to do" (Langellier & Peterson, 2003, p. 468). Implied by these such narratives is the theme that every job contributed to a larger reality and was therefore valued and meaningful. Meaning attributions about work emerged through the process of work socialization and narrative. Here, narrative is "an embodied and situated storytelling where meanings are being constituted, interpreted, and contested by participants within the material and discursive forces that order work and family" (Langellier & Peterson, 2006, p. 469). Through stories, children in the family learned what work was worthy of effort and therefore meaningful. Stories became memorable messages through which meaning attributions about work were communicated (Boje, 1991). Again, the meaning of work is not settled or obvious, but emerges through the sedimentation of messages that are communicated through the use of language and symbols.

Language and Symbols

The teaching and learning of culture (i.e., socialization) is accomplished through language and symbol use—they are the machinery by which we socialize. They are also the machinery by which we communicate. Language and symbol-use in everyday messages can be repeated time and time again to produce a kind of layering, which sediments or laminates (Boden, 1994) into 'D'iscourse, or *ways* of talking (Bisel, 2009). Scholars of organizational discourse explain that there are two levels of discourse: unique and one-of-a-kind talk—little 'd'iscourse, and those patterned ways of talking (and therefore thinking) about social reality—what they term big 'D'iscourse (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2000; Bisel & Barge, 2011; Taylor, Cooren, Giroux, and Robichaud, 1996). So-called big 'D'iscourse represents general and enduring systems of thought while discourse is talk and text in social practices. Both are mutually constitutive (Fairhurst & Putnam, 2004). Messages uttered in everyday conversation build upon each to become a larger social reality that can be called upon at a later time through more talk (Clair, 1996).

To return to our nurse example, she could have heard messages throughout her life from family, media, friends, and other nurses such as "Your shot didn't hurt as much because you had a good nurse who helped you" or "Thankfully there was a nurse who stayed with you during your operation". These sayings affirm the meaning attribution that nursing helps (or at least reduces harm to) people. Through time, our nurse will connect the messages from various influential sources into a larger Discourse that supports an interpretive framework of nursing as a meaningful

profession worthy of effort because it helps people. Everyday messages and discourse, that may seem mundane and arbitrary, can become through time Discourse, which invite specific meaning attributions or shared mental models (Fairhurst, 2011; Sveningsson & Alvesson, 2003). Therefore, it stands to reason, what constitutes worthwhile time spent as a profession, or meaning attributions about work, is learned through the actual language of work socialization. Words invite meaning attributions through their sedimentation across time.

For example, Lucas (2011) conducted a study of the Discourse of blue-collar workers she termed the Working Class Promise. Everyday comments (paraphrased from the article), or discourse, such as "He's a good worker" or "They are providing for the family" or "I have pride in my work" hint at a larger Discourse of what it means to be a blue-collar worker. Blue-collar work is physically demanding, low paying, and generally depicted as less desirable than white collar work. Instead of viewing blue-collar work as the general American public does (Dick, 2005), the blue-collar workers in the article viewed their work as meaningful, evidenced by their comments about work, or discourse. Through their talk, blue-collar workers made seemingly unattractive jobs meaningful through a Discourse that positioned their work responsibilities favorably (Tracy & Scott, 2006). The work itself was not inherently meaningful but the workers' talk about work made it so (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999; Kreiner, Ashforth, & Sluss, 2006). Importantly, the study revealed how the children of blue-collar workers learned what it meant to function as a blue-collar worker because of statements their parents made repeatedly. The children also learned through familial and community discourses *how* to perceive blue-collar work because of statements

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their parents and influential others made repeatedly. Over time, meaning emerged through the sedimentation of these messages that were communicated through the use of language and symbols (Dallimore, 2003). The talk, or discourse, is what socialized the next generation into an understanding of a larger reality, or Discourse.

Another example of language and symbol-use as key forces in the teaching and learning of meaning attributions that form the basis of work socialization is seen in Meisenbach, Remke, Buzzanell, and Liu's (2008) study of women's maternity leave discourse. When interviewed about their maternity leave, respondents claimed (paraphrased from the article) that "they let me take more time off than I expected" or "I can get more time off with a doctor's note." The reference to "they" or "a doctor" place agency outside of the pregnant worker. The messages reveal a way of speaking and thinking (i.e., a Discourse) that, if pregnant, a worker must rely on the decisions of others regarding the appropriateness of her leave. If others are in charge of a pregnant worker's leave, then pregnancy becomes a down-graded or *de*-meaned subject position (van Langenhove & Harré, 1999). Such messages, or discourse, reveal a larger social reality or Discourse within the organization (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2000). In both statements, the pregnant employee was not in control of the amount of time for maternity leave. A nebulous "they" or a doctor granted the time. A new employee in the same organization would not need to read in the handbook, if it was even written, that maternity leave is framed as *bestowed* by powerful others. Such is the often invisible consequences of the discourse-Discourse interplay (Taylor, Cooren, Giroux, & Robichaud, 1996). Of course, other meaning-attributions are possible too and would compete with such a frame (Fairhurst, 2011; Zoller & Fairhurst, 2007). For instance,

workers could, presumably, position leave as *earned*. If the comments (i.e., discourse) claimed instead "My hard work earned me leave" or "It's my right through the Family Medical Leave Act to take maternity leave," the larger Discourse or reality would be quite different. Either way, the talk socializes members into meaning attributions about work in nearly invisible ways, taken for granted by members through their ways of describing their lives (Clair & Thompson, 1996). In the article, respondents did not question, or perhaps could not see (*literally*, hear), the Discourse in order to resist it. Seemingly random messages layered to create a larger reality in nearly invisible ways—such is the power and influence of culture itself (Brown & Starkey, 1994). If language and symbol-use layer to create Discourse, then Discourse comes to affect meaning attributions in two ways: interpretation and sensemaking.

Interpretation and Sensemaking

The relationship between interpretation and sensemaking may provide a way of understanding how a community's messaging comes to shape its members' meaning attributions about work. Meaning attributions about work emerge from the sedimentation of discourse that becomes Discourse through human interpretation (Rouleau, 2005). "Interpretation is the process through which information is given meaning and actions are chosen" (Weick, 2001, p. 256). Karl Weick (1995, 2001) explained extensively the central interpretive processes by which humans come to perceive their reality under the banner of *sensemaking*. Sensemaking is the process of interpretation. The distinction between interpretation and reality is important because the reality we give sense to is not about accuracy but about plausibility (Weick, 1995,

2001; Weick, Sutcliffe, & Obstfeld, 2005). Part of the sensemaking process is that we tend to obscure the processes by which we assigned meaning to the world around us as we assign meaning in retrospect (Weick, 1995, 2001; Weick, Sutcliffe, & Obstfeld, 2005). For example, the nurse in our example may have not known exactly why she became a nurse until someone asked her after she had already become one. To answer the question, the nurse will look back on her life and recall the messages that stood out and layered to become Discourse or the meaning she attributes to work. Sensemaking is retrospective. We act like the meaning was there all along when it was not.

Weick (1995) explains how sensemaking is a seven-part-process, which allows us to interpret our surroundings. According to his theory, it is cognitively impossible to process every message or equivocal input we encounter; therefore, we make sense of the world by extracting enough of the "right" cues. If there are enough right cues to build a plausible picture, then we stop looking for more cues. Searching for and evaluating cues is cognitively expensive and humans are cognitively thrifty beings (Fiske & Taylor, 1991). In the social process of interpretation and socialization, not every cue will be attended to in our goal of satisficing, or doing just enough and not more. We do enough to get by through the practice of extracting cues from our environments and ignoring others. If the cues we extract make a plausible, or realistic, picture then we follow through sensemaking with just enough information to "make sense" literally and move on to the next experience (Weick, 1993, 1995). For example, Gibson and Papa's (2000) study of blue-collar workers' devotion to Industry International is perhaps not surprising in that blue-collar workers would not feel the need to look beyond their social circle for different career paths. The cues they could

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extract from their surroundings would make a plausible picture that working in a factory offers a decent and meaningful way of life. Rather than expending extra energy to look for more, the blue-collar workers were satisfied with following in the footsteps of their role models and elders.

Sensemaking is about organizing through communication. "Situations, organizations, and environments are talked into existence" (Weick, Sutcliffe, & Obstfeld, 2005, p. 409). And communication does not occur in a vacuum but rather in a social setting. Obligations to social relationships affect sensemaking and subsequent behavioral outcomes (Weick, 2001). Sensemaking is an individual activity in a social setting (Weick, 1995). Therefore, it stands to reason that a person's main social contacts influence their communication, sensemaking, and behavior. For example, Buzzanell, Meisenbach, Remke, Liu, Bowers, and Conn (2005) studied how women coming back to work from maternity leave make sense of their dual responsibilities to work and to family. With seemingly contradicting and competing roles as a good mother and a good worker, the women needed to manage their identity in the fabric of their social contacts through communication. "Through sensemaking processes, managerial women are able to form identities that enable them to pursue meaningful and challenging work, create a home life that is satisfying to them, and construct arguments that may help to deflect negative attributions toward working mothers" (Buzzanell et al., 2005, p. 279) and position themselves in favorable ways. In short, the women found ways to talk about themselves as good working mothers in order to respond to their social environments in defense of their behaviors of both career and

motherhood. The way in which they talked layered to become a larger Discourse or meaning attribution, which they shared with others.

In the continuous flow of life, sensemaking is about attending to certain cues selectively in order to choose a course of action (Fairhurst & Putnam, 2004). Sensemaking is action based on interpretation (Weick, Sutcliffe, & Obstfeld, 2005). Therefore, the cues we choose to bracket out influence action. "Small events have large consequences" (Weick & Sutcliffe, 2007, p. 8). Therefore, it is plausible to see how messages spoken casually at the dinner table can affect meanings one attributes to work at a later time in life. But not all language and symbols play important roles in socialization. Messages that are memorable will serve as sources of socialization *unto* the meaning of work because they will be the plausible cues used in the process of sensemaking (Barge, 2004; Barge & Schlueter, 2004; Stohl, 1986). "There are only two necessary characteristics of a memorable message—an individual remembers the message for a long period of time and perceives the message had a major influence on the course of his or her life" (Stohl, 1986, p. 232). Therefore, in the process of sensemaking, not all cues or messages will matter. Memorable messages likely do matter in that they act as plausible cues for the sensemaking process about meaning attributions.

Meaning Attributions and How People Work

Research demonstrates the meanings people attribute *to* their work hold important implications for *how* they work (e.g., Kirby & Krone, 2002; Zoller, 2003). The definition of meaningful work is ever changing and varied across disciplines (for a review, see Broadfoot, Carlone, Medved, Aakhus, Gabor, & Taylor, 2008). First, a distinction must be made between meaning and meaningfulness. Pratt and Ashforth (2003) claim that meaning of work refers to the *interpretations* of sensemaking individuals and their attributions about work while meaningfulness is the *quality of those interpretations* in the sense of the amount of meaning or significance, typically with a positive valence. Each discipline has its own focus on what makes work meaningful but a recent literature review conducted by Rosso, Dekas, and Wrzesniewski (2010) found two key areas. "Our analysis revealed that although the 'meaning of work' researchers have examined this topic from a bewildering array of angles, in a basic sense they all explicitly or implicitly weigh in on two key issues: where the meaning of work comes from (i.e., the sources of meaning), and how it is that work becomes meaningful (i.e., the underlying psychological and social mechanisms)" (p. 93)

In fact, an international group of scholars and researchers developed an heuristic model describing meanings of work (MOW) for individuals combining the two key issues of sources of meaning and how the sources become meaningful. The three most important constructs were *work centrality* or how important involvement in work is for an individual, *societal norms* or an obligation to contribute to society

through work, and *valued working outcomes and goals* (MOW International Research Team, 1987). Most importantly, they describe the meanings of work as reciprocal processes that "are both affected by and affect social, work, and societal factors. Cultural conditioning, learning, development, and socialization are important processes which influence the meaning of working" (MOW International Research Team, 1987, p. 38). For the purpose of this project, I conceptualize *meaning attributions about work* as the patterned, or sedimented, ways of talking about what constitutes worthwhile and valued effort expended in the accomplishment of work responsibilities and duties. Such patterns of talk are likely to arise in family and communities, although a detailed identification of such patterns and their influence on adult meaning-attributions of work (i.e., their work socialization) has yet to be articulated in the literature. Analyzing the intersection of messaging, socialization, culture, and meaning attributions about work, this study connects organizational and intercultural communication in new ways. Although MOW and organizational socialization scholars discuss sources of cultural learning, they do not examine in detail how ethnic culture is influential as an important source of messaging for meaning attributions about work.

Intercultural Communication

The field of intercultural communication describes cultural interactions. Scholars in the field attempt to answer questions such as how does ethnic culture affect behavior, attitudes, values, norms, expectations, and motives? Adding a discussion of meaning attributions about work can supplement current understandings

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about the relationships between intercultural communication and ethnic identity. As humans, we are not born into this world equipped with all of the knowledge to behave within our social environments. In order to learn how to behave, we are trained through socialization processes. "Socialization involves conditioning and programming in the basic processes of communication, including decoding (perceptual and cognitive) patterns and encoding (verbal and nonverbal) training" (Gudykunst & Kim, 2003, pp. 358-359). We are each trained uniquely according to our surrounding culture and the understandings and behavioral cues that we internalize based on that training are termed *enculturation* (Gudykunst & Kim, 2003; Kim, 2001). If, for some reason, we move into a new cultural environment, for example through immigration, theorists argue we need to reassess our cultural understandings and resulting behavioral patterns in accordance with the new host culture (Gudykunst & Kim, 2003; Kim, 2001).

Cross-cultural adaptation theory. Cross-cultural adaptation theory describes the stress-adaptation-growth cycle that is triggered when an immigrant moves to a host culture (Kim, 1977, 1988, 2001, 2002). When an immigrant enters a new host environment, there is tension between the culture of their past and the culture they are currently encountering. This tension can be perceived as a threat to the immigrant's existence causing stress, which in turn results in adaptive responses. Internal growth is the consequence of these adaptive responses. "The *stress-adaptation-growth dynamic* … is one that is fueled by a continual and cyclic tension between stress and adaptation, resulting in a form of psychic growth" (Gudykunst & Kim, 2003, p. 381). The growth triggered by stress motivates the immigrant to adapt to behaviors from the

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host culture. According to theorists, this process of re-learning or re-socialization into a different ethnic culture is called *acculturation* and is distinguished from *enculturation*, or the learning of one's own ethnic culture. According to Kim (2002), while accumulating an understanding of the new cultural environment, we also undergo a process of *deculturation*, or the un-learning of our old ways and understandings. This entire progression helps the immigrant to renew him or herself in order to integrate into the host culture, similar to the process of organizational socialization where an individual learns new behavioral patterns, such as behavioral patterns needed for the accomplishment of a job within the context of an organization (Hess, 1993).

Not all cultures follow the linear process outlined in cross-cultural adaption theory. Instead of systematically shedding ethnic identities via deculturation in favor of the identity of the host culture via acculturation, some cultures appear to maintain values, attitudes, and behaviors of their ethnic past in their immigrated future consciously (Homsey, 2012; Homsey & Sandel, 2012). Furthermore, I argue that maintenance of ethnic behavioral patterns does not always result in conflict as cross-cultural adaptation theory describes (Kim, 2001). According to the theory, immigrants and their descendants systematically deculturate past behaviors and values in favor of acculturating those of the host culture. Of course, it is possible that a descriptive theory like cross-cultural adaptation is mistakenly being interpreted prescriptively but the question still remains: What accounts for the preservation of ethnic norms in some ethnic communities that do not engage in deculturation or acculturation? One possible answer to that question is that socialization, whether organizational or cultural, is an

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interpretive process in which influential community members inculcate new

generations through memorable messaging and make sense in ways that invite shared

mental models. Memorable messages shared within groups communicate behavioral

expectations. When new members perform expected behavioral patterns, they

maintain cultural norms through socialization processes. Socialization, whether

organizational or cultural, is a process of replacing old behaviors and understandings

with newly learned behaviors and understandings but it also is a fluid process of

shared behaviors and understandings between both cultures without privileging one

over the other.

      Intercultural fusion. The theory of intercultural fusion argues a more dynamic

relationship between immigrant and host cultures. "The point of [cross-cultural

adaptation theory] is to help maladjusted people fit in, which is, I contend, very

nationalistic and penultimately ethnocentric" (E. M. Kramer, 2003b, p. 251). Instead

of burdening the immigrant with the responsibility of learning host behaviors as in

cross-cultural adaption theory, intercultural fusion describes how host and immigrant

cultures learn behaviors from each other in a shared process. The theory describes the

process as a "fusional in-between" with a fluid and integrative approach (E. M.

Kramer, 2000, p. 203). When different cultures come in contact, behavioral patterns

are maintained, rejected, or shared in random and accidental ways. "According to the

hermeneutics of cultural fusion, 'adaptability' is not a unilinear, single dimensional

sort of variable. Hence, it is unpredictable. Life is a continual experiment" (E. M.

Kramer, 2000, pp. 220-221). Adaptability does not necessitate "unlearning" of old

ways in favor of new ways. Members of cultures and communities have agency, or the

power to choose what behaviors to enact and maintain. Through the interpretive process of sensemaking, information is given meaning and actions are chosen (Weick, 2001). As cultural mixings occur more frequently, members choose what behaviors to espouse and maintain based on interpretations of environmental cues. The juxtaposition of immigrant and host cultures provides cues from both cultures that individuals use to make sense informing chosen behaviors. The resulting set of behaviors chosen from both parent and host cultures often times creates a third culture distinct from either.

Hybridity and critical cultural transculturation. Canclini's (1995) notion of hybridity, as a theory, deals with the problem of immigrant and host cultures coexisting by addressing the continual mixing of cultures from already mixed starting points creating a third hybrid culture.

> I understand for hybridization sociocultural processes in which discrete structures or practices, previously existing in separate form, are combined to generate new structures, objects, and practices. In turn, it bears noting that the so-called discrete structures were a result of prior hybridizations and therefore cannot be considered pure points of origin. (Canclini, 1995, p. xxv)

In a rapidly churning world, immigration, transculturation, creolization, and all other forms of change and mixing create new cultures (Canclini, 1995). Hybridity is a theory of process. The term "hybridity" is ubiquitous in research and has been used to describe processes in literature, art, music, anthropology, sociology, linguistics, archaeology, politics, geography, media, and communication (Kapchan & Strong,

1999). Overuse of the term has contributed to its dilution (Dorst, 1999; Kapchan & Strong, 1999). Scholars have studied the contextual limitations of the concept of hybridity in the hopes of retaining its relevance (Dorst, 1999). Others have examined the discourse of hybridity as a subversive tool that enables binary oppositions and conceals real and negative undertones behind cultural mixings (Hale, 1999). What is clear is that hybridity seems to hint on greatness but its usage seems to hinder it. As the anthropologist Nicholas Thomas stated, "Hybridity is almost a good idea, but not quite" (1996, p. 9).

Building on Canclini's ideological foundation of hybridity, Marwan Kraidy (2005) suggests the use of critical cultural transculturation making the concept more directly useful in research through explanatory power. He describes hybridity as a discursive phenomenon and expands it into the concept of critical cultural transculturation. Transculturation describes "a kind of brokerage, an exchange, a give-and-take, a process whereby both parts of the cultural equation are modified and give way to a new sociocultural conglomerate" (Martinez-Echazabal, 1998). By describing active exchanges at the social level as groups interact, as when an immigrant community joins a host culture, critical cultural transculturation explains how a distinct third culture can arise from the friction between two different cultures. Individuals have agency consciously to choose behaviors, attitudes, and values to privilege and preserve from the different cultures around them. Critical cultural transculturation describes how social groups and communities refer to multiple cultures as cues in sensemaking about behaviors to create a culture distinct from the parent or host. This third and distinct culture can be maintained through socialization

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processes as new members are taught what behaviors are acceptable and unacceptable. Socialization occurs through language and symbol use, discursive methods for a discursive phenomenon like critical cultural transculturation.

Kraidy's work builds on historical foundations to prove the existence of cultural mixtures. The following section narrates the history of the Lebanese-American immigrant community to demonstrate how cultural mixings result in behavior not exactly like its parent culture in Lebanon or like the host culture in America. By describing the interaction between the host and immigrant cultures and the opportunities available to the Lebanese-American community, cues used for sensemaking about behaviors become apparent. From such cues, the Lebanese-American community made meaning attributions about work from the sedimentation of discourse that becomes Discourse through human interpretation (Rouleau, 2005).

Research Context: The Lebanese-American Community

Research has been conducted on immigrant identity and the importance of the second generation as the determiner of whether traditions are carried on or lost (e.g., Portes, 1996, 1997); however, what remains less understood is the fate of subsequent generations. This study fills that gap by examining third, fourth, and fifth generation Lebanese-Americans. Lebanese-Americans are investigated here as an exemplary and potentially typical case study, which can be explored to derive transferable insights about other cultural contexts. I do not mean to imply the case of the Lebanese-Americans are absolutely the same or different than all other immigrant cultures; rather I mean to suggest that cultural and interpretive processes apparent in the Lebanese-American case might be indicative of processes apparent in other immigrant groups (for a review of the logical inference of case study methodology, see Thomas 2010, 2011).

America's history of immigration has precipitated much scholarly research (Daniels, 2002; Fuchs, 1990). Several sources cover Lebanese-American cultural identity from a Muslim perspective (Abu-Laban, 1991; Ajrouch & Kusow, 2007; Aswad, 1992), but this study focuses on a smaller Christian demographic of Lebanese-Americans. Post 9/11 America brought negative stereotypes of Muslim Arab-Americans but the Lebanese-Americans living in a Midwestern city were largely spared from these sentiments because their Christian faith not only enabled them to enact their own ethnic identity but also it affected the way in which the host community accepted them (Gaultieri, 2001; Haddad, 1994; Kurien, 2005). Often referred to as "Turks" or "Syrians" in historical documents, this relatively small but

perseverant group encompassed individuals and families from Mount Lebanon, known today as modern day Lebanon. Therefore, the "Turkish" or "Syrian" immigration of the 1860s to World War I encompassed the Lebanese as well. Although specific numbers are hard to verify due to the nature of historical documents and the misnaming of the Lebanese as "Turks" or "Syrians" at Ellis Island and other immigration points, it is believed that around 400,000 immigrated to the Americas permanently (Karpat, 1985). For Mount Lebanon specifically, over 100,000 immigrated permanently, resulting in a loss of about one fourth of the area's total population (Khalaf, 1987). Although this number seems small in comparison to the 32 million immigrants from Europe before World War I, the number of Lebanese immigrants still provides a valuable area of study (Owen, 1992).

There was never a real mass exodus from Lebanon, but rather immigrants came to America through chain migration. The first immigrants braved a totally new experience in the hopes of making enough money to move back to Lebanon and support their families (Caldwell, 1984). When the new immigrants became prosperous in America, they brought family members to America rather than returning home to Lebanon themselves (Daniels, 2002). "After the feasibility and profitability of immigration to the United States and to 'America' in general were well established, chain migration became the norm, with immigrants making it possible for the ambitious and disgruntled in the old homeland to seek newer horizons" (Suleiman, 1999, p. 3). Immigrants would send for their family members to come and join them in the new country with new opportunities.

The first generation of Lebanese who immigrated to the United States paved the way culturally and financially for the next generation through peddling and more permanent vocations like owning grocery stores, dry good stores, clothing stores, and wholesale ventures. The material success earned through such ownership enabled the second generation to focus on school work and secondary education resulting in a surge of professionals like doctors, dentists, and lawyers (Suleiman, 1999). As subsequent generations demonstrated their work ethic to the host culture through business ownership and professional practices, the Lebanese-American were viewed as a productive and successful minority group by the host culture (Truzzi, 1997). The Lebanese-Americans who follow the Christian faith are a relatively small minority group but the preservation of various ethnic behaviors and displays make them a context worthy of study. Muslim Lebanese Americans and other Arab Americans have been more dominant in the literature and the current study aims to enhance our understanding of meaning attributions about work behaviors through intercultural communication by studying the Christian Lebanese American demographic. The Lebanese-American community attended to cues derived from immigrant and host cultures to make sense of work behaviors through the sedimentation of language to make meaning attributions about work.

Research Questions

While it appears reasonable from a theoretical perspective that cultural and community language-use, the rise meaning attributions, and patterning of work behaviors are associated, this study sought to observe these associations empirically.

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Work socialization communicated through language and symbols from influential others layer to form a larger Discourse. To examine how such Discourse acts as cues in sensemaking about meaning attributions about work and cultural maintenance, the following research questions are posed:

RQ1: In what ways do memorable messages from within one's ethnic community and across generations shape adult understandings of the meanings of work?

RQ2: How do those meaning-attributions about work function for an ethnic culture?

Method

To answer these questions, qualitative methods were employed. The goal of inductive, interpretive research is to support the discovery of contextualized insight through a process of theory building (Cheney, 2000). For the present study, the primary context is the Lebanese-American (L-A) community. As a member of an ethnic L-A community, I noticed anecdotally, the tendency of community members to hold certain beliefs about work. That observation led me to question how memorable messages across one's lifetime and from within one's community shapes meaning attributions about work. Therefore, an emic approach was used to maximize the researcher's access to an L-A community and insider knowledge of lived experience in this community (Berry, 1989).

Participants

Interviewees were members of an L-A community in a large Midwestern city. Ages ranged from 23 to 85. The wide range of ages increased the likelihood of comparing and contrasting varying and enduring big 'D'iscourses from multiple generations (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2000). All participants were aspiring workers, current workers, or retired workers who are self-identified members of the L-A community. Thirty-one participants were solicited from the researcher's personal and professional networks. All participants were selected purposively on the basis of having a familial bond with at least one other participant—meaning their parent, child, or sibling participated. Over 90% of participants had familial bonds with at least three other participants. Eighteen of the participants work in the same career as their parents

and the other 13 do not work in the same career as their parents. This sampling

strategy also included family members who could reflect on the messaging they have

engaged in cross-generationally, allowing the researcher to track the consistency of

espoused values and discourses across generations while examining the differences

between families who follow in the career paths of their parents as well as the

experiences of those who do not.

Data Collection

The study used qualitative methods to gather data through 31 audio-recorded,

face-to-face interviews. In-depth interviews were conducted individually and in

private with each participant following a semi-structured format with a list of planned

and follow-up questions. The interview protocol guided the discussion to certain topic

areas while leaving room for the researcher to follow variations when participants led

the discussion to other important topics (Kvale, 1996; Lindlof & Taylor, 2011; Tracy,

2010; see Appendix A). Reference to the term "L-A community" was avoided until

the end of the protocol, to reduce the likelihood that the researcher influenced

participants' narrative sensemaking about the connections among communication,

behaviors, and meaning attributions and to increase the likelihood that described

connections originated from interviewees' own interpretive schemas. In keeping with

best practices for qualitative research, collection and analysis overlapped to enable the

researcher to revise the interview protocol as trends became apparent (Tracy, 2013).

Dominant trends were detected with the use of the original interview protocol and

changes were not implemented. Interviews were conducted at participants' homes,

places of work, or other comfortable locations to capture data in the natural flow of life and with participant consent (Cheney, 2000). To build in tests of disconfirmation (Silverman, 1989), participants who did not appear to espouse or enact the dominant discourses were sought out and included as part of the data collection process.

Data Analysis

Once interviews were completed, all recordings were transcribed by the researcher, a professional transcriptionist, or two undergraduate research assistants and later checked by the researcher as the first level of analysis (Ochs, 1999). A modified version of constant comparative analysis was employed to find patterned relationships in the data (Dey, 1999; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Transcriptions were read to sort material relevant to the research questions in a process of data reduction (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011). The level of analysis was the family. More specifically, shared and unshared memorable messages and meanings of work were identified and isolated per family unit. Despite the fact that analysis was conducted by family, enormous convergence of themes rendered this approach superfluous and results were ultimately analyzed collectively. Relevant material were coded in a process of open coding where raw data and lines from transcribed interviews were interpreted and labeled with words of the discipline and research questions. Memorable messages and meanings of work represented the dominant codes. An expansive process of open coding was subsequently constricted through focused coding where codes were sorted into similar themes and condensed into the following categories: cultural identity, obligation, work behavior, and reinforcement. Finally, the researcher examined the interrelationships

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among categories for a grounded theory of community messaging to emerge in axial coding (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011). After axial coding was complete, the researcher checked codes for accuracy to ensure that all relevant data was accounted for through one or more categories. Negative case analysis was used to account for all remaining data comprehensively within the grounded theory (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011; see Bisel & Barge, 2011).

<center>**Results and Interpretation**</center>

Results of the analysis revealed a communication pattern typical of community members, a dynamic I label the *Obligation-based Culturing of Work* (OCW). The sensitizing concept, OCW, refers to the process by which community messaging obligates members to perform work behaviors in order to achieve full membership status. In short, OCW is a four-part process in which the communicative constitution of *cultural identity* occurs through *obligating* members to perform *work behaviors* in accordance with that identity, which are, in turn, reaffirmed and regulated through *reinforcement*. Each of these four parts is described in detail in the following section. The central emphasis of the OCW process is that membership is not complete until a performative threshold is passed, specific work behaviors enacted, obligations shared, and expectations reinforced through community messaging. OCW emerges through four interdependent processes: cultural identity, obligation, work behavior, and reinforcement. Although interdependent in reality, for the purpose of explanation, each of the four mechanisms is discussed individually in the following sections. Then, a final section of the results illustrate how the sub-processes interrelate (see Table 1 and Figure 1).

Communicative Constitution of Cultural Identity

The Communicative Constitution of Cultural Identity refers to the ways in which community members make sense of whose performances ought to be authentic enough to mark inclusion in their cultural group. Community members use messaging to create and maintain expectations of authentic identity performance. According to

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participants, to call oneself an L-A, one needs to work hard, value family, and continue the legacy. All three elements appeared routinely in each interview as central to the L-A cultural identity. The term "work hard" appeared over 70 times, "family" appeared over 230 times, and half of interviewees mentioned "ancestors" or "grandparents" who established for current members the values implied by their cultural identity through these Discourses.

Hard work. L-A community members value the performance of hard work as central to their cultural identity. The association of hard work with the L-A cultural identity was repeated consistently. For example, participants commented, "Lebanese people are not afraid of working . . . they're not afraid of getting in there and doing their best" (15; notation indicates interviewee) and "[L-As] know the power of work" (16). Others reported observing hard work from members of their community by making comments like, "everyone does their best effort in what they do" (13) "[L-As are] hard working people, they're good business people" (31), and "most Lebanese people are not afraid of work, and yes good hard work will pay off in the return" (1). According to interviewees, working hard will produce positive results and is not seen as a negative to be "afraid" of or avoided but rather as a means of power. To mark inclusion in the cultural group, community members make sense of the performance of hard work as a means of power. A male dentist whose grandparents immigrated to the United States and who has a practice with his family said, "We just don't survive, we just don't succeed, we—not only that—we lead" (12). What group members deem authentic performance of hard work involves a certain level of success.

"Hard work" in and of itself is not authentic enough. If a child spends a lot of time on homework, some people may consider that hard work. For this community, the child will have to demonstrate a level of success and leadership for the work to be deemed "hard work". "Hard work" only counts towards authentic L-A membership if success is achieved at work as defined by other members of the community. For example, a male in the service industry whose great-grandparents immigrated to the United States said, "We have high standards for what we want our children to be and what we want to be in life" (21). A female in the service industry said, "Just strive to be the best at what it is you choose, and set your goals high" (22). According to participants, high standards are routinely communicated to the family and larger community thereby engendering a common understanding that hard work means obtaining successful results. Performances of hard work with a degree of success are understood as authentic enough to mark inclusion in the community. A male participant whose grandparents immigrated to the United States and who works in a large family business recounted a memorable message from his father, "Hey Dad, I got an A minus in *Civil Procedure*. 'Well, son, why wasn't it an A'" (5)? To survive as the first generation did is not enough; the obligation for authentic performance is now to succeed through "hard work" to produce gains beyond the first generation. For participants, hard work means giving a best effort, regardless of the task. Some participants worked in professional functions (e.g., lawyers, dentist, and professors) while others were small retail business owners and others larger wholesale business owners; working hard transcended these kinds of contextual boundaries. For example,

a female participant whose father immigrated to the United States and who worked in the financial sector said:

> I think work is important, and I don't care if it's a five-year-old doing a chore at home, or an 80-year-old that still wants to have the Sunday dinner for their family. It's all important and I think it's the message we send to the next generation that we're not sitting around waiting for the check to come in the mail from somebody else. (8)

According to the participant, in order to be authentically part of the L-A community means taking responsibility and not relying on others to complete the task, no matter the task. The participant constructs the meaning of "successful" hard work as being self-sufficient and interacting with "somebody else," presumably outsiders or members of the host culture, in a proactive and positive way as opposed to needing a "check." By using the word "we," the participant acts as if she is speaking on behalf of a unified collective that is passing on values to the next generation. Participants explained consistently that being L-A "meant" to be hardworking, virtually equating the two in their social constructions of community membership and involvement. Everyone is called to perform work behaviors to authenticate inclusion in the community, whether five or eighty years old.

Participants also made sense of hard work as a means to support a lifestyle for their families. A male in the restaurant business whose great-grandparents immigrate to the United States said. "Not everybody does the same thing, you know, career-wise or anything, but I think everybody works real hard to try and provide the good life for

their family, for their kids, and grandkids and everything" (20). For participants, the driving force behind the value of hard work and the responsibility to succeed equated to providing for a family and enabling future success beyond that achieved by previous generations. Conventionally, "provide for" refers to basic humans needs like food, clothing, and shelter. For the L-A community, "provide for" seems to now operate as a euphemism for perpetuating the achievements of previous generations and garnering ever-increasing material gain. For the purposes of the current analysis, the way in which L-A members make sense of "providing for" will simply be interpreted as sustaining supplying basic needs.

Family. The concept of family transcends nuclear-family units in the L-A community and plays a central role in the way in which community members made sense of whose performances ought to be authentic enough to mark inclusion. Community elders are called aunts and uncles regardless of blood relation, connecting most members of the community through an extended social construction of *family*. The larger connection fosters a larger duty. For the L-A community, the responsibility to family is more than a nuclear unit; it spans a community. A male business owner who works with his father, uncle, cousins, and brothers and whose grandparents immigrated to the United States contrasted the American notion of family with that of the L-A community:

> As long as you provide for your family, as long as you do right by you, whereas I think the way you were raised, you do right by more than just you. You have to do right by your mom, you have to do right by your dad, you have

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to do right by your husband and if you choose to get married, you have to do

right by your children. (4)

Community members understand the performance of "doing right" by family that at

least extends beyond a single generation. Such performances played out before the

audience of family marks whether the member is authentically L-A. To "do right"

means to work hard with successful results for an individual, their extended family

and by definition the larger community. The goal of hard work is success but this does

not mean that the community is always successful. When success is not readily

achieved, the larger family and community encourage and foster success in a self-

perpetuating value system. A male dentist with six familial bonds in the participant

pool said, "The Lebanese people drive themselves forward and when they hit a hard

glitch, they always return back to their family to give them the strength to continue

forward and then they make it past that step" (12). Not only does the extended family

obligate a member to succeed through hard work, but it also helps them achieve that

goal. A larger community identity and value system mean success for one is success

for all. A female nurse echoed the sentiment, "I think the values that their parents,

grandparents, and all those generations and just the support the family gives each

other, it keeps instilling that value" (24). Success through hard work to support the

family and larger community emerges from a long history.

Immigrant heritage. Cognizant of their immigrant heritage, the L-A

community shares messages about a history of success despite facing challenges. Such

a legacy informs their current understanding of what it means to be an L-A and what

marks authentic behavior. A mother and grandmother whose parents immigrated to the United States said, "We decided to prove ourselves we just had to prove ourselves; and we went to work because Lebanese was not a pretty word back then" (11). The participant talks about her childhood in rural communities and the struggles her family faced to survive. Facing a common immigrant phenomenon of xenophobia and racism (Shamas, 2000), the L-A community worked hard to prove themselves to the larger host community and to themselves.

The cultural identity of the L-A community begins with immigrant roots. The present day community values hard work and success as ways to achieve material success greater than that of the founding generation. A medical professional who works with his father, sibling and cousin said, "We have the drive, we have the passion to know where we are, where we came from and where we want to be" (12). Current and future success is only possible through the performance of hard work and an awareness of founding generations. A male small business owner said:

> And, that goes with most of the Lebanese people, period. I think their work
> ethic is what drives 'em. My grandparents came to this country and couldn't
> speak English and they got ridiculed because they couldn't speak English. But
> the way they raised their kids and the way they worked eventually earned
> respect. (23)

His first sentence sounds like a decree stating universal truths for all members of the community by ending with "period." An L-A cultural identity is rooted in a history of hard work to gain respect and success.

Members of the community readily tell stories to each other about the first generation to both teach and inspire each other and younger members while collectively making sense of performances that are authentic enough to mark inclusion. A young attorney whose great-grandparents immigrated to the United States said:

> We have those roots to us. Most of our ancestors that came over couldn't speak the language, couldn't read and write; you know, they were peddlers, they worked really, really hard just to provide for family; just to survive. And, they instilled in their children a drive to be something better, to do something more than what they've done. (31)

Rather than following in the vocational footsteps of his parents, this participant decided to make his own choice and reach success through a different context. Because when success is constructed as hard work, its attainment is available irrespective of career choice. The young attorney gained valuable insight into what an L-A cultural identity is through stories of his ancestors and the roots of the larger community. A small business owner who works with his children tells a similar story:

> All four of my grandparents came over from Lebanon and became their own business. They had guts, they worked hard, scraped together a little money, opened their own little dry goods store or grocery store or whatever they did. It's just in the blood. It's just in our blood to either be a professional or to be an owner of a business. (19)

The participant credited a hard work ethic and drive for success to "blood," later explaining in the interview that he never considered any other occupation but owning his own business. By saying his grandparents "became their own business," the participant virtually equates identity and work behaviors in his social constructions of community membership. The powerful metaphor of "blood" constructs being a professional or owning a business as a genetic and deterministic reality that is passed down through the generations.

Attributing success to genetic determinism obscures the role of messaging in obligating community members' work behaviors. Whether it is a genetic reality or the results of a community's social construction that inform the L-A cultural identity, knowledge is passed on through storytelling and memorable messaging. Present understandings of identity are informed by stories about and messages from founding generations. A female from the finance sector talked about how the legacy of hard work, success, and family values are learned through stories. "That's what makes us cling on to it, because the story is great and I want to make sure [my daughter] knows those stories when I'm gone" (8). The story describes her father's struggle to immigrate to America. "Your grandfather was in Lebanon. He got to Marseilles, France. He didn't have enough money to get on the boat, and he was a teenager, a young – he wasn't much older than you are now, and he had to work to get enough money to come over here. That is what this family does (8)."

In sum, to claim an American-Lebanese-cultural identity, participants reported that members must work hard, value family, and continue an historical legacy. A young dentist whose great-grandparents were founding members of the L-A community summed it up by saying:

> I feel like a lot of Lebanese people desire to be successful and to be able to provide for their family and be able to provide for their children what their parents did for them, and I would suggest to them to listen to your parents and, you know, really follow the advice that they give you because I think it's, for the most part, pretty sound, and something you can count on. (17)

Advice from previous generations gives sense to what performances are authentic enough to mark inclusion. Such a cultural identity is incomplete until certain behaviors are performed with certain outcomes. Membership is liminal in the sense that a member has duties to accomplish to acquire full membership. This sense of obligation will be discussed next.

Obligating

Obligating refers to the ways community members' messaging produces expectations about duties for oneself and group. In the OCW process, members of the community are bound to enact culturally-approved behaviors to complete their membership. Written colloquially: You have to perform certain behaviors to be an authentic Lebanese (cf. Weider & Pratt, 1990). Members are obligated to fulfill their identity through performance. Members are expected to fulfill duties of education,

family, and a reputation in congruence with their Discourse about the hard work of previous generations.

Education. Participants called upon education as an important obligation, occurring in 97% of interviews. Some families stressed education more than others but education was discussed routinely. For example, participants made comments like, "We were going to go to college; there was no question about it, it was expected we were going go to college" (15) and "The more education you get, the better you are, the more certifications you get the better you are" (31). A female whose father immigrated to the United States said, "My grandfather didn't have a college degree, my father didn't have a college degree, but by golly every one of us had to have one" (8). Apparently, because the first generation had limited options due to language barriers and general access, elders constructed the importance of education for both sons and daughters and emphasized it as a means to elevate member status and enable success. Education afforded options. Following a common immigrant pattern (Sowell, 1994), the first generation of Lebanese became peddlers and store owners as few other options were readily available. Many of the next generation were educated and became professionals such as doctors, dentists and lawyers with more career options from which to choose. Although many immigrant views on education are well documented (Kao & Tienda, 1995; Louie, 2004), the current study adds to the phenomenon through the process of obligation as a driving force for education. In the L-A community, second, third, and fourth generations pursued advanced education to fulfill family and community expectations. To be included as a member of the L-A community meant upholding duties in accordance with community expectations. One

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of the paths to fulfill obligation was education. A young male lawyer whose great-grandparents immigrated to the United States described in detail how his mother advised his future career moves. He did not have to work with his family in their practice; all that mattered was that he earned an education and became a professional.

> I went to professional school, and when I say 'professional school,' I don't consider every career a profession the way a lot of people will justify their careers. I went to a certain type of school because I was influenced by my mom and obviously she's rooted in the Lebanese heritage. (31)

Crediting his mother for his decision to go to professional school shows his sense of obligation to her expectations and to the overall L-A heritage. He owes it to her and to his larger community to become an educated professional. He even goes as far as to state that his profession of law is part of a select group of "real professions," because, in the interpretive scheme of the community, not every profession qualifies as an authentic marker for inclusion in the community identity. Why might that be?: Not every career incorporated formalized education and hard work for future success—key aspects of the L-A Discourse about work. Throughout the course of the interview, the participant continued to talk about other jobs or careers that were interesting to him, such as real estate, but in the end he was heavily influenced by an obligation to realize certain expectations that began with an advanced education. Although there was a family medical practice the young lawyer could have joined, he was able to fulfill his obligation through a different professional school. His education fulfilled his obligation to his mother's expectations, to his family, and to his community identity.

Another participant whose parents immigrated to the United States told a story of how his mother influenced his decision to go to dental school after a tour in the military.

> My dad had a children's ready-to-wear shop, and I was working there. My mother says, "You're not happy here, are you?" "No, I'm not." "Why don't you go back to school?" "Alright, I think I will; what do you want me to do?" She says, "Be a doc – no, no, no, be a dentist. That's better for you." "Okay, Mom." (10)

The participant credited his mother with guiding his career path at an early age. Before going to dental school, the participant played semi-professional basketball and then joined the military. Both endeavors did not meet L-A community expectations of authentic work behaviors, prompting the participant to claim his parents thought the semi-professional sports role was "just play." Interestingly, working in the family retail store did not fulfill work obligations either. Because his mother wanted him to pursue a higher education, this participant could not fulfill his obligation by working in the family store. Although it seems as if the participant did not follow what the community wanted by eschewing the family business, he actually did uphold his obligations by following his mother's advice to pursue an advanced degree. The participant was able to mark authentic inclusion through an advanced education in dental school. Career-oriented decisions were made as a family to fulfill obligations to education.

Family. As described above, participants discussed extended family as an integral performative expectation in the L-A cultural identity that carries another type

of obligation both directly, in the sense of a family business, and indirectly, in the sense of family members as a cohesive unit. Four participants worked together in a family business and all discussed the obligation to each other and the business. "My brothers and I never wanted to leave my dad high and dry" (22), "I don't want to leave the family because I don't want to put them in a bind" (21), and "We were brought up to work hard and work for your family and to stick by each other" (20). Metaphors of "high and dry," "bind," and "stick" construct community understandings of obligation. Although interviews were conducted privately, the father walked over to where one of his children was being interviewed to interject, "I wouldn't be here if it wasn't for my kids" (19). The ambiguity of "be here" is important in that it can be interpreted as "being in the business" or even as far as "being alive." As small business owners who run the business with little help outside of the family, all four constructed meaning around the need for each other and the expectations about duties.

Each participant discussed other career choices that interested them but ultimately all stayed working together due to their sense of obligation. For example, one male participant whose great-grandparents immigrated to the United States said, "We always had the option if we wanted to do anything else… I've done other things, but this was just best…convenient I guess" (21). Such narratives are also influential in projecting apparently desirable future career alternatives that were then constructed as undesirable. There was a keen understanding that if they did not participate, the business, and, in a sense, their father, would not survive. In order to mark inclusion into the community through authentic performances of the cultural identity, the family was obligated to enact certain work behaviors, namely sticking together (*literally*,

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remaining in the business) to sustain their small family business through hard work. They were part of the L-A community because they proved inclusion through the authentic performance of work and the obligation to each other. A family business provided an obvious way for these four members to fulfill their cultural identity through obligation.

Another family produced obligation, which did not require having to work together in the same business. A female nurse said, "I've just grown up so close to my family and so I always want to care for them and all our friends and family. I'd like to be that person that they can always come to for medical advice" (27). In other words, the participant constructed her career as important, even though it was not the family business, and defended by invoking an obligation that her work meets. She could support her family through professional advice. Although she did not work directly for her family business, she was still able to fulfill her obligation to support the family and community through her career choice. Because family is central to the L-A identity, providing general support to the family meets expectations of supporting the family. Another way in which the production of obligation can be seen in community messaging is when L-As choose to *deviate* from participation in family business. When a participant did not choose to work for the family business, members of the community voiced their concerns.

> There were people that would just tell me that I should help my dad. They
> would always say I need to disregard what I want to do to help my dad. It
> happened multiple times. Eventually I talked with my grandmother and my

mom about it and they both basically said the same thing of, 'Do what makes

you happy.' And so, that's why I pursued going to law school, and my brother

helped me. (26)

On the surface it seems the participant did not meet expectations about duties to the

family by eschewing the family business. But a closer analysis demonstrates that

before he chose to go to law school, he sought the approval, advice, and help of his

mother, grandmother, and brother. Although he did not work directly for the family

business, he still met expectations of duties to the family through education, a

performance deemed authentic enough to mark inclusion. There is a sense of

obligation to the family whether direct, through working in a family business, or

indirect, through professional advice or family approval. The obligation to education

and family stem from an overall obligation to a reputation in congruence with the L-A

Discourse of hard work.

Reputation. Participants explained consistently that being L-A "meant" to

honor the legacy and reputation for hard work, virtually equating the two in their

social constructions of community membership and performance. The performance of

hard work and good reputations met community expectations about duties to fulfill

their cultural identity. Reputation can be interpreted as ways fellow community

members evaluate performances or as ways community members evaluate how

outsiders view performances. For example, if an L-A community member works hard

and has a successful business with outsiders as customers, other L-A community

members can tell the member has a good reputation with outsider clients and therefore

evaluate the performances as contributing to a good reputation overall. A health professional whose grandparents immigrated to the United States and who works with his family said:

> Do the best that's instilled to you when you were a child. As a Lebanese, you are kind of set at a higher standard. Unfortunately, our forefathers created that and we have the *obligation to continue that and that obligation starts when we're young kids. So, continue* the tradition and the *demand* that being Lebanese, in my opinion, *requires*. (13, emphasis added)

This quote demonstrates that there are expectations of duties to oneself and one's group in order to be a member of the present day L-A community. The obligations are constructed as originating from an immigrant heritage (or Discourse) and generations of hard work and "high standards." Young members are "expected" to understand the "demand" of a Lebanese identity and to meet the expectations. Being Lebanese "requires" behavioral patterns. Thus, in this interpretive scheme, claiming membership in the L-A community is not enough. Members have to perform duties deemed authentic enough to mark inclusion. There is an obligation to meet through acceptable behaviors and performances. Members know what the behaviors and performances are by invoking idealized examples from earlier generations. For example, participants commented, "I think we already have a well-respected community and just to continue that" (27) and "You just don't hear anything bad about the community, all you hear is good and, we've got to maintain that" (13). Throughout the data, participants demonstrated an awareness of their heritage and the expectations and obligations that

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come with it. To be a member of the L-A community, one must work hard, value family and continue the legacy.

When asked what kind of advice he would give to other L-A kids in the community, a small business owner claimed, "You know, you're fortunate to have what you've got. Use it the right way. You have an *obligation* to your Lebanese Community and your heritage to be an asset and not be a liability to it" (23, emphasis added). He felt the need to pass on advice to other members' kids about upholding the legacy of the L-A community identity. Being Lebanese is a "fortunate" identity and one is obligated to bolster it instead of becoming a "liability." Another male business owner whose grandparents immigrated to the United States said:

> I would say look at the generation before you because, again there's always exceptions, but the Lebanese children have been given the greatest playbook to work from in terms of hard work. If you can't figure it out, then you're stupid. You deserve whatever befalls you. You deserve it. I don't understand if you can't get it. (4)

Because newer L-A generations have the "greatest playbook," the business owner believes it should not be a problem to meet expectations of duties to oneself and one's group through hard work. In fact, if members do not succeed, it is attributed to their own shortcomings and not the values and behaviors of the community as a whole. Members view the obligation to fulfill the L-A cultural identity as serious enough that those who do not succeed are denigrated

As a negative case, a young male lawyer lamented that the newer generations are not living up to their obligations. "I think we've gotten to a point now that we're at a split in our generation that you have those that are productive and those that are entitled, and I think you're going to see a big change in how the Lebanese culture is perceived" (31). And yet his lament sounds like a warning. He believes that not everyone in the newer generations is meeting expectations about duties of hard work, education, and following the legacy. Such a change could alter the way the entire community is "perceived" by presumably the host culture as well as fellow members. Even as the young lawyer views changes, his wording sounds like an obligation. If newer members heed his words, they will be afraid of altering the reputation of the entire community and therefore feel obligated to perform according to community expectations. Community members' messaging produces expectations about duties of education, family, and a reputation in congruence with their heritage of hard work to mark inclusion in the community. Obligating serves as a mechanism to perpetuate community values and performances centered on work behaviors.

Work Behaviors

Work behaviors, in the context of the OCW, refers to actions performed at work which are interpreted as central indicators of cultural uptake by one's community. Members of the L-A community have a duty to meet expectations through performances understood by community members as authentic enough to mark inclusion. The performances of helping others and working hard are central indicators for work behaviors.

Helping others, go-getters, and best efforts. Participants explained

consistently that actions performed at work "meant" to help others, virtually equating

the two in their social constructions of work behaviors as central indicators of cultural

uptake. For example, participants commented, "work is a great vehicle to provide you

with the means to give back and sometimes change little parts of the world" (18), "I

think we all try to help other people" (14), "Just like my parents have always told me,

you always need to help others" (27), and "[Helping others] is part of our service and

that's part of the definition of being a professional" (12). To work like a member of

the L-A community means to help others. Whether medical professionals, financial

analysts, teachers, restaurant managers, lawyers, or wholesale business owners, 61%

of participants spoke directly about helping others as a desired work behavior and a

factor in deciding even what career to pursue. Helping others as a central indicator of

cultural uptake also means being independent and not asking for help *from* others. A

female financial advisor whose father immigrated to the United States taught her

daughter, "There's give and take in this world. We are givers, we're not takers; and

we work hard for what we do" (8). To perform actions at work authentic enough to

mark inclusion on the L-A community means to help others while not "taking" from

others.

Not only are members expected to help others, but they are also expected to

help themselves. A male law student whose paternal grandparents immigrated to the

United States said, "If you want to do anything and be able to provide for your family,

you've got to work hard. You can't just be lazy. You can't expect it to come to you.

If you want something to happen, go get it" (26). To meet community expectations of

hard work and success, members ought to demonstrate "go get it" work behaviors.

Members also contrast helping others and helping oneself as different from other communities' values. A male business owner who works with six of his family members said, "Some people make things happen; some people wait for things to happen. And, there are two different people, and 90 percent of the people wait for things to happen. Ten percent make things happen" (7). Including himself in the 10%, the participant is able to differentiate between those who are included and those who are excluded from the L-A cultural identity based on whether or not they are proactive at work. "Getting it done" or "making things happen" are actions that illustrate the work behavior of helping and therefore indicate cultural uptake and valid membership in the L-A community.

Members of the L-A community indicated that working hard and giving the job their best effort will result in success over time. Participants discussed consistently that working hard "meant" giving the job their best effort. Not all work behaviors are interpreted as central indicators of cultural uptake but giving a best effort is understood as authentic enough to mark inclusion. A male dentist working in a family practice said, "If there was a new way you could join the Lebanese Community and you want to know what it's like to be Lebanese, I'd say when you're working, no matter what you do, do the best you can do" (13). Clearly connecting "doing your best" with membership in the community, the participant illustrates the value of working hard as giving a best effort. He also illustrates that membership in the community is not only about genetics but rather about meeting expectations through performances of work behaviors. His words reflect a sense of consciousness that

inclusion must be achieved and it not entitled to children. Another male participant whose grandparents immigrated to the United States reminisced about his drafted days in the Army and how military expectations about duties differed from those within the L-A community. "[The Army] was a group setting where mediocrity was okay. I mean there wasn't a lot of competition. Nobody really wanted to be there" (28). The participant believed that hard work and the value of giving a best effort were not espoused in the military and did not help him meet expectations of the L-A community. The participant went on to build his own family-medical practice where he was able to perform work behaviors to authenticate inclusion in the L-A community.

The expectation of success central to the L-A identity can be achieved through actions performed at work, namely working hard and giving the job a best effort. For example, participants said, "Always work hard, it always pays off (22)," "We were taught that hard work is how you succeed" (8), "You can attain your goal if you work hard and you stay focused" (6), and "You have to try hard because anything worth having is worth working for" (4). To mark inclusion as an authentic member of the community, members are expected to achieve success in the workplace. Here, participants construct success as the realization of a uniquely affluent lifestyle. A male financial advisor whose grandparents were founding members of the L-A community stated, "Something I've told, not only my children, but also anybody that wants to come in here and talk to me, if you're willing to work like nobody else will for five years, you can live like nobody else can the rest of your life" (18). Motivating members to perform the behavior of hard work and doing a best effort, the participant

believes that such performances not only indicate cultural uptake but also will produce material success. Although a goal of actions performed at work is to mark inclusion in the community, material success is also a benefit. Sometimes material success is lamented as the undoing of the next generation. A male professor stated, "Today, we tend to center our lives around giving our kids so very much that I think that we have somewhat steered away from the work value" (12). Material success becomes an unintended consequence of the L-A community interpretive schemes of helping others through doing a best effort and hard work to meet expectations of duties of what it means to be a member of the L-A community.

Reinforcement

Reinforcement refers to community messaging that reaffirms and regulates authentic group belongingness. Reinforcement first reaffirms the interpretive scheme and, as a result, regulates the meanings community members attribute to work behaviors and decisions. Belongingness is ascertained by the communicative constitution of cultural identity via obligations to work behaviors in the context of OCW. As a highly collectivistic culture that values a tightly-knit framework (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 1991), the L-A community perpetuates itself by means of messaging that reinforces cultural identity. Messaging comes from parents, members of the L-A community, and cautionary tales to teach current members how to perform authentic duties to mark inclusion.

Reinforcement messages from parents. Participants credited their parents as important influences in their lives, especially concerning careers and work behaviors.

A female told a story about her early career in broadcasting. Her father wanted her to become a lawyer and when she found early success in broadcasting, she broke the news to her parents about forgoing law school.

> I told [my parents] I wasn't going to go to law school, at which time the entire restaurant heard my father scream at the top of his lungs, 'Over my dead body!' Well so that didn't go very well. So I ended up quitting my job and going to law school. And it was the smartest thing I ever did. He was right, I was wrong…He's always had that opinion that you have to have the education to be on your own and because of that philosophy I am a lawyer and working on my own today. (14)

Notice here, parental opinion reinforced through verbal aggression was persuasive enough to change the course of the participant's career and decision making. Enacting authentic performances through hard work and education was reinforced by the father's response to the participant's career choice. His messaging produced tangible results. Ultimately, the participant changed careers, demonstrated a sense of belongingness to the L-A community as a lawyer, and concluded that her father was "right" and she was "wrong." Her behavior was regulated to stay within performative boundaries, proving belongingness to the community, according to the community's interpretive scheme. She acknowledged the reinforcement from her parents. Another participant whose grandparents immigrated to the United States discussed messaging he sent his children to regulate their performances and subsequent belongingness. "Don't shame your parents; don't shame me, you know. I mean, you want to have a

good reputation, and so you need to be well-liked and respected in whatever you doing" (23). Performing authentic behaviors to mark belongingness is more than an individual endeavor. The reputation of the L-A community is evaluated by outsiders based on interactions with individuals. Therefore, L-A community members carry the responsibility of a good reputation not only for themselves but also for the community as a whole. Members of the L-A community and the larger host community are watching and parents are affected by the choices of their children just like children are affected by the choices of their parents. According to this participant, a child not performing authentic behaviors would bring "shame" to the parents. Building a "good reputation" is based on performances that meet expectations to demonstrate belongingness.

Reinforcement Messages from L-A community members. The concept of family transcends nuclear family units in the L-A community and community members play as important of a role as parents do in regulating and reconstructing group belongingness. A young female working for the family business discussed messages her uncle would send her at work.

> It comes up every day 'cause [my uncle] will walk by the office, if the gets here before me, and will say, 'When I was your age, I was here at 7am'…They're Lebanese; they rub it in your face when they do something better than you. I mean, that's every day, they want to point that out to you. (9)

By "pointing that out to you" "every day," the uncle is attempting to influence her interpretations of acceptable and unacceptable work behaviors, thereby reinforcing the

interpretive scheme about work in the community. The expectation is to arrive at work early to perform work behaviors indicating cultural uptake. The taunting from the uncle reinforces community expectations for work behaviors and reaffirms his niece's performances. Community members reinforce belongingness for other members whether blood related, as in parental relationships and that between the niece and her uncle, or not blood related. A female financial advisor credited a non-blood-related member of the community as her mentor.

> I didn't know anything. I worked as an assistant for six months… then, it gave me a chance to learn the business, build the business. We worked together until it was time for the little chicken to fly the coop and I did and set up my own practice, but he'd given me, you know, the best background for 11 years I could ever imagine. (8)

Working with her for 11 years, a member of the community regulated the participant's work behaviors in a formalized way as a mentor. Crediting her mentor, the participant felt like she went from not "knowing anything" to building a successful practice. The mentor was able to reinforce community expectations about work behaviors for the participant. Not only did the mentor obligate the participant to perform certain work behaviors, but he also could have felt an obligation to help another member of the community mark belongingness through hard work and success. He obligated her while he himself was obligated by community expectations.

Reinforcement messages from cautionary tales. In addition to direct parental and community member messaging, indirect messaging reaffirms community

belongingness through counter examples. A participant whose family is in the service

industry, commented on another community member working at a different business

in the same industry. "[Another community member] can yell and belittle all his

[workers] 'til he's blue in the face and it's not going to make him better. It's people

like that [who make it] bad for business for everybody" (25). The participant believes

the other community member did not mark inclusion in the L-A community through

work behaviors like helping others. The exhibited work behaviors do not meet

expectations and, according to the participant, make "business" bad for the whole

community. As evidenced through the quote, the participant constructs success for one

as success for the community. If a member gains a reputation of performing work

behaviors that do not meet expectations of the community, it affects the larger L-A

community. The participant tells the story of a counter-example as a messaging

strategy to mark who belongs and who does not belong as well as a teaching

mechanism to regulate and reconstruct other member behaviors.

Disciplining is reinforcement of a different kind. A male participant in the oil

and gas industry discussed reputation. "Your reputation matters big time; especially

with what I do. There's guys that won't give you a job that you're super qualified for

if they hear that you go out and get drunk all the time (25)." Behaviors that do not

qualify as "hard work" according to community standards result in alienation and a

bad reputation. Tales of such stigmas reinforce community-approved work

performances.

The process of reinforcement acts as a self-perpetuating system where performances are deemed authentic enough to mark belongingness to the L-A community. There is a sense that members, whether blood related or not, are watching and they have the ability to reaffirm or regulate the behaviors of other members through messaging. A male financial advisor stated, "I did it because I did want the Lebanese Community to be proud of me. You know, you don't want to disappoint your family; you just don't want to do that. And so, I think we all – we all live our lives that way" (18). He believes that all members "live lives that way" and behave according to community expectations because the community is watching. If belongingness is achieved through expected performances of work behaviors, a member of the community earns a reward of authentic identity as well as esteem from fellow community members. When the threshold of authentic identity is passed, other members are happy to welcome a new member to the club. Parental and community messaging as well as counter-examples reaffirm and regulate community belongingness.

Illustrative Examples of the Obligation-based Culturing of Work (OCW)

The Obligation-based Culturing of Work is a sensitizing concept that links community membership to performance. Performance of authentic membership occurs through the enactment of work behaviors that meet community expectations in accordance with community messaging. The following examples reveal the Obligation-based Culturing of Work concept by illustrating the interrelations between the communicative constitution of social identity, obligating, work behaviors, and reinforcement. A male dentist whose great-grandparents immigrated to the United States and who works in a family practice said:

> My uncle sat me down right when I graduated dental school and said, 'Everything you do has your name on it. You are representing yourself and our family in everything you do, and you have a responsibility now. As long as you have top-notch customer service and you're honest, you'll continue to grow your practice.' (30)

Messaging from an uncle revealed expectations of work behaviors (e.g., "top-notch customer service") that are authentic enough to mark inclusion in the L-A community. Performing such work behaviors with a "name on it" allows other members to make sense of whose performances are authentic while representing community reputations to outsiders. And such performances not only affect the participant but also his family. The invocation of *family*, in the context of this quote, is almost certainly a synecdoche (Nerlich & Clarke, 1999) for the L-A cultural community in that family transcends the nuclear unit and encompasses the whole community. The uncle's messaging produced

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expectations about duties to oneself and to the group. The messaging reinforced reconstructed authentic group belongingness in the process of community reinforcement.

In this excerpt, a restaurant owner talks about advice he would give other L-A member's children:

> [I would] tell them the same thing as my kids – just because you're born into a privileged environment, to keep it, you've gotta work for it…That motivation and that drive, they won't have the lifestyle or live the way they were brought up to what their parents had worked for. (23)

By communicating with other member's children, the participant is reaffirming the interpretive scheme and, as a result, regulating perceptions of what constitutes group belongingness. Work behaviors (e.g., "motivation" and "drive") qualify as authentic performances to mark inclusion into the L-A community. The participant communicates obligation through his message by reminding listeners that the "privileged environment" they live in was "what their parents had worked for." To benefit from a foundation built by parents, members "gotta work for it." Because this message was meant to be delivered to other children in the L-A community, the participant interprets the "environment" as shared within the whole community. Therefore, this participant believes that demonstrated work behaviors will achieve full membership status in the L-A community.

In this last excerpt, a young male attorney discusses how he ended up in his career:

[I had a summer job where] I'd go in there once a week, two hours, just to bullshit, talk with the girls, and do a little work, and [get paid]. But, you know, two hours a week is not a summer job, but I had told my dad I had a summer job. [My dad] goes up to [L-A community member] and says, "Hey, thanks for employing my son." And, [L-A community member] says, "What are you talking about; I haven't employed your son." Dad comes up to me, chews my ass out, gets me all in trouble…[Another L-A member] sees dad and he was ripping me and goes and talks to Dad and…says "Yeah, tell him to come in to my office Monday morning and I'll put him to work." [What] started off as a summer job; ended up for two years I was working with him…And, all that is influenced by maybe not a dad, a brother or a cousin, but definitely someone in the Lebanese Community, and I consider him as much as a mentor as my father was to me.

According to this participant, a summer job for a few hours a week did not meet expectations of work behaviors such as hard work to mark inclusion in the L-A community. The L-A member that was paying him for the few hours a week did not consider the job "employment" when the participant's dad asked about it. The dad then "rips" the son because he was not living up to obligations about duties to work behaviors. To help the participant meet expectations about work duties, another L-A member offered him a job and mentored him for two years just as a father would. The messaging from a member of the L-A community regulated and reconstructed expectations of work behaviors for the young attorney to achieve full membership in the community.

Discussion

The goal of this research was to determine (a) in what ways do memorable messages from within one's ethnic community and across generations shape adult understandings of the meanings of work and (b) how those meaning-attributions about work function for an ethnic culture. Data were gathered within the context of an ethnic Lebanese-American (L-A) community. Both research goals were achieved via grounded theorizing with an original sensitizing concept labeled the *Obligation-based Culturing of Work* (OCW). The sensitizing concept, OCW, refers to the process by which community messaging obligates members to perform work behaviors in order to achieve full membership status.

Research question one asked in what ways do memorable messages from within one's ethnic community and across generations shape adult understandings of the meanings of work and is answered by the OCW concept. In short, OCW is a four-part process in which the communicative constitution of *cultural identity* occurs through *obligating*, about *work behaviors*, that are reaffirmed and reconstructed through *reinforcement*. Memorable messages within the L-A community set up expectations about how work behaviors ought to be performed to mark authentic inclusion. Therefore, memorable messages construct meanings of work as performative patterns that lead to identity. In other words, L-A community members send and receive messages that communicate how to work in order to be a member of the community. To earn the ability to claim an L-A identity, members ought to perform behaviors according to community expectations. Expectations of behaviors

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are communicated via memorable messages. Memorable messaging tells community

members how to behave at work if they want to claim a community identity.

Research question two asked how such meaning-attributions about work

function for an ethnic culture: OCW functions as a mechanism for cultural

maintenance. The central emphasis of the OCW process is that membership is not

complete until a performative threshold is passed, specific work behaviors enacted,

obligations shared, and expectations reinforced through community messaging.

Cultural values and behaviors are maintained through community messaging that

comes to invite shared meaning-attributions about work. Relationships between

messages, meanings, and identity are described through OCW and nuance several

communication theories in significant ways. The sensitizing concept, OCW, extends

current theorizing on structuration, cross-cultural adaptation theory, critical cultural

transculturation, intercultural fusion, meaning of work (MOW), blue-collar

Discourses, and organizational socialization.

Structuration, Cultural, Discourse, and Work Behaviors

First, OCW is a structurational process of cultural maintenance that influences

both cultures and work behaviors. Structuration is the production and reproduction of

a social system through actors' application of generative rules and resources (Giddens,

1979; Giddens & Turner, 1987). Structures enable and constrain agency, which, in

turn, constitutes the structures that enable and constrain agency. Agency is the

freedom to act otherwise (Giddens, 1979). In the context of the L-A community,

agency is the freedom to choose behaviors to enact. OCW is a structurational process

where community messaging is a structure that enables and constrains member behaviors. Members have the choice to act otherwise, defined as agency, but if they want to claim an ethnic identity, they are obligated to perform according to the structures of Discourse produced by community messaging. Such obligations may seem to constrain decision making and therefore agency of L-A members. Even though members are obligated to perform certain work behaviors, it seems that they are free to some degree to choose what profession in which to enact such behaviors. Although narrow in its manifestation, agency exists in the L-A community. Intercultural communication theories tend to articulate phenomena via binaries, agency or no agency, individualistic or collectivistic, but the L-A community validates that phenomena occur along a continuum. Agency exists but the structure can constrain where agency functions. One pole of the dialectic is weak but present. When members perform according to the structure of community messaging, or enact their agency in correspondence to those structures, they constitute the structure that enables and constrains community member behaviors. The process is thus cyclical and mutually constitutive.

Through OCW, community messaging produces and reinforces the social system of culture for the L-A community. When members enact approved work behaviors based on obligation, they mark authentic inclusion into the community and reproduce the overarching social and cultural system. Structuration occurs through enactment and has no zero point (Giddens, 1979). Members of the L-A community are obligated to enact and therefore reproduce the cultural system through work behaviors. For example, a participant stated that members of the L-A community have an

obligation to uphold the legacy of behaviors from the founding generation. The legacy of behaviors acts like a structure that enables and constrains member behavior or agency. The L-A culture, or structure, is maintained through such enactment, or agency, derived from rules and expectations about work behavior. The rules and expectations of work are communicated and maintained via community messaging. Community messages about work behaviors maintain the culture, or structure, making OCW an effective concept in bridging organizational and intercultural communication.

Intercultural Communication Theory

Second, OCW supplements Kim's cross-cultural adaptation theory (1977, 1988, 2001, 2002) by articulating an exigency out of which immigrant communities adapt *within* a host community instead of *to* a host community. In rhetorical theory, an exigency is a circumstance that demands a response (Bitzer, 1968; Rowland 1991). An immigrant moving to a host culture is a circumstance that demands a response from the immigrant, according to cross-cultural adaptation theory. As humans, we are not born into this world equipped with all of the knowledge to behave within our cultural environments. In order to learn how to behave, we are trained through socialization processes. When the first generation of Lebanese immigrated to America, an exigency was created. If the immigrants did not work hard to feed, clothe, and provide shelter for themselves and their families, then they would literally not survive. Also, racism was another exigency out of which immigrants engages in culturing. They were motivated to work hard to survive and achieve success to prove wrong the host culture that discriminated against them (Shamas, 2000). When the first generation achieved survival through hard work, subsequent generations viewed their behaviors as heroic and therefore valued hard work. For the Lebanese-Americans, survival and success are not taken for granted but are preserved through culturally valued behaviors. Rather than facilitating absorption, exigency for immigrant communities can actually calcify cultural values and behaviors. Cross-cultural adaptation theory explains how immigrants respond to the host culture by accumulating an understanding of values and behaviors of the host culture while "un-learning" past ways (Kim, 2001, 2002).

Moving to a host culture creates a stressor on the immigrant who is not equipped with behavioral knowledge of the host culture. The stress is uncomfortable for the immigrant, prompting the immigrant to reduce stress by adapting to the host culture and growing into a new set of behaviors learned from the host culture, termed the stress-adaptation-growth cycle (Gudykunst & Kim, 2003). Therefore, an immigrant moving to a host culture is in a circumstance that demands a response to adapt to the host culture to reduce the stress of not knowing acceptable behaviors. This adaptation process can be called an exigency in that immigrants are faced with a circumstance that demands their response. Cross-culture adaptation theory posits that the best response is to adapt to the host culture (Kim, 2001, 2002). OCW supplements cross-cultural adaptation theory by articulating how immigrants adapt not only *to* a host community but also *within* a host community. Maintained values and behaviors within ethnic communities are not necessarily learned from the host culture (Homsey, 2012; Homsey & Sandel, 2012). The L-A community maintains expectations of behaviors to perform what would be considered an authentic identity. The behaviors are not derived from the host culture but rather the ethnic understanding within the immigrant community. For example, when members of the L-A community talk about family, they are referring to a larger community that includes non-blood related individuals and that concept is different than the host understanding of family as a nuclear unit. When an immigrant moves to a host culture, a circumstance is created that calls for a response, an exigency, either to adapt to the host culture or to maintain cultural behaviors. For the L-A community, responding to the immigrant/host exigency means maintaining cultural behaviors through mindful processes like OCW

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rather than adapting to the host culture as described in cross-cultural adaptation theory. Cultural maintenance is perpetuated by messaging across time.

Third, OCW supports E. M. Kramer's (2000, 2003) intercultural fusion with an in-depth case study of an immigrant culture's messaging across time. Intercultural fusion views intercultural communication as fluid and integrative. When an immigrant moves to a host culture, adaptability is not linear but rather unpredictable, random, and accidental. The churnings between the immigrant and host culture randomly fuse together new and old cultural behaviors. A fusional in-between is created when cultures communicate as when an immigrant community lives within a host culture. The immigrant can learn new behaviors from the host culture but new learning does not necessitate an "unlearning" of past cultural understandings resulting in a haphazard mixing of both cultures (E. M. Kramer, 2000, 2003). OCW supports intercultural fusion through an in-depth case study. As stated before, the L-A community maintains a culture different than the parent or host through community messaging perpetuated by OCW. Messaging was originally encouraged by an exigency (i.e., a circumstance that demands a response as when an immigrant moves to a host culture). When immigrant and host cultures interact, cultural churnings happen resulting in change.

Through the generations of the L-A immigrant community, messaging has remained the same but meanings have changed due to cultural fusions. Meanings changed because contexts changed. For example, the first generation of the L-A community worked hard to "provide for" their families, *literally* supplying needs like

food, shelter, and clothing. The expectation of hard work to "provide for" the family was reinforced through community messaging about acceptable behaviors. Through time, the messages about "providing for" were maintained due to OCW but the context and, therefore, meaning, changed due to churnings between the immigrant and host culture. Three to four generations from founding L-A immigrants, the current community values "providing for" their families through "hard work." Based on my understanding of the context of the utterance, the term "provide for" no longer means food, drink, shelter, and clothing but rather ever-increasing material gain—*figuratively and proverbially* supplying needs, and, more probably, supplying wants. The L-A community is generally affluent and not concerned about survival in a primitive sense. Although the messages are the same, the meaning changes because the context changed. The random and accidental churnings between the host and immigrant cultures, a new context, created new meanings derived from the same messages perpetuated through OCW. Although OCW is a process through which the L-A community maintains cultural behaviors different than the host culture, the immigrant community is not the same as its parent culture either

Fourth, OCW supports Kraidy's (2005) critical cultural transculturation with an in-depth case study of how an immigrant culture produced a culture distinct from its parents or host culture. Kraidy enhances Canclini's (1995) notion of hybridity. The notion of hybridity addresses the continual mixing of cultures from already mixed starting points. Interactions between a host and immigrant community represent two distinct hybrid cultures creating a third hybrid culture. No point of purity exists. Rather, hybridity is a theory of process that describes the continual mixings between

cultural communities (Canclini, 1995). Critical cultural transculturation specifies the process of cultural mixings introduced through the theory of hybridity by describing the social level as groups interact (Kraidy, 2005). Culture is created in the spaces between (Bhabha, 1994). In a globalized world where different cultures are constantly in contact with each other, critical cultural transculturation describes how communication constructs distinct cultures in the spaces between cultures. The in-between spaces create an opportunity to negotiate identity between cultures, such as between immigrant and host communities. Immigrants can choose what behaviors to privilege and perpetuate, regardless of the origins of those behaviors whether from the host or immigrant cultures therefore creating a third or hybrid culture (Kraidy, 2005). The L-A community does not behave exactly like its parent culture in Lebanon or like the host culture in America. Their behaviors reveal a third culture different from the parent or host culture that is maintained through the process of OCW.   Through OCW, the L-A community renegotiated a cultural identity different than both the parent and host cultures. As a sustained immigrant community within the host culture, the L-A community members have the agency to choose what behaviors to enact and reinforce for subsequent generations. For example, members share stories of first generations that worked hard to survive. Such memorable messages teach members what acting like an authentic member of the L-A community means, producing a distinct culture. The L-A community, as an immigrant community within a host community, maintains a third and distinct culture through the discursive production of obligations to community-approved work behaviors. Repeated and reaffirmed messages produced meanings within an immigrant/host context.

Organizational Communication Theory

Fifth, OCW supplements the meaning of work (MOW) literature by describing how individuals can assign obligation-based meanings to work behaviors as a means of proving cultural membership, not only societal membership. MOW research indicates meanings of working are derived from a combination of factors, including obligation norms. These norms are the "belief that all individuals have a duty to contribute to society through work and working" (MOW International Research Team, 1987, p. 174). Individuals feel the need to be active and working members of a larger society (Grant, 2007). OCW supplements the obligation norm of MOW by describing how obligation functions not only on a societal level but also on a cultural level, in service of an ethnic community. In the L-A community, members are obligated to perform certain work behaviors to prove authentic membership in a cultural community. For example, a member of the L-A community specifically stated that members were obligated to their ethnic community and heritage to perform certain behaviors. The felt obligation was not to a larger society but specifically to the ethnic community. Obligation affects meanings of work on a community level as they pertain to cultural membership and not only as they pertain to societal contributions. Obligations then invoke higher ideals in these justifications and meaning attributions that infuse workday effort with grand meaning derived from messaging. Here, higher ideals are not esoteric but are grounded in specific messaging. Organizational communication and processes like OCW contribute uniquely to MOW through the study of such messaging, and Discourses about work.

Sixth, OCW augments research on blue-collar Discourses (e.g., Lucas, 2011) with an example of the cultural production of *white-collar* Discourses. Scholars of organizational discourse explain that there are two levels of discourse: unique and one-of-a-kind talk—little 'd'iscourse, and those patterned ways of talking (and therefore thinking) about social reality—what they term big 'D'iscourse (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2000; Bisel & Barge, 2011; Taylor, Cooren, Giroux, and Robichaud, 1996). So-called big 'D'iscourse represents general and enduring systems of thought while discourse is talk and text in social practices. Both are mutually constitutive (Fairhurst & Putnam, 2004). Messages uttered in everyday conversation build upon each other to become a larger social reality that can be called upon at a later time through more talk (Clair, 1996). Discourse positions seemingly unattractive blue-collar jobs as meaningful (Tracy & Scott, 2006). The talk about work makes it meaningful even though the work itself is not inherently so (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999; Kreiner, Ashforth, & Sluss, 2006). Although generally depicted as less desirable than white-collar work (Dick, 2005), blue-collar work is constructed as noble and worthwhile through themes in blue-collar Discourse like providing for a family and working hard (Lucas, 2011). OCW demonstrates that *white-collar Discourse* calls upon strikingly similar themes in order to imbue work behaviors with meaning beyond that of merely "making a paycheck." L-A community members described their work in noble and worthwhile ways by calling upon themes like providing for a family and working hard. Both blue-collar and white-collar Discourses describe work as meaningful but through OCW, white-collar Discourse ultimately constructs work as a performance to prove an authentic cultural identity. Identity is partial until culturally-

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approved behaviors are performed to fulfill obligations outlined by community messaging. Future research should investigate if blue-collar discourse engenders the same performative threshold to identity.

Seventh, OCW synthesizes MOW literature and organizational socialization literature by describing how community messaging initiates and reinforces meaning of work attributions, which socialize workers anticipatorily in ways overlapping but distinct from other known sources. Organizational socialization explains how organizations shape members' skills, knowledge, and meaning attributions about work (Jablin, 2001; M. W. Kramer, 2010). We learn meaning attributions about work through many sources of socialization (Clair, 1999). And our meaning attributions affect the way we think about and behave at work (Wrzesniewski, Dutton, & Debebe, 2003). In anticipatory socialization, individuals form expectations of the culture they will encounter in a future workplace (Gibson & Papa, 2000), termed *organizational anticipatory socialization*, or in a future vocation (Russo, 1998), termed *vocational anticipatory socialization*, through interactions with friends, family, education, previous employment, and media (Jablin, 1994, 2001; M. W. Kramer, 2010). OCW adds community messaging to anticipatory socialization as another important source for meaning of work attributions. For the L-A community, the expectation of performing "hard work" as a culturally acceptable work behavior is derived from community messaging that is reinforced by members. For example, participants talked about how uncles, cousins, grandmothers and non-blood related members of the community sent messages about how to work hard like a member of the community should. Such messaging reinforced behavioral expectations and came from more than

just nuclear family members. MOW researchers have studied family and work as separate entities (Brief & Nord, 1990). Because the L-A community understanding of family moves beyond the nuclear unit, OCW addresses both family and work as it describes community messaging as a source of anticipatory socialization. Sources of socialization include family but OCW expands family to include cultural community, increasing potential influences for anticipatory socialization.

Eighth, OCW contributes to organizational socialization theories the notion that work socialization could be triggered by individuals' desire to perform community affiliation, not only organizational affiliation. Organizational socialization is "the process by which an individual acquires the social knowledge and skills necessary to assume an organizational role" (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979, p. 211). The goal is to perform behaviors in an "organizational role." The life cycle of organizational socialization is comprised of four phases: anticipatory socialization, initial encounter, full membership, and exit (Jablin, 1984, 1987, 1994, 2001; M. W. Kramer, 2010). All four phases focus on organizational roles whether through preparation, active participation, or departure. Theories of organizational socialization focus on different sources of socialization while the targets remain the same: a specific organization, profession, or vocation (Clair, 1999; Cohen-Scali, 2003). OCW contributes the notion that work socialization can affect not only organizational affiliation but also community affiliation. Members of the L-A community learn what behaviors are desirable to display at work in order to perform according to organizational, professional, and vocational standards but also according to community standards. For example, participants talked about work behaviors as a

means of proving ethnic membership and not as a way to join an organization or profession. Messaging within OCW acts as sources that reaffirm and regulate work behaviors for both organizational and community targets. Socialization literature is extended by the concept of OCW in that the goal of work behaviors may not just be to adapt to an organizational or vocational need but rather to prove membership in a community outside of work.

Transferability of the OCW Concept

The goal of inductive, interpretive research is to support the discovery of contextualized insight through a process of theory building (Cheney, 2000). The sensitizing concept, *Obligation-based Culturing of Work* (OCW), seems likely to be applicable to a number of situations in which groups face situational exigencies that motivate them to inculcate the value of hard work in other community members and subsequent generations. In other words, Obligation-based culturing of work may arise in cultural and community groups where and when survival is difficult or threatened (as with immigrant groups). Those survival difficulties could motivate group and family members in particular whose work outputs appear to relieve survival burdens. In turn, that valuing may begin to be perpetuated in community messaging as folk wisdom, sayings, aphorism, proverbs, cautionary tales, myths, fables, narratives, and the like. OCW describes the link between identity and behavior. Group membership is not complete until a performative threshold is passed. Simply claiming an identity is not enough; an individual has to prove identity through behavior. Expectations of what behavior is acceptable are taught through group messages, a uniquely communicative

process. Imagine for example, how OCW could arise in messaging within groups whose survival is threatened such as refugees, immigrants, pioneers, frontier-persons, and groups that are being militarily occupied. When core values are rejected, membership in the group is threatened because values link groups of cultural and social systems (Smolicz, 1981). When the majority of members reject core values, such as within groups whose survival is threatened, the community could disintegrate. OCW describes how such groups can maintain cultural values and survive even when threatened by situational exigencies.

Limitations and Future Directions

The present study has some limitations. For example, interviews were conducted within a highly-interconnected cultural group. As a result, it is not surprising to find coherent and reinforced messaging. Future research could explore OCW across multiple groups comparatively, including less-interconnected groups or those with larger subgroups. Future research can also analyze the term "provide for." For the L-A community, "provide for" seems to operate as a euphemism for perpetuating the achievements of previous generations and garnering ever-increasing material gain rather than its conventional and historical usage for food, shelter, and clothing. Also, OCW perpetuates expectations for work behaviors but are such expectations different for men and women? Future research can reanalyze the data for gender differences in work behaviors, messaging, and community expectations for identity.

Work behavior marks an important part of identity and future research can link work socialization and intercultural theories more directly. Further research can study how work socialization can incorporate ethnic and community influences on work behavior. Also, future research can specifically study what role work behaviors play in intercultural communication and cultural identity.

Conclusion

The *Obligation-based Culturing of Work* (OCW) is a sensitizing concept that describes a process through which community membership is complete when a performative threshold is passed, specific work behaviors enacted, obligations shared, and expectations reinforced through community messaging. OCW supports and extends theories of work socialization and intercultural communication by describing links between community messaging, meaning attributions, work behaviors, and cultural identity maintenance. Memorable messages encourage familial and community groups to converge on meaning attributions about work and its importance and value. Such meaning attributions generate behavioral patterns that perpetuate community expectations about identity thus maintaning ethnic cultures. Therefore, communication and the exchange of memorable messages hold important consequences for work behaviors and cultural identity.

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Appendix A: Interview Protocol

1. Could you describe your job title, duties, and how long you have worked?

2. Can you describe a work experience that illustrates what you like about being a

   _____?

3. How did you end up in your occupation?

   a. When did you know you wanted to be an X?

4. How else did you learn about what kind of career you wanted to be in?

   a. Where did your decision come from? (family, peers, education, media, previous work experience)

5. Did you ever consider an alternative career path?

   a. Yes: What dissuaded you?

   b. No: Can you think of a career that would have upset your parents?

6. Please describe memorable messages about work you heard from your parents.

   a. Can you give me a story when that would come up?

7. Please describe memorable messages you say to your children about work.

   a. Can you give me a story when that would come up?

8. If you could say one thing to other members of the Lebanese community about work, what would it be?

9. If you could say one thing to other members' children about work, what would it be?

10. If we imagined the Lebanese community in five years from now as a community in which very few members followed their parents' vocational footsteps, what do you suppose must have changed?

11. Do you think this way you've come into your career was influence by the fact that you were a member of the Lebanese community?

12. Is there anything else you would like to share about your experiences with the Lebanese community and work that we have not yet discussed?

Table 1

Four Parts of the Obligation-based Culturing of Work

Process	Definition	Example Interview Samples
Communicative Constitution of Cultural Identity	Ways in which community members make sense of whose performances ought to be authentic enough to mark inclusion in their cultural group	We have those roots to us. Most of our ancestors that came over couldn't speak the language, couldn't read and write; you know, they were peddlers, they worked really, really hard just to provide for family; just to survive. And, they instilled in their children a drive to be something better, to do something more than what they've done.
Obligating	Ways community members' messaging produces expectations about duties for oneself and group	Do the best that's instilled to you when you were a child. As a Lebanese, you are kind of set at a higher standard. Unfortunately, our forefathers created that and we have the obligation to continue that and that obligation starts when we're young kids. So, continue the tradition and the demand that being Lebanese, in my opinion, requires.
Work Behaviors	Actions performed at work which are interpreted as central indicators of cultural uptake by one's community	If you want to do anything and be able to provide for your family, you've got to work hard. You can't just be lazy. You can't expect it to come to you. If you want something to happen, go get it.
Reinforcement	Community messaging that reaffirms and regulates authentic group belongingness	I did [perform certain work behaviors] because I did want the Lebanese Community to be proud of me. You know, you don't want to disappoint your family; you just don't want to do that. And so, I think we all – we all live our lives that way.

Figure 1

Obligation-based Culturing of Work

Reinforcement

Cultural
Identity

Community Messaging

Work
Behaviors

Obligating