



Finding My Work Utopia

Examining My Work Experiences and Position in Society

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Abstract: As I prepare to search for a job after graduation, there are many factors that I must consider in order to understand exactly what I am looking for in a job. I am unsure at this time as to what type of job I am looking for. However, I do realize that I can draw on my past paid and unpaid work and labor experiences to recognize what characteristics I find desirable and undesirable in a job or work environment. Furthermore, through examining my position in society in relation to my social class, gender, and race, I will be able to understand what advantages or obstacles I may face in finding and maintaining a job in relation to others. Through examining these factors in this paper I hope to reach a greater understanding of what I am searching for.

In his book, *The Sociological Imagination*, C. Wright Mills states that an individual can understand his life's experiences better if he or she takes the time to examine them in relation to what goes on in the world (349). As I am preparing to graduate and find a job other than the minimum-wage jobs that I have held until now, I believe that by examining my past work experiences, both paid and nonpaid, I will gain a greater understanding of what I am looking for in a potential work. Furthermore, by examining the experiences of others I will be able to decide if my preferences are feasible for me to achieve in competition with others who have similar goals to mine.

As of right now, I am unsure of what course I would like to take in regards to my occupation. I am considering taking a year off of school and then attending law school

at night. However I want to take time off to make sure law school is really what I want before I make any major decisions. As for jobs that I will have in the meantime, I am unsure of what type of work I am looking for. Over the course of this paper I seek to examine the aspects of my previous work experiences that I value and which characteristics I would prefer to avoid in future work. In addition, for future unpaid work I assume that I will one day have a family and children, so in imagining my work utopia I will take into consideration how children will affect my future jobs.

Over the course of my life, I have participated in many different types of **wage and nonwage work** that have helped prepare me for future jobs through learning what characteristics I would preferably want and not want out of a job and to iden-

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tify the characteristics that would form my ideal job. Wage work is commonly referred to as “real” work, as it is done in exchange for monetary wages and is organized by an employer (Dickinson & Schaeffer 30). Wage work that I have done includes being a crew member at Dunkin Donuts, a salesperson at the clothing store American Eagle, and an intern at the State House where I completed various administrative duties. On the other hand, nonwage work is just as important but is often held in low esteem as it is work that is often done to assist the individual, family or friends and is rewarded with thanks, a gift, or cash (Dickinson & Schaeffer 30). The nonwage work that I have done includes being a student, babysitting for friends and family, and completing chores at home. While wage and nonwage work is often very different, both play instrumental roles in developing myself as a worker and to identify what I want in a job.

One thing that may make finding a job difficult is the current state of the economy. Dickinson and Schaeffer in *Fast Forward* address some of the new features of the **changing world of the economy and work**. Initially, the authors address the issue of the **immiseration of workers**, which refers to the decline in worker resources and income (Dickinson & Schaeffer 42). It is believed that between 1979 and 1995 the median income in the United States fell by approximately \$100 a month. As a result, there were many workers that were making less money in 1995 than workers made in 1955. Another feature of the new economy is the reduction of state benefits. Through this reduction, benefit to groups of workers such as women on welfare and immigrants have been largely reduced, resulting in diminished income and quality of life for these individuals (Dickinson & Schaeffer 37). Dickinson and Schaeffer also discuss how income from both wages and benefits has declined, while the cost of basic necessities has increased. For instance, workers are

now expected to pay for the increased cost of housing, utilities, healthcare, education, taxes and rising gas prices on a lesser income (Dickinson 39).

In “The Capitalist Firm in the Twenty-First Century,” Walter Powell discusses how unemployment is currently at a thirty year low, as one feature of the new economy. Even though there are more people working, this has not meant there has been a steady or increase in job security. Workers constantly have to worry about becoming unemployed due to **downsizing** (Powell 81). Downsizing has affected the workplace and economy because it has reduced the number of jobs available since workers are employed only when there is a pressing need for assistance within a company. As a result of downsizing there are many individuals who are temporary workers, only being employed when needed by the company. This practice leaves individuals that are permanently employed by the company to have greater job responsibility, since they are compensating for job positions that have been consolidated into fewer positions (Powell 81). This knowledge of downsizing makes me apprehensive about my immediate future as a recent college graduate with very little experience or skills in the paid workforce. To find a job only to be a victim of downsizing would be disappointing and something to worry about in terms of maintaining a steady income.

As graduation and the responsibility of finding a job approaches, I find that I am placing my faith in the **achievement ideology**. I believe that as long as I have the proper education and training, the ability to demonstrate my skills, and that I work hard and have the proper attitude, I will have no problem in finding a job and being successful (Royster 288). However I do have to realize that there are always going to be people who may be more qualified, interview better, or have more personal contacts, than I do. The idea of using per-

sonal connections to have greater access to jobs is known as the **contacts ideology** (Royster 288). Up until recently, I never really believed in this ideology since I deeply believed that hard work and level of skill was the determining factor in finding employment. However, at my internship at the State House I have heard countless times that getting a job is “all about who you know.” My supervisors at the State House have instructed me to use them as contacts for whatever position I may apply for, since having the recommendation of a State Representative almost guarantees an applicant an interview and certainly works in favor of the applicant.

I am part of a household that financially supports me in the form of paying for my education, bills and other necessities. As a result, while I have been in school I have had the ability to work solely to make extra money to spend on myself. Furthermore, as I have only worked in minimum wage paying jobs for extra money, I never really recognized the importance of having contacts. However, I received my first two jobs as a result of my contacts. When I first applied to Dunkin Donuts, I applied in the town next to where I live, but never received a call back. A few weeks later, a friend from school who knew the manager at the Dunkin Donuts in my town got me a job. I had no job experience at this time and I think that the only reason I was given the job was based on the fact that my friend knew the manager. I have seen this type of situation many times throughout my years at Dunkin Donuts. Whenever a new application was submitted to the manager, our manager would ask the employees if they knew who the applicant was. There were many times that an applicant would be disliked by an employee and subsequently that applicant would not be considered for a job. Furthermore, there were even more times when an applicant was a friend of a current employee and subsequently put on the top of the application pile and that indi-

vidual was interviewed first and usually given the job.

I also experienced hiring as a result of contacts at American Eagle. I received my job because my mother is friends with the assistant manager’s mother. Had I not had this connection, I am positive I would not have even been considered for the job. Almost every employee at American Eagle knew each other before starting to work there. It was common practice to hire from friends of employees. For example, during my time at the store there were many instances when the manager would make an announcement that the store was hiring and that employees should inform their family and friends. As a result, it almost became a joke when an “outsider” whom no one knew came in and asked for an application. These individuals were almost never considered for a position. Of particular interest, in many instances the friends that were hired were valued for their physical attractiveness. These employees had no skills and were poor workers in regard to their work ethic; however these employees were never reprimanded. This behavior disproves the achievement ideology, as people who had no particular skill or personality were given a job because they were attractive and knew employees who already worked there. These hiring practices assist in maintaining racial boundaries in the area in which American Eagle is located. The area is predominantly white and all of the employees that work at the store are white as well. Furthermore, the friends of employees are white as well, presumably because of the location in which they live. Since friends of employees take precedent over other applicants, white individuals are the only people employed by the particular store in which I worked.

Ideally, I want to work what is referred to as the **fixed day**, which requires that at least half of the hours worked during the majority of the work week fall between the hours of 8 A.M. and 4 P.M. Also, I would

prefer to work during the week days and to avoid working **nonstandard days**, which are Saturdays and Sundays (Presser 459). Furthermore, to be able to have **flexitime** would be optimal, as I would be able to choose what time I want to begin and end my work day, “within a few hours of the core schedule” (Presser 459). By being able to flexibly work during the week would be ideal in the future when I decide to have a family. By being able to work standard hours during the week, I would be able to have the time to spend with my family and to take care of family obligations. This schedule would match up with the schedule of children attending school, so I would be able to be at home while my children are at home. Furthermore, by being able to be flexible with my hours I would be able to accommodate anything unexpected such as taking children to doctor’s appointments or taking care of any family emergencies that may arise.

While I want to work hard and contribute as much as possible to my future work environment, I want to avoid working excessively or to the point of constantly worrying about work. The first step I would ideologically avoid taking would be to not frequently work **overtime**, which is work that is completed in addition to a worker’s scheduled hours (Golden 29). While working overtime sparingly would not be a problem, I would want to avoid frequently working extra hours as it is very important for me to have time and space away from work. This time away would help me relax and concern myself with things that happen outside of the work environment. Allowing myself to separate work and time away from work will prevent me from working more than is physically or mentally healthy, which is known as **overworking** (Golden 30). It is important to avoid this as it is known that employees who consistently work overtime are twice as likely to consider their jobs to be very stressful and are at risk for high blood pressure,

heart attack and occupational burnout (Golden 30). The worst situation that I could potentially have would be **overemployment**, which occurs when employees are willing to reduce the amount of time they spend earning an income but are unable to due to constrictions of the job (Golden 30).

I have learned from past experience that overtime and overwork can lead to undesirable consequences. At one time during my college career, I was working upwards of forty hours a week at two jobs, while attending class for fifteen hours a week, and then completing countless hours of schoolwork. This was obviously more hours than a standard forty hour workweek and I was unable to reduce the amount of time I spent on this work, no matter how much I wanted to. I clearly could not cut back on my class attendance or schoolwork as I would do poorly in my classes. I was also unable to cut back at my two jobs as I worked part time at both, and both jobs required me to work a minimum of twenty hours a week in order to continue working there. I wanted to keep both of these jobs and as a result I continued to work. The longer this schedule went on I became very anxious and stressed out. I became tired all the time and my grades and class attendance began to fall. It was only after I forced myself to cut back on one job that I began to feel better, both physically and in relation to the work I had to complete. As a result, I believe I must learn from my past experiences and do my best to prevent working too much overtime, becoming overworked, overemployed, and burnt out at future jobs.

In addition to the actual time spent at work, I also have to be aware of the **emotional labor** that I do and how I manage it. The work of emotional labor requires an individual to suppress any felt emotion, in order to present themselves to the customer a certain way. This was described in Hochschild’s “The Managed Heart” in the exam-

ple of a flight attendant who was expected to serve customers and be polite and friendly at all times during the flight. The flight attendant was not afforded a break as she constantly had to maintain an appearance of being relaxed, friendly and willing to serve. In the reading, Marx is consulted to note that work can become dangerous because the worker can become detached from the object of himself that is used to do work, either physically or emotionally. For instance, a factory worker can become detached from his arm, which is vital to his work and the flight attendant may become detached from her emotions, which are vital to her work (Hochschild 70).

Drawing on this notion of the worker becoming detached or alienated from body or emotion, Marx suggests that it may be vital to survival for the worker to become mentally detached from himself (Hochschild 70). While I hope to avoid a job that forces me to rely heavily on emotional labor, I hope that I am able to separate my emotions from work with my life away from work. I am aware that I tend to become completely dedicated and engulfed in the work that I do, to the point that it consumes my thoughts day and night. While that increases my work productivity and makes me a hard worker, I need to constantly be aware that there is a line that I should not cross between being emotionally invested in my work and being overly invested in what I do. As a result, I am aware of this potential and I must continuously watch myself from becoming too involved.

While it may seem as if there are large differences between types of jobs, especially between minimum wage paying and corporate, I think that it is important to realize that there are no real great differences in the core structure of work. I believe that this knowledge will help me in knowing what to expect out of a job and to successfully acclimate myself to future jobs. For instance, most work organizations utilize

centralization and decentralization of authority. In using this system, there is a concentration of power at the top of organizations, generally in the form of a CEO or manager. From there, the individual or group in power generally pushes responsibility for profits and decisions “as far down the organizational line as possible” (Jackall 406). In relaying responsibility down to the less powerful within an organization, superiors are able to rid themselves of the pressure and obligation of having to deal with minute details and tasks, which is referred to as the **pushing down of details** (Jackall 408). However, even though superiors do not do the actual tedious work themselves, they often receive all of the credit for any profit, ideas, or recognition that is produced by inferior employees, which is known as the **pulling up of credit** (Jackall 409).

Through the centralization of power, pushing down of details, and pulling up of power in both corporate and minimum wage positions, employees are used to assist and benefit superiors. Employees assist their managers and bosses with little or no gratification, in terms of receiving credit for work done or monetary compensation. In my experience, I have found that this occurs everywhere. At Dunkin Donuts and American Eagle, there would be certain quotas of product that employees were required to sell during the day. If we did not meet this quota, employee hours were often reduced as a punishment. However, on days that employees did exceed the quotas, we received little acknowledgment, even if our superiors received bonuses or company recognition.

This was also evident, though in less harsh of a manner during my internship at the State House. In the House of Representatives, each Representative has at least one legislative aide to assist them in the massive amounts of work that needs to be done. These aides complete the work behind the scenes and put in all of the effort to

make things happen; however the Representatives receive all the credit. While Representatives are very appreciative and generous towards their legislative aides, the aides receive no recognition by any other individuals such as constituents, the media, or other legislatures. In my situation, even though it may seem unfair for someone to get full credit when others have done the hard work, I realize that I am employed to benefit the organization I work for and I am an integral part of that company, whether or not I receive credit for what I have produced.

My past work experiences have definitely helped me to become more aware of what I want and don't want out of a future job. Initially, by working at Dunkin Donuts I realized that of utmost importance in having a job, aside from making more money than minimum wage, is to have more freedom and variety in a job. My work at Dunkin Donuts was primarily characterized by **standardization**, which orders that there be strict and detailed control over both work routines and product quality (Leidner 347). This was enforced in every aspect of the job, from the way in which every employee was required to wear the uniform of company issued pants, visor, and whatever color shirt was being worn on a particular day, to the way in which every breakfast sandwich that was ordered was not considered done until the egg, meat and cheese had been assembled in proper order and the wrapping had been folded around the sandwich in the proper technique.

The quality of employee behavior was managed through **routinization**, which achieves expected behavior through repetition of work habits until they become essentially programmed into the employee. At Dunkin Donuts, this occurs with everything from the way orders are taken, to the manner in which they are processed and distributed (Leidner 351). For instance, in Robin Leidner's "Over the Counter," the

way in which McDonald's routinizes behavior is exemplified by the way employees complete every task through the use of a computer instructing them what to do. The employees press buttons according to what food is ordered, allowing the employee to never have to remember anything or write anything down. The characteristics of standardization and routinization are definitely what I want to avoid in future work, as there is no room for individuality, creativity or freedom to think or act on ones own.

To avoid high levels of social control in my future employment, I hope to convey that I view supervision as social control of the worker. Due to standardization and concern over employee and product quality, supervision at American Eagle and especially Dunkin Donuts was extremely high. This characteristic is exemplified in the film *Modern Times*, which illustrates the notion that someone, namely a boss or manager, is always supervising employees to make sure that all tasks are completed and that employees are producing maximum output for the company. In the film, when Charlie Chaplin enters the bathroom to smoke a cigarette he is seen on film by his boss who promptly tells him to "quit stalling and get back to work" (*Modern Times* 1936). By monitoring employees it can be ensured that company time and funds will not be wasted by idle employees.

Every morning at Dunkin Donuts, a manager would review the amount of time it took for employees to complete their transactions from the previous day. This would be done through review of receipts or of security tapes. If the manager noticed that, for example, between 4:00-5:00 p.m. one day there were multiple customers that were not served in sufficient time (usually in under one minute), the manager would find out who had worked that shift and reprimand the employees. Furthermore, managers would watch large portions of the film to monitor employee behavior and

to make sure that everything was being done properly and efficiently. If an employee did not complete all cleaning duties or did something else deemed undesirable, they would be written up.

The excessive level of supervision often made work an uncomfortable environment. There were many trivial reasons an employee could be reprimanded, such as leaving the drive-thru window open on hot days to allow air into the building. Supervision was vital to the manager's role in **getting workers to work**. For instance, Robin Leidner in "Over the Counter," mentions the McDonald's slogan of "[i]f there's time to lean, there's time to clean" (354). This slogan is utilized, most of the time word for word, by Dunkin Donuts. Weekend mornings at our Dunkin Donuts were very hectic. There were frequent periods of endless customers, followed by a few short minutes of relative quiet. During that time, employees would sometimes stop and rest for a second to collect themselves in anticipation for the next rush. When this occurred, managers would see this happening on the camera in their office, and promptly rush out to tell us "i[f] you can lean, you can clean." This also happened on days where there were few customers and the store was completely clean, leaving employees to wonder what else we could possibly clean. As a result, many would pick up a wash cloth and stand scrubbing the same area as to appear busy.

Through these experiences I have learned that I desire relative freedom in future work in the sense that I will not have constant supervision from a supervisor. However, as uncomfortable as the supervision may have been at times, I am glad that I experienced it at such a young age. I believe that because the level of supervision made employees constantly accountable and nervous, I was able to strengthen my work ethic. Since I knew that I was being observed, I wanted to make sure that everything I did was of the best quality possi-

ble. As a result, everything I did was of high quality, which is something that I naturally strive for today.

There are additional incentives that encouraged employees to put forth great effort at Dunkin Donuts and American Eagle that I hope to continue using as a motivator in successfully completing future work. One of the major motivators that is echoed in Leidner's article is that many workers view the work they produce as a team effort and therefore work hard in order to earn and maintain the respect of their coworkers (354). In my situation this was true because if one individual did not complete a certain task, another worker would have to complete that task in addition to their own tasks. Therefore, working as a team to assist coworkers and to keep coworkers from growing angry with one another was a great motivator in getting work done.

Another major motivator was the customer. Leidner states that at McDonald's "the sea of expectant faces provided a great deal of pressure to keep moving" (354). This provided significant motivation at my jobs because employees knew that the faster we worked, the faster we could finish the customer transactions and shorten lines. Furthermore, employees knew that effort had to go into every customer transaction or it would just prolong the amount of time the customer was in the store. For instance, at Dunkin Donuts if an employee did not toast a customer's bagel properly, that customer would keep coming back until the bagel was properly toasted. As an employee I am extremely motivated by these factors to please everyone I work for, whether it is a company, my coworkers, or customers.

One issue that I should be aware of potentially occurring in future work is gender discrimination. As a result of my brief participation in part time, unpaid and minimum wage work I do not feel that I have been granted any privilege or dealt any disadvantage in relation to finding work or the

pay I receive based on my gender; however I do have to realize that this may be an issue in the future. I am aware that discrimination exists in some form in the paid workplace environment, as I believe I have faced particular instances. My experience can relate to the article "Gender Inequality of Work," where authors Cotter, Hermsen and Vanneman state that in terms of inequality, men and women have made great advances; however there is still "a long way to go" (Cotter 190). This was proven to be true during my time at American Eagle.

One particular instance of discrimination is illustrated in the opportunities that were afforded to males over females. About once a month new clothes would arrive at the store, which had to be placed on the sales floor. When new clothes arrive, new decorative cases and structures to hold the clothes would also arrive. These new cases require assembly with the use of tools. Every month, managers would request that one or two employees come in on a Sunday after the store closed to assemble these structures. This was desirable because on Sundays we were able to earn time and a half.

The issue with this request, however, was that managers would only allow male employees to assemble these structures. In the two years that I was employed at the store, never once was a girl allowed the opportunity. Girls would frequently request that they be allowed the opportunity to no avail. In one particular instance I remember asking my assistant manager why the boys were always chosen to assemble the cases. She replied that boys are "stronger and better at that stuff" and suggested that girls "don't really want to do that kind of work anyways." Not only did she make a huge generalization, she confirmed through those statements that management only chose boys because it was assumed that they would do a better job with the assembly, based solely on the fact that they were male.

The issue of concern with this particular situation is in reference to the **dissimilarity index**, which is a tool that is used to "describe patterns of gender segregation" by interpreting the percentage of employees that would have to change occupations in order to make each occupation equally represented by male and female workers (Cotter 191). On this scale, my retail work at American Eagle was categorized as evenly represented by male and female employees (Cotter 191). This information has prepared me to expect discrimination because if discrimination can occur in a field that is commonly evenly represented by male and female workers, I have to assume that discrimination also occurs in jobs that are unequally represented by females.

While I may have experienced discrimination based on my gender, I believe that I have and will continue to be privileged based on my location in relation to my race as one of the **mechanisms by which racial discrimination around jobs take place**. In his article "Is Job Discrimination Dead?" Cedric Herring discusses the way in which companies alienate and discriminate against African Americans. Herring cites that discrimination occurs when companies locate themselves away from urban areas where large numbers of African Americans reside. The author furthers that public transportation to desirable job sites is not available from the inner city, where many blacks live, to the central city or suburban jobs (Herring 282). This lack of access forces black inner city residents to remain isolated and to find meager jobs located in their own communities.

In relation to Herring's information, I feel that I am privileged based on the fact that I am white and live in a predominantly white, suburban, middle class community. While African Americans are disadvantaged due to their lack of good jobs and locations, I believe that I benefit. The areas that I work and live in are the same areas that are inaccessible to inner city jobseek-

ers. I am able to access these jobs as a result of my proximity to a variety of companies and because of this, I believe I have privilege over minority groups. I also benefit in getting to a job based on my easy access to transportation. Based on where I live and the income levels of my area, I am able to afford a car to take me to and from work. However, even if I did not have access to a car, every town in my area has access to a commuter rail which connects all of the towns to one another. However, the benefit of public transportation in my area would not be a viable option to inner city residents. The train system in my area connects towns to one another and in order to reach inner city areas, a rider must change trains and trolleys multiple times. In addition, fare costs eight dollars each way to ride. While this is discouraging for poor individuals that reside in inner city areas, this will continue to benefit me as I seek for a job after graduation.

While my past paid work experiences have definitely helped to prepare me for future work by giving me experience and an idea of what I am looking for from a paid work position, my non-paid work has also given me considerable skill. To begin with, I have benefited from my work to assist the **household as an institution of the economy**. A household consists of separate workers that are engaged in different types of work. These workers pool resources and income in order to survive and sustain themselves economically (Dickinson & Schaeffer 28). Initially, I have learned from my experiences in lending myself as a resource to my cousin through subsistence work, which is unpaid work that is done to share resources or assist family members (Dickinson & Schaeffer 23). My cousin has a ten-month old baby and was having financial difficulties as she was unable to work, since she could not afford childcare for her daughter. I attend school relatively close to where she lives, so I volunteered to baby-sit two nights a week so that my

cousin could work. Other family members have since offered their services as well, so my cousin is able to work around thirty hours a week. Due to this experience, I have learned not only the value of assisting someone in order for them to survive, but I have gained experience for future unpaid work I will do. Before my cousin's baby was born, I had relatively little experience around babies. By babysitting, I have learned all of the basics of childcare, such as feeding, diaper changing, bathing and interaction with the child, all of which will benefit me when I decide to raise my own children.

Also, Goldscheider and Waite in "Children's Share in Household Tasks" discuss the **gender and age division of household labor**. Some characteristics of this division include that girls are more apt to spend almost twice as much time on housework than boys. It is believed that this pattern parallels the amount of work participation in by their mothers and fathers, with mothers contributing more work than fathers. (Goldscheider & Waite 809). Furthermore, as children grow older they become more involved with both indoor and outdoor chores. Families with teenagers also break down the types and amounts of chores by gender, with teenage girls completing five times more tasks than teenage boys. For instance, when there are chores that are completed by multiple children, teenage girls are often expected to complete three quarters of an entire task, for instance by doing most of the laundry or most of the dishes. Furthermore, girls contribute more in the area of dishes, cleaning and sharing in cooking and laundry (Goldscheider & Waite 813).

This is relevant to my experiences since when I was younger and still to this day I complete more work than my brother. When we were younger, we were both expected to complete equal amounts of work, however my brother frequently chose not to complete the tasks assigned to him. As a

result, as time passed my parents grew tired of constantly asking him to participate in chores to no avail and began asking me instead. I believe that my experiences in participating in non-paid, household work has increased my work ethic and made me realize that in order to succeed, work must be completed. I did not receive any significant pay for this work; however I knew that it was my responsibility to complete my chores. I knew that if I chose not to complete a certain chore, that chore would simply not get done. As a result, from a young age I realized that I need to work hard at things that I sometimes may not want to do, in order to get things done. Also, when I was younger if I did not do a satisfactory job in something like folding laundry or dusting, my parents would make me redo the chore. This helped me to learn that I might as well give one hundred percent the first time, or I will have to waste more time by redoing the task until it is done properly. Since I have always been responsible for completing my own work and work that does not get done by others, I have become used to completing work on my own without help from others. This could present a problem in my future as I may have a difficult time allowing others in my family to complete a share of the work that needs to be completed, as I am so used to doing everything myself. This is something that I need to be conscious of and fix if the problem presents itself.

The desire to work hard is also echoed in my unpaid work as a student. I took the initiative to attend college and from the first day I realized that all of the work was my responsibility. No one was going to pick up my slack if I decided not to pass in a paper or study properly for a test. As a result, I needed to develop a strong work ethic to get all my work done. Furthermore, I was aware of the necessity to put all of my effort into every piece of work that I did, or my grades would not be as good as possible. My work as a student has helped me de-

velop a strong work ethic and sense of responsibility as I was able to manage taking many classes and completing all assignments. By also giving all of my efforts to my assignments I ensured that I was successful in achieving the highest grade possible, which will benefit me in finding paid work after graduation.

One of the major reasons I want to be successful in getting a job after graduation is to benefit my family. In "Household Structure and Family Ideologies," Nazli Kibria describes how the **ideology of family collectivism** is the belief that family is of much greater importance than the individual. Furthermore, there is the trust that the family is the most significant and reliable source of support in an individual's life. The family is considered such a vital support system, that Kibria believes that individuals in a household should share resources and assistance to survive. This type of support can come in the form of economic or emotional assistance (Kibria 64). The information that Kibria provides is one of the most prominent factors to why I want to be successful in future work.

In conclusion, my family has financially supported me my entire life from buying me a car, to paying my college tuition and bills, and giving me money during times that I have been unable to work. Over time, they have spent a significant amount of their money on me, which they could have easily spent elsewhere. In addition, my family has always been there to assist me physically, mentally, and emotionally as well, whether I needed help after my car broke down or if I needed help deciding a difficult decision. As a result of this level of support and commitment from my family, I want to do well in my work in order to make them proud of me and so that I can begin to pay them back for all of the money they have given me over time. As I prepare to find a job after graduation, there are many factors that I must consider before I make any decisions. I realize what type of

environments I enjoy working in and what types of environments are not well suited for me. Furthermore, I have realized that there are many individuals that have similar goals to mine; however I may be more privileged or disadvantaged than them based solely on gender, race, or location. In taking what I have learned, I will be able to analyze my past experiences and my future goals before making an informed decision on what job I will choose.

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