

**FROM NUTLEY TO PARIS:  
HOW THE CULTURE OF COMMUNITIES SHAPES ORGANIZATIONAL  
IDENTITY**

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**ABSTRACT**

We explore the role of geographic communities in the construction of an organization's identity as narrated in the pages of *Martha Stewart Living* magazine, the flagship product of the Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia organization. We content analyzed 253 columns published between 1990 and 2004. We found that communities figured prominently in the emergence and institutionalization of the organization's identity, with over 800 mentions of specific places, from Stewart's childhood home of Nutley, NJ, to storied Paris, France. We examined how Stewart's use of places compared with descriptions of these same places in the *Lonely Planet Travel*. Our evidence suggests that the invocation of community enabled the organization to legitimate its product offerings as well as claim and partition complex and sometimes contradictory identity elements that included both highbrow culture and Americana "rural apple-pie goodness."

Although organizational scholarship on identity has flowered since Albert and Whetten's (1985) seminal piece (for review, see Glynn 2008a), scant attention has been paid to the role of "place" or geographic community in these accounts (e.g., Marquis and Battilana, 2009; Marquis, Glynn and Davis, 2007; Marquis and Lounsbury, 2007). Although a number of studies imply the importance of place in organizational identity (e.g., Dutton and Dukerich, 1991; Glynn, 2000; Rao, Monin and Durand, 2003), there have been no systemic efforts to link the character of communities to the identity of organizations. We seek to address this gap by exploring how community character is appropriated and deployed in the articulation of an organization's identity, and, to uncover how organizational "places" correspond to broader cultural accounts of those places. Our aim is to show how the identity elements associated with particular geographic communities, including its character and tradition (Molotch, Freudenberg and Paulsen, 2000), are used to construct an organization's identity and shape its formulation over time. Our research is guided by two core questions: 1) To what extent and in what manner are communities used to construct an organization's identity? and, 2) How does the organization's depiction of community relate to (or leverage) broader cultural accounts of these communities? Taken together, the two questions afford a view of the role of community in constructing organizational identity as well as its potential resonance with broader cultural meanings of community.

In conceptualizing community, we use the description of Marquis and Battilana (2009: p 286): "a local level of analysis corresponding to the populations, organizations, and markets located in a geographic territory and sharing, as a result of their common location, elements of local culture, norms, identity, and laws." Marquis and Battilana (2009) illuminate how processes of institutionalization, meaning-making, and mental models characterize communities and function as "pervasive frames of reference and identity that provide templates or models that

facilitate the adoption of similar practices for members of a community group” (p 292). We focus on this cultural-cognitive aspect of communities (Marquis and Battilana, 2009) and explore how it functions as a cultural resource or toolkit (Swidler, 1986) that organizations appropriate in constructing their identities. In this process, organizations act as institutional or cultural entrepreneurs (Lounsbury and Glynn, 2001) that tap into societal notions of place to carve out a sense of “who they are” or “what they do” to enable wealth creation (Lounsbury and Glynn, 2001). A primary mechanism of cultural entrepreneurship is that of story-telling or narrating the organization’s identity (e.g., Lounsbury and Glynn, 2001; Martens, Jennings and Jennings, 2007); we explore how identity narratives can connect an organization to broader, societal level understandings of community both to shape its identity and to enhance the perceived authenticity or legitimacy of its products and services.

We examine the identity narrative told by the Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia (MSLO) organization in the columns authored by Stewart in the firm’s flagship product, *Martha Stewart Living* magazine, from their inauguration in 1990 until they ceased in mid-2004. As the title of the magazine suggests, the business of MSLO is focused around the concept of “lifestyle” which frames “economic consumption as more than simply the acquisition of goods; rather it was an expression of one’s taste, style, aesthetics and identity” (Glynn and Dowd, 2008: p 73). The mission statement of MSLO emphasizes the importance of “lifestyle” and, in particular, elevating the everyday to distinction and high quality:

*We are the leading integrated content company devoted to enriching the changing lives of today’s women and their families. .... We elevate the familiar elements of daily life, infusing them with the pleasure and confidence that come from the growing sense of mastery and discovery we foster in our customers and ourselves. Our products are stylish and distinctive, with a consistently high level of quality ([www.marthastewart.com](http://www.marthastewart.com), accessed January 14, 2010).*

Stewart's columns bookended the magazine, engaging the reader from start to finish, and revealed parts of her private life – her childhood spent in Nutley, NJ; an exciting purchase made at a Greenwich auction; or a wondrous trip to world capitals like Paris, Beijing, or London, as well as the local Flower Market in New York City.

Stewart's audience was far-reaching, including “readers, advertisers, business partners, family, friends, staff,” all of whom she thanked in her final letter published in the magazine (*A Letter from Martha*, May 2004). Beyond her own readership, Stewart's columns drew a wider audience, including Jeffrey Toobin (2004), who referenced this same Letter in the *New Yorker*. *Martha Stewart Living* magazine currently has an audience of 11.2 million, with a median age of 48 years; the subscribers are primarily female (89%), college educated (68%), home-owners (76%), employed (65%), and with a median household income of \$74,436, well above both the U.S. median of \$48,201 and several competitors, e.g., the median income levels of *Family Circle* and *Good Housekeeping*, are \$57,048 and \$52,392, respectively (<http://www.echo-media.com>, accessed April 15, 2010). Thus, *Living's* audience tends to be relatively affluent, well-educated, and broad in its reach, “embracing mothers, teachers, managers, and entrepreneurs like Stewart herself” (Glynn and Dowd, 2008: 83). Stewart had humble beginnings in Nutley, NJ, where she learned the domestic arts that later became the touchstone of her business empire, whose growth and success expanded her world view considerably.

Our analyses of Stewart's two columns revealed that community is prominent in the identity narrative, with over 800 mentions of “place” in 253 columns, ranging from the specifics of a street address in New Jersey to regions like the Catskills in upstate New York. We find that these shift over time, in concert with broader changes in the governance structure of the organization, from a more personal to a more public display of community. Additionally, we

show how the depiction of community in identity elaborates a rich and complex sense of the organization; for MSLO, this is a sense of domesticity that appropriates the style of the upper class and pairs it with uniquely American, middle-class tastes and values celebrating rural back roads, country fairs and small town “Americana” (Remembering, April 2001: 272).

As much as we show how the character of place is grafted on to the identity of the organization, we also show how the invocation of community can enable the management of complex and sometimes competing identity elements. The identity of MSLO comfortably pairs a lifestyle that is “stylish and distinctive” such as haute cuisine of Paris with “the familiar elements of daily life” such as mom’s home cooking in Nutley, New Jersey. We rely on *Lonely Planet Travel* guides to show how geographic communities have distinct cultures and identities that are referenced by MSLO to elaborate tastes and preferences as well as craft and maintain the identity of the organization. Thus, communities can usefully partition identity elements that might compete or contradict each other. Finally, we show how the organization’s identity association with place resonates with broader accounts to lend it authenticity and credibility. At MSLO, for instance, baking expertise and an aesthetic eye are paired with locations that symbolize these qualities, such as Paris or Italy. Thus, the character and traditions of place (Molotch et al., 2000) become associated with the identity of the organization, lending a “country of origin” effect that can legitimate or authenticate its offerings in the eyes of consumers (Loo and Davis, 2007).

Overall, our research reveals how the cultural-cognitive framework or character of a geographic community can be appropriated by organizations in the construction of the organizational identity. Our work makes contributions to the burgeoning work on communities and organizations, as well as that of organizational identity. Our study extends current theorizations of community by showing how the meanings and symbols associated with a

particular place can be appropriated by organizations that are not located within the geographic or physical boundaries of community. Previous work has revealed the important imprinting of communities' character and traditions on organizations that are founded or headquartered there (e.g., Marquis, 2003; Marquis et al., 2007). Our work extends the reach of communities to empirically show what Marquis and Battilana (2009) theorized, i.e., that the notion of community can supersede its geographical limits. We show that the symbols and understandings of community can be without physical limits and still serve as cultural resources in the construction of an organization's identity.

Our work contributes to the literature on organizational identity in several ways. First, we offer a fine-grained analysis of a critical component of the organizational identity, that of its content (e.g., Showers, Abramson and Hogan, 1998). More specifically, we show that the meanings and symbols of community are important identity elements that can be leveraged by organizational leaders to help define the organization's identity. Second, we show how community can usefully be a carrier of different identity elements that are potentially conflictual. We find that community is a means by which organizations can hybridize their identities without inciting a contest between different elements. Different types of communities, e.g., Paris, France and Nutley, New Jersey, are, literally, worlds apart, but both can be sampled for their uniqueness and savored together, as narrated in the organization's identity. Using communities as a point of reference to describe an organization's offerings can increase the richness of its identity and lend it comprehension and authenticity. Finally, we show how narratives are a useful vehicle for understanding the construction of an organization's identity. By analyzing the stories told in real time, by the organization's founder and leader, and through its flagship product, we can glimpse

the cultural entrepreneurship (Lounsbury and Glynn, 2001) involved in the unfolding of an identity over organizational changes.

We begin by theorizing the connection between communities and identities and next turn to a presentation of our research methods, data and findings. We conclude by drawing out the implications of our work for future theory and research.

### **GEOGRAPHIC COMMUNITIES AND ORGANIZATIONAL IDENTITIES**

Geographic communities have long been recognized as important in the study of organizations. Classic writings (e.g., Litwak and Hylton, 1967; Warren, 1967), as well as those of more recent vintage (e.g., Freeman and Audia, 2006; Marquis and Battilana, 2009) have illuminated the significance of community in organizational theory. Moreover, there are a number of empirical studies that attest to the significance of the connection between communities and organizations. The prolific work of Galaskiewicz and colleagues (1985, 1991, 1997; Galaskiewicz and Burt, 1991; Galaskiewicz and Wasserman, 1989) demonstrated the significance of the twin cities of Minneapolis-St. Paul in corporations' charitable giving. More generally, cities have been shown to be an important variable in the institutionalization of civil service reforms (Tolbert and Zucker, 1983) and in the development of local norms that shape labor pools and organizational foundings (Marquis, 2003; Marquis and Lounsbury, 2007). Broadly speaking, a fair amount of research has accumulated demonstrating how corporate social action is linked to the local communities in which corporations are headquartered (e.g., Guthrie, 2003; McElroy and Siegfried, 1986; Marquis et al., 2007).

Although it has not received as much explicit attention, the notion of community figures in a number of studies of organizational identities. For instance, Dutton and Dukerich's (1991) research on the New York City Port Authority shows how features of the community, and

particularly, the social problem of homelessness, influenced the construction of the organization's identity. Rao, Monin and Durand (2003) clearly show how the identities of chefs and their restaurants were affected by national shifts in French gastronomy. Glynn's (2000) study of the musician's strike at the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra traces the conflict partly to the early development of the city.

Glynn and Abzug (1998; 2002) show that a key marker of identity – an organization's name – often incorporates geographic features, by referencing particular places, rivers, towns, states, or sections of the country. They found that about 12% of Fortune 500 firms, in the 35 year period 1960-1995, explicitly referenced a geographic locale in their names; earlier, however, at the turn of the last century (circa 1900), the frequency was even higher, suggesting that the identities of early organizations and their communities were often intertwined. One of the first names given to an organization, “The Long Wharf in the Town of Boston in New England,” squarely identifies its geographic locale (Glynn and Abzug, 2002). The inclusion of geography in the organizational name persisted through the 19<sup>th</sup> century and into the 20<sup>th</sup>, shifting from a local focus (e.g., Bridgeport Glass Company) to a national or international focus (e.g., United States Steel Corporation; American Sugar Co.). Geographic place served to anchor organizational identities in the communities in which the organization operated, expanding to reflect changing markets. By appending “place” to their name, organizations used the meanings of particular communities as cultural resources to lend meaning and significance to their identities. Moreover, such a detailing of community in the organization's identity through name choice may have offered consumers and employees a touchstone for identity reducing ambiguity at the organizational level (Glynn and Marquis, 2004), consistent with what Brown and Humphreys (2006) found on the individual level of analysis. Brown and Humphreys show how

organizational employees often use “place” as a resource in constructing their sense of their organization’s identity, finding that physical settings – such as the college’s buildings on “Westchester Road” – are filled with meaning and symbolism.

Scholars have also indicated that notions of “place” often incorporate two key dimensions of communities: character and tradition (Molotch et al., 2000). City character is what makes places distinctive, not only for the particular attributes of the community but also for the way in which these attributes come together and are perpetuated by habitual aspects of city tradition (Molotch et al., 2000). Cities themselves can be conceptualized as an interorganizational field “operating in American metropolitan communities” (Warren, 1967: 396). They function not only as symbols in their own right but also can lend meaning to organizations via labeling; Olympic Games, for instance, are named for their city host (Glynn, 2008b).

We see evidence of the character and tradition of geographic communities in their narratives. Quoting Somers and Block (2005:280), Rivera (2008: 615) notes that “Every nation has a story—a public narrative it tells to explain its place in the flow of history, to justify its normative principles . . . and to give meaning to its economic policies and practices.” Such national narratives tend to describe the character or traditions of the place, highlighting what is positive, distinctive or unique. We can see evidence of these narratives and distinctive cultural elements in tourism publications; for example, tourism guide *Lonely Planet Travel* richly and vividly describes the character and culture of geographic communities. The description of Paris highlights a community that is sexy, stylish and impeccable:

*Coiffed, buffed and looking like 1 million (Euros), Paris is at once a beautiful woman and a sexy guy. Well informed, eloquent and oh-so-romantic, the City of Light is a philosopher, a poet, a crooner to bring you to your knees. Sitting before a stylish table laid with unimagined treats, Paris is a bon vivant, a banquet, a wine of impeccable vintage. Paris is all these and more because Paris always has been and always will be a million different things to a million different people.*

(www.lonelyplanet.com/france/paris, accessed January 1, 2009)

By comparison, the description of Dubai highlights a community that is ostentatious, flamboyant, and materialistic:

*Glitzy, glam, over-the-top and a little overexposed, Dubai lives for attention. On the surface it's materialistic beyond anyone's wildest dreams and by treating every visitor like a VIP, visitors respond by spending like VIPs, only to need resuscitating when the next month's credit-card bill arrives. But this is the whole idea.* (<http://www.lonelyplanet.com/ united-arab-emirates/dubai>, accessed February 4, 2010)

*Lonely Planet Travel* describes other communities in terms of their quaint simple every-day elements. Areas of upstate New York are highlighted as ideal “*small town Americana*” ([www.lonelyplanet.com/usa/new-york-state](http://www.lonelyplanet.com/usa/new-york-state), accessed February 4, 2010), and Portsmouth, New Hampshire is described as an exemplar of the simple life:

*A window into 18<sup>th</sup> century New England...Numerous museums and historic houses allow visitors a glimpse into the town's multilayered past, while its proximity to the coast brings both lobster feasts and periodic days of fog that blanket the waterfront.* ([www.lonelyplanet.com/usa/new-england/portsmouth](http://www.lonelyplanet.com/usa/new-england/portsmouth), accessed February 4, 2010).

Travel guides also frequently highlight the distinctive product offerings of geographic communities (Rivera, 2008). These are also closely related to the character and culture different locations; for instance, *Lonely Planet Travel* draws attention to the “peerless malt whiskies” of Scotland (<http://www.lonelyplanet.com/scotland>, accessed February 4, 2010), the “città d’arte (cities of art)” of Italy (<http://www.lonelyplanet.com/italy>, accessed February 4, 2010), and the technologically advanced products of Japan that provide “an easy peek into the future of the human race” (<http://www.lonelyplanet.com/japan>, accessed February 4, 2010). Termed “Country of Origin Effect,” Loo and Davis (2007) show how awareness of the distinctive product offerings of geographic communities affects consumers’ perceptions of products: When consumers have little knowledge about a product’s attributes, they tend to use indirect evidence, such as the particular meanings suggested by country of origin, to evaluate organizational products and

make inferences regarding their quality (Bilkey, and Nes, 1982). Imagery used by corporate brands can be closely linked with attributes of their provenance of origin, such as French perfume (perfume company Chanel prominently includes the word “Paris” on all offerings), and Scotch whisky (Highland Distillers prints the Great Seal of Scotland on all offerings) (Anholt, 1998). These images signal product legitimacy by coupling the unknown quality of a corporate product with the renowned offerings of geographic regions (e.g., perfume from Paris). Such qualities of place associated with the organization’s products are also often reflected in the organization’s identity. For example, mineral water bottler Evian, owned by Danone, uses imagery from the French Alps and the slogan “Untouched by man, perfected by nature” to establish itself as a producer of “pure” “natural” products (accessed from <http://www.shopevian.com>, accessed January 18, 2010). Faux affiliations with provenances are also used to “borrow brand equity” from established cultural icons (Anholt, 1998) to purchase legitimacy. For instance, a British consumer electronics company chose the mock-Japanese name “Saisho” to signal competence in technology; American pizza brands use names and imagery from Italy to signal legitimacy; and ice cream maker Häagen Dazs (founded in the Bronx, New York) manufactured a seemingly authentic source of “old-world traditions and craftsmanship” for its products (<http://www.haagen-dazs.com/company/history.aspx>, accessed January 18, 2010).

In summary, the distinctive cultural elements evident in the narratives and renowned product offerings of different locations tend to foster a sense of geographic identity and offer a “rich *tool kit* (Swidler, 1986) of national symbols, traditions, and practices” (Rivera, 2008). The extant literature suggests there is a potentially significant connection between the character and tradition of geographic communities and the identity of an organization, related through its

narrative. This prompts the following two research questions, which we investigate empirically in the study reported herein: 1) To what extent and in what manner are communities used to construct an organization's identity? 2) How does the organization's depiction of community in its identity correspond to (or leverage) broader cultural accounts of these communities? Taken together, the two questions afford a view of the role of community in organizational identity and its potential resonance with broader cultural meanings of community.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

### **Research Context and Data Sources**

Our research setting is the Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia (MSLO) organization and, particularly, the identity narrative told in the pages of its most recognizable product, *Martha Stewart Living* (MSL) magazine, which is described by the company as:

Our flagship magazine, *Martha Stewart Living*, is the foundation of our publishing business. It was launched in 1991 as a quarterly publication with a circulation of 250,000. The magazine appeals primarily to the college-educated woman between the ages of 25 and 54 who owns her principal residence. *Martha Stewart Living* seeks to offer reference-quality and original "how-to" information from our core content areas for the homemaker and other consumers in an upscale editorial and aesthetic environment. *Martha Stewart Living* has won numerous prestigious awards. Revenues generated by *Martha Stewart Living* magazine constitute the substantial majority of our magazine revenues." (2006 Annual Report, p. 14, [www.marthastewart.com](http://www.marthastewart.com) accessed on May 23, 2009).

The magazine afforded a particularly opportune site for exploring the link between organizational identity and community for several reasons. First, there is a natural affinity for geography, given that this is an organization that focuses on "lifestyle," including food, gardening, entertaining, and travel, all of which have a geographic basis. MSLO makes this connection not only in the magazine, but in some of its other product offerings as well. For instance, a May 2009 MSLO television program, "The Martha Stewart Show," featured two

programs grounded in community: 1) The New York City Show, which purports to “Celebrate the city that never sleeps with Mayor Michael Bloomberg and favorite NYC food,” complete with unique NYC memorabilia such as classic subway cars, and 2) “Road Trip Week” which featured daily trips across the U.S. and around the world, including a focus on arts and crafts in America (particularly in New England, including Massachusetts, Maine, Vermont and New York) and Mexico, as well as food specialties from Atlanta, the Bahamas, and Russia (www.marthastewart.com, accessed May 8, 2009). Second, the narrative of the organization is told, in real time, by its iconic founder, Martha Stewart, in the two columns she authored in the magazine, from their inception (1990) to their ending (mid-2004). They offer an unfolding of the organization’s identity, issue by issue, year by year, that provides a cultural and very public account of the firm (Glynn and Dowd, 2008) that we track for its references to community. Third, the company evolved through different governance eras: Initially, the magazine was published under its parent company of Time-Warner, from 1990 to 1997; then, Stewart purchased the company and held it privately (1997-99), a period generally viewed as a ramp-up to the Initial Public Offering (IPO) in 2000. This allows us to make comparisons over time and with regard to changing governance structures. Finally, we are able to compare the way that communities are referenced in the magazine text to that of broader accounts of the character and tradition of place. For this, we again draw on the tourism guide, *Lonely Planet Travel*, for a description of communities. Our two primary data sources are: 1) the text of the magazine columns authored by Stewart in MSL magazine, which provided a narrative of the organization’s identity, and 2) the *Lonely Planet Travel* descriptions of specific communities, which constituted a sort of narrative of the character and traditions of place.

### **Organizational Narrative of Identity: MSL magazine columns authored by Stewart**

We analyzed the narration of the organization's identity told by Martha Stewart in all 253 of the two columns she authored in MSL magazine: 1) A Letter from Martha (n = 127), which averaged 331 words/column, and 2) Remembering (n = 126), which averaged 712 words/column. The Letter originated as the traditional "letter from the editor" published in the first issue, when Stewart served as MSL's inaugural editor-in-chief; until she resigned that position in April 1997, when it became simply, "A Letter from Martha." Stewart's Letter tended to articulate the particular content of the issue, pointing readers to some of its stories, recipes, gardening tips or crafts, or the business of her enterprise, its goals, strategy, staffing and even the decision to take the firm public in 1999. Stewart's Remembering was published on the last page of the magazine and was a more personal account of Stewart's values, identity, upbringing, and life events that related her background and interests to that of the magazine. Because both columns narrated aspects of the identity of the organization, and intertwined it with that of Stewart (Glynn and Dowd, 2008), we treated each column as an independent document which we first analyzed and then aggregated in our analysis. As a shorthand for identifying sources, we use "L" to indicate Letter and "R" to indicate Remembering.

**Community Mentions.** Using some of the raw data from a larger study on emotional expression (Glynn and Dowd, 2008), we coded and content analyzed the 253 columns for any references to geographic community, using NVivo 8.0 software. We created two indicators of community: 1) at the level of the document (i.e., Letter and Remembering columns), i.e., a count of the number of documents that referenced community explicitly, and 2) at the level of the community mention, i.e., a count of references to a particular community.

Coding the documents for community mentions was fairly straightforward and done at the level of occurrence. We coded as community any explicit mention of place, whether city, state, region, country, continent or even street address. For example, the following was coded for Nutley, NJ: “My clearest memories of my childhood on Elm Place in Nutley, New Jersey, involve the garden and the many hours I spent there in the company of my father.” Multiple, explicit mentions of community were coded for each of these places. For example, the following was coded for Connecticut, East Hampton, and Maine: “Nothing gives me more pleasure than plucking Meyer lemons or giant Ponderosa lemons from my tiny trees in Connecticut, or Persian limes from seven-foot-tall potted trees in my daughter's backyard in East Hampton, or five varieties of figs from big potted trees on my sun-drenched terrace in Maine--I feel as though I've been able to outwit omnipresent Mother Nature just a little bit.” (L, Mar 2000: 22)

Because Stewart references community in a variety of ways, ranging from very specific (e.g., Elm Place, above) to more general (e.g., New England), we categorized MSL community references into location codes based on geography (using maps) or categorizations by the *Lonely Planet Travel* website<sup>1</sup>. For example, references to multiple locations in New York City (e.g., Madison Avenue, 73<sup>rd</sup> street, East 91<sup>st</sup> street, Central Park, etc.) were coded as New York City; references to multiple locations in Upstate New York (e.g., Buffalo, Poconos, Niagara Falls, etc.) were coded as Upstate New York; and references to multiple locations in Long Island (e.g., East Hampton, West Hampton, etc.) were coded as Long Island. MSL references to communities that had their own *Lonely Planet* guide were kept as is to allow comparison between these two

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<sup>1</sup> This website receives over 36 million visits per month and consists of over 20,000 pages of detailed information to assist and inspire travelers (available at [www.Lonelyplanet.com](http://www.Lonelyplanet.com), accessed May 22, 2009). The Lonely Planet website is considered the leading source of information for worldwide travelers and in 2009 was awarded the Webby Award for Best Travel Site of the Year by the International Academy of Digital Arts and Sciences.

sources. For example, there is a specific *Lonely Planet Travel* guide on Paris and also one on France; and so, we coded MSL references specific to Paris as Paris, and those to other locations in France as France. We also coded each location based on geographic continent (Africa, Antarctica, Asia, Australia, Europe, North America, and South America) and we also preserved MSL references to regions (e.g., New England, the Berkshires).

**Communities of “Home.”** In addition to the specific geographic codes (described above), we created a code for “Home” for those communities in which Stewart lived, had a home and/or owned property; the home code includes Connecticut, Long Island, Maine, Massachusetts, New York City, Upstate New York, and New Jersey.

**MSLO Business Categories and Products.** Using the magazine’s Table of Contents, we generated a list of the categories into which MSL organized its business products, offerings, and articles. This resulted in an initial list of 27 categories, which we collapsed to 5 categories, based on common descriptions or activities (n = 184 mentions): *Decorating* (Decorating, Collecting, Homekeeping, Restoring; n = 57), *Entertainment* (n = 13), *Food* (Baking, Cooking, Tasting, Fit to Eat; n = 45), *Garden* (Gardening, Landscaping, Planting, Growing; n = 68), and *Travel* (n=1). The remaining categories – Shopping, Exploring, Learning, Reading, Celebrating and Playing – together had 31 mentions, each with only a few. These were dropped from further analyses. To illustrate mentions of the business categories, the following passage references Decorating, and, notably, it locates the activity within geographic communities.

*This is an issue about contrasts, personal expression, and the art of decorating. It has taken me a long time to feel confident that I do, indeed, have my own personal style of decorating. I think this has more to do with the fact that, until my house in Maine, I never had such a wonderful blank canvas ready to be adorned with color, with texture, with fabric, and especially with personal and particular details. My Turkey Hill house was first in need of total restoration and renovation, then only gradually filled with furniture finds and accessories. My home in East Hampton was another massive restoration - so much had to be invested in the basics, such as heating and plumbing and electric, that the*

*decoration was pushed to second place, and still, after ten years, there are empty spaces, blank walls, and dark corners. Skylands was different: The structure was superb, and it has been a delight to embellish such a magnificent piece of architecture. (L, Sept 2000: 22)*

**Data Description.** Preliminary frequency and descriptive analyses of the data revealed that this was an opportune site in which to examine the role of community in the articulation of organizational identity. Overall, there were 809 mentions of 187 unique locations in the magazine columns. Following the coding procedure described above, we collapsed the 187 unique mentions into 54 codes. Communities appearing more than 5 times overall (or constituting about  $\geq 1\%$  of all mentions) are listed in Table 1, along with their frequencies. The 10 most frequently appearing communities, with at least 10 mentions each and accounting for  $\geq 2\%$  of all mentions are: New York City, New Jersey, Connecticut, Upstate New York, Long Island, Maine, Massachusetts, California, Italy, and Paris. Of these, the 7 most frequently appearing places are those in which Stewart has (or had) homes; these “home” communities in total accounted for 60% of all community mentions. In addition, there is considerable range in the kinds of places mentioned, from the East to the West Coasts of the U.S., from national to international places, and from the “down home” nature of Nutley, NJ (where Stewart spent her childhood) to the haute couture of Paris. We examine these top 10 communities more closely with regard to their character and traditions using descriptions from *Lonely Planet Travel*.

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### **Narrative of Community Character and Traditions: *Lonely Planet Travel* guides**

To understand the character and tradition of the communities Stewart describes, we employed a method used by Rivera (2008: 618), who content analyzed tourism publications in order to show how a country articulates its identity to outsiders. We used descriptions from the

*Lonely Planet Travel* website, which describes its mission as: “*Lonely Planet* writers aim to present accurate, practical and insightful collective knowledge, guided by professional on-the-ground expertise and no-holds barred opinion” (available at <http://www.lonelyplanet.com/press-centre/about-lonely-planet.cfm>, accessed May 22, 2009).

We chose *Lonely Planet Travel* over other tourism guides because it described communities’ character and traditions richly and vividly, more so than other tourism publications we researched, including Fodor’s or Frommer’s, which tended to focus on historical facts and tourist attractions to a far greater extent. In our analyses, we used the introduction to each community presented by *Lonely Planet Travel*, such as those for Paris, Dubai, Portsmouth, and Upstate New York above.

We reviewed in detail the *Lonely Planet* descriptions for all the communities mentioned in MSL and developed a coding scheme that could succinctly capture the character of communities. As we read through these, there were two aspects of community character that stood out: 1) *Americana Character* and 2) *Highbrow (or High Culture) Character*. For a community to be coded as having an *Americana* character, *Lonely Planet* descriptions would include “small town” culture, 18<sup>th</sup> century roots, colonial, pastoral, and “rural apple-pie-goodness.” *Americana* communities included California, Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Tennessee, Upstate New York, Virginia state, and Williamsburg. Examples include Massachusetts: “The history is legendary – Plymouth, where the Pilgrims landed; Boston, where the first shots of the American Revolution rang out; and Nantucket, whose whaling ships swarmed the oceans...The Cradle of Liberty...rural apple-pie goodness;” and New Hampshire: “Jewel-box colonial settlements such as Portsmouth offer a window into 18<sup>th</sup> century New England, while small-town culture lives on in charming villages such as Keene and

Peterborough.” Although by its nature, Americana can apply only to U.S. communities, not all U.S. communities are described by this code; some fit into the highbrow code.

For a community to be coded as having a *Highbrow (or High Culture) Character*, *Lonely Planet* descriptions would include adjectives like luxurious and posh, pulsating night life, glorious monumentality, imperial history, and greatness in the arts, cuisine or lifestyle. Highbrow communities included Aspen (Colorado), Florence, Hong Kong, Italy, Greece, Long Island (e.g., the Hamptons), New York City, (e.g., Sotheby’s, Upper West side, Nobu restaurant), Paris, Rome, Switzerland, and Venice. Examples include Paris: “It is not hyperbole to say that Paris is the most beautiful, the most romantic city in the world....Paris has just about exhausted the superlatives that can reasonably applied to any city;” and Aspen: “Unbashfully posh, Aspen is Colorado’s glitziest high-octane resort, playing host to some of the wealthiest skiers in the world.” Community character codes, exemplar communities, and *Lonely Planet* descriptions are presented in Table 2. We used this coding in our analyses to discern how community character and traditions might shape an organization’s identity.

----- Insert Table 2 about here -----

## FINDINGS

### **Where in the World is Martha Stewart? Community Mentions in MSL**

To address our first research question, concerning the role of communities in the construction of organizational identity, we charted the frequencies of MSL’s community mentions. Beginning at the highest level of abstraction, we mapped first, the prevalence of world continents and, next, the country of the United States; these are displayed in Figure 1. As the figure shows, North America garnered the highest frequency of mentions, followed in order by

Europe, South America, Asia, and Africa; there were no mentions of Australia or Antarctica. Figure 2 details the mentions of the continents, by year and with regard to the different governance eras for MSLO. Figure 2 reveals that mentions of community generally increased over time, and dramatically so following the IPO offering in 2000. The most frequent mentions are of North America, followed by Europe, reflecting a trend towards internationalization that mirrored the expanding business. Figure 2 also shows how mentions of North America waned a bit during the era when the firm is privately held (1997-99). This was a period generally regarded as preparation for the public offering and a time of more dampened expressions of personal identity (Glynn and Dowd, 2008). Although we see an overall decrease in mentions of locations in North America, Stewart continued to mention locations associated with her home and business locations (especially New York City, New Jersey, and Connecticut). There are barely any mentions of other regions of the United States. In general, the pattern of community mentions evidences a strong bias towards referencing places close to home (Northeast) and business (New York City headquarters), as well as an increasing internationalization over time, especially with regard to Europe. Overall, then, community mentions reflect an intertwining of organizational and personal identities in MSL. Such tendencies may reflect a variant of “country of origin” effects (Loo and Davies, 2006); Stewart and MSLO’s origins in the northeast, as well her family’s origins, heritage, and traditions from Europe, particularly Poland:

*We have a small fabric covered album containing approximately forty photographs of Dad's trip to Poland that year (1934). Dad was twenty-two, fresh from a summer course in the Polish language at Columbia University in New York City and he couldn't wait to visit the family: homeland and perfect his speech. His photographs ... were a huge success with the family, who longed for a firsthand view of the beautiful country they had left years before. There are shots of the cities-Warsaw, Krakow, and Gdansk- and amazing shots of farm workers, wagons, workhorses, and fields of wheat. One picture, my favorite, depicts a woman in a long gathered skirt, with a long-sleeved blouse and a babushka on her head, tying sheaves of barley in a sun-drenched field. When I first saw this photograph, it reminded me so much of the painting titled The Gleaners by the*

*French artist Millet. ... The pictures are an invaluable record of a time in my dad's life that I would have absolutely no access to otherwise. (R, Oct 1997: 256).*

----- Insert Figures 1 and 2 about here -----

To further investigate the interface between communities and the organization's identity and offerings, we examined the co-occurrence of community and MSLO business products/practices; we found a strong relationship, as shown in Table 3. An illustration of the linkage between place and product is the following:

*When the second volume of Julia Child and Simone Beck's Mastering the Art of French Cooking was published in 1970, my life changed. In that book, Mrs. Child included the first really good recipes in English for real, authentic French bread ... I searched for the correct flour, experimented with yeasts, and even traveled to Paris to buy the professional baguette pans sold at that time only at E. Dehillerin and A. Simon near the Rue du Louvre. I practiced the rolling and folding and heel-of-the-hand sealing that makes a true French baguette what it is... I learned to make a fine-tasting, crusty French bread that everyone in my family loved. Then I moved on to croissants, which required more patience and more tools: a croissant cutter, French rolling pins to beat the unsalted butter soft, and French style pans that gave the perfect golden-brown crust. (R, Oct 1995: 144)*

As the passage indicates, Stewart's reference to Paris co-occurs with discussion of food (a core MSLO business offering) giving credibility or cultural authority to the firm and its techniques for making "real, authentic French bread." We see similar relationships between geographic communities traditionally associated with business offerings and Stewart's deployment of these identities (e.g., Paris and Food, Italy and Decoration, Maine and Gardening). For example, 40% of the documents referencing Maine specifically reference Gardening, 29% of documents referencing Paris reference Food, and 20% of those referencing Italy reference Decorating. Such branding of the firm's products by an association with the authentic "country of origin" (Loo and Davies, 2006) is a strategy of legitimation, signaling expertise and quality to consumers and other stakeholders. In addition to an association with communities of world renown, places closer to home were also associated with the business, as indicated in Table 3. In

total, of all the references to “home” communities, 22% were also associated with Gardening, 12% with Decorating, 11% with Food, 6% with Travel, and 2% Entertainment. To illustrate:

*Because I love the moss-and-evergreen landscape of Maine, I don't want to brighten up the green and silver too much with strong colors. That's why my cutting garden is hidden behind a wattle fence, in keeping with the traditions of "summer" families who ventured to Maine for just a few weeks every year. (R, Jan 2003: 156).*

This evidence indicates that communities play a vital role in describing, authenticating and legitimating the core business products of MSLO, conveying a credible identity built around “what we do” as an organization. Moreover, Stewart serves as a carrier of taste and preference and uses communities to define the boundaries of the MSLO identity.

----- Insert Table 3 about here -----

### **From Nutley, NJ to Paris, France: Community Character and Traditions**

We analyzed MSL’s community mentions for their association with community character and tradition, as reflected in the *Lonely Planet* guides. Overall, we found that more than half of all documents (52% or 132/253) reference at least one community coded as Highbrow, with the majority of these (60% or 80/132) making exclusive references to this community type. We found that just over one-third of all documents (37% or 85/253) reference at least one community coded as Americana, with nearly 40% (33/85) of these exclusive to Americana. Only 21% (52/253) reference both types of community character in the same document.

Overall, the results point to the complex nature of community, character and identity. The findings suggest that community can widen the bandwidth of organizational identity, from American values associated with “rural apple-pie goodness” (of the Berkshires) to the haute cuisine of the “stylish table laid with unimagined treats” (in Paris). Moreover, the strategy of exclusive mentions, found for 80% of all documents, may offer a means for managing organizational identity elements evident in the mission statement that can be contradictory or

even conflictual (“familiar elements of daily life” vs. “stylish and distinctive, with a consistently high level of quality”); this partitioning of different identity elements can effectively maintain the integrity of the character associated with particular communities. Although 60% of Americana type communities were also associated with highbrow ones, only 40% of highbrow communities were associated with Americana. Perhaps organizations attempt to preserve (or fence off) the high quality that can be associated with communities typed as high culture and not “taint” it with features that could potentially dilute it.

Figure 3 highlights types of community character mentions in MSL, year by year. In the early years of the magazine (1990-93), there are nearly an identical number of references to communities coded as Americana and Highbrow types, suggesting an identity balance between American preferences or values and highbrow sensibilities. This was the start-up period for the magazine and offered a way of enacting the stated mission, intertwining the everyday and familiar Americana with the aspired elevation to the highbrow or elite. MSLO created the new cultural category of “lifestyle” and Stewart embodied it: “Martha Stewart, a woman from working-class beginnings, encourages women to both aspire to and create the appearance of an upper-class lifestyle that traditionally has been attainable only for the wealthy” (Mason and Meyers, 2001: 816, cited in Murphy, 2010: 210). More generally, this period has been characterized as “mass tastefulness,” i.e., bringing an upper-income lifestyle to mass-market shoppers.

By the mid-1990s, references to Americana began to overshadow those to the highbrow culture. This period saw the establishment and growth of the magazine and an increasing emphasis on the “*business of domesticity*” (Murphy, 2010). The highlighting of Americana seemed to be a leading indicator of a more conservative period, in which Martha bought the

magazine from Time-Warner (1997), holding MSLO as a private organization through 1999. This was a more muted period of expressiveness (Glynn and Dowd, 2008) that seemed to establish the sound footing of the company in preparation for the IPO in 2000. We can speculate that the magazine may have been highlighting what MSL knew best, rather than stretching too far. With the IPO imminent, the gap closes in 1999, but mentions of Americana peak in 2000, the year following the IPO offering. In 2004, for the first time, references to highbrow communities eclipse those of Americana. Stewart explains the shift in her December 2001

Letter:

*This year we have looked far beyond the shores of the United States to many other parts of the world that have historically contributed national and religious traditions to our American way of celebrating the holidays. ... we scoured the earth for craftsmen and artisans whose work evokes the Christmas spirit but transcends the norm in quality and beauty. Everything these artists create can be used in any of our homes as decorative reminder of the, past and inspiration for the future. ... we became enamored of the traditions from a host of countries: the cardboard Dresden ornaments of Germany, the straw decorations of Poland, the breads of Ukraine, and the foods of Italy to name just a few. Here at the magazine we were also intrigued by regional American menus that have roots in other countries and by decorations that evolved in distant places but seem quite at home in the United States. (L, Dec 2001: 12).*

----- Insert Figure 3 about here -----

Table 4 presents the ten most frequently referenced MSL communities along with their *Lonely Planet* description. The most commonly mentioned places in MSL exhibit great variety in their descriptions and include the "luxuriously indulgent" (the Hamptons), "high culture" (NYC), "picture-book colonial" (Maine), and "rural apple-pie goodness" (the Berkshires). The communities themselves are quite complex. For example, New York City and Paris are described as contradictions: New York City, as a place that is both highbrow and gritty and Paris as "a million different things to a million different people." As well, California, Connecticut, Long Island, and Massachusetts are described by *Lonely Planet* as being a mix of diverse

cultures. The majority of the most frequently mentioned communities in MSL (60% or 6/10) are quite complex, seemingly signaling corresponding complexity in the identity of the MSLO organization. Interestingly, the remaining communities are evenly divided between those of Americana character (Upstate NY; Maine) and high culture (Italy; Paris), perhaps indicative of the organization's hybrid identity (Albert and Whetten, 1985).

----- Insert Table 4 about here -----

## **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS**

Our study explored the relationship between communities and organizational identities, seeking to address two core questions: 1) To what extent and in what manner are communities used to construct an organization's identity? 2) How does the organization's depiction of community in its identity correspond to (or leverage) broader cultural accounts of these communities?

In order to address our first research question, we examined the frequency of community mentions and the types of communities invoked in the identity narrative authored by the organization's iconic leader, Martha Stewart, and published in its flagship product and her namesake product, *Martha Stewart Living*. We found an abundance of named communities in the organizational narrative; these spanned the globe but were concentrated in places closest to MSLO business headquarters and Stewart's homes, i.e., the northeast U.S., especially New York City and New Jersey. The organizational reach may extend to the far ends of the earth, but there seemingly was "no place like home," particularly for Stewart who seemed never to forget her childhood in Nutley, N.J. Thus, Martha Stewart herself seemed to embody the character of communities she mentioned, ranging from the homespun quality of Americana to the highbrow

culture of the global city. In spite of an expanding global presence, the organization still claimed communities close to its “roots” and anchored in American values, symbols, and preferences.

Communities were linked to the core business practices and products of the organization, evidenced by the high co-occurrence of codes for both these constructs. Paris was frequently mentioned with regard to Food; Italy with Decorating; and Maine with Gardening. The coupling of product and place seemingly reflected “country of origin” effects (Loo and Davies, 2006), that appropriated the character and tradition of communities to authenticate business offerings. Thus, the perceived high qualities and meanings associated with communities functioned as cultural resources that were used to brand, authenticate, and legitimate the organization and its offerings. Moreover, through her many references to highly connotative places, Stewart served as a carrier of taste, drawing on the cultural capital of communities; in turn, the “borrowed” cultural capital of the community helped to legitimate the organization’s identity in cuisine, crafts, gardens, and homes.

Martha Stewart illustrates the rise of the individual as a carrier of taste and preference. Frank and Meyer (2002) have observed “the individuation of modern society” (p 86) such that “the individual became more central as the fundamental cultural locus of social membership and identity after World War II” (p 89). Moreover, this individuation ennobles persons with broad and equal rights to taste and “moderns can claim exceptionally varied tastes in food, unconstrained by religion, nationality or class” (Frank and Meyer, 2002: 93). Our study offers an elaboration on Frank and Meyer’s (2002) argument to reveal a mechanism by which individuals can function as carriers of taste: through their associations and experiences with the culture of communities, including their own birthplaces, homes, and work communities.

Moreover, our findings indicate that communities can be reservoirs of cultural resources that, through organizational claims and construals of association, can be grafted on to the organizational identity. As such, our findings build on extant research that shows how the attractiveness of communities may have an *objective* basis, due to superior resources (Krugman, 1991) or network externalities (Sorenson, 2003; Stuart and Sorenson, 2003), or a *perceptual* basis of shared understandings, due to entrepreneurial expectations (Arthur, 1990) or regional identities (Romanelli and Khessina, 2005). To this, we add a third basis of community attractiveness: *cultural* resources with quality and value connotations that can be appropriated by organizations and deployed in their identities. As we have shown in the case of *Martha Stewart Living* magazine, associations of cultural products, such as food, entertaining, gardening or travel, with specific city, state, regional or national communities, can lend identities a sense of credibility, status, and authenticity. More broadly, together they can be used together to construct a palate of tastes and preferences that constitutes “lifestyle.”

In order to address our second research question, we drew on culturally available descriptions of communities using tourist information (specifically, the *Lonely Planet Travel* guides) as a means of capturing important aspects of the character and traditions of communities (Molotch et al., 2000). We found that the character of particular communities invoked in *Living* magazine could be categorized as one of two types: *Americana*, reflecting an everyday or country “rural apple-pie goodness,” or *Highbrow (or High Culture)*, reflecting luxurious, posh or elite status. We coded the top ten communities mentioned in MSL magazine for each of these; we found that both were invoked frequently and exclusively. These results suggest a hybridization of the MSLO identity, in that it consists of identity elements – Americana (familiar

daily life) and Highbrow (stylish, distinctive) – that typically do not go together (Albert and Whetten, 1985).

Additionally, it seemed that community mentions were deployed as way of usefully partitioning the complex identity space of the organization in order to separate or contain symbols or meanings that could be potentially conflictual. We found that mentions of Americana and Highbrow community types co-occurred only 20% of the time, enabling MSLO to articulate an identity that pairs the style of the upper class with American, middle-class tastes and values celebrating its colonial underpinnings. Thus, our results show how the invocation of community in an organization's narrative can enable the management of complex and sometimes competing identity elements. The identity of MSLO conjoins mom's apple pie of Nutley, New Jersey with the brioche and baguettes of Paris.

We also found that mentions of communities were not random. The frequency of mentions waxed and waned during different governance eras in the organization's history: both community character types were present in roughly equal proportion early in the organization's history, but the Americana character prevailed during a quieter period of private governance. This changed, however, subsequent to the successful IPO, reflecting a seeming exuberance for, and competency with, more highbrow or elite associations. Although there was an overall ratio of about 60:40 for Highbrow and Americana respectively, the emphasis shifted with organizational changes, indicating a sensitivity to the appropriation of communities' character relative to organizational events.

More generally, our findings illustrate how the transposition of cultural elements (or practices) from communities to organizations can occur without relational connections or networks (Strang and Meyer, 1993; Davis and Greve, 1997). Rather, the infusion of community

culture was not dependent on social relations per se, but rather on complex and rich “theorization” of place applied to the organization. Theorization, according to Strang and Meyer (1993: 492) is “the self-conscious development and specification of abstract categories and the formulation of patterned relationships such as claims of cause and effect.” Or, more simply, theorization is a “strategy for making sense of the world” (Strang and Meyer, 1993: 493). It was evident from the descriptions of community in the *Lonely Planet Travel* guides that communities can function as meaningful categories that connote quality, values, and understandings. Martha Stewart, in her narratives, theorized the relationship between a community and her organization; moreover, the more culturally legitimate she became over time as an arbiter of taste (Murphy, 2010), the more compelling was her theorization. For instance, she theorizes Panini recipes in terms of Italy:

*Years ago when I traveled to Italy with my daughter, we became aficionados of quick and tasty snacks found in many cafes along the streets of Venice. They were panini-thin slabs of bread filled with delicious ingredients, such as salami, dried tomatoes, basil, roasted peppers, pesto, and cheese. ... The tradition of panini has traveled to us, and can easily be continued right on top of your stove (“Panini, Savory and Sweet”, page126). (L, April 2004)*

Overall, our research lends support to Marquis and Battilana’s (2009) conceptualization of how the cultural-cognitive framework (or character) of a geographic community can be associated with an organization. Our research extends their work by showing how these effects are not limited by the geographic or physical boundaries of community, or even the relational ties of networks; we found that an organization’s narrative can appropriate the idea of a place without actually being located there. Thus, we confirm the hunch of Marquis and Battilana (2009) that community can supersede its geographical limits.

Our findings also contribute to theories of organizational identity. We illuminate an important identity element – that of communities – that has been overlooked in the extant literature. We show how communities are important in several ways, i.e., by detailing the content of the organizational identity in terms of the meanings associated with place; by authenticating or legitimating identity through grafting credible community associations; by hybridizing the organizational identity by incorporating potentially conflictual identity elements; and by managing hybrid organizational identities by partitioning contradictory elements.

In spite of these contributions, our study is not without its limitations; overcoming these offers opportunities for future research on the link between communities and identities. Extending our work beyond that of a single case would clearly increase the generalizability of our findings and might reveal if there are communities that are more (or less) favored in the construction of organizational identities. The connotations of community character we found both in MSL magazine and *Lonely Planet* guides were overwhelmingly positive, reflecting a more general tendency of communities to de-emphasize negative aspects of their identity or history (e.g., Rivera, 2008). Exploring the negative or “dark side” of community character would be an interesting extension. Finally, we focused on one vehicle for expressing an organization’s identity, that of the published narrative; it would be interesting to explore how other carriers or markers of identity capture community. These might include symbols, values, or the distinctive social character of both organizations and communities; complementing these with employee or customer interviews, for both insider and outsider perceptions of the organization’s identity, would also be a fruitful exploration.

To conclude, our research represents an initial step in investigating the relationship between geography and identity. Our study indicates that invocations of community can enrich

and complicate organizational identities in distinctive and positive ways that lend authenticity and legitimacy. We show how identity narratives can reveal some of these dynamics of association between communities and identities. Finally, we show that although communities can be described by their geographic locale, they also represent a form of cultural capital that organizations can appropriate to construct an attractive identity.

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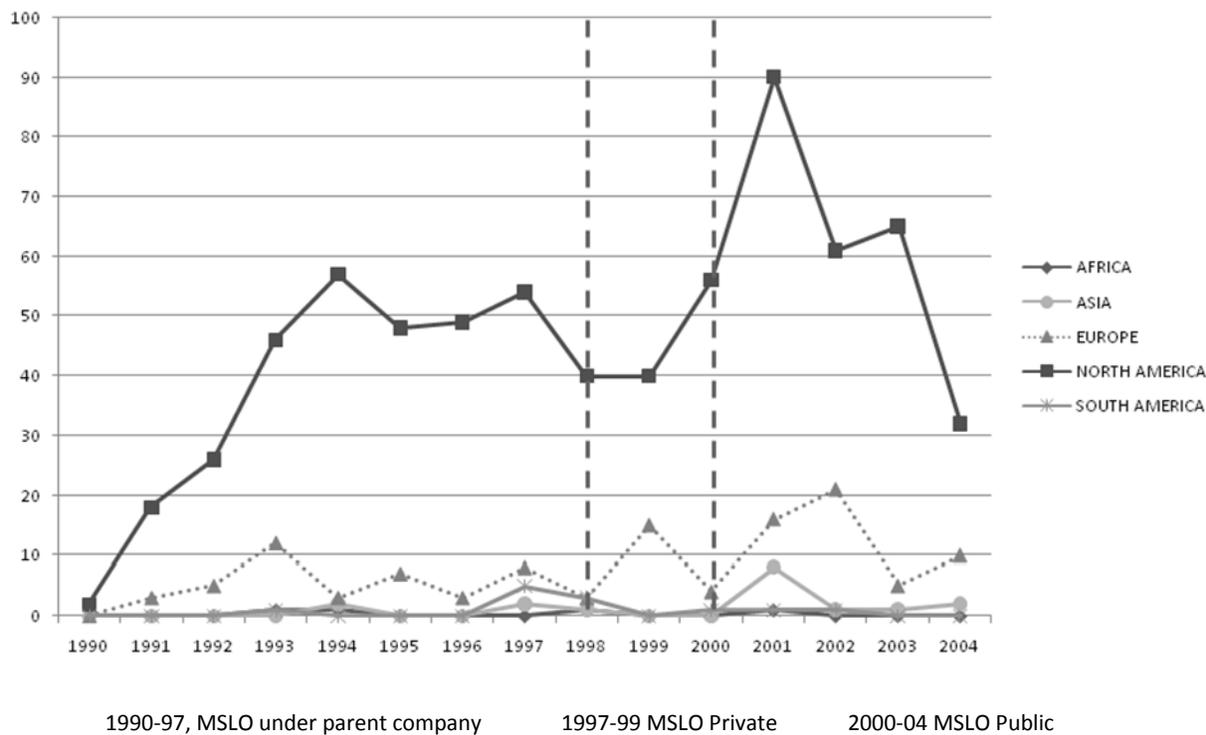
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**FIGURE 1**  
**MAPS WITH HIGHLIGHTED COMMUNITIES MENTIONED IN MSL, 1990 – 2004**



FIGURE 2

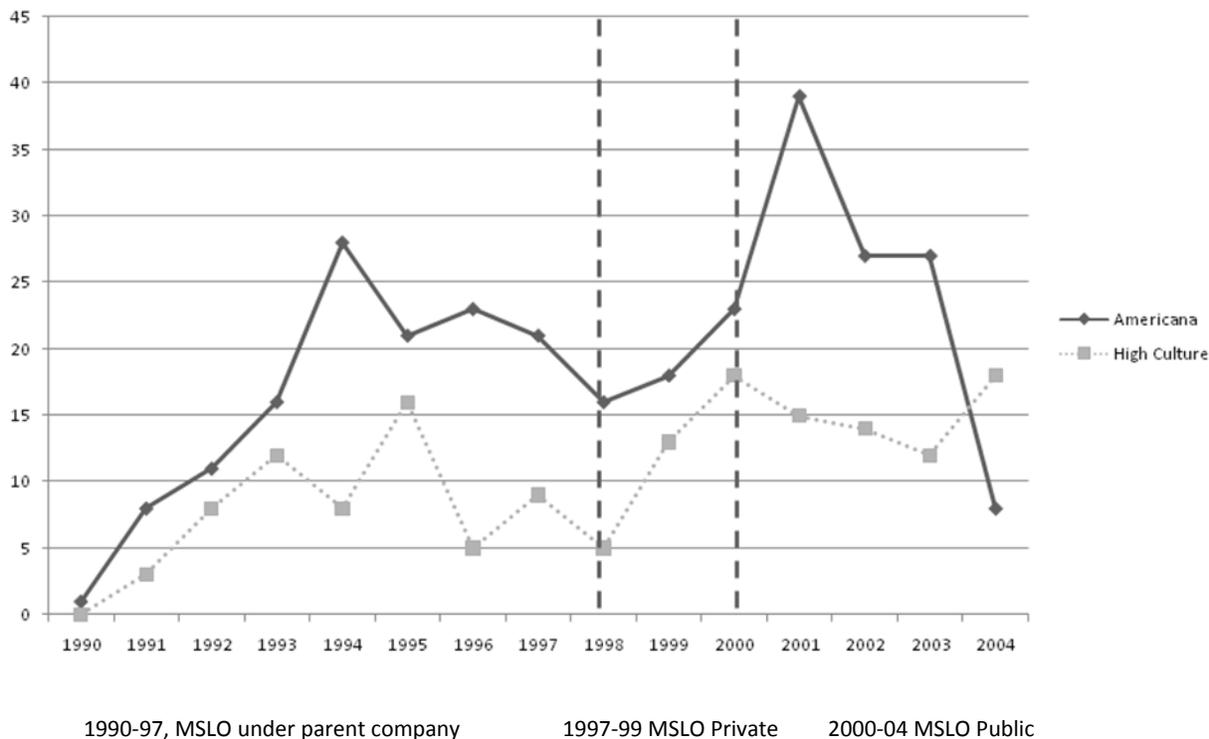
**MSL MENTIONS OF CONTINENTS, 1990-2004,  
RELATIVE TO SHIFTS IN MSLO GOVERNANCE<sup>2</sup>**



<sup>2</sup> The different governance structures for publication of MSL magazine are: 1990-1997, MSLO operated under the aegis of parent company, Time-Warner; 1997-1999, MSLO was privately held (primarily by Stewart); 2000-2004, publicly held.

FIGURE 3

**CULTURAL TYPES OF COMMUNITY – AMERICANA VS Highbrow – IN MSL, 1990 – 2004, RELATIVE TO SHIFTS IN MSLO GOVERNANCE<sup>3</sup>**



<sup>3</sup> The different governance structures for publication of MSL magazine are: 1990-1997, MSLO operated under the aegis of parent company, Time-Warner; 1997-1999, MSLO was privately held (primarily by Stewart); 2000-2004, publicly held.

**TABLE 1**  
**FREQUENCY OF COMMUNITY MENTIONS IN MSL MAGAZINE, 1990-2004**

<b>Geographic Community</b>	<b>No. of MSL Mentions</b>	<b>% of Total Community Mentions (n = 809)</b>
1. New York City (H) <sup>4</sup>	107	13%
2. New Jersey (H)	94	12%
3. Connecticut (H)	90	11%
4. Upstate New York (H)	75	9%
5. Long Island (H)	61	8%
6. Maine (H)	35	4%
7. Massachusetts (H)	23	3%
8. California	16	2%
9. Italy	15	2%
10. Paris	14	2%
11. Germany	12	1%
12. Japan	11	1%
13. England	10	1%
14. Newark	10	1%
15. France	9	1%
16. Europe	8	1%
17. Vermont	8	1%
18. Los Angeles	7	< 1%
19. Boston	6	< 1%
20. Greece	6	< 1%
21. Spain	6	< 1%

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<sup>4</sup> (H) indicates a location where Stewart has/had a home and/or owned property.

TABLE 2

## COMMUNITY CHARACTER CODES: AMERICANA VERSUS HIGHBROW

Code	<i>Lonely Planet</i> Description
<b>AMERICANA</b>	
California	... tracing pathways once trod by native inhabitants, <b>explorers and pioneers</b> , and in the ghost towns of the rough-and-tumble <b>frontier days</b> .
Connecticut	<b>Prettily pastoral as any place in New England</b> . The Connecticut River, which slices clear across Connecticut, gives the state its name. The word comes from the <b>Mohegan Indian</b> mouthful <i>quinnehtukqut</i> , which means 'place of the long river.'
Maine	The Midcoast offers a <b>mix of old shipbuilding villages, academic settlements and pretty harbor towns</b> . Further east lies Acadia National Park, a spectacular island of mountains, lakes, fjord-like estuaries and coves. Beyond it stretch the little-visited peninsulas and jagged cliffs running east to Canada.
Massachusetts	<b>The history is legendary</b> – Plymouth, where the Pilgrims landed; Boston, where the first shots of the <b>American Revolution</b> rang out; and Nantucket, whose whaling ships swarmed the oceans... <b>The Cradle of Liberty...rural apple-pie goodness</b> .
New Hampshire	Jewel-box colonial settlements such as Portsmouth offer a <b>window into 18th-century New England</b> , while <b>small-town culture</b> lives on in charming villages such as Keene and Peterborough.
Tennessee	Here, the folk music of the Scots-Irish mountain-dwellers in the east combined with the bluesy rhythms of the African Americans in the western Mississippi bottomlands to give birth to the modern <b>country music</b> that makes Nashville famous.
Upstate New York	From wilderness trails with backcountry camping to <b>small town Americana</b> , miles and miles of sandy beaches, from the historic, grand estates and artists colonies in the Hudson Valley and Catskills to the rugged and remote Adirondacks it's easy to understand why so many people leave the city never to return.
Virginia state	The sheer density of this state is mind-boggling: <b>every acre of soil is packed with some saga of national significance</b> , be it the USA's colonization, Revolution or Civil War... The national narrative is set against a stunning stage.
Williamsburg	An open-air, <b>living history museum</b> is the centerpiece of Williamsburg, which was capital of Virginia from 1699 to 1780. If any place is going to get your kids into history, 'Colonial Williamsburg' with its hands-on crafts and costumed interpreters, is it.
<b>HIGHBROW</b>	
Aspen	<b>Unbashfully posh</b> Aspen is Colorado's glitziest high-octane resort
Florence	Locals at aperitivo time, effortlessly strutting, flirting and evidently <b>enjoying life</b> . At times it seems nothing much has changed since the days of the Medici.
Greece	Greece offers a myriad of experiences, landscapes, and activities. It is the <b>pulsing nightclubs of Mykonos</b> and the ancient beauty of Delos; the grandeur of Delphi and the earthiness of Ioannina... Tourism is now most definitely pitched to the <b>middle to upper-end markets</b>
Hong Kong	this entrepreneurial, irrepressible and singular trading city is booming again
Italy	Italy is a <b>moveable feast of seemingly endless courses</b> . Rome bristles with reminders of its Imperial past; Florence and Venice are virtually outdoor museums; Naples is full of Baroque bombast and Palermo locals view their Byzantine-Norman treasures with a shockingly laissez-faire attitude.
Long Island	<b>Luxuriously indulgent, sun baked glory</b>
New York City	New York can be anything you want it to be. It's why countless people have pinned their dreams on the place, thrown caution to the wind and shown up on its doorstep. If you'd like your day to be filled with <b>high culture</b> , work your way through the tomes at the Pierpont Morgan Library, then onto the Metropolitan Museum of Art before rounding out your day with a little ballet at Lincoln Center.
Paris	<b>Coiffed, buffed and looking like the (euro) 1 million</b> , Paris is at once a beautiful woman and a sexy guy. Well informed, eloquent and oh-so-romantic, the City of Light is a philosopher, a poet, a crooner to bring you to your knees.
Rome	Rome has a glorious monumentality that it wears without reverence. Here the national preoccupation with the aesthetic fuses with incredible urban scenery to make Rome a city where you <b>feel cool just strolling through the streets, catching the sunlight on your face outside a café, or eating a long lunch</b> .
Switzerland	Illustrious names evoke all the <b>romance and glamorous drama of the mountain high life</b> .
Venice	<b>Venice defies description</b> . Many have tried, from Goethe to Brodsky, but it has to be seen, felt and wandered through to be believed, and even then you may have trouble thinking it real. Yet no theme-park creator could ever have come up with this result of <b>1400 years of extraordinary history</b> .

TABLE 3

## HOW COMMUNITY RELATES TO MSLO BUSINESS CATEGORIES, 1990 – 2004

Stewart's Home Locations	# MSLO References	Food	Entertainment	Gardening	Traveling	Decorating
New York City	108	12%	0	<b>22%</b>	11%	9%
New Jersey	94	12%	3%	<b>23%</b>	9%	11%
Connecticut	90	10%	2%	<b>28%</b>	3%	13%
Upstate New York	75	12%	3%	<b>17%</b>	4%	11%
Long Island	61	7%	5%	13%	0	<b>26%</b>
Maine	35	11%	3%	<b>40%</b>	11%	14%
Massachusetts	23	22%	0	<b>30%</b>	0	4%
<b>HOME TOTAL</b>	<b>510</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>12%</b>
California	16	13%	0	0	0	6%
Italy	15	14%	<b>20%</b>	7%	7%	<b>20%</b>
Paris	14	29%	7%	<b>14%</b>	7%	<b>14%</b>

**Table 4: MSL Top 10 Mentions and *Lonely Planet* Descriptions<sup>5</sup>**

<b>Community</b>	<b><i>Lonely Planet</i> Description</b>	<b>Illustrative text from MSL magazine</b>
1. New York City	New York can be <b>anything you want it to be</b> ; high culture; gritty; bohemian It's got so many sides and so much to offer that it can be intimidating	As my life got busier and busier, baking took less precedence; I was helped, however, by the fact that American bakeries were getting better and better. Fine brioches could be found at several French-owned bakeries in <b>New York City</b> . Because I could buy brioche, why continue trying to bake it myself? I rationalized, and decided I wouldn't. (R, Feb 2001: 228)
2. New Jersey	New Jersey gets a bad rap; <b>diverse</b> , fair-minded people, who inhabit many <b>culturally-rich</b> towns and cities	My intense interest in roses began many years ago in my paternal grandmother's rose garden at 66 Elm Place in <b>Nutley, New Jersey</b> , the town where I grew up. (R, Aug 1994: 112)
3. Connecticut	Sandwiched between sexy New York City and northerly New England's quainter quarters; largely industrial, but take a closer look and you're in for pleasant surprises. has blossomed into a happening place that fuses <b>historic appeal</b> with an up-and-coming cultural scene	My love of antiquing took us on many, many great trips all over <b>Connecticut</b> --to Washington, Newtown, and small northwestern towns where great examples of Americana could be found in beautiful little shops hidden on dirt roads and in tiny hamlets. ... Natural beauty, too, abounded near home, and we spent lots of time hiking through Devil's Den Preserve in Weston, biking around the reservoirs to the north, and canoeing on any one of the numerous <b>Connecticut</b> rivers and close to the shore on Long Island Sound. We dreamed of a trek along the entire Appalachian Trail-we even plotted out that vacation, until we realized it would take several months. So we did portions of the trail, and thus discovered much of our state's natural splendor. (R, April 2001: 272)
4. Upstate New York	From wilderness trails with backcountry camping to <b>small town Americana</b> , miles and miles of sandy beaches, from the historic, grand estates and artists colonies in the Hudson Valley and Catskills to the rugged and remote Adirondacks it's easy to understand why so many people leave the city never to return	As I write this, I'm enjoying a white peach from Wickham's in Cutchogue, Long Island, and a bowl of the hugest blackberries from my own Easter field in Westport. I'm looking forward to picking my pumpkins soon at a wonderful farm in Bridgehampton, and my fall pears at specialty growers in the <b>Hudson Valley</b> . (R, Oct/Nov 1993: 138)
5. Long Island	Private-school blazers, nightmare commutes, strip malls colonized by national chains, cookie-cutter suburbia, moneyed resorts, wind-swept dunes and magnificent Long Island has wide ocean and bay beaches, important historic sites, renowned vineyards, rural regions	I was attracted to its quiet, serene appearance, and though most of the homes were tucked behind private barriers, some of the gardens were fully exposed. The most wonderful one was a garden situated on the actual <b>Lily Pond</b> . It was breathtaking. I stood and gazed at the profuse and colorful flowers.... (R, March 1996) In East Hampton, I am one of nearly four hundred members of the Ladies' Village Improvement Society, a group founded in 1895 by twenty-one women who recognized the need for committed volunteers to maintain the beauty of one of <b>Long Island's</b> oldest towns. (L, May 1995: 6)

<sup>5</sup> In text citations (column 3), L designates the source as "A Letter from Martha" and R designates "Remembering."

6. Maine	Planted along this seascape are fishing villages, summer resorts and <b>picture-book colonial towns</b> , wilder untouched scenery to the northeast; adventure	In <b>Maine</b> it's really difficult to go anywhere without the thrill of discovery; as there is more natural beauty to see than in any other place I know: Craggy cliffs, surging ocean, Acadia National Park. Baxter State Park, Lubec to the north, islands to the east--I know my exploring there will never cease. Just last summer I finally spent time in the Abbe Museum, down the road from my house, a small but provocative museum devoted to the arts and crafts and history of the Native Americans who once populated Maine. (R, April 2001: 272),
7. Massachusetts	Mix of rural apple-pie goodness and unexpected cultural hotspots.	Although my husband and I never managed to totally escape from the city, we did attempt many of the Nearings' suggestions on our little property in the Berkshire Mountains in Middlefield, <b>Massachusetts</b> . We bought Middlefield, as we called our three-room) 80s schoolhouse, in 1965 right after our daughter, Alexis, was born. (R, April 1996: 148)
8. California	The history is legendary; spirited college towns; <b>mix colonial sights and museum strolls with sizzling nightlife and pub crawls</b>	...we went to <b>California</b> . We found more ideas in local antiques stores, in the San Francisco flower market, and from new friends. When it came time to shoot, we forgot it was midsummer. As photographers, writers, and designers hung swags, looked for errant glass balls, cut out cookies, and wrapped gifts, it reminded me of my brothers and sisters scurrying to finish everything by Christmas Eve. (L, Dec 1999/Jan 1993: 6)
9. Italy	<b>Italy is a moveable feast of seemingly endless courses</b> . Imperial past; virtually outdoor museums, full of Baroque bombast, a shockingly laissez-faire attitude. designer shades, no other cuisine compares	Years ago when I traveled to <b>Italy</b> with my daughter, we became aficionados of quick and tasty snacks found in many cafes along the streets of Venice. They were panini-thin slabs of bread filled with delicious ingredients, such as salami, dried tomatoes, basil, roasted peppers, pesto, and cheese. ... The tradition of panini has traveled to us, and can easily be continued right on top of your stove ("Panini, Savory and Sweet", page126), (L, April 2004)
10. Paris	Coiffed, buffed and looking like the (euro) 1 million, Paris is at once a beautiful woman and a sexy guy. Well informed, eloquent and oh-so-romantic, the City of Light is a philosopher, a poet, a crooner to bring you to your knees. Sitting before a stylish table laid with unimagined treats, Paris is a bon vivant, a banquet, a wine of impeccable vintage. Paris is all these and more because Paris always has been and always will be <b>a million different things to a million different people</b> .	I could go on and on about each of the sights we saw, but the best was last -- <b>Paris</b> and its environs, in April. Nothing in my readings had prepared me for the tree-lined country roads; the terraced vineyards; the narrow, winding roads; the vast stone and masonry barns; the varied chateaus; and the great soaring cathedrals that took my breath away minute to minute. The food, too, was mouthwatering: every cheese, every baguette, every croissant slathered with confiture d'abricot. The tiny inns we found to sleep in were charming and clean, though modest and poorly heated. Looking through the pages of my diary, I found that rarely did a room for two cost more than \$3 a night. Unbelievable! (R, April 1999: 284)