

**Social Rituals and Identity Creation in a Middle Class Workplace**

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Working Paper 14  
Spring 2002

For many, parties and celebrations that occur in the work place and during work hours comprise a class of events in which none of the official task work of the working unit gets accomplished. In many workplaces these events exist as the only officially sanctioned times when the entire work group (department, office, etc.) may gather together and focus on an activity that does not seem to pertain to organizational functions and obligations required of the unit. However, it is during these occasions that the social group most completely presents “itself to itself” in a reflection and reification of shared values and beliefs. Here also appears the most well developed and fully public occasion during which individuals may present their identities to their co-workers. Furthermore, in more subtle and unseeming ways these situations do in fact allow for a demonstration of the relative position of each person’s work role to one another in a symbolic performance of the type of hierarchy that defines the official functional relations of the unit.

Though in recent years scholars of the workplace and the family have tended to downplay a strong distinction between the work experience and that which extends into the domains of home, family and community (Hertz and Marshall, 2001; Hawes and Nybakken, 1991), this distinction still proves useful as a starting point from which to explore the composition of the social matrix of the workplace. And an understanding of celebratory social occasions in the workplace as ritual helps to understand the efficacy these events play in the coordination of social and work relations within the workplace, and between the workplace and the home. Writing on the necessity of rituals in corporate life, Deal and Kennedy remark that “[w]ithout expressive events, any culture will die. In the absence of ceremony or ritual, important values have no impact. Ceremonies are to

the culture what the movie is to the script, the concert is to the score, or the dance is to values that are difficult to express in any other way” (Deal and Kennedy, 1982: 63).

## **Personal and Group Formation as a Prerequisite and Consequence of Workplace**

### **Social Rituals**

The need to categorize the world, personal and group experience, and how individuals and groups move through life plays an important part of the human condition. Despite the vast array of cultural differences found throughout the world and through time, this cognitive capacity for orderly categorization of the environment most pervasively defines what it means to be human. And a central feature that characterizes this most basic of human process is the creation of “identity.” This is as important at the level of the individual as it is at the level of humanity in general. The primal differentiation between the “self” and the “other” provides the basis for navigation in the social world, and is a prime requisite for any theory of true democracy. With a firm grasp of what constitutes the “self,” this identity may then be used to enter into agreements and accords, as well as involve the individual in the everyday negotiations through which are created our conceptions of the world in which we live, and consequently, the actions available to the individual and the group in the world so conceived.

A further indication of the need for a creation and affirmation of self-identity lies in the psychological concept of anxiety, or “self annihilation.” Psychological definitions of anxiety describe a process by which the self, an individual’s identity and the seat of rational action, literally disappears – the process of personal development reverses and

the individual is annihilated, becoming merely an unthinking mass reduced to physical reactions to external physical stimuli, left only with a choice between “fight” and “flight.” In writing on the pernicious effects of unfounded anxiety, Michael Diamond writes that “[u]nsettling feelings of powerlessness and helplessness, and a disconnectedness from reality, further describe this disturbing psychodynamic phenomenon” (Diamond, 1993: 55 n.4). In short, without a sense of identity as a defense against anxiety, and as the basis of the individuality of a freely associating being, there remains no chance for humanity, or for a just and beneficial civilization.

As already mentioned, the process of creating and sustaining an identity also works on larger scales than that of the individual physical being. We as humans create an identity for ourselves that separates us from the other animals, plants, as well as the remainder of the universe. This holds true for the mental, spiritual, and meta-physical as well as the physical world. Utilizing a complex and well-developed communicative system of symbolic interaction, humans have been able to organize in an effective manner in order to affect changes most beneficial (and unfortunately, detrimental as well) to the whole of humankind. Agriculture allows for the possibility of a sustained and assured food source. Storage methods, especially cold storage, allows for a stockpiling of provisions that may help to overcome the possible deleterious effects of drought and production shortages. Improved transportation techniques gives the possibility of obtaining basic necessities even in environments that do not lend themselves to cultivation, or do not have the requisite on-site resources for a secure and comfortable life. All of these improvements on what nature has offered rely on an orderly means of coordination of individuals, which leads to the most important-by-far feature of the

human identity: the capacity for sustained, repeatable, complex, extremely descriptive as well as general, and adaptive communication – the ritual coordination of symbols and language.

Negotiation of what constitutes identity – those aspects and features attributed to a bounded and independent entity – may occur in the internal space of an individual, as well as in a sphere in which notions of humanity play only a part. There are many psychological processes that present possible problems to the formation of a unified individual character, and the human species also plays a role within a larger world-ecological system. But for the purposes of this present discussion, considerations of what constitutes “identity” will be confined to the workings that occur in the spectrum between the individual on one side, and the group on the other.

The definition of “group” used here includes two or more persons who share a collection of attributes and attitudes that serve to distinguish them from their surroundings, and the others that may occupy those surroundings. These may include personal demographics, clothing, economic features and/or concerns, sharing of a common space<sup>1</sup>, sharing a common social or work goal, among others. The main feature they share, one that cuts through all of these specific characteristics so far illuminated, is that groups organize themselves (or are organized by others) around a specific focus, or collection of foci. That a group needs a focus in order to assemble indicates that “[t]o live together in the world means essentially that a world of things is between those who have it in common, as a table is located between those who sit around it; the world, like every in-between, relates and separates [persons] at the same time” (Arendt, 1958:48). Being

related as such to an external object, members of a group may form a new inclusive entity; while at the same time retain all the essential features that label them as individuals.

A conception that has so far remained implicit in this discussion of individual and group identity, but which appears as the most useful and necessary indicator, and in fact creator, of identity is the consideration of boundaries. Personal boundaries separate the individual from other individuals and groups. Group boundaries separate the group from other groups, as well as protect the group from dissolving into its constituent parts. Within these boundaries, the features that come to identify the entity are created, coordinated, and periodically communicated both to members and those others that lay outside the group. This last action, periodic reinforcement of identity features, becomes especially important as the connections between group members grow to be more ephemeral and transitory. As interaction falls more completely into the domain of the symbolic, rather than being expressed through physical and naturally visible means, symbolic presentation of relations through ritual means arises as the essential mode of communication and coordination – two processes without which meaningful concerted action is impossible.

Problems arise in considering the notion of identity as reinforced by boundary marking processes, and how this notion relates to the actual “real world” experiences of the individual. What features mark the individual? Kinship roles, social roles, community roles, economic roles, and work roles all feed into an individual’s feeling of who he or she “is.” Concurrently, the identity of a group arises from display of the aforementioned

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<sup>1</sup> This feature is most often a physical space, though with modern technological communication devices such as telephones, teleconferencing, telecommuting, e-mail, and computers in general, physical proximity

qualities as well, such as the goal of product production, or of community involvement, or profit creating, or all three. Individuals with different personal traits can come together around a shared focus or set of shared foci. For the purposes of analytic inquiry, the group may be considered to be defined only by those qualities which are shared by all, or most, of its members, and as those qualities relate to the expressed aims of the group. But in actual practice a member of one group may simultaneously be a member of one or more other groups with different defining features and coordinating foci than the first. Some questions remain – how, and by mechanisms, does a group retain its integrity despite being composed of individuals with possibly competing allegiances and interests? And even if group members share goals central to the definition of the group, they may also retain goals and influences at least non-complementary, and possibly opposed, to the other members of their group as a result of outside relations. And finally, how does a member of the group retain a sense of “individuality,” a persona that is part of the group, yet distinct from it as well? This last question, though apparently a paradoxical consideration, is extremely important in understanding the relational flexibility of the individual – how the individual can be both parent and employee, for example; retaining social identities without sacrificing work identity, and vice versa.

This theoretical discussion, and the questions which arise from it, become useful in the consideration of what comprises a work unit, its operation, and its environment. While an understanding of what constitutes a role in the workplace seems easily defined by the structure of the organization, the performance of an individual as an employee in such an organization presents some challenges to those companies that are willing to acknowledge the full range of activities, desires, and goals contained in the full

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is not always an adequate qualifier of what constitutes “space.”

experience of the individual. A “job” comprises a role defined by certain criteria – responsibilities, activities, authority, as well as subordination. The director of the department in an organization must monitor the employees of the department, hire new employees, answer to company protocol, and in other ways attend to the business of the company. But the actual person who fills that role comprises an entity with more far reaching concerns – care for children and family, activity within the local and national community, care for personal needs, and so on. Yet the work experience demands primary attention to the work role during the appropriate hours. And as it is quite impossible for a mentally healthy person to *completely* divorce him or herself from these concerns not related to performance of the work role – these concerns always lie at different degrees and depths from the present concern, “under the surface” – the task remains to investigate those mechanisms which allow those other concerns an existence in the personal psyche, while at the same time allowing the bulk of attention to be applied to the demands of the work role. The next three sections of this discussion will be used to describe three different workplace rituals that function to coordinate activity in the workplace with regard to identity (both of the individual and the group), role performance, and the transferring of attention to different aspects of identity in a celebration of the employee as a complex and whole person.

The following presentations come from research conducted through participant/ observation in an administrative department of a university located in the Southeastern United States. Though there do exist many more celebratory occasions in the “ritual cycle” of this department, three have been chosen to be presented here based on their usefulness in describing the identity constructions so far discussed. The department

Christmas party provides a good example of a presentation in which the department as a whole represents itself in terms of internal structure; a get-together for the anniversary of occupancy at the present physical location by the department presents the group as a whole – as differentiated from other departments and allegiances, and as having a unique identity; and the presentation of the birthday party in honor of a department member illuminates the process of integrating the individual into the department setting. A fourth type of group formation, that of the integration of the department as a functioning member of the university collective, is outside the scope of this essay.

### **Christmas in the Office**

The office Christmas party<sup>2</sup> was set for Tuesday, December 18. This, of course, happened several days before the official observation of Christmas since the office would be closed on December 25. It also coincided with a pre-holiday lull in office activity since those researchers from whom the department receives most of its work had already begun to depart for their winter breaks. I arrived at the office around noon. As I exited the elevator onto the floor on which the department is located, I met with what happened to be the last three people who were departing the cluster of offices that make up the physical space of the department and were heading for the location where the party would take place.

The physical arrangement of the department consists of a collection of offices approximately 15ft x 15ft in size (all occupied by two staff persons, except for the

director and assistant director of the department and the IT professional – each of whom occupied a private office space), a large storage room, a large file room including two fax machines and a photocopier, a break room/kitchen with sink, microwave, full size refrigerator, two coffee makers, pantry storage, and two tables set with chairs. These rooms make up almost the entire south wing of the fourth floor. In addition, the department also retains a large room on the north wing of the third floor which is used for the more formal meetings that occur each Wednesday and one Thursday out of the month. This office also happened to be the setting for the office holiday gathering.

Though the party had been scheduled for twelve o'clock, this time served more as a rough guide than a precise beginning. This is one of the features that portrays this event as a party rather than a more formal occasion such as a meeting, movie, or class. The staff wandered down from the fourth floor alone, or in groups of two or three. Sometimes one of them would arrive and then go again to retrieve a forgotten item from his or her office, or go to the bathroom. The director of the department arrived about a half an hour early in order to let in the caterers (the room is normally kept locked when not in use), supervise their setting up of the food, and to start to bring down the presents which would be handed out on behalf of "Secret Santas." By quarter after twelve all of the participants who would be taking part in the gathering had arrived, claimed a seat (by sitting in a particular seat long enough for most of the others to notice and recognize their claim) and had gotten up again to form a line leading to the table on which was placed the catered food. Included in this group were the chair and a vice-chair of a group of related

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<sup>2</sup> "Christmas", rather than "holiday", is used throughout to describe this gathering. This is how the participants referred to the occasion, and to my knowledge they all claim to belong to the Christian Church, if any at all.

oversight committees for which the study department served an administrative support function.

For this Christmas party the director – as proxy for “the department” – had ordered a meal of lasagna, salad and sautéed vegetables with iced tea, coffee, water, and diet sodas as beverages. A desert was also made available, and it consisted of a choice between chocolate cake and cheesecake, or both if anyone so chose to indulge in both. Once everyone had finished collecting their food and returned to their seats, an announcement was made concerning the two staff members who happened to be absent from this occasion. One was home ill, and the other was attending a class. This was significant in that it seemed to be done to assure those present that the absent co-workers were unable to participate in this event due to uncontrollable circumstances and had not merely chosen not to attend. To have chosen not to attend might convey the message that one did not consider him or herself to be part of the group, or that one refused to take on a social role in relation to his or her co-workers. Though attendance was not mandatory, a final “sweep” of the fourth floor departmental space was done to assure that all those present at work on this day were informed that the party was to begin soon. It was this group that I had met upon my arrival.

Fifteen or twenty minutes after everyone had begun eating, the committee chair departed. Before he left he gave each of the staff members a Christmas card in a white envelope bearing each individual’s name. Soon after he left, the vice-chair also left, though without dispensing any holiday trappings. At this point most people had finished their meal and had moved on to desert or coffee; distribution of the “Secret Santa” gifts also began.

“Secret Santa” is the name of a gift giving process in which each person in the department receives, at random, the name of another person in the department for whom he or she must purchase a gift to be presented during the party. The receiver, however, does not know from whom a gift will be received. The aim is to recreate the gift giving convention associated with the larger society-wide tradition of gift exchange as practiced between family members and friends. In the work context, “Secret Santa” gift exchange helps to create a social connection between persons outside of the context or work relations; people who are otherwise only officially connected in their capacity as an employee of the university and as their official work related roles intersect. And more than just providing a gift, each gift had been chosen by the giver as a result of taking into account the personal tastes of the recipient. Thus in order to give an appropriate gift, the giver must have or obtain some knowledge of the personal traits of the recipient, and this familiarity becomes further connected by the act of giving the gift for as will be shown, “secret santas” do not remain secret.

The distribution of the gifts proceeded as follows: the director and the assistant director would simultaneously take one gift off of the table that had been set aside for the purpose of bearing the packages until this time. They would then give the present to the person to whom it had been addressed, usually accomplishing this by placing the present onto the table in front of the addressee. They did not do this with any haste, as it had been decided upon earlier that the gifts would be opened as they were received, and as everyone in attendance held some interest in discerning what each of the others had received, the director and assistant director would occasionally pause for a moment to see what a particular person had been given. In a slow and sure manner, all of the presents

were dispersed and the presenters seated themselves to open the gifts that they themselves had received.

During this process, three simultaneous actions took place: the distribution and opening of gifts, the observation of and commenting on gifts received by others, and the eventual revealing of the origin of the gift, that is, from whom the gift came by. The common action of each person was to open a gift, comment on the appropriateness of the gift, and then an attempt was made to discern who gave the gift. This last act proceeded with the recipient urging the giver to reveal him or herself, followed by exhortations to the effect that several guesses should be made first, and then the eventual revealing of the giver's identity. Surprisingly, several people were given gifts that were extraordinarily appropriate. One lady received a "throw" (a small blanket-type covering) that she exclaimed would match her couch perfectly. In fact, she had just recently purchased some pillows for her couch in the same design as the throw. In a later, private interview, the woman who gave her the gift did not know about the couch arrangement that the receiver had been crafting, but thought that from what she knew about the recipient, the gift would be a suitable match to her personality. At the other extreme, one man received a perfectly neutral gift, a basket of fruit, which seemed to indicate that the he and his "Secret Santa" did not often engage in social conversation during the course of normal working hours. This method of gift exchange acts as a confirmation of the personal and social aspects of others as learned through everyday interaction in the workplace, or, as shown by the latter example, the lack thereof. It also, though perhaps paradoxically, creates those same connections with others by providing publicly visible and tangible symbols of the awareness of others. One may be acquainted with the personality of another, but it is of

no use in social interaction unless it is conveyed through common channels of communication. After the gifts were unwrapped and commented upon, everyone finished their beverages and dessert and began to clean up as a group before returning to work.

The Christmas party contains the richest symbolic load of all the occasions that make up the cycle of social rituals in this department. It presents the group as a one distinct from other groups in the working environment, as well as simultaneously displaying the internal relations between the members of the department. It also allows for the expression of individual characteristics that normally are relegated to an area outside of the workplace: individual tastes and preferences that might define a person's home-life are allowed representation in a sphere more generally defined by certain institutionally mandated goals and actions.

The subtlest aspect of work life that finds representation in this affair concerns the structure of a system of relations that occurs not in the social organization of people, but rather in the ordering of their respective work roles. The system of gift distribution found in this holiday celebration quite faithfully reproduces the hierarchical arrangement of work personae that comprise the composition of the department. The director and the assistant director were responsible for the requisition of the food, as well as for the dispersement of the gifts. They stood in as a proxy for Santa. In addition to the exchange of gifts between individuals, the "department" bestowed upon each employee a small gift (a large can of assorted flavored popcorn), which was again distributed by the heads of the department. In regards to the "Secret Santa" method of gift giving, Levi-Strauss has noted that this "univocal" form of gift bestowment assures that an egalitarian principle reigns in consideration of relations between co-workers since no one person is directly

indebted to another (Levi-Strauss, 1969). And as for the “asymmetrical” gift flow represented by the “department” gift to each employee, Gregory Moschetti has suggested that this represents groups “whose constitutional structure is one of unitary centralism” (Moschetti, 1979: 5). Furthermore, the fact that the gifts intended to represent the egalitarian nature of the relationship between co-workers were first collected and then dispersed by the central agency of the department only further proves that institutional concerns have intruded upon what seems to be a wholly non-work related occasion.

### **Anniversary of Workplace Setting**

On Friday, March 29, an afternoon gathering took place on the occasion of the three-year anniversary that marked the arrival of the department staff and their accoutrements to the present location on the south wing of the fourth floor of a building approximately a mile and a half from their former location. The move became necessary after an increase in their workload, and a concomitant increase in staff size, created the need for a larger physical space. This occasion presented the opportunity to take some time out of the workday to recollect that move and to muse over the changes that occurred which prompted the move, as well as changes that have occurred since the move took place.

As with the Christmas celebration already outlined, the staff present at work on that day came together in a piece-meal fashion. This time, however, they collected in the break room that forms a part of the space they occupy on the fourth floor of the building. This room presents itself in a much more relaxed and informal fashion than the meeting

room-cum-party space in which the Christmas party was held. The celebration itself complemented this more casual venue – the food was not catered, no mention was made of those several employees that did not attend the event, and there was no gift exchange.

After several people came in and were seated, the director placed on the table two containers of ice cream along with an assortment of toppings: walnuts, M&M candies, candy “sprinkles,” butterscotch and chocolate liquid topping, and two canisters of whipped cream. Again the food for the event had been provided in the name of the “department” reinforcing its role as the focus of the current social occasion. The ice cream and toppings were passed around the table as each employee created for him or herself a custom sundae. Conversation then began in a gathering that was to last for the next forty-five minutes.

The conversation that ensued can be divided into three distinct stages according to the topics that dominated publicly expressed and group confirmed interaction. The first stage of the conversation revolved around a discourse on the food. Participants discussed their ice cream flavor preferences, which toppings they do and do not like, how they prepare their sundaes, and on what occasions they have allowed themselves to unfortunately consume too much ice cream, much to the chagrin of their “figures.” By focusing on the food as a source of discussion, the participants in this unfolding rite of remembrance created a forum in which a social body could take shape. Having removed themselves from their particular and individual work tasks that they had been occupied in before the event, a source of common attention became necessary to reintegrate the individual concerns into a form that would allow a shared experience. This process is one of the central concerns of ritual. As Farb and Armelagos have written in their work on the

anthropology of food, it is “food [that] to a large extent is what holds a society together” (Farb and Armelagos, 1980: 6).

At this point the director of the department, who happened to be sitting apart from the rest of the participants on a table separate from the one that occupied the center of the room, introduced a topic into the conversation that concerned the previous locations that have housed the department in the past. During this time she also took an informal poll regarding who present in the room has been with the department since before it has been located in its current location. It turned out that the majority of people who now work in this unit have been hired rather recently, within the last year or two. When she then informed everyone that this present location was also intended as a temporary home for the group, everyone began to discuss possible work locations that may lay in the group’s future.

Once the history of the department had been illuminated, and the future contemplated, the discussion turned to what would be its last stage. Having served the purpose of the occasion, which was to celebrate and contemplate the existence of the group as a distinct work unit, the conversation became more fractured as subgroups formed and the focus of attention became dispersed. The conversation of the several groups during this last phase revolved around movies, TV shows, and interestingly enough, movies and TV shows about “the harsh reality of prison life.” Everyone at this point must have either been ready to return to work (or dreading it!), or expected to, for when the director got up and began to casually take a few dishes to the sink, the rest of those left in the room joined her in clearing the table. Some conversation continued into

the hallway, but the occasion ended as it had begun, with the participants returning to their workstations in a manner as gradual as they had arrived.

This description provides another view of how social gatherings in the workplace act to affirm identities and reify boundaries. These occasions may also operate to effectively shuttle people between some of the different roles of which their being is comprised, allowing them to express aspects of each while highlighting those that seem most appropriate for the particular setting. During this department anniversary celebration the staff, by engaging in a common activity, came together as a group with a singular identity. They were then instructed of their common history as members of this group through the narration of the director. Just as a new citizen learns about the history of his or her adopted homeland in an exercise designed to conjure the fullness of the national entity, the newer employees here were instructed on the shape and course of their new work life. Having now a sustained and concrete existence, they may now more readily recognize the department as a source of definite identity.

The internal hierarchy of the department appeared during the gathering in a subtle manner, as it did during the Christmas party. The director again purchased the food in the name of the “department” and she sat with the assistant director apart from the rest of the staff. And while engaging in the conversation, she twice directed its course: first to the theme of the history of the department in the university, and then to its conclusion by beginning the final clean-up-and-go process. The display of authority on this occasion was, however, less developed than in the holiday assembly. Here it was sufficient to have represented a semblance of authority that could be wrapped around the community that developed during the course of the afternoon. In this manner the group finds a definition

for itself, and that definition happens to be of a group of people that have come together to perform an institutional goal.

### **A Birthday in the Office**

On Friday, November 15, I attended the department observation of the assistant director's birthday. About half of the office was present, some having made an appearance and then returned to work, and some having taken the day off for various reasons. As with the anniversary described above, this occasion took place in the department break-room with those in attendance seated around the table, which bore appropriate birthday food: a chocolate cake, donuts, coffee, and a fruit salad. This last item happened to be left over from a group breakfast, in which it and biscuits ordered from a local restaurant served as the central meal. This breakfast also occurred ostensibly as a celebratory recognition of the assistant director's birthday. Lucky woman, getting two parties in the same day, or, lucky staff, getting two breaks from work on the same day.

This occasion turned out to be much more informal in terms of having a central focus than either of the two other gatherings already outlined. No common theme emerged as a central focus of group attention. Several conversations occurred simultaneously; one woman showed some others photographs of her family, some others talked about vacations they have been on and those that they are planning to take. The woman whose birthday was used as the reason for the get together spoke of her plans to go to Biloxi, Mississippi on the coming weekend to do some gambling, and some others

took this as a cue to talk about their own gambling habits and those of their friends and family. Even the cake, which is the centerpiece of any birthday celebration, had been baked by a member of the staff, rather than having been provided in the name of the “department.”

This de-centralized and casual ritual brought together members of the staff in an event that allowed a fuller possibility for the expression of non-work identity than is possible in most other occasions on which the work group gathers. Conversation here avoided any mention of work roles or department dynamics. Individual personalities were given full reign during what was essentially a communal chat. However, that this experience still took place within the confines of the work place is significant. Individuals could only bring up those topics and features of their own lives in which others could recognize themselves and take part in managing the flow of conversation. This helped to provide a bridge for staff members connecting their non-work lives to their work personae, creating a work identity that retained all the features of human experience as well. All of this, being accomplished in the work-space, linked the two major distinct domains of modern human life, that of work and non-work, in an inclusive relationship in which each could be reaffirmed as an integral part of one’s overall personality.

### **Conclusion**

Individuals need ways in which to express their unique character while participating in group settings so that they may allay the anxiety that may arise from fears associated with a possible loss of identity. At the same time, this identity may only arise

from participation in group activity and communal life. Sharing in the goals and desires of a myriad of different groups, such as of family, friendship, workgroup, church group, etc., individuals need a way to engage in communal behavior in a manner that allows them to both participate in the actions of a particular group in the moment, as well as preserve a wholeness of identity that may allow them to move between groups professing different goals as the circumstances demand.

Perhaps most basically, being part of a social group requires the proper presentation of the values, beliefs, and goals of that group. The individual must portray these attributes in a way that is observable to others and so therefore allow for the possibility of recognition as a viable participant. Parties, celebrations, and gatherings in the workplace offer employees this opportunity to identify with those with whom they work, and for this collective to identify with the prescribed aims of the work unit. Parties are not inimical to institutional goals. Social celebrations in the workplace encourage reflection on shared values and beliefs; and as those concerns arise that reflect issues other than directly work related, they still may build stronger social connections between the employees that comprise the primary work unit – the operational unit that gets work done. By creating a familiar and somewhat predictable environment, employees may feel comfortable at work, and thus feel that when they participate in their work, they are not meeting hostile adversaries but participating in life.

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