



## FACULTY &amp; RESEARCH

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# Identity Incentives as an Engaging Form of Control: Revisiting Leniencies in an Aeronautic Plant

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## Abstract

Research has long shown that organizations shape members' identities. However, the possibility that these identities might also be desired and that members might benefit from this process has only recently been explored. In a qualitative study of a French aeronautic plant, I demonstrate how an implicitly negotiated leniency between management and workers around the use of company materials and tools, on company time, to produce artifacts for personal use, enhances workers' identities. This leniency applies to a select subset of workers and enhances their desired occupational identity. This practice produces an engaging form of control that relies on management's selective allocation of identity incentives. These findings document a previously overlooked type of control: one reliant on desired identities that engage rather than constrain. Desired identities, specifically previously enacted ones, constitute potent incentives for inducing efforts or actions.

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