

## THE TASTE OF OVERTIME

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This paper explores the cultural faces of overtime among a blue-collar, manufacturing workforce. Maximizing income is a powerful incentive for workers to accept and seek overtime work at Sylvania. Yet, we argue that economic motives cannot be cleanly disentangled from other motives. Overtime work offers opportunities to garner social honor and cultivate social belonging among peers and co-workers in the plant and to fight against the stigma of factory work experienced outside the plant. The specific set of conditions which elicit consent to long hours among Sylvania's blue-collar workers is the combination of pay high enough to secure financial stability and buy middle-class lifestyles or social mobility for children and the room for strategic uses of overtime available to individual workers.

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<sup>1</sup> The authors contributed equally to this paper. Britt Halvorson drafted specific language used in this paper, provided critical readings of written drafts and participated in field observations and data analysis. Tom Fricke was instrumental in launching and defining the Sylvania project and helped develop our interview protocol, conducted interviews, and contributed field observations. The Sylvania project would not exist without Bob Bowen's involvement, knowledge, and expertise. His active participation in all of our discussions of overtime contributed in fundamental ways to the paper. We also acknowledge the assistance of the UAW local leadership at Sylvania, the Sylvania plant management, and the many Sylvania workers who have collectively spent many, many hours patiently explaining details of their work and family lives to us.