

Stanford SOCIAL INNOVATION REVIEW

Research
Diversity and Generosity
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INDIVIDUAL GIVING

Diversity and Generosity

► In many organizations today, leaders put a premium on making their workplace more diverse. Not only does diversity promote the values of fairness and equal opportunity, it's also potentially good for the bottom line. Some studies, for example, have shown that diversity can enhance employee performance.

But recent work by scholars at the University of Minnesota suggests that the benefits of workplace diversity extend beyond company walls. The researchers focused on the workforce of a large university, and they analyzed how differences in gender and ethnicity affected the amount of money that university employees contributed to a workplace charity drive. Because funds raised by such campaigns flow to people outside the organization, they offer one way to assess the impact of diversity on society at large.

The researchers collected a data set that combined demographic information from the university's human resources department with information on the employees' contributions to an annual charity drive. Their sample covered 487 administrative work units and included more than 16,000 people.

The study revealed some intriguing patterns. Women, overall, donated more per person than men did. But in work units where the percentage of women was higher than average, the level of giving by

men was higher as well. "There was a spillover effect," says study co-author Lisa Leslie, a psychologist at the University of Minnesota's Carlson School of Management.

Leslie and her colleagues considered but ruled out several possible explanations for this finding before concluding that it was most consistent with social role theory. According to social role theory, people assume that women have an

higher representation among black employees that largely accounted for this pattern.

The researchers explain that result by reference to social exchange theory. Because blacks have experienced a greater degree of disadvantage than other ethnic groups in the United States, they are less likely to feel generosity toward society as a whole, the researchers argue. Yet a relatively high level of black representation



"It's Christmas, Melanie. Have young Cosgrove go down to the street and give something back to the community."

inclination to help others, and they expect women to contribute to charity at high levels. An increased presence of women in a workplace, therefore, would arguably increase the willingness among men to give to charity—even if they don't actually know how much their female colleagues have donated.

Members of minority groups, overall, donated less per person than whites did. In work units with higher-than-average minority representation, however, the donation level among minority members was also higher. What's more, it was

within a work unit might signal that conditions are improving, thereby increasing the inclination among black employees to support a charity drive.

All in all, these results send a compelling message to organizational leaders who want to strengthen the connection between their company and their community. "There are positive synergies between diversity and corporate social responsibility," Leslie says. ■

Lisa M. Leslie, Mark Snyder, and Theresa M. Glomb, "Who Gives? Multilevel Effects of Gender and Ethnicity on Workplace Charitable Giving," *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 98, 2013.

CIVIL SOCIETY

What Makes People Mobilize?

► Just because there's a protest-worthy cause doesn't mean that a protest movement will, in fact, emerge. Researchers who study social movements have theorized that such mobilization tends to occur when members of a community have the right kind of political opportunity or when they have access to critical resources.

Sociologists Rachel Wright of Stanford University and Hilary Schaffer Boudet of Oregon State University have found a novel way to put those theories to the test. First of all, they decided to look not only at cases when a social movement emerged, but also at cases when that didn't happen. "Communities have a choice as to whether or not to mobilize. Some do, and some don't," Wright says.

Wright and Boudet focused on communities where a large and potentially controversial energy infrastructure project—a liquefied natural gas terminal, for instance, or a nuclear power plant—was slated for installation. The researchers combed through a federal database containing environmental impact statements for such proposed projects and chose a set of cases to research in depth. They read newspaper stories, gathered census data, and conducted interviews with people on all sides of each proposal. Drawing on that research, they identified 10 cases in which a protest movement emerged and 10