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Research

Can't Buy Me Democracy

By Alana Conner

Stanford Social Innovation Review
Fall 2008

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MANAGEMENT

A Soldier's Life for Her

► On March 13, 2006, Elizabeth A. Okoreeh-Baah did what no woman had done before: She piloted the V-22 Osprey—a flying behemoth that takes off like a helicopter and then cruises like an airplane. The Marine Corps captain and graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy joined the military for challenges like this, as well as for educational and travel opportunities. But she stays in the service in large part for the equality.

“Nowhere else would I be guaranteed equal pay to my male counterparts,” says Okoreeh-Baah. “In the Marines, I know that another person with the same rank, the same position, and the same time in the service is getting paid exactly the same as I am. But in the civilian world, women are paid about three-fourths as much as men,” she notes. “That’s a major concern.”

Such unflattering views of “the civilian world” make women and minorities in the military quite pleased with their employ, finds Jennifer Hickes Lundquist, an assistant professor at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. Across many occupations and many studies, white men report the greatest job satisfaction. But Lundquist’s research shows that in the U.S. Armed Forces, black women are happiest with their jobs, followed by black men, Latinas, Latinos, and white women. (White men are the least wowed by their work.) Lundquist’s analyses further show that women’s and minorities’ perceptions of



The military’s better than civilian life, say minorities and women such as Marine Corps Capt. Elizabeth Okoreeh-Baah, the first woman to pilot the V-22 Osprey.

better pay, promotions, and overall quality of life within the military, as compared to outside of it, drive their contentment.

“Most people don’t consider the military the best place to work because of the risk of death, loss of autonomy, constant deployment, and family separations,” Lundquist explains. “But for people who are disadvantaged in society, it’s a more level playing field.”

One field-leveler is the military’s rigid enforcement of equal employment opportunity policies. “In businesses, you can’t have top-down enforcement of equality,” says Lundquist. “And so private firms are going more into the area of diversity training, addressing inequality at the individual level rather than at the structural level.” Yet clear and consistently enforced employment, advancement, and

pay policies seem to smooth a faster path to workplace equality, other research shows. (For instance, see “Diversity Training Doesn’t Work” in the winter 2007 issue of the *Stanford Social Innovation Review*.) In the military, for example, sex ratios across occupations are more equal than among civilians.

“Having those rules written down and knowing that everyone knows about them empowers you to speak up against harassment or ill treatment,” attests Okoreeh-Baah. “The problem with most organizations is that they don’t have these things written down, and managers aren’t willing to talk about or deal with them.”

Because the military mandates evenhandedness, “there’s a lot more fraternization between people of all colors,” continues Lundquist. “[U.S.] civilian society still has so much residential and occupational segregation that some sociologists call the situation ‘apartheid.’ But in the military, people of all backgrounds live next door

to each other, shop together, work together.” This contact fosters warmer interracial relations, suggests a statistic from another one of Lundquist’s studies: Rates of interracial marriage are two to three times greater in the military than in the civilian world.

To examine gender and racial patterns in military job satisfaction, Lundquist analyzed the responses of 30,489 military service people to the Pentagon’s 1999 Survey of Active Duty Personnel. Her analyses controlled for age, education, rank, service branch, occupational area, time in service, marital status, and several other confounds.

“Often people think of the military as a conservative organization,” Lundquist concludes. But when it comes to racial and gender equality, “it has been very progressive because it wants to have efficient use of its manpower. If you have unity, you have a more efficient force.” ■

Jennifer Hickes Lundquist, “Ethnic and Gender Satisfaction in the Military: The Effect of a Meritocratic Institution,” *American Sociological Review*, 73, 2008.

DEVELOPMENT

Can’t Buy Me Democracy

► “Pretty much every agency or nonprofit out there acts under the assumption that if you help people grow economically, this will lead to democracy,” says Simon Johnson, a professor at MIT’s Sloan School of Management. Yet the widespread notion that increasing per capita income will cause democracy simply isn’t true, report Johnson and his colleagues in a



recent research article. Instead, their analyses of 500 years of data from around the world show that complex historical factors shape both economic and political development, rather than economics determining politics.

Whether your nation is currently democratic and wealthy “is very much about what your institutions were like when industrialization occurred,” explains Johnson. “Places with good institutions”—especially ones that checked executive power—“made opportunities available to a broad swath of society. And so 80 to 90 percent of the population later wound up with good rights and a decent standard of living.” But when industrialization took place in autocracies, he says, “maybe only 20 to 30 percent of the population wound up benefiting.”

People aren’t foolish to think that income and democracy are related. Indeed, a quick whiz around the modern world reveals that, generally speaking, the wealthier the country, the freer and fairer its elections, the more competitive its political parties, and the better its representation of minority groups. Although some nations buck this trend—Singapore, China, Russia, and Saudi Arabia are notably rich nondemocracies—

With a few notable exceptions, such as Saudi Arabia, income and democracy tend to travel together. Yet income does not cause democracy, show 500 years of data.

these nations lacked the rule of law or checks on executive power that would have sparked democracy. But by and large, per capita income and democratization go hand in hand.

At the same time, the old chestnut holds true: Correlation does not imply causation. The rough-and-ready conclusion that income *causes* democracy belies the complex historical processes that brought about the current state of affairs. It also leads to flawed policies and programs, points out James A. Robinson, a professor of government at Harvard University and one of the report’s authors. He notes that in Iraq, “one could argue” that the U.S. government just gave advice on economic policy and then waited for economic growth to create democracy.

To promote democracy, says Robinson, governments and nonprofits need to think harder about how to change the social institutions that either nurture or hinder it. Likewise, “businesses might also want to consider how their behavior influences the way these institu-

tions work,” he says, citing the example of the Chiquita Banana Company. Last year, the U.S. Justice Department fined the produce giant \$25 million for paying bribes to paramilitary organizations in Colombia. “Doing business in that way undermines both the democracy and prosperity of Colombia,” says Robinson.

The authors conclude that building democracy is a poorly understood, slow process. But in the near term, “development projects such as improving health care and spreading technology are all terrific,” says Johnson. “I don’t know if they will lead to democracy, but they will really improve people’s lives.” ■

Daron Acemoglu, Simon Johnson, James A. Robinson, and Pierre Yared, “Income and Democracy,” *American Economic Review*, 98, 2008.

POVERTY

Bad ‘Hoods, Naughty Kids

► People’s personalities are quite stable, etched early in life in muscles and minds. But Rutgers University psychologist Daniel Hart and colleagues find that over time, the personalities of children in poor neighborhoods not only change more

than do those of wealthier children, but also run a higher risk of taking a turn for the worse. The more rotten the barrel, their findings suggest, the more apples go bad.

“I don’t want to demonize these kids,” Hart says. “Most turn out to be very good, no matter their neighborhoods. But some kids will be hurt by these environments, in ways that jeopardize their later development.”

Using data from a long-running U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics study, Hart and his colleagues first assessed the personalities of 1,550 children at age 3 or 4. They next reassessed the same children’s personalities two years later, at age 5 or 6. Every two years for the remainder of the children’s elementary schooling, the researchers checked their academic performance (math and reading) and delinquent tendencies (e.g., fighting and shoplifting).

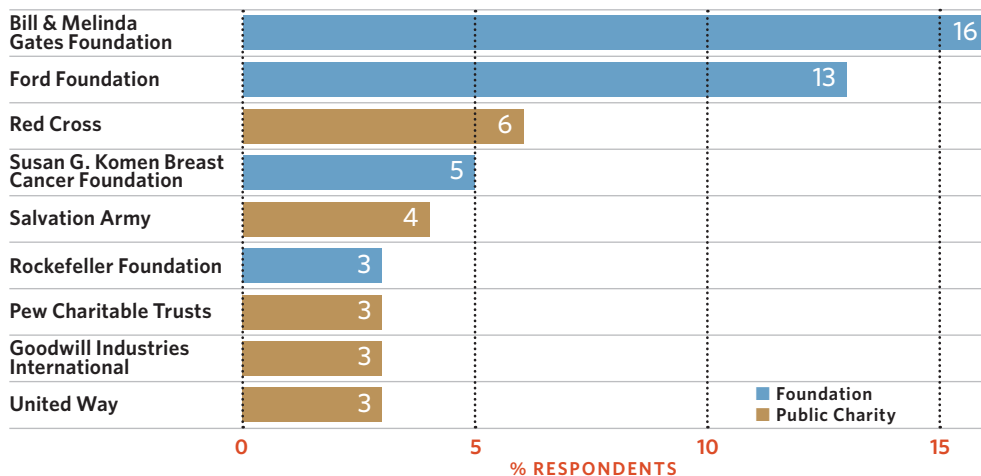
Hart and his colleagues then looked at how the economic status of children’s neighborhoods—as measured by the percentage of households living

The violence, noise, and crowding of poor neighborhoods stress kids and parents, bringing out their bad sides and breeding psychopathology.



Foundations' PR Problem

In a recent poll, researchers asked 371 leaders and board members of social purpose organizations, "When you think of foundations, which ones come to mind?" Only 44 percent of respondents correctly named a foundation on their first try. Below are their nine most popular answers. Note that only four are actually foundations.



SOURCE: *Philanthropy's Awareness Deficit: Results From Survey of Engaged Americans*. Philanthropy Awareness Initiative: 2008.

below the federal poverty line—shaped the unfolding of their personalities. Controlling for family-level factors such as household income, mother's education, and father's absence, the authors show that the poorer the neighborhood, the less resilient (e.g., even-tempered, obedient, prosocial) and more "undercontrolled" (e.g., aggressive, disobedient, antisocial) children became over time. They also demonstrate that, when the children are 11 or 12, resiliency is linked to greater reading and math skills and less delinquency, whereas undercontrol is linked to worse reading and math skills and more naughty behavior.

The stress of impoverished neighborhoods is what derails kids' development, says Hart: "Most undesirable neighborhood characteristics—noise, crowding, poor housing, exposure to crime, violence—are correlated with poverty. This chronic stress just wears people down," making it more likely that the children's underlying problems will rise to

the surface. "Some kids are more robust," he adds, "but some kids are more vulnerable."

For the robust and vulnerable alike, a little more social support from outside the neighborhood can go a long way. Poor neighborhoods tend to host a higher ratio of children to adults, which means that they have "fewer adults to provide the social web that can help communities to come together," says Hart: "Hillary Clinton's idea that 'it takes a village' is nice, but the reality is that some communities don't have enough adults to make that village."

Organizations such as Big Brothers Big Sisters of America, which import the knowledge, attention, and cultural capital of the suburbs, can keep poor kids from slipping into trouble. "Kids in the suburbs get all kinds of help from adults—summer leagues, homework tutoring, college advice," notes Hart. "There are really good and remarkable kids in poor neighborhoods who could benefit from

just a little bit of that kind of help. We should give them a chance." ■

Daniel Hart, Robert Atkins, and M. Kyle Matsuba, "The Association of Neighborhood Poverty with Personality Change in Childhood," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 94, 2008.

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

When Good Wins

► Even Google has its dry spells—those stretches when the otherwise innovative Internet company launches nary a new product. During those times, Google's informal motto "Don't be evil" and its generous corporate foundation may protect the company's coffers, says Clyde Hull, an assistant professor at the Rochester Institute of Technology's Saunders College of Business. Being socially responsible "helps companies ride out the troughs when innovation flags," he finds in research he recently coauthored with colleague Sandra Rothenberg.

Companies often rely on new products and intense advertising to leap ahead of the pack. But companies can't be brilliant all of the time, because "innovation comes in spikes," notes Hull. And some companies are just chronically uncreative. In both cases, "CSR [corporate social responsibility] can give your company that something extra to attract consumers," says Rothenberg.

For example, "if you develop a razor that will remove all of your facial hair in two seconds with no nicks or cuts," explains Hull, "people won't care if producing it kills 16 indigenous species. But if company No. 2 has the same product, being socially responsible can make you more competitive."

Using data from the socially responsible investment research firm KLD Research & Analytics Inc., Hull and Rothenberg tracked how social performance shaped returns on assets for 69 large corporations over the course of three years (1998–2001). They also examined whether a company's level of innovation—as indicated by its research and development budget—amped up or dialed down the effect of CSR on financial performance. After controlling for firm size, industry, and debt/asset ratio (a measure of risk), the authors show not only that CSR generally improves financial performance, but also that it especially helps companies when they are less innovative.

"People running a business think they have to choose between being profitable and being socially responsible," Hull says. "But our research shows that CSR never hurts. And so the question isn't 'Is CSR good?' It's 'When is CSR good?'"

Rothenberg draws parallels between the CSR movement of

today and the quality movement of 15 years ago: “People wanted to see the link between quality and performance. Now it’s just assumed. I think that’s where social responsibility is headed. Soon, I hope, we won’t need to justify every CSR decision.” ■

Clyde Eirikur Hull and Sandra Rothenberg, “Firm Performance: The Interactions of Corporate Social Performance with Innovation and Industry Differentiation,” *Strategic Management Journal*, 29, 2008.

FUNDRAISING

Help People Do the Right Thing

► Take in a Saturday matinee or put in a shift at the soup kitchen? Buy a louder sound system or donate a bigger chunk to charity? Inhale a box of Fruity Pebbles or fletcherize a bowl of bran? The ancient struggle between what we *want* to do and what we

should do besets our species at every turn. And in the clinch, virtue often loses to desire.

But researchers Todd Rogers and Max H. Bazerman have discovered one way to help people choose their *shoulds* over their *wants*: Don’t make them act now. Instead, let them choose now to act later. “When you give people the opportunity to make binding choices that will go into effect in the future,” says Rogers, “they are much more likely to do what they think they should do, rather than what they want to do.” The researchers call this tendency the “future lock-in effect.”

In one study, for example, Rogers and Bazerman asked participants how strongly they supported legislation that would reduce gas consumption—something many people think they should do—by raising gas prices—something few people

want to do. Half the participants read that the legislation would take effect in a few years, and the other half read that it would take effect as soon as possible. The researchers found that more participants supported the legislation when they understood that it would launch in the distant future than when it would launch soon.

“People think about the future differently from the way they think about the present,” explains Rogers, who conducted the research at Harvard Business School as part of his doctoral dissertation. When considering the future, “people think about high-level goals: What is this action good for?” he says. “But in the present, they think about concrete outcomes: What are the immediate consequences of this action for me?”

To get people to lay aside their pressing desires and pursue their loftier goals, “you have to get them out of thinking for the moment,” says Rogers. In four studies with more than 900 participants, he and Bazerman did just that. Their studies explore a range of scenarios, from policies that would reduce overfishing (a *should*) while increasing the price of fish (an undesirable), to plans that would make automatic retirement account contributions (a *should*) while reducing take-home pay (an undesirable). Across these studies, they show that getting people to commit to future actions, rather than to immediate ones, increases their ability to do as they should, rather than as they want.

Rogers points out that nonprofits can readily apply his findings to fundraising. When appealing to donors, “emphasize that their contributions will be implemented in the future,” he says. “With credit cards and checks, that’s easily doable.”

Indeed, the work of another scholar, Anna Breman of the University of Arizona’s Eller School of Management, shows that donors to a nonprofit in Denmark upped their regular donations more when asked to do so in the future, rather than in the present.

“People struggle to make the choices they know they should make and, at a profound level, wish that they did make,” says Rogers. By designing appeals and policies that emphasize the future rather than the present, nonprofits, foundations, and legislators can help the *shoulds* beat out the *wants*. ■

Todd Rogers and Max H. Bazerman, “Future Lock-In: Future Implementation Increases Selection of ‘Should’ Choices,” *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 106, 2008.

VOTING

Poll Position

► Want to increase government spending on education? Locate ballot boxes in schools, suggests the research of Jonah Berger and his coauthors. Their studies find that people who vote in school buildings are more likely to endorse a tax hike that supports education than are people who vote in community centers, churches, or other polling sites.

“It’s not that people are going into schools and saying, ‘These schools need more money, and so I’m going to give it to them,’” explains Berger, an assistant professor at the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania. “Rather, subtle cues in their environment—sights, sounds, smells—activate related concepts in their minds,” such as the idea that people should take care of schools. These gently activated concepts then drive people’s actions—usually without their knowing it.

“People aren’t aware that they are being exposed to these

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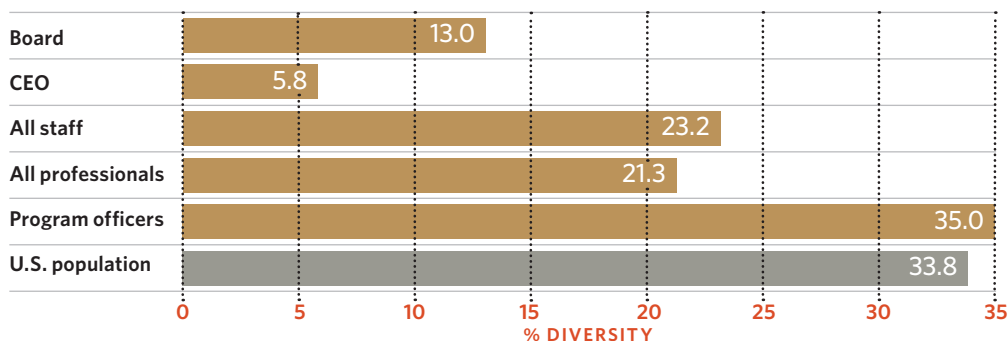
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It's Still White at the Top

Despite growing ethnic and racial diversity in foundations, white people still occupied a disproportionate number of the top positions in 2006.



SOURCE: Data from the Council on Foundations. Analyses by Jessica Chao, Julia Parshall, Desirée Amador, Meghna Shah, and Armando Yañez in *Philanthropy in a Changing Society: Achieving Effectiveness Through Diversity*, Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors, 2008.

school-related cues, and they're not aware that being exposed to these cues could influence their behavior," says Berger.

Berger and colleagues first examined voting patterns in Arizona during the 2000 general election. After controlling for regional differences in political

preferences and other confounds, the researchers found that 56.02 percent of voters polled in schools supported the tax increase, compared to 53.99 percent of voters polled in other types of sites. "That effect is large enough to tip a close election," says Berger.

Next, the researchers conducted an online experiment with 327 participants from across the United States. They found that participants who first viewed photographs of well-maintained schools in an allegedly unrelated study showed more support for a tax increase

to fund public schools than did participants who first viewed photographs of generic buildings.

The finding that subtle environmental cues nonconsciously affect behavior is one of the hottest ideas to emerge from the field of social psychology. In one of the earliest demonstrations of nonconscious priming, New York University professor John Bargh showed that undergraduates who unscrambled sentences peppered with words related to the old-age stereotype—such as bingo, Florida, and gray—later walked more slowly down a hall than did undergraduates who unscrambled neutral sentences. The effect of polling places on votes is real-world evidence of nonconscious priming at work, says Berger.

"We don't mean to suggest that people shouldn't vote in schools," Berger says. "A lot of complex factors go into

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choosing polling places,” such as their location, handicap accessibility, and parking.

“But we do want to draw more attention to the selection of polling places,” he continues. “The site should minimize the influence of environmental cues.” At schools, for example, people should vote in “multipurpose rooms without artifacts,” says Berger. “Don’t make them vote in a classroom with desks and kids’ drawings on the wall,” he advises.

Berger also cautions that his research does not imply that “people are dumb, or mindless machines that are totally influenced by their environments.” Instead, nonconscious priming shows how exquisitely attuned people are to their surroundings—which turns out to be a pretty brilliant strategy, most of the time. ■

Jonah Berger, Marc Meredith, and S. Christian Wheeler, “Contextual Priming: Where People Vote Affects How They Vote,” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 105, 2008.

LEADERSHIP

Catching Charisma

► Say what you will about Barack Obama’s campaign strategies or proposed policies, the man has a great smile. A smile that his audiences often can’t help but mirror. And that may be one reason he is so persuasive, suggests University of Florida associate professor Amir Erez and his colleagues.

“It’s emotional contagion,” explains Erez. “Charismatic leaders are happier themselves, and they spread their happiness to others.” Because people like feeling happy, they tend to follow leaders who augment their cheer.

In other words, “people are influenced by charismatic leaders because charismatic leaders

make them feel happy,” says Erez. Yet most of this mutual lovefest unfolds under the radar of awareness. As a result, followers usually cannot even say what they like about a charismatic leader, and charismatic leaders usually do not understand why people flock to them.

Erez and his team studied both undergraduates in laboratory experiments and firefighters in the real world. They first find that charismatic leaders both feel and act more joyful than do their less captivating counterparts. “They smile more, they laugh more, they are warmer,” says Erez.

The researchers then show that people working with charismatic leaders themselves feel more mirthful. Finally, the team uses statistical modeling to show that charismatic leaders’ happy feelings and expressions induce similar sanguinity in their followers.

Across the globe, dozens of other studies find that charismatic leaders are more effective, inspiring greater productivity, effort, commitment, and job satisfaction among their followers. Yet little research has explored exactly why or how charisma works.

Most previous studies focus on what charismatic leaders say or how they say it. Erez and colleagues’ studies are among the first to explore how charismatic leaders feel and how they make their followers feel.

“Leaders should know that they influence followers’ emotions,” says Erez. “They should wield that power carefully.” ■

Amir Erez, Vilmos F. Misangyi, Diane E. Johnson, Marcie A. LePine, and Kent C. Halverson, “Stirring the Hearts of Followers: Charismatic Leadership as the Transference of Affect,” *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 93, 2008.

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