

### *To the Victors Goes the Sleep*

Darkness reigns in the executive suites of major Japanese corporations after 6 P.M., while subordinates' lights burn late into the night. Just the opposite is true in U.S. corporations, three Japanese researchers were astonished to discover. Their findings are summarized by Wallace H. Offutt, Jr., in *Across the Board* (April 1990).

*Do Japanese CEOs work harder than American CEOs? You might expect them to, based on the enormous success of Japanese corporations and the many stories we hear about how hard everyone in Japan works. But . . . the typical Japanese CEO, in spite of considerably longer commuting time, sleeps on average one hour and 15 minutes longer and has nearly an hour more private time*

*each day than does his American counterpart. Moreover, the American CEO spends almost as much of his day in meetings as does the CEO in Japan—the country where so many decisions are made through nemawashi, the time-consuming process of consensus-building. Perhaps most surprising, U.S. and Japanese CEOs spend about the same amount of time entertaining guests after work . . . In both Japan and the United States, executives spend an average of 6.3 hours per day in meetings . . . The Japanese CEOs found that [meetings with subordinates] produced information most useful for work-scheduling and new product development, while Americans gained knowledge that was most useful for personnel management and evaluation.*

ment: human relations, organizational development, and organizational design.

The subject seemed closed until 1978, when Richard Franke and James Kaul took another look at the Hawthorne data. They argued that the original researchers, lacking sophisticated statistical techniques, had blundered: When they could not find reasons for changes in worker output in their reams of data, they had simply attributed changes to "soft" human-relations factors. In fact, Franke and Kaul said, a new analysis of the numbers showed that virtually all of the changes in output could be explained by external factors, such as workers' fear of losing their jobs as the Depression deepened after 1929, and by plain old-fashioned discipline imposed by management. They even suggested that the famed Hawthorne Effect

was a mirage.

Jones's essay is the latest installment in a running battle that has been going on since 1978. Jones argues that his own complex statistical manipulations of the data from the Hawthorne plant's relay assembly test room between 1927 and 1932, where five women worked, show that "interdependence" was crucial after all. "The human relations approach to industrial sociology," he maintains, "is not controverted by the original Hawthorne data from which it began."

Still, embarrassing questions remain. Why must the original findings be "proved" half a century after they were incorporated into the foundation of social science? Why did social scientists accept for so long conclusions that were actually based on the *absence* of evidence?

---

## SOCIETY

---

### *The Old-Age Crisis*

"The Aging of America: Impact on Health Care Costs" by Edward L. Schneider and Jack M. Guralnik, in *Journal of the American Medical Association* (May 2, 1990), 535 N. Dearborn St., Chicago, Ill. 60610.

Somewhere in America on January 1, 2031, the first baby boomer will celebrate

his or her 85th birthday. Quite possibly in a nursing home.

Those two facts ought to sound an alarm in a nation already bearing monumental health-care costs, write Schneider and Guralnik, researchers at the University of Southern California and the National Institute on Aging, respectively. These costs grew nearly twice as fast as inflation between 1976 and 1987, reaching \$500 billion, or 11 percent of the gross national product.

Much of the increase is the result of the "aging of the aged": The over-85 age group is already the fastest-growing segment of the population. The U.S. Census Bureau's highest (but most credible) estimate is that the over-85 group will grow from 3 million today to 8.6 million by the year 2020 and to 17.8 million by 2040. By then, there will be more than a million Americans aged 100 or older.

Simple demographic projections show with stark clarity what may be in store for the United States. In 1985, for example, the budget for Medicare (federal health insurance for the aged) was \$72 billion. But Medicare outlays increase "substantially" with age, from \$2,017 annually for those aged 65 to 74 to \$3,215 for those aged 85 and above. By 2040, therefore, Medicare could rise to between \$147 and \$212 billion, depending on the demographic assumptions used.

That provides only a partial snapshot of

the future, since Washington picks up only part of the tab for the care of the elderly. For example, it pays only 40 percent of the cost of nursing-home care. In 1986, 1.8 million people over age 65 were living in nursing homes, at a total cost of \$31 billion. (Those over 85 accounted for 45 percent of the nursing-home patients but more than half the costs.) By 2040, the number of elderly nursing-home patients could grow to between 3.6 and 5.9 million, more than half of them over 85. The bill: \$84 to \$189 billion.

Many remedies have been proposed for the rising costs. Some specialists favor cost-containment measures; others, such as former Governor Richard Lamm of Colorado, have even proposed limiting medical care to the relief of suffering after an individual has lived out a "natural" life span of perhaps 80 years. But Schneider and Guralnik argue that medical research, which has done so much to lengthen lives, can now be redirected to improve their quality. Today, for every dollar spent on the care of victims of Alzheimer's disease, less than a penny is spent on research into its causes. By attacking Alzheimer's and other debilitating maladies of the elderly, such as arthritis and Parkinson's disease; we could reduce future health-care costs and make many lives already sure to be longer happier as well.

## *The Charmed Life Of Head Start*

"Head Start Enters Adulthood" by Constance Hold, in *Science* (March 23, 1990), 1333 H St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005.

It may be one of the great success stories of modern American politics: A liberal social program launched 25 years ago as part of President Lyndon B. Johnson's Great Society gains such popularity that a conservative Republican, President George Bush, asks Congress to increase its \$1.4 billion budget by 28 percent. And to top it all off, writes Hold, a *Science* reporter, there is hardly a shred of proof that Head Start does what most people think it does.

The original idea behind Head Start was that a brief intervention very early in the

lives of poor children could raise their IQs and "inoculate" them against the depredations of their environment. But that hope began to crumble as early as 1969, when a study showed that children's preschool gains evaporated by the time they reached the third or fourth grade—a finding since confirmed by other studies.

Today, Head Start's advocates maintain that the program serves as a bridge to the world of the school, giving poor children a valuable introduction to middle-class culture: "Many have never seen a book, give