

MARQUIS,

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NOTES: (1) (AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE FORD FOUNDATION)

Many persons naturally jump to the inference that the Ford Foundation will be local in operation and will represent the personal interests of the Ford family. It may be desirable to include specific contradictions on these points in some public statement.

It is undesirable to state the aims of the Ford Foundation in any but the most general terms. A more specific statement, which might provide guidance for program selection, will be found to be debatable and it may easily become dated. The restrictions on the field of interest of the Foundation can better be stated as a "current interpretation" of the general aims.

Our statement of aims may well emphasize the nature of the public responsibility of the Foundation; the peculiar opportunities afforded the last large private foundation; and the critical times in which it undertakes its task.

NOTES: (2) SAMPLE PROGRAM AREAS

I. Basic Support of Social Science. If it is agreed that scientific work in the social disciplines should be facilitated, it is then necessary to decide how best to accomplish this purpose. Analysis of current work in social science indicates that a uniform expansion would have less than the desired effects -- there is no shortage of total personnel or of students, and there is research money for any qualified scientist who is in a position to make good use of it. The situation demands some selective action in order to increase the opportunities for research and the number of qualified research scientists. Some way must be found to maximize the influence of the small number of individuals who can do effective work in social science, but who now are scattering their efforts in teaching, administrative work or casual research.

It is proposed that the Foundation select 15 to 25 of the most promising research scientists for appointment as Ford Fellows in Social Science. A portion of the salary of each person would be paid by the Foundation in order to free him from irrelevant tasks, and funds for a 5-year research program (ca. 25,000 to 75,000 per year) would be secured from a government or foundation source. Each person would be expected to train a group of graduate students and fellows in his project. The key to the continued effectiveness of the program is a 4-week meeting of the Fellows under congenial conditions each summer, at which the research projects are intensively discussed. By means of the group pressures which would be generated, the standards of excellence could be reinforced and the rewards of group membership would substitute for the power and security motivations which pull such persons away from research.

NOTES: (3) CRITERIA FOR SELECTION OF PROGRAM AREAS

The selection of broad programs for support by the Foundation is a matter of judgment for which there are no rigorous guides. Decisions of this sort are constantly being made, but the basis of the decisions is ordinarily not explicitly stated. It seems desirable, nevertheless, to attempt some formulation of the criteria by which such decisions can be made. The following suggestions are based on an analysis of the decision process as seen in a variety of situations requiring choice of program areas.

Three sets of criteria may be applied in the evaluation of a proposed program: (1) the welfare potential, (2) the technical potential, and (3) the practical feasibility of the program.

Welfare Potential. The ultimate value of work in any program area must be judged in terms of the contribution to human welfare of the anticipated end-result of the program. It is necessary to assess the importance of the area for welfare and the degree of deficiency now existing. For example, the welfare potential of health is very high, but the degree of current deficiency is less in pneumonia than in neurosis.

Judgments of welfare potential will ordinarily be made by the staff and trustees of the Foundation who should be selected with this requirement in mind.

The most basic (pure) scientific research cannot be evaluated in terms of welfare potential, since it is characteristic of pure theoretical research that the end-application cannot be anticipated.

Technical Potential. In addition to the welfare potential of an area, it is necessary to evaluate the likelihood that a program of effort would produce the new knowledge or skills which would be utilized for the welfare objective. This evaluation is essentially a prediction that the work will be fruitful. The assessment of technical potential is therefore best made by persons who are expert in the field under consideration since it involves, not only a full knowledge of the current status of the program, but also an estimate of the potentialities of expanded or accelerated work.

Whether there are any objective guides for the assessment of technical potential is not entirely clear. A supplementary memorandum outlines a draft of an intent to suggest a guide on the basis of an analysis in eight categories of current activity in a field.

Practical Feasibility. Although a program may be considered high in welfare potential and technical potential, there may be practical considerations which render it not feasible. In this category it would be necessary to consider the number and calibre of the personnel available for work, the institutional and administrative arrangements under which the work might be prosecuted, the availability of facilities for the work, and other social and economic conditions which might place restrictions upon the carrying forward of the work or upon the subsequent utilization of the results through publication and application.

NOTES: (4) MANNER OF FOUNDATION OPERATION

The following suggestions are based on the attitudes of recipients and potential recipients of foundation support. In general, everyone feels that his field of work is "neglected" and deserving of support, and that "good men should be subsidized".

The attitudes expressed by respondents toward foundations fall naturally into two classes. Many scholars feel that the resources of a foundation should be devoted to increasing the freedom of scholarly work by means of unrestricted long-time grants to individuals. In general these individuals do not appreciate the difficulty of administration of such a program. On the other hand, many persons recommend that foundation support should be utilized to facilitate organized programs of work which guarantee the integration and coordination of sufficient effort to result in an appreciable and usable advance in knowledge. It is often suggested that the foundation responsibility ends with the instigation of the program of work and that the monitoring of the program should be left to designated individuals who administer the funds.

There is general agreement that grants are preferable to contracts in the support of research. Scholars do not like to have to make periodic progress reports and strongly prefer to leave the auditing of expenditures to the institution with which they are connected. There is also clear agreement that grants should be made for a period longer than one year, the optimum time being between three and five years.

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2. Program design to facilitate effective research. (Marquis, D.G. Research Planning at the Frontiers of Science. Amer. Psychol., 1948, 3, 430-438).