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Suggested Program Area  
SOCIAL (HUMAN) RELATIONS

Fundamental in our modern civilization are the relationships of individual to individual, individual to group, and group to group. More complete knowledge, greater dissemination of knowledge, and certainly more effective application of knowledge of these relationships are requisite to general promotion of the human welfare and represent a most challenging and highly significant area for Ford Foundation support.

The following critical factors or components of a Social (Human) Relations program area may be distinguished:

1. Human Motivation - those motives, ideas, needs, or emotions within the individual, rather than without, which determine choice and incite him to action.
2. Human Values - those ethical or moral principles or standards by which individuals estimate the merit, excellence, or character of an action, purpose, or goal.
3. Human Organization and Administration - the conditions requisite for effective human effort involving participation or membership by individuals constituted into a whole of interdependent parts, each having a special function or relation with respect to the whole. Administration encompasses the management and direction of the conduct of group affairs.
4. Communications - intercourse at various levels involving interchange of thoughts or opinions, particularly between or among individuals or groups within an organization, and between or among different organizations.



5. Industrial Relations - the affairs, dealings, or the mutual or reciprocal interests of individuals and/or groups within the business unit, industry, area, nation, or society. Included are not only the relations of labor to management but of members of labor unions to their unions, local unions to national and international unions, and of one level of management to another.

6. Minority Tensions - the tensions resulting from strained conditions, hostility, or conflict between or among racial, cultural or class groups.

7. Governmental Relations - the affairs, dealings, or the mutual or reciprocal interests of governmental units with individuals or groups or organizations within the community, state, nation, or society, or the relations between or among governmental units.

8. International Relations - the affairs, dealings, or mutual or reciprocal interests of governments of two or more nations.

Certain major boundaries and central problems of this comprehensive field were well expressed at least as early as 1937 in a Report of the Sub-Committee on Competitive-Cooperative Habits, of the Committee on Personality and Culture, of the Social Science Research Council.<sup>1</sup>

In terms of scientific disciplines, the boundaries were described as "those fields of inquiry that consider, among other things, human beings and their social interactions. Certain of these sciences, notably the biological groups, are concerned with man as a physical organism; others, especially psychology and psychiatry, are concerned

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<sup>1</sup>The members of this Sub-Committee were Dr. Mark A. May, Chairman, Gordon Allport, and Gardner Murphy. The Report is entitled "Competition and Cooperation," Social Science Research Council Bulletin No.25, April 1937.



with problems of behavior and with mental processes and structures; still others, the social sciences, are concerned with the structure of society, its populations, institutions, and traditions. But the study of the individual as a social unit does not come wholly within the purview of any of the existing sciences. The biological sciences deal mainly with the organic functions, patterns, and mechanisms of behavior; the social sciences with the patterns and structures of the culture. Both are abstract and neither is primarily concerned with the total individual as a living, functioning, socialized being."<sup>1</sup>

The following statements included in the Report referred to above are pertinent in presenting a perspective for considering the general importance of this proposed program area. A basic need is for the determination of "the process by which the individual, with ... basic equipment of undifferentiated organic drives, becomes socialized in a culture and thereby achieves a personality.... From the moment of delivery, the culture begins to work on...basic biological impulses and instincts. Each is patterned by a process of socialization... In general, the culture is transmitted by persons and institutions and through a wide variety of techniques including rewards, punishments, persuasions, etc.... One of the most exciting lines of inquiry is to find out how these patterns of culture become a part of a child's personality, how he reacts to them and to the process of receiving or rejecting them, and how, in short, he develops into an individual."<sup>2</sup>

"This statement of the problem from the standpoint of the individual should be supplemented by a statement from the obverse standpoint of how the culture is influenced by the personality and

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 1

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 1-2



social activities of an individual or group of individuals.... The greatest of all human experiments, indeed the chief end of man, is to discover or invent a culture that is most congenial to the nature of the biological constitutions of those who share it. The complexity of the problem is multiplied many fold by the supposed range of individual differences in basic biological potentialities."<sup>1</sup>

In order for future research in this proposed program area to have promise of "fruitful outcomes," a framework of basic guiding concepts must necessarily be developed. The emphasis should be on flexibility, however, rather than on any ambitious theory of human behavior. The Sub-Committee on Competitive-Cooperative Habits began this process as early as 1937 by seeking answers to "four crucial questions" which were stated as follows:<sup>2</sup>

1. Why do individuals compete or cooperate?
2. For what things do they compete or cooperate?
3. With what persons do they cooperate at all, or compete rather than cooperate, or cooperate rather than compete?
4. In what manner do they compete or cooperate?

The Committee pointed out that the concepts of competition and cooperation occupy a prominent place in social theory. "In short, these two Latin derivatives, the former meaning to strive together and the latter to work together, embrace a multitude of connotations bearing on the central problem of human relations." The Sub-Committee hastened to point out, however, that "as aids to the understanding of concrete situations and as guiding concepts for research [the terms cooperation and competition] require more precise definitions."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 2

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 7

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 3



That is, "that the behavior which the terms represent be understood in the light of the psychology of the individuals who are behaving."<sup>1</sup>

In comment on the above questions the Sub-Committee stated that "The first question is clearly one concerning motivation,"<sup>2</sup> a topic which had the virtue of attracting "a welter of conflicting theories." Accordingly, the Sub-Committee undertook "to outline a conception of motivation that is broad enough to comprehend the known facts not only about cooperation and competition but also about personality and culture as well;" yet "...narrow enough to contain a minimum number of postulates."<sup>3</sup>

Certainly, before one can understand why an individual sometimes strives with and at other times against other persons it is necessary to learn first why he strives at all, and it was the Sub-Committee's belief that "In all except grossly abnormal personalities there exist various and sundry discrepancies or gaps between the levels of achievement and those of aspiration, or between what the individual now is or has and what he would like to be or have." It was their contention "that motivation is a function of these discrepancies."<sup>4</sup>

The Sub-Committee stated further, "To round out this conception of motivation many related questions should be considered. One is that of accounting for the level of aspiration possessed by any given individual. Even though this question is of extreme importance...it cannot be considered...in any great detail for the reason that the answer to it will probably be found only by a genetic study of specific individuals in their specific cultures. The essential data for such studies are not now available;..."<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 6

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 7

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 7

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 8

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 9



In comment upon the second question posed above, the Sub-Committee asserted that individuals "compete or cooperate to get the goals they want. The nature and intensity of their wants is determined largely by the nature and width of the gaps between their levels of achievement and aspiration....[Although] human wants are extremely complex and varied...the goals for which individuals compete or cooperate, in both primitive and modern cultures, can be brought under two categories: objects (material gain) and prestige.... Of course, it is possible to observe that all human beings require and therefore crave the inevitable trinity of food, clothing, and shelter,... At the same time the concrete kinds of food, clothing, and shelter do vary with the culture and the social values that are considered important by the inhabitants...[i.e., these material goals are] carriers of prestige to those who possess them...the ways in which material objects and prestige become interrelated and structured through the culture's scale of social values vary enormously. From the long-time point of view, these culturally determined patterns of value both cause the discrepancies between levels of achievement and aspiration to arise and also provide opportunities for closing the gaps."<sup>1</sup>

The next step is to consider the concept of attitude, i.e. "the individual's permanent sets to behave in certain ways" which are "fundamentally rooted in the personality by a developmental process of socialization." Attitudes "represent the emotional predispositions that are the total product and integration of an individual's reactions to his experience."<sup>2</sup> The whole wealth of inter-individual relations and the entire pattern of social friendliness or hostility demand analysis in order to understand "the genesis and arousal" of specific attitudes.

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 9-10

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 12



In the fourth question raised, i.e. in what manner do individuals compete or cooperate, the Committee points out that we are concerned both with "the general form of the behavior involved" and "the quantity and quality of...performance in action." The former will be partially dependent upon the rules of the situation, although it may be demonstrated "that these rules, by and large, are derived from the culture;". The latter are also "partially--a function of the skills" possessed by persons in particular situations.<sup>1</sup>

The Sub-Committee points out that "Goals, persons, rules, and performances are four concepts which can be employed when groups of individuals are being observed or when a single individual is being observed relatively casually---...a social (or 'objective') level of discourse. Discrepancy, knowledge, attitude, and skill, on the other hand, are four concepts which can be employed when a single individual (or perhaps two...or...three) is being observed relatively thoroughly---...a psychological (or 'subjective') level of discourse....

"Whether or not a given phenomenon should be described and analyzed on a social level or on a psychological level depends upon the interest and the ability of the outside observer. In the natural sciences the experimenter is assumed to have a neutral attitude when he carries on his experiment:....

"It is a fact...that social scientists who in the contemporary academic world are known as anthropologists, economists, political scientists, and sociologists (and including a great many psychologists too) have been trained in such a way that they perceive only certain broad aspects of social behavior on one level."

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 13-14



The Committee proposed that "the unit of social science research is the form of behavior which represents the total configuration of behavior in any given situation."<sup>1</sup>

It was the opinion of the Committee that a tentative theory such as the one described above might be used as a guide for "research toward strategic points" without circumscribing "the boundaries of research too closely."<sup>2</sup> The ultimate goal (as of all science) "is the development of theories (or laws) by which the complex phenomena of life may be understood without the necessity of resorting to tedious investigations of each new situation."<sup>3</sup>

Although some progress has been made during the twelve-year period since the Sub-Committee's Report was published, such progress (both fundamental and applied) has been all too meager compared with the great needs. Generally speaking, there have not been really imaginative and integrated programs of investigation in this area. It is suggested that the Ford Foundation should support several Social (Human) Relations Centers in universities which would be interdisciplinary in fact as well as in mere form, at which research would be carried on, provision made for "exchange" of ideas with potential users of results at various stages on a "two-way street" basis, and provision made for publication in readily usable form in order to promote effective application of significant results.

Foundation activity in this program area may well constitute a yardstick by which to test progress and to point out possibilities of significant future progress by other groups which are also active within the broad program area. In this way such of the necessarily

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 14-15

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 18

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 19



limited Foundation resources as are devoted to Social (Human) Relations can have a more far-reaching effect than would be the case if the Foundation itself were to attempt to account for the bulk of the significant expenditures in the field.

Foundation support should be sufficient to allow for the efficient utilization of participants from the various disciplines. It is sometimes necessary to have several projects under simultaneous attack so that significant events requiring the passage of time can take place. By undertaking different, though related, plans of attack in the same or in different centers, critical data may be checked for validity and methods may be checked for adequacy so that it will be reasonably certain that important variables are not being overlooked which are operative in unusual ways in a specific case.

Allocation of support to a given center on a continuing basis will (1) make it feasible for the director to devote considerable time and energy to the training of staff members, and (2) enable young men in what may be termed the areas of "social action" to serve internships, experienced leaders to hold fellowships, graduate students to hold scholarships, and research men trained in related fields to hold post-doctoral fellowships.

New developments in research methods and new working hypotheses as to determinants of human nature and human activity should be aired in their early stages at periodic conferences of the several complementary center staffs. Written media for the exchange of information on a systematic basis should also be encouraged by Foundation support.

Moreover, the significant results arrived at, as tested and verified in conference discussions, should be organized into new forms for early presentation on a meaningful basis to the major "action groups" involved. A continuous process of education and communication



at all significant levels should be undertaken and tested periodically for results.

Conferences should be arranged among groups or teams working in the several "components" of the program area (e.g. industrial relations teams with governmental relations teams and minority tensions teams) for the purpose of correlating experience. In this way the findings can be applied eventually to a more fundamental attack upon basic questions which cut across specific boundaries set in the necessary demarcation of operating areas.

This proposal recognizes present defects in social science methods and in the training of personnel. It is believed that significant progress can be made with the resources which we now have while simultaneously attention is given to the defects referred to above.

In addition, grants to support teaching and the transmission of knowledge in this program area are strongly recommended. These grants should best be made to "pace-setter" institutions and should cover both instruction to undergraduate and graduate students interested in the area and, perhaps of greater importance, the training of teachers whose interdisciplinary approach will increase the possibilities for success in such teaching.

In order to justify substantial support of this proposed program area, certain of the components referred to above are treated in some considerable detail in the following pages. The following important components are being covered by Dr. Marquis: (1) Human Motivation, (2) Human Values, and (4) Communications. We assume that Dr. Odegard's report will have material bearing on components (7) Governmental Relations and (8) International Relations.