

Comment from Jack S. Morrison: It has been observed that we west of the Mississippi are rather sensitive about the geo-political nature of national organizations. There is no question in my mind but what this organization's center should be in or about New York. Let's see, however, if sociometric principle can beat this cleavage, an unsolved problem in the professional societies I know.

Comment from Read Bain: (In regard to Choice according to Preference for Co-workers) Not clear—should read: If I were chosen President, I'd choose for Secretary . . . for Treasurer . . . and so on for the other two offices. Makes considerable difference whom one would choose if he were chosen for anyone of the three offices.

Members of the society are invited to contribute their comments as to how the sociometric technique of election can be modified and refined. We will try to incorporate their comments and suggestions into the next sociometric ballot.

IDEAS AND PLANS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A SOCIOMETRIC SOCIETY

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The American Sociometric Association is to be an experiment in society-creation. Instead of studying the structure of an already existing society, its institutions, the character of its people and its social pathology post mortem, one can concentrate on creating new societies with institutions of an original order, checked and controlled from step to step, as they develop from the present into the future.

The members of this society, by the very act of electing its officers, have elected themselves as members into the society. By doing this, the society itself has come into existence. This is as it should be. It is a society *sui generis*, the first of its kind in the history of civilization. It is not an "experiment of nature" showing, after a period of unconscious development sociodynamic regularities. It is not the act of one mind or the decision of a few founders. It is the conscious, social act of its total present membership, creating the society and becoming members of the society by means of this act.

The formation of this society may be considered one day as a political deed of the first order, its membership should succeed to maintain consistently its sociometric and self-propelling character. The open implication of

the experiment is that what is possible for a little social cosmos of one hundred, should be possible for a group of any size. In order to keep from the very start full scientific control of the development of our society, we must vigilantly consider every factor which enters into its formation, fully conscious that every decision which we are making as a group may have beneficial or fatal consequences for the future destiny of the society.

Let us consider therefore, the elements which we have already thrown into this society in formation. In the first place, in order that the society can define itself, we have introduced an instrument suitable for self-finding, self-exploration and self-decision—the sociometric procedure. As it is planned to use this instrument repeatedly, every time the group is to make a significant choice or decision, the sociometric procedure must be considered as the *first social institution* which the society recognizes and permits to establish and perpetuate itself. The acceptance of the sociometric instrument has not taken place blindly but is the result of many years of study by a large number of sociometrists. The degree, of course, to which the sociometric instrument will be used, would depend entirely upon the society's total membership from time to time. It will depend on the degree of sociometric consciousness, the dynamic structure of its groups which it will permit to come into operation on the surface.

Membership Criteria

The abstract membership, characteristic for many scientific societies, should be replaced by a type of functional and concrete membership. The criterion of a member should not be what he is to the society in abstract terms, but what he can produce for it because of his scientific capacities and the contributions he makes to the community in which he lives. The criterion of membership should therefore be based on *the role in which a prospective member is most productive*. One may be most productive because he is a researcher, another because he is a scholar, a third because he is a teacher, a fourth because he is a practitioner. In the community at large individuals who function in various roles, as physician, lawyer, artisan, or minister, may have earned the full respect of their fellow men *each in his own capacity*. However different their prestige status may be, their status as specialists is fulfilling a community need of equal rank. An exchange of service is continuously going on in the community to the benefit of all. In this sense a sociometric society should not limit itself to the admission to membership of persons with an academic degree, but permit individuals of all types to become members if they can make a contribution, in a particular role. There

should be many categories of membership, as related to a concrete field of operation, each with a different *role-character*. A member is then not a member in an abstract sense, but in the role-character in which he is chosen. When, for instance, applicants for membership are presented before the society, they would not apply to become members in *general*, but in reference to a specific criterion and role. Dr. A for instance, has made a contribution to the group organization of industrial units. He has no connection with a university and therefore does not function in the role of a teacher, his scholarly aptitude is average, or small, he is primarily a researcher. If his membership is accepted, he is accepted into membership category R, within the area of research. Another member may be admitted because he is a teacher of sociometry in a university. He has never made any contribution to sociometry, he is admitted as member in category T. Another may be admitted as fulfilling both criteria, researcher and teacher. He will then be admitted as member in category R and T. Another applicant may be admitted because of his contribution to the historical development of sociometry and also because of being a teacher and researcher, he will fall into the category of R, T, and S. Another individual at last, may have no degrees, but may be employed in a large industrial concern and engaged in applying sociometric principles to his work situation, he is a *practitioner*—P. He may be admitted as member in reference to the criterion P. In this manner *the society will be divided and sub-divided into several operational areas*. Into each area will fall members of each of the categories enumerated above. New operational areas could be added to the ones mentioned, certain members will fall only into one area, some in two or three, and perhaps some in all. The operational status of a member will be clarified by the initials following his membership, for instance, R, S, T, or P. Sociometric tests will disclose association between *like* individuals and roles and natural cleavages between one or another group within the society. On the other hand, on many occasions we may see that members of various operational areas might cooperate in certain committees and tasks. We may then see an exchange of influence taking place between the practitioner and the researcher, the scholar and the teacher, and so forth.

*Division of the Society into Regions and
Local Units on a Sociometric Basis*

The society will be sub-divided into regional and local units, the chairman of that unit being that member which has shown the highest score in the sociometric test procedure just taken. For instance, Dr. B may not

have been chosen for the Executive Committee at large, but shows the highest scoring for Oklahoma, Texas, etc. In the District of Columbia Dr. C. may have shown the highest scoring although he is not elected for the Executive Committee. He would therefore be the logical sociometric chairman for the Washington, D. C., region, and so forth.

*Active Participation of Members in
Forum of a Sociometric Test*

Every member is to contribute an annual paper on a research project in progress. The journal SOCIOMETRY has agreed to reserve for every member the space of 300 words. These projects will be published in SOCIOMETRY or in special issues thereof. All members are invited to send in the problem area of their research which will be listed regularly in current issues of SOCIOMETRY. Such members who do not have any project in mind, may assign their printing space to another member whose topic they favor. This will be carried out like a sociometric test, certain focal topics and focal members may receive the major share of space from the members. The space which these most chosen researchers will receive will be in proportion to the quantity of choice received.

The result is that the research space which the society provides for publication to its members will be stratified in accord with the status which a member has attained among his fellow members. One may receive fifty times three hundred words, because fifty members have considered him as particularly qualified and his topic particularly significant and have assigned their space to him. Others may receive only ten times 300 words, some may not have received any space from others, but use the space of 300 words allotted to them. Some may give their space to others and not use it themselves. Finally there may be some who might not use their space but also do not choose to give it to others. The result will be a sociogram of which the criterion will be the numbers of words given or received. As a matter of principle such members who do not participate will cease, in the course of years, to be members of the society automatically. The professional status and the paying of dues should *not* be considered sufficient for maintaining membership.

The manuscripts of the one hundred Research Projects (one hundred members) should be in the hands of the Editors of SOCIOMETRY latest by December 31, 1945, covering a minimum of 30,000 words.

Constitution and By-laws

A constitution and by-laws are being prepared and will be presented to

the members for consideration. Meanwhile new applications for membership are received and considered, the final decision to be made after criteria for membership to the A.S.A. have been established.

A Three Year Plan

Since sociometric activities began to spread in the United States almost fifteen years have gone by, and thousands of active workers have been influenced by its principles. If during the next three years these potential members could be activated, a large sociometric society could be established in this period.

Ideas and Plans for the Development of a Sociometric Society

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