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THE VANISHING SOCIOLOGY-SOCIAL WORK ALLIANCE:  
A STUDY IN THE POLITICS OF PROFESSIONALISM\*

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ABSTRACT

The undergraduate sociology-social work alliance in sociology departments has a long tradition in American colleges despite ideological differences between the two disciplines. Recently this old alliance shows signs of disintegration. This paper argues that the recent emphasis on professionalization of undergraduate social work through the use of accrediting standards coupled with the control of Federal social work training grants have placed new pressures on the old alliance. Evidence is presented which indicates that the conflict is being resolved in the direction of greater administrative specialization and autonomy for social work.

The traditional alliance between undergraduate social work and sociology currently is undergoing rapid and extensive alteration. Some members of each discipline view this change as a major crisis; for others the change simply represents long needed reform. The purpose of this paper is to examine the organizational dynamics involved in sustaining and eroding the stability of that alliance. The source of both the long period of relative stability and the recent period of rapid change cannot be found in the ideological differences between the two disciplines for these have existed since the inception of the alliance. Rather, it is argued, the alliance provided a variety of advantages to each discipline as long as administrative and curricular relationships were determined principally within institutions of higher education. It has been the largely externally centered

\*The authors' names are ordered alphabetically. We wish to acknowledge Dr. Joseph Sheehan's comments and suggestions.

politics of professionalism that has generated the internal conflicts which many undergraduate sociology-social work departments are now experiencing.

Sociology departments have had a long tradition of teaching undergraduate social work courses in colleges and universities. The sociology-social work relationship dates from the rise of the social science movement in the 1840's (Davis, 1975) and was strongly influenced by the successive waves of social reform movements which influenced the development of a social pathology paradigm that is so characteristic of American sociology. The social pathology paradigm in sociology helped provide the theoretical rationale for locating the source of social problems within the individual, thus adding legitimacy to the development of the social casework method which was basic to the professionalization of social work. The historical coincidence of perspectives between sociology and social work was the starting point of a continuing relationship in undergraduate sociology departments with professional training in social work reserved for the separate graduate schools. The evidence for the traditional relationship can be found in surveys of undergraduate sociology curricula dating from 1900 through 1970. These surveys all clearly demonstrate that social work courses have been an important fixture in sociology curricula.

The earliest surveys (Tolman, 1902; Bernard, 1909; Chapin, 1911) reveal few distinctly social work courses except "Public Welfare" due to the pre-eminence of the social pathology paradigm and the applied emphasis in sociology. It is apparent from a comparison of course titles in early sociology curricula (Kennedy and Kennedy, 1942) and in the curricula of the first schools of philanthropy (Steiner, 1921:492) that there was considerable overlap in subject matter. Much of the curricula in sociology which later would have carried a social work designation was at that time incorporated in courses with titles such as Social Problems, Population Problems, Social Disorganization, Applied Sociology, Practical Sociology, Poverty and Dependency, and "Deviants."

By 1941, social work courses were clearly identified in curriculum surveys and were an important component of undergraduate sociology programs. Kennedy and Kennedy (1942) found that Social Work ranked fourth, Public Welfare thirteenth and Child Welfare fourteenth in frequency of sociology course offerings. These three courses together accounted for eleven percent of sociology department courses. A replication of the 1941 survey in 1957 (Podell, Vogelfanger, and Rogers, 1959) showed that Social Work ranked sixth, Public Welfare twentieth, and Child Welfare twenty-fourth in frequency of course offerings. The

three courses accounted for eight percent of sociology course offerings in 1957 compared with thirteen percent in 1941. Using a broader definition of social work related courses, Social Welfare and Reform, Social Work accounted for thirteen percent of sociology courses.

Gates' (1969:325) survey of small liberal arts colleges in 1963 revealed that the introductory social work course ranked ninth among sociology offerings and that sixty percent of the colleges offered the course. Reid and Bates (1971), using a more broadly based sample of colleges and universities produced almost identical results. Although the results of these latter two surveys are not completely comparable with the earlier surveys, it appears that social work course offerings may have declined slightly during the 1960's. However, it should also be emphasized that it was the popularity of other specialty areas, particularly anthropology and criminology-deviance, which produced the relative decline in social work courses and not an absolute decline in social work courses themselves. On balance, then, the evidence indicates that social work has been an integral part of undergraduate sociology programs since the turn of the century.

#### The Uneasy Alliance

##### The Sociologists' Perspective

Sociology has been openly ambivalent about its joint departmental arrangements with social work for a long time. During the early years of the alliance many sociologists defined social work as applied sociology. For example, writing just after 1900, Cutler (1911:761) offered suggestions on "how to correlate courses in sociology which shall meet the requirements of the modern university with the practical social work ... for which there is so great need." He lamented "universities giving instruction in sociology but giving little or no detailed consideration to the practical applied aspects of the subject and schools of philanthropy offering preparation for definite lines of social work but giving little or no consideration to the subject of sociology." His recommendation for undergraduate curriculum in sociology emphasized making "extensions in the direction of giving definite and effective preparation for specific lines of practical social work." Other sociologists attempted to define a role for "applied" sociology (Henderson, 1912) and "clinical" sociology (Wirth, 1931).

If sociology was strongly imbued with the reform ideology during the period of its initial academic institutionalization, the second generation of sociologists sought academic respectability for the discipline by identifying themselves with scientific ideology. Sociology sought first to legitimate itself as a social science and, later, as value-free (Dynes, 1974). The value-free social science ideal rendered problematic the alliance with social work.

The ambivalence of sociologists is apparent from comments in the surveys on sociology curricula. As Kennedy and Kennedy (1942:667) observed, "it is virtually impossible to study problems of social maladjustment without proceeding to the means employed to cope with them in public welfare programs in social work. At the same time they also expressed concern that "an undue proportion of the curriculum is devoted to social pathology and therapy while analysis of the normative structure and processes of society and culture is relatively underemphasized. In their replication of the Kennedy's research, Podell et al. (1959:93) commented that "the further removed is the subject matter from the discipline of sociology ... the more courses are offered by departments of sociology" and that Social Welfare and Reform is "the most value-laden of all (categories) and, perhaps, utilizes the sociological discipline least of all."

A major source of this ambivalence has been sociology's concern with its integrity as a discipline. Surveys of undergraduate sociology majors revealed that they very frequently perceived social work as a subfield of sociology, and over sixty percent in one survey (Bates, 1965) identified social work as a job they saw sociologists as holding. These findings prompted the author (Bates, 1965:34) to remark that "If we are preparing undergraduates for any specific vocational future, it is social work, not sociology. It is doubtful that after completing five or more courses in sociology our students can yet even distinguish our field from social work." Bates and Reid (1971:241) were even more pointed in their comments:

.... We believe the only contribution sociology can make to general education ... is to inculcate ... sociology's unique disciplinary perspective on human behavior.... As to the notion that a major in sociology is a kind of preprofessional training for social work we agree that a soundly designed major would be an excellent background for a career in social work.... But on too many campuses the tail is wagging the dog.... Some of the pernicious effects on undergraduate curricula in a large proportion of small colleges arise from the fact that the graduate schools of social work have come to utilize teachers of sociology as their local recruiting agents.

#### The Social Workers' Perspective

Early in the twentieth century social workers as well as sociologists perceived a very close relationship between the two disciplines

(Meredith, 1922). Indeed, in an early survey of practicing social workers, sociology was ranked first among academic disciplines in desirability for inclusion in social work training programs (Young, 1934: 673). However, the same kind of ambivalence which characterized sociology's attitude toward social work developed almost as soon as "social worker" replaced the term "charity worker." Social workers saw the two disciplines moving in opposite directions. For example, Steiner (1921:493) observed that "after sociology established itself as a university discipline for the next ten or fifteen years sociologists were occupied so largely with debates about method, that their work seemed very remote from the problems in which social workers were interested." Social work was concerned about the theoretical orientation of sociology. As Steiner (1921:496) put it:

Graduate students in sociology preparing for teaching positions seldom expected to supplement their university instruction with clinical experience in the social work field. Their acquaintance with social work agencies was usually limited to what could be gained through observational visits or assignment for research based on the data available in their files. It was not uncommon for sociologists equipped in this way to underestimate what is involved in learning the technique of social work.

The early ambivalence within social work about the relationship to sociology centered on graduate level education, which was the principal focus of social work. The issue of an alliance with sociology at this level was rather quickly resolved in favor of separate professional programs within universities. However, education at the undergraduate level presented a more complex problem. Social work was struggling to achieve professional status, and as Steiner (1921:482) reminded his fellow social workers, "the public did not regard philanthropic work as a technical activity that required special skill and so quite readily employed workers in this field who lacked proper training and experience." The combination of "the undeveloped state of social work; the failure of the public to appreciate the value of thoroughly trained workers," and "the large number of people still able to find employment in social work without the technical equipment that a professional school is expected to furnish" (1921:502) made insistence on high standards of professional education problematic. Quite simply, social work encountered enough difficulty in establishing its professional credentials that it was virtually impossible to gain sufficient leverage to institute or enforce preprofessional educational standards.

What has emerged historically in social work has been a strong commitment to professional education on the graduate level and to a general education, emphasizing the social sciences, on the undergraduate level. Once the relationship between social work and sociology at the graduate level was clarified the same kind of ambivalence surfaced at the undergraduate level. Social work educators have periodically surveyed the administrative auspices of undergraduate programs, cataloging the advantages and disadvantages of the various options (Dolgoft, 1969; Shimer, 1977). In these surveys they have persistently complained of the lack of professional identification, inequitable resource distribution, sociologists meddling with the social work curriculum, inadequate staffing, and a general failure to give proper recognition to the unique needs of social work education.

#### Sources of Stability

While the mutual ambivalence of sociology and social work toward each other deserves proper recognition, it is important to emphasize that organizationally the relationship was quite stable in colleges and universities for a number of decades. There were several reasons for this stability. One was the simple fact of the tradition itself. When social work courses were added to a college curriculum, precedent called for placing them in sociology. A second reason for the location of social work programs in sociology was the limited number of organizational options. A large proportion of social work programs were in liberal arts colleges. Since social work never established its credentials as a basic liberal arts discipline, there was a perennial concern with its administrative auspices. To have created a separate, autonomous Department of Social Work would have been to treat social work as a sister discipline organizationally, a prospect which was greeted with less than enthusiasm by traditional liberal arts disciplines. As Dolgoft (1969:1) observed, "The academic community may be less threatened when an established department instead of a new and separate department administers the social welfare program." In universities, an undergraduate social work program might find a home outside of liberal arts, but even on campuses that had graduate schools of social work, there was little interest in sponsoring and promoting undergraduate programs until very recently.

A third factor holding social work and sociology together was the reluctance of the social work profession to become deeply involved in undergraduate education. For several decades how much preprofessional education should occur at the undergraduate level was a matter of persistent debate. Queens (1922:297) argued that "pre-vocational" education must be sound or credible professional training would not be possible, but he also contended that "pre-vocational education, the study of social problems and resources, is of value in education for

citizenship and is particularly helpful to future teachers, ministers, and lawyers.... No special training school need be created and maintained for the purpose of teaching these subjects. Any college or university ... can give the courses which are for the social worker pre-vocational and for other students general or cultural." On the other hand, Steiner (1921:518) countered that the fact that a student had "taken certain courses may not be of any real significance. The content of the courses and the way they are presented must determine whether they are of preprofessional value." He concluded that "the undergraduate course in social work given by a few universities" would be a preferable means of maintaining standards.

Although this debate has continued among social work educators, the profession adopted a formal position which tightly circumscribed social work undergraduate programs. As early as 1937 the profession was under some pressure to support undergraduate education because the Depression and war-connected activities had produced an acute shortage of trained social workers (Fenlason, 1945:689). The American Association of Schools of Social Work (AASSW) resisted a plan from Arts Colleges and Land Grant Colleges outside its membership to institute training for social work at the lower level and decided to restrict AASSW membership to schools whose curriculum was entirely on a graduate basis. The AASSW, a forerunner to the present Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), modified its earlier position in the mid 1940's by proposing that an integrated plan of education which would allow an undergraduate to "acquire enough knowledge to enable him to be useful in a social service agency as an aide (Fenlason, 1945:689). However, it was strongly emphasized the "undergraduate content should be differentiated from graduate content and that it should be concerned primarily with material of an historical or informational nature" (Fenlason, 1945:690). The proposal also recommended that professionally focused courses be specifically limited to ten semester hours.

The Hollis/Taylor report issued in 1952 formed the basis for the position adopted later by CSWE and supported the profession's earlier position. It specifically stated that undergraduate education for social work should be broad, not be specifically "preprofessional," and should not include the teaching of professional skills nor learning of a technical vocational nature (Pins, 1968:6). This policy was relatively consistent through the mid 1960's. Indeed, as late as 1969 Dolgoff (1969:1) stated that "Social welfare education is considered part of liberal arts education, and the organization established for its administration should serve to strengthen the liberal arts focus and approach." Although he went on to argue that the administrative auspices also should facilitate the unique needs of social work, the stress on liberal arts was apparent.



Probably the strongest mortar for the sociology-social work alliance has been the ability of each discipline to broaden its appeal to students as a result of that alliance. Social work's problem has been whether to base its appeal on preprofessional education, liberal arts education or career opportunities. The profession traditionally has not supported undergraduate social work education strongly enough to make preprofessional education mandatory. Indeed, a variety of other majors were acceptable to graduate schools of social work. Preprofessional training therefore did not constitute a sufficient base for an undergraduate program. Further, since undergraduate social work has never established itself as a basic liberal arts discipline, any appeal on this basis virtually mandated a relationship with one of the social sciences. Finally, there has been some risk in attracting students on the basis of employment opportunities because the supply of social welfare jobs has been equally accessible to students with a variety of other majors. Thus the alliance with sociology meant that social work did not have to justify itself either in terms of career opportunities, which it could not guarantee, nor in terms of general or preprofessional education, for which there was very limited demand.

The problem for sociology as for other liberal arts disciplines always has been what its majors would do with their education. In times when a liberally oriented education itself attracted students, as in the 1960's, sociology was able independently to attract an adequate supply of academically motivated students. At other times, as in the 1970's, when vocationally oriented education has appealed to students, the alliance with social work allowed sociology to remain "relevant." Similarly, sociology has tended to prosper in private colleges with a strong liberal arts tradition and has faced a more difficult challenge in attracting students at publicly supported institutions where the vocational emphasis was more pronounced. At the latter institutions sociology has been able to rely upon the alliance as a recruitment device. The alliance has provided sociology with considerable flexibility in appealing to students; in the appropriate times and places it has been able to emphasize or de-emphasize the alliance. It is for this reason that despite the occasional outcries about the tainting of their disciplinary integrity, sociologists have tacitly allowed students to confuse sociology with social work.

#### Extramural Politics: The Dynamics of Professionalism

One of the prominent features of the contemporary academic landscape is the substantial influence of extramural agencies (e.g., governmental agencies, private foundations, accrediting bodies) on academic administration policy. Even matters such as academic standards and curriculum content, which traditionally were the preserve of faculties, are increasingly influenced by outside agencies. In the case of the

sociology-social work alliance, it has been the political dynamics of governmental and professional accrediting agencies which have been at the root of the changes in that traditional relationship.

The major factors which led to the initiation of professional education in undergraduate social work programs over the last decade include (1) the perception of increased need for social work manpower; (2) the development of CSWE undergraduate education guidelines; and (3) the availability of government manpower training grants for social work.

#### Manpower Needs

The major shift in social work's view of undergraduate programs began to occur with the release of an HEW report entitled "Closing the Gap in Social Work Manpower" presented in November, 1965. The report indicated that the need for trained workers was acute and would intensify. The conception of the social work profession that every social work job in the United States should be filled by a person with a master's degree was shattered by the projections that the graduate schools could not meet projected manpower needs (Briggs, 1975:10). In addition it was found that of 460,467 social service employees, only 983 or about one quarter of one percent had baccalaureate degrees with a social work concentration or major (Daly, 1969:46). Statistics like this gave proponents of undergraduate social work education added credibility in arguing for a change in the role of BA degree personnel in social work.

The 1965 manpower study had a significant effect on social work's attitudes toward the role of undergraduates. Two significant events in the development of undergraduate education followed the publication of the 1965 study. First, CSWE compiled a new set of guidelines in 1967 which allowed universities and colleges to have approved programs and constituent membership in the council, and the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) began accepting baccalaureate graduates of CSWE approved programs for full professional membership in the association. However, in spite of the "new" professional recognition of the bachelor's degree social worker, the 1967 program guidelines remained very general in calling for sequential arrangement of courses, educationally directed field experience, and a description of the program in the catalog. Administratively, the guidelines only called for a full-time faculty member to administer the program and teach at least one social welfare course. No specification of graduate social work training was made (CSWE, 1967). In this way the guidelines easily accommodated themselves to a diversity of departmental conditions in liberal arts colleges.

The second significant result of the manpower studies was the passage

of the social work manpower and training title in the 1967 Social Security law. Five million dollars was appropriated for each of the three succeeding years to go to public or private colleges and universities for the development, expansion or improvement of graduate or undergraduate social work education (Daly, 1969:48). This marked the first time that there was specific grant monies for undergraduate social welfare programs available. The federal criteria based largely on the 1967 CSWE guidelines were developed for eligibility for funds (Feldstein, 1972:9). The council had informally established itself as the authority in specifying program characteristics for Federal funding even before it began accrediting undergraduate programs.

#### CSWE Guidelines

The 1962 and 1967 CSWE guidelines for undergraduate programs were very general and relatively permissive in that they tended to serve only as recommendations. The 1971 revision of the CSWE guidelines, however, began to move toward dictating professional program standards to colleges and universities. The 1971 guidelines followed the older ones but added some significant new requirements. First, CSWE required a qualitative evaluation in terms of a site visit in order to get approval. In addition, transcripts and diplomas were to indicate that the student had successfully completed the social work program. This gave to the program a quasi-degree status and more professional visibility. Second, the new guidelines specified that full-time faculty from accredited graduate schools of social work should be responsible for teaching the social work practice courses, and have significant involvement in the design of the curriculum (CSWE, 1971:9-22). It was also recommended that more than one faculty member teach all the social work content. Although this recommendation seems modest on the surface it does place a hardship on small, liberal arts colleges that often teach social work courses in the sociology department. The personnel requirements and recommendation set forth by CSWE made the reliance on outside grant money more critical because of the difficulty of competing with other departments for new staff positions within the college or university.

By 1974 CSWE had established itself as a significant pressure group on shaping the development of undergraduate social work programs. The newly developed guidelines and CSWE's influence on government grant funds were the mechanisms used to press for changes in college social work programs. The standards for the accreditation of baccalaureate degree programs went into effect in 1974. These standards for full accreditation had many similarities with the 1971 guidelines, but also had new points of emphasis. First, there was a strong emphasis on the planning objectives of the program and on distinguishing social work program objectives from the objectives of the administrative unit where

it was located. This implied that social work should have the autonomy and power to set its objectives and pursue them without being encumbered by other administrative constraints. This was apparent in the statement on liberal arts:

While any type of liberal arts preparation carries intrinsic value for the student, the nature of liberal arts content for social work should form a basis for social work practice, support attainment of expected student outcomes, and be integrated with the social work curriculum. (CSWE, 1974)

Note that "liberal arts" were expected to conform to social work and not social work conform to the curricular demands of liberal arts.

The guidelines also referred to students having "knowledge in" or "content in" some topic area like ethnic and racial minorities. Yet the guidelines did not specify that an academic discipline outside social work should be required to teach this knowledge. By referring to "content" areas, the social work program could conceivably meet all its "content" needs using its own faculty (see Leighninger and Leighninger, 1978). The 1974 accreditation guidelines in this way reflected an orientation toward social work having a greater curricular and administrative autonomy. Indeed, the guidelines clearly stated that the administrative structure should "support the implementation of the objectives of preparation for beginning professional social work practice" (CSWE, 1974).

Second, the guidelines required a minimum of 300 clock hours of field experience with academic credit commensurate with time invested in field work. This represented a further specification of credit hours in social work from the 1971 guidelines. It should also be noted that the 300 hour field experience requirement represented a compromise and that there was at least an informal expectation that programs would move toward a 400 hour requirement. Finally, the guidelines provided greater detail in the role of social work faculty in teaching and administering the program. Institutions were expected to recognize workload differences and allow professional experience to be given adequate weight in tenure decisions (CSWE, 1974).

#### Social Work Training Grants

The federal training grant money available to undergraduate programs in the late 1960's contributed to the development of some programs, yet CSWE's influence on the program grants was still informal and indirect. CSWE's current control over undergraduate social work programs is more closely related to social work manpower training grants

provided under Title XX of the Social Security Act. Title XX grants were made available for education program, curriculum development, classroom instruction, and related field instruction at the undergraduate level and have been widely used in developing undergraduate social work programs. The link between CSWE accreditation standards and the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare's training grants was provided by a policy of the Office of Education. This policy specified certifying accrediting agencies like CSWE for "providing one basis for determining eligibility for Federal assistance" (DHEW, 1972). Although the government policy of certifying accrediting organizations represented an attempt to preserve quality, it also preserved a monopoly because "it is unlikely that more than one association or agency will qualify for recognition" (DHEW, 1972). The monopoly effect can be seen in the Federal regulation for Title XX grants which specifically stated that a condition for eligibility is that "a specialized program for which there is a specialized accrediting body shall be accredited by, have preaccreditation status from, or have applied for accreditation by such body" (Federal Register, 1977:5863). By this mechanism CSWE accreditation standards became the determining factor in receiving Federal funds and the use of Federal funds became limited to developing only programs that attempted to conform to standards.

In summary, then, the manpower studies of the mid 1960's encouraged the profession to increase and broaden its base of social work training. The influence and authority of CSWE over undergraduate programs increased, along with the availability of Federal grant money, so that CSWE has become a powerful influence in the development of autonomous "professional" programs on college and university campuses. The development of professionally oriented programs, in turn, has had a powerful impact on intramural politics.

#### Intramural Politics: Precipitating Events in the Erosion of the Alliance

The advent of professionalism in undergraduate social work education has almost inevitably evoked conflict at the departmental and college level, and the tendency has been to resolve that conflict through further administrative specialization. Professional education proceeds according to a different logic than liberal arts education. Therefore, once the decision was reached to implement or expand an undergraduate social work program, then the accreditation guidelines and grant funds became sanctions for greater autonomy, and a trend toward greater administrative separation began to occur.

#### Trends in Administrative Auspices

CSWE information on the location of sanctioned undergraduate programs provides evidence of the impact of professionalism on the alliance.

Table 1 reveals the trend in administrative auspices of sanctioned undergraduate social work programs between 1962 and 1976. During this fourteen year period the percent of sanctioned programs in social

Table 1. Administrative Auspices of Professionally Sanctioned Undergraduate Social Work Programs: 1962-1976

Administrative Auspices	Year				
	1962 <sup>1</sup>	1967 <sup>1</sup>	1971 <sup>2</sup>	1974 <sup>3</sup>	1976 <sup>4</sup>
Graduate School of Social Work	11%	9%	12%	17%	15%
Social Work Department	5	5	18	33	33
Social Science Department	82	84	63	50	42
Other	2	2	7	0	10

1. Dolgoff (1969:3)
2. C.S.W.E. (July, 1971)
3. Leighninger and Leighninger (1978)
4. C.S.W.E. (July, 1976)

science departments decreased from 82 to 42 percent and there was a corresponding increase in autonomous departments of social work from 5 to 33 percent. During the same period the percent of sanctioned undergraduate programs in graduate schools increased only slightly from 11 to 15. Further, very little of the change in administrative auspices occurred between 1962 and 1967. It was only after the release of the manpower survey and initiation of federal funding for undergraduate programs that the upsurge in autonomous departments of social work began.

Table 2 provides a more detailed breakdown of the changes in administrative auspices of professionally sanctioned programs between 1971 and 1976. The marginal frequencies in Table 2 clearly shows that autonomous departments of social work are more likely to be accredited than any other administrative arrangement. In 1971 the 28 departments of social work accounted for about 18 percent and the 63 sociology departments accounted for about 40 percent of all sanctioned programs; by 1976 the figures were almost reversed with social work accounting for about 33 percent and sociology around 18 percent of all accredited programs. Tracing the flow of programs is revealing. Of the 28 programs in departments of social work in 1971, 21 were accredited in 1976 and remained autonomous and 1 allied with a graduate program. Of 63 programs in sociology departments in 1971 only 34 became accredited and 19 of these moved out of the sociology departments. Nine of those

Table 2. Changes in Administrative Auspices of Undergraduate Social Work Programs

1971 CSWE Approved Programs <sup>1</sup> (N=158)	1976 CSWE Accredited Programs <sup>2</sup> (N=168*)							Not Listed in 1976	N
	Graduate School of Social Work	Department of Social Work	Sociology-Social Work Department	Sociology Department	Social Science Department	Other**			
Graduate School of Social Work	14							5	19
Department of Social Work	1	21						6	28
Sociology-Social Work Department		4	8	1				7	20
Sociology Department	3	6	7	15	2	1		29	63
Social Science Department		5			3			8	16
Other**	1	2						9	12
Not Listed in 1971	7	17	11	15	9	16			75
N	26	55	26	31	14	17		64	

\*Not including schools in Puerto Rico

\*\*Indicated as social work programs only or some other administrative unit.

<sup>1</sup>Colleges and Universities with Approved Undergraduate Social Work Programs (July, 1971), C.S.W.E.

<sup>2</sup>Colleges and Universities with Accredited Undergraduate Social Work Programs (July, 1976), C.S.W.E.

moving allied with graduate programs or formed autonomous departments and 7 more became designated joint departments of "Sociology-Social Work." An examination of the programs sanctioned in 1976 which were not sanctioned in 1971, shows that the largest category is departments of social work. This indicates that the trend probably is stronger than these data convey. Since programs must conform to CSWE guidelines prior to applying for accreditation if they are to have any change of success in being accredited, and since most programs were initially in sociology, the fact that departments of social work are accredited in greater frequency implies that programs which change to an autonomous status have a greater probability of getting accredited.

The data presented here, of course, deal only with CSWE sanctioned programs, not all programs. Therefore, it cannot be directly established that the absolute number of sociology-social work programs is declining, just that the proportion of sanctioned programs in sociology departments is declining. Nevertheless, it follows that the stability of non-accredited programs varies directly with the significance of accreditation. If a degree from an accredited program begins to have significant bearing on the ability of graduate students to obtain employment, the pressure for accreditation will be substantial. The movement reflected in Table 2 for just a five year period suggests that at least at present accreditation is having a significant impact on program location.

#### Points of Departmental Conflict

The administrative separation of sociology and social work typically is precipitated by a variety of conflicts stemming from inherent differences in orientation between professional and liberal arts education. These conflicts reduce the rewards and increase the costs of the old alliance, and where solutions are not forthcoming it is likely that conflict will be resolved in the direction of greater administrative specialization. Conflict frequently occurs in one or more of three general areas: (1) the role of the liberal arts, (2) the autonomy and visibility of the social work program, and (3) the curriculum.

First, liberal arts departments, including sociology, often work out accommodations with each other in terms of general requirements. These accommodations usually require that other disciplines determine for themselves what knowledge a student should receive. As CSWE guidelines emphasize education for beginning professional practice, the value and function of liberal arts for social work has changed correspondingly. A very mechanical model of education emerges in which liberal arts content is viewed as modular, and the modules can be joined and grouped in any fashion that is desired by the designer. The sociology department may be unable to rearrange general liberal arts



requirements for social work without causing great conflict. However, these conflicts might be avoided by creating a new department so that the conflict is resolved at the dean's level of administration.

Second, a number of issues have arisen with respect to attempts at increasing the autonomy and visibility of social work programs. These include matters such as name changes; catalog formats; degree or transcript designations; hiring, promotion, and tenure criteria; administrative lines of authority; and criteria for allocation of resources. Some of these matters involve largely symbolic issues with few real organizational consequences (e.g., separate listing of social work courses in the catalog); others involve real distributions of power and resources which evoke conflict (e.g., granting administrative autonomy to the program director). When a series of such issues are raised which broaden the area of separate interests and narrow the area of mutual interests, the cohesiveness of the alliance declines appreciably.

Third, one of the most critical issues which arises is curricular organization. The requirements for a baccalaureate degree involve a fixed number of credit hours. Since there is little room for expansion, any increase in requirements produces a corresponding reduction of requirements or electives elsewhere. Professional education involves an increase in the number of social work courses, the number of required courses, and the number of prerequisites. Even with good faith efforts it is difficult to design a curriculum so that students are able to move between sociology and social work or so that some common core of courses exists for both sociology and social work students. Unless some such arrangements can be negotiated sociology courses essentially become elective courses, which creates a relationship which can as easily be worked out between separate departments.

#### Summary

The undergraduate sociology-social work alliance was stable for several decades despite considerable ambivalence about the relationship on both sides. The organizational structure and priorities of higher education and the social work profession combined to make the alliance advantageous to sociology and social work. The roots of change in that traditional relationship also are to be found in organizational dynamics rather than ideological differences.

It has been the attempt to introduce professionalism into undergraduate social work education which has led to conflict between sociology and social work, and the trend toward administrative separation of the traditionally allied disciplines. The specific conflicts discussed in this paper are only some examples of many which may or may not surface at particular institutions, and, in general, they are merely symptoma-

tic of organizational and political changes occurring at an extramural level. Frequently the structural nature of the conflict is not readily apparent either to the participants or to outside observers because intramural disagreements are viewed as personality disputes or administrative procedures change without visible organizational change.

What the future holds for the sociology-social work relationship depends a great deal on how much success the professionalization of social work achieves. The greater that success, the fewer joint departments are likely to survive. The success of professionalism, in turn, itself clearly depends on the continuation of training grant funds and the profession's ability to control social welfare occupations. Both issues would have to be resolved favorably in order to firmly establish social work's authority as a profession. At present there is still too little convincing evidence to predict confidently the nature of the resolution which will occur.

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