

SOCIOLOGY AND SOCIAL WORK:
MARRIAGE OR DIVORCE?

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INTRODUCTION Undergraduate social work programs have grown phenomenally in the past 15 years. In 1963 there were 138 undergraduate programs accredited by the Council of Social Work Education (hereafter called CSWE). By 1978, despite more stringent standards, there were 226 colleges and universities with accredited programs (CSWE 1978). Although the CSWE recognized that social work programs can flourish under a variety of auspices, administrative suitability depends on the support received to prepare students for professional social work training (CSWE 1974).

This paper has three goals: 1) to review major studies in the social work literature on growth patterns and descriptions of administrative auspices of undergraduate social work programs; 2) to outline a survey made in 1974, and replicated in 1978 to determine current trends in administering the programs; 3) to discuss the trends regarding social work's historic identification with social science, and with sociology in particular.

CHARTING ADMINISTRATIVE AUSPICES

Research studies in the social work literature on patterns of administration of undergraduate social work programs from 1963 to 1971 were reviewed. Then, surveys of all undergraduate social work programs were made in 1974 and again in 1978 by a nine-item mailed questionnaire. For the 1974 survey there were two follow-ups by mail, and contact by telephone. In the 1978 survey there was one mail follow-up, and personal and telephone contacts. Administrators were asked to mark the choice which best described their own situation. The nine types of administrative auspices were as follows:

1 An autonomous undergraduate social work department with social work faculty responsible to administer the program.

2 A combined social sciences department of two or more social sciences plus a social work department, where each discipline maintains separate academic identity. The social sciences often included sociology, psychology, anthropology, economics, history, and political science.

3 Graduate school of social work auspices, in which the graduate school administered the undergraduate social work program.

4 Sociology department auspices, where the head of the sociology department administered the social work program.

5 A consortium or collaborative arrangement with two or more educational institutions jointly administering a social work program.

6 As joint sociology and social work department in which the chairperson is either a sociologist or a social worker.

7 Other unique arrangements, usually allied with health programs.

8 An autonomous university department other than sociology administers the social work program, such as the psychology department.

9 An interdepartmental social work concentration, in which social work content is provided by faculty from several disciplines, including social work.

FINDINGS In the 1974 survey, data were obtained from 183 of the 216 approved programs (85%), and in the 1978 survey, 189 of the 226 approved programs provided data. Between 1962 and 1967, 83 percent of the programs were located in social science departments (Dolgoff 1969). Of these, 59 percent were in sociology departments, and 10 percent were in departments which had a combined title with social work included in the title. Fourteen percent were in other types of social science departments. Ten percent were in

TABLE 1 SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

<u>Auspices</u>	'74 %	'78 %	+ -
Autonomous social work	31	35	4
Combined social science	18	19	1
Social work grad school	14	16	2
Sociology	13	4	-9
Joint sociology/soc work	8	10	2
Consortium	9	11	2
Autonomous other	2	2	0
Interdepartmental	2	2	0
Other	4	3	-1
Total, percent	101	100	
(N)	183	189	

departments which had a combined title with social work included in the title. Fourteen percent were in other types of social science departments. Ten percent were in graduate schools of social work, and 5 percent were listed as autonomous departments. Stamm (1972) reported somewhat different figures. The data derived from the surveys made in 1974 and 1978 are shown in Table 1.

Between 1974 and 1978, the primary trend seems to be toward locating these programs in joint sociology and social work departments, in consortiums, in graduate schools of social work, and in autonomous social work departments.

About a third of these programs were autonomous, separate departments of social work, and another third were in combined social science departments, or in graduate schools of social work. Decreases were noted in the number of programs located in sociology departments or other departments. A status quo situation seems to obtain for interdepartmental auspices.

Such data should be approached with caution, due to the turnover of membership in the CSWE over the years, but 72 percent of the programs which were accredited in 1973 appear in the 1978 listing.

DISCUSSION The increased number of undergraduate social work programs is a reality which has implications for social science, and particularly, for sociology departments, in the competition for students, majors, resources, and facilities.

In most cases, social work was clearly differentiated from other disciplines, either in autonomous social work departments, or in graduate schools of social work. Perhaps social work has a smaller probability of becoming blurred among other disciplines when it is located separately, and social work professors can be better identified as professional, personal, and career role models for student recruitment and socialization.

In recent years, colleges and universities have become very receptive to initiating social work programs. This has been fostered by the availability of federal and state formula-matching grants, manpower needs for baccalaureate level social workers, social work licensing laws, social welfare agency preferences for academically qualified staff, and student interest in training which leads to future employment (Enos 1978). Accredited undergraduate social work programs are now essentially able to control access into the field of social work practice. These factors have undoubtedly made it possible for new programs to locate in auspices that reflect their own interests in terms of autonomy and control of the major decisions on curricula, goals, budget, and faculty and personnel matters. These factors explain the marked decrease in the number of programs under sociology department auspices.

There are disadvantages in the movement toward increasing autonomy and differentiation from the other social science disciplines. The tendency to work in academic isolation from other social scientists, and reduced opportunities for interdisciplinary research, is

one consequence. Historically, undergraduate social work education programs have had to balance professional education with liberal arts education. CSWE has emphasized the inclusion of broad liberal arts content in the degree program for the social work major. Recently however, CSWE has been sanctioning the efforts directed to specifying the nature of the liberal arts content felt to be most relevant for the social work major preparing for advanced training or social work practice (Baer & Federico 1978). The issue for many social work educators now becomes: When does professional education with a liberal arts base leave off, and when does the technical training and vocationalism begin? The answer to this question may determine the nature of the alliances among social work, sociology, and other social sciences.

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