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AN EXPLORATION OF THE NEED FOR MACRO TRAINED
SOCIAL WORKERS

A Project
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Social Work

by

Crystal Dawn Shackelford

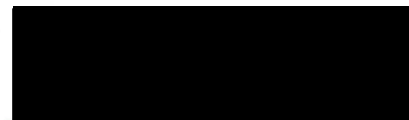
June 1997

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ABSTRACT

Direct, or micro practice, is the focus of education at a Department of Social Work in Southern California. This research explores the need for macro trained social workers in that area. The findings of this study will be used to determine the need for the development of a macro practice curriculum at the Department of Social Work. Data was gathered through face-to-face interviews in an exploratory manner. Definitions, needs, impact, and job availability were explored as they pertain to the community served by the Department of Social Work.

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Introduction

Since the 1989 inception of the Social Work Department under study at a Southern California public university , two curriculum specializations have been offered: working with children, youth, and families, and the field of mental health. The first year of study is generic skills and theory and is the same for all students. The second year is focused on the chosen specialization and offers specific skills and theories within that concentration. Both of the offered specializations, however, are within a direct practice concentration, also known as micro practice.

Micro practice involves working with individuals, families, and small groups. This can include clinical therapy settings, case management, crisis intervention, and group work. The area that will be the focus of this research is macro practice. Macro practice is traditionally recognized as involving three arenas: social administration, community organization/planning, and policy. Rothman and Tropman have defined macro practice as:

[dealing] with areas of human service activity that are non-clinical in nature, but rather focus on broader social approaches to human betterment, emphasizing such things as developing enlightened

social policy, organizing the effective delivery of services, strengthening community life, and preventing social ills (McNutt, 1995).

This is an inclusive definition of macro practice. It illustrates that there is often an overlap of methods, it lends more diversity to the field, and allows for a more integrative model of macro practice (McNutt, 1995).

The problem is that there is no public school offering a macro practice specialization in the region under study, which consists of two large counties. These counties are two of the largest counties in California. The university of study has the only public accredited school of social work in the area. There is a nearby accredited program in the area, but it is located in a private university. A concern of this research is that the identified geographic area served by this Master of Social Work program does not access graduate social workers who are specifically educated in the field of macro practice. If only micro practice is being offered as a specialization to students of Social Work in this geographic area, then it does not seem possible to have well rounded provision of services in all realms of social work practice.

The main purpose of this study is to explore what kind of need the area's social work agencies feel exists

for more macro skilled practitioners. Also to be considered, is what type of job market exists for practitioners specializing in the macro field? The significance of this is that it may lead to the development of macro practice curriculum at CSUSB's School of Social Work, which in turn would lead to better service provision. Social work could then become more involved with making changes in the area's policies, organizations, and communities. Changes made by social workers at the macro level also have a profound influence on micro level social workers. For instance, macro practice often times offers the resources and pathways that are vital to direct practitioners in providing services to their clients.

Literature Review

Up until the sixties, social work curriculum in schools of Social Work focused more often on direct practice. A history of social work between 1915 and 1960 shows that social casework (micro practice) was the primary practice and that there was a shortage of development of people who could help reshape institutions that promoted problems in the first place. It was not until 1971 that the Council on Social Work Education allowed for graduate schools to offer specializations in social policy, social planning, or administration. At

that time, the Council changed the curriculum policy to allow inclusion of these areas stating that curricula should educate social work professionals for a "variety of roles" (Sarri, 1973).

During the sixties and seventies, macro practice was embraced. Broader concepts and experiences were offered in social work education. This was largely due to the social upheaval of the times and renewed interest in helping minorities and the poor. The psychosocial approach, which was heavily rooted in psychology and the predominant approach of social work education, was being challenged by a more complex and broad approach to educating social workers (Abel & Kazmerski, 1994).

The eighties represent a return to the focus of direct clinical practice. Private practice became popular, so graduate schools responded to the demand by expanding the micro practice specialization. This shift caused schools to downsize macro practice education (Abel & Kazmerski, 1994). This downsizing has not since been reversed. This research, however, is based on the premise that macro practice needs to be kept alive and brought back into balance with micro practice. As stated previously, micro practice greatly relies on policies, administration, and community support, all of which are

emphasized in macro practice.

As Schwartz and Dattalo (1990) stated, the decline of students in macro education threatens social work's "presence in and impact on needed social and institutional reform." The fact that managed care is now making private practice more difficult is an example of the need for macro practice. Policies affecting this negative movement of managed care need to be monitored, influenced, and changed. Macro practitioners are in the position to do this, and when properly trained, can be more effective. Neugeboren (1987) discusses that not only do social workers need to be properly educated in macro practice, but there is the need to spark interest in the macro field in the first place so that there is a pool of available macro practitioners. They suggest that all students of social work be more exposed to this type of practice in the school setting to help spark interest and instill the importance of such work.

Another perspective on the problem is illustrated in a study that showed social work administrators specially trained for the macro practice of administration, as opposed to clinically trained administrators, performed their jobs differently (Hairston, 1981). The study found that the supervisors trained specifically in

administration and macro skills better met the full range of managerial needs in social service organizations. The study suggested that more curriculum development in this area is necessary for better service provision. Although this is a major role of social workers, there is no specialization in the area of administration in the Inland Empire offering the skills that were found to be to the advantage of social service organizations.

A prediction by Bernard (1995) states that there will be a ratio of one Master of Social Work (MSW) to four Bachelors of Social Work (BSW) in the future. His conclusion, therefore, is that MSWs will be expected to fulfill management positions (macro practice), rather than providing direct services. A gap is already shown to exist between the less than 10% of MSW students who receive training in management type positions and the approximately 50% who become managers and supervisors within a few years of receiving a Master degree (Raymond, Teare, & Atherton, 1996). This argument is another reason to look into this issue and explore the need that exists for more macro training.

Hoefer (1993) conducted research that showed the MSW degree as being desirable for low or middle management positions, but not as desirable as a Master of Business

Administration in higher positions of management in human service organizations. An MSW was not perceived as having received the proper training in such areas as communication, leadership, and decision-making that is necessary for higher levels of administration and management. Hoefer gives possible reasons for this as being: MSW students may lack adequate training as compared to other management degree programs, MSW students may be less able to learn the abilities than students in other disciplines, and/or current administrators' perceptions are distorted by outdated stereotypes of MSW students versus other disciplines' students.

Hoefer (1993) concludes that the desires of current administrators cannot be ignored, for they are the source of employment for graduates in management and administrative programs, but at the same time, educators can help shape and improve those desires. It is important to realize if social work schools do not produce students who can demonstrate the skills that the agencies currently desire, those agencies will not hire social work graduates. Such a trend would continue to devalue the role of social work in the management and administrative levels.

To illustrate an emerging need for macro practice,

Brzuzy and Segal (1996) state that "students and social work practice in general would benefit from greater involvement in community research and planning." There seems to be a trend toward the interest of community involvement again after experiencing a loss of that interest in the 1980s. Community planning and development are again becoming recognized as important for serving diverse and disadvantaged populations. Brzuzy and Segal conclude that social work curriculum that includes community-based work and research will lead to more social workers in positions as policy makers, administrators, fundraisers, and community group organizers. In turn, stronger support and resources would be built for macro oriented practices in the field, because there would be social workers in these positions which would help perpetuate a cycle of continuing placement of social workers in these positions.

Purpose of the Study

The major social work role that was being evaluated is that of the administrator/policy planner, or macro practitioner. The proximate goal was to identify what kind of need exists for specially trained macro practitioners in the community. As stated previously, this will be used as part of a foundation for changes in

the educator role of social work by sparking curriculum development in this MSW program in the field of macro practice. The possible curriculum development can also be steered in the direction that would best satisfy the specific needs identified by the research.

What does the social work community in this geographic area perceive to be the identified needs for social workers with a specialization in macro practice? The "community" in the study will be represented by an MSW Community Advisory Board for a Department of Social Work in Southern California. This research is the second part of a year-long, three phase study. The first phase used the Delphi approach (Dalkey and Helmer, 1963) which consisted of two rounds of mailed surveys to "expert" field instructors and alumni in the social work field regarding the possibilities for the development of a macro practice specialization. The second of the three phases, as mentioned above, is this research. The third phase consisted of a graduate course in Community Organization in which the students conducted discussion groups regarding macro practice needs with the following constituencies: public social service agency representatives, private non-profit social service agency representatives, religious leaders, politicians, and

representatives of education, public health, and housing.

Research Design and Methods

This study employed a positivist paradigm. It is exploratory in that a hypothesis was reached after data was collected and analyzed. The exploratory type of study is labeled as the weakest form of positivist research because of its inability to show causality or correlation. It is, however, extremely valuable and should not be discounted. Ruben and Babbie (1993) point out that exploratory research can expose new insights, help break new ground, and serve as a source for more inductive types of research. In this case, the exploratory method provided all of the above. It offered new insights as to how the social service agencies in this geographic area felt about macro practice social work education, it helped break new ground by entertaining the idea that curriculum needs to be developed for macro practice to better serve the community, and it laid a foundation upon which inductive methods were used to discover ways of delivering such a service to the identified geographic area.

The instrument used during the interviews was a list of five open-ended questions that allowed the respondents

to elaborate as much as they felt necessary. The primary research question posed is as follows: What need does this advisory board feel exists for macro trained social workers? The other questions of interest were: How would the community be better served if students were graduating with specializations in macro practice; were there established positions in area agencies which represent and meet macro practice needs, and could potential positions be created within the area agencies? The participants were also asked to define macro practice in their own terms.

Sampling

The sample for this study was members of the community advisory board for a Southern California MSW program. The advisory board members are representatives of social service agencies that help the social work school to better serve the needs of the area, students, and social work as a profession. They advise, offer ideas, and critique the social work program. These chosen members represent various agencies in the areas surrounding the university. The agencies that are represented span the different levels of social work practice. Multiple services are performed by the variety of agencies represented, whether those services are on the

micro or macro level of practice.

The advisory board members had been notified during the first phase of the larger three phase study that research in this field was being done and that they may be asked questions regarding the issue at hand by this researcher. This population of nineteen was chosen because of their close relationship to the Department of Social Work, their understanding of social work and service provision, and their positions within social service agencies.

Data Collection

Data was collected by the researcher through interviews which were conducted face-to-face with eight of the members of the advisory board. The sample was smaller than anticipated. This was due to the difficulty the researcher had in either contacting or engaging the members of the advisory board. Of the members not interviewed, two were apprehensive. Repeated attempts were made with the other nine, to no avail.

There are many strengths for the chosen method of data collection. First, when the respondent was unclear regarding the meaning of a particular question, the interviewer was able to help clear up any misunderstandings. The interviewer was also able to probe

further when a respondent answered a question in a short manner without expanding their point. Because of the interviewer's position of objectivity, however, any extra communication during the interview was neutral to avoid inflicting bias into the survey (Rubin & Babbie, 1993).

Secondly, when the interviewer conducted the personal interviews, the flow and order of the questions could be controlled appropriately to help keep the respondent from feeling overwhelmed, rushed, or confused. This led to a naturally higher response rate than if the questions were administered by written means. By being a tool for clarity, the interviewer attempted to erase any feelings of stress that the respondent may have felt about finishing the survey.

A weakness of face-to-face interviewing is that it can be quite time consuming. For this study, nineteen people were approached. The researcher was confident that the time allotted for data collection permitted for this size of a sample to be interviewed. Time was indeed a concern for most of the respondents. The interviewer made the survey as succinct as possible so the length of time needed for the interview could be used as a means for convincing people to agree to responding.

Protection of Human Subjects

The confidentiality and anonymity of the respondents is protected in this study. In order to ensure this, no personal or agency names have been used in the discussion of the data that was collected during the interviews. Each participant was given an informed consent to sign with a brief description of the study before the interview took place. Upon termination of the interview, each respondent received a debriefing statement. No names were used on the interview notes, instead the interviews were numbered so the researcher would know the order in which they took place. The interview notes were also labeled to indicate whether the person interviewed was currently in a micro or macro role. Finally, the data was analyzed solely by the researcher as further means to insure the confidentiality of the responses.

Results

Demographics

Of the eight respondents, seven were female and one was male. There was an even split between practice levels, with four in macro and four in micro oriented work. Of the macro oriented practitioners, three were in

administration, and one was involved in community organizing. Three of the micro practitioners worked in the public sector, while one worked in the private sector.

Procedure

The data collected in this exploratory positivist study were qualitative in nature. To analyze the data, open and axial coding were utilized. According to Strauss and Corbin (1990), coding is a set of procedures that break down data, discover concepts from the data, and then rearrange the data to make better sense. Theories are created from qualitative data through the employment of coding.

This research was inductive in nature, that is, the researcher explored for the purpose of discovering a hypothesis. This inductive reasoning lead to the generation of a hypothesis by beginning with the collected data, as opposed to starting with the hypothesis of the researcher and then going to the data to prove or disprove it. Units of analysis were then derived from the data as it was broken down using the process of coding. In this case, the researcher did not impose her own ideas, therefore, the study remained objective (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Constant Comparison.

The method of constant comparison was the procedure followed to answer the research question. This constant comparison involved a process in which initial data were collected and analyzed, subsequent data were then collected and analyzed, then joined with the initial data. Eventually, all data were incorporated into the process (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This can be thought of as a type of refinement process in which data were narrowed down interview by interview until an end product was reached which was manageable and more easily interpreted.

The constant comparative method involved four stages. The first stage involved discovering units, or incidents, from the data that was collected. These incidents were then lumped into categories of similarities. The categories became clarified as more data was broken down and added in this manner (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

As more data were collected and narrowed to incidents and then categories, eventually no new categories were created, instead, the identified incidents fit into already existing categories. This was the second stage of the constant comparative method. The categories that were created in the analysis were reviewed and narrowed down even further as the researcher realized that certain

categories held the same properties (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

The third stage in the constant comparative method refers to defining boundaries of the theory that was developing. The purpose of this stage was to avoid letting the research piece become larger than was manageable by the researcher. The research had to be kept defined so that it did not become out of control (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Theoretical Sensitivity.

This term refers to the ability to see what is really being presented by the data. This was done by the researcher not just assuming what may have seemed to be appearing in the data collected because of interference by presuppositions, past experiences, and knowledge of reviewed literature. Strauss and Corbin (1990) offer techniques that this researcher employed to help ensure that theoretical sensitivity was present in this study.

By analyzing data as it was collected, as suggested in the second stage of the constant comparative method, the first technique suggested by Strauss and Corbin (1990) was already utilized. They refer to the technique as questioning. Interviews were analyzed and broken down after each was completed so that the next interview could

be refined and more precise than the one before. Each interview offered clues as to what to look for during the next interview. For instance, the first interview contained seven questions. After analyzing this interview, the researcher discovered that the respondent was repeating herself due to the redundant nature of a few of the questions. The researcher revised the questions so that they were more precise and clear, as well as less time consuming.

Another technique offered by Strauss and Corbin (1990) is that of "waving the red flag." This refers to when respondents used certain words and the researcher was alerted due to the nature of the word. When alerted, the researcher explored his/her meaning further. For example, in this study, a respondent replied that a newly graduated student with education in macro social work practice could never get a job. The researcher explored the use of the word "never" to find that she meant "never right away." The social worker would need to move up from a micro position to a macro position. The respondent did not actually believe that a student could never get a job, which is how it sounded at first. Strauss and Corbin present this technique as a safeguard against taking respondents' answers for granted and instead exploring the

possibilities of what they actually mean.

Definitions of Macro Practice

The definitions of what the respondents felt macro practice means were separated into two categories: those given by the macro practitioners and those given by the micro practitioners. Interestingly, the micro practitioners were the ones who went into greater detail to describe what macro practice meant to them. Definitions from this category included descriptions of what a macro practitioner may do, such as program planning and implementation, needs assessment, resource gathering, and advocating for people. Another subgroup of definitions described what type of perspective a macro practitioner may have, such as big picture, systems change, all encompassing, large scale, and various governmental levels. Lastly, this category provided the definition of macro practice as not being clinical practice.

The macro practitioners' definitions consisted of mainly descriptions of scale and perspective: large scale, community, generalist, larger sociological units, public agreement, and comprehensive. This category also offered the idea that macro social work is not individual clinically oriented, but that it is indeed a type of

practice. No other definitions were given in this category of macro practitioners.

What Impact Could Macro Practice Have on the Community?

Four subcategories of impact that macro practice can have upon the community emerged from the data: current deficits of the community, possible influence on the community, scope of impact, and barriers to impact. Differences between the responses of macro and micro practitioners are highlighted.

Current Deficits of the Community.

In describing current community deficits, there were no major differences between the responses of macro and micro practitioners. It was stated that there is a lack of sense of community and that communities have given up knowing each other, working together, and recognizing their strengths. The consensus was that currently, communities do not recognize the positive impact that can be made by incorporating macro social work practice into their structures, but will do so when it is realized that change must take place. It was noted that there is a need to get community people involved and more macro trained practitioners will help to make better communities because of their specialized training in issues which affect communities.

Possible Influence of Macro Practice on Community.

Macro practitioners offered types of positive influence that macro practice would have on the community. It was stated that the quality of life of a community would be impacted by graduate macro social workers being involved. Another possible influence includes macro social workers helping to curb the frustrations of the community that may arise when change is taking place and encourage continuance of forward movement despite the frustrations. Macro practitioners can "help people learn to stand on their own two feet" and know how to do for themselves by leaving the concept of deficits behind and building upon the strengths the community holds.

Micro practitioners offered the following responses which point out some positive effects that macro practice would have. On a community level, a respondent felt that the community would be better served by macro practitioners and as a result, a better community would be made. It was stated that macro theories need to be put into practice. Another respondent felt that macro practice would help prevent people from falling through the cracks. With disjointed and separate practices, this often happens, but with a larger focus, people would be less likely to go unnoticed. Finally, the viewpoint was

offered that social workers would be better served with the knowledge of macro practice.

Scope of Impact.

Macro practitioners also spoke about the scope of impact that can be made by graduate level macro social workers. A respondent stated that initially the impact is on a large scale, but that effect trickles down to smaller units. Essentially, the effect then becomes even larger. Another respondent expressed the fact that a concerted front can be made with macro practice. An example was given of having impact on the government by presenting concerns and issues of groups of people as a concerted front. Macro practitioners can create, organize, and support this type of action which would unify a community. Lastly, prevention was seen as a type of impact. Macro practitioners can create prevention programs which would stop problems before they are allowed to manifest; this could have multiple implications for a community.

Barriers to Impact.

The barriers to the possible impact that macro practice could have on the community were given by a micro practitioner. The respondent stated that more problems exist than there are resources for macro practice to be able to make an impact. The respondent recognized that a

need exists, but questioned how such positions that may make an impact on the community would be funded and implemented with scarce resources.

How Might Macro Practice Affect Service Delivery?

In this category, three subcategories emerged: holistic approach, efficiency, and comparison to micro practice.

Holistic Approach.

Only macro practitioners highlighted the holistic approach of macro social work as a cause of better service delivery. One stated, there is a need for original planning that is holistic in the first place, as opposed to fixing mistakes as they come up after the fact. Another felt macro practice can provide this preventative thinking because it is focused on the big picture. Another respondent stated there is a different focus for macro social work as opposed to other professions. Using planning as a specific example, this respondent stated macro social work thinks of the needs of the user as a component. All aspects of a situation are thought of in macro practice, even the simplest of things that could later turn out to be big problems. A scenario was given of planning the building of a senior citizen living complex. The plans were ready to go and had everybody's

approval when a macro oriented social worker pointed out the fact that there was no place to shop for necessities within close proximity that the seniors could access on their own.

One respondent stated that macro practitioners use a team approach and are trained in coalition building. A major tenet of social work, macro practitioners do not do "to" the client, but "with" to get the greatest results. Macro social workers understand the differences and similarities within communities. These are all examples of the holistic view of macro practice.

Efficiency.

As one macro practitioner offered the following responses, some comparison with micro practice also takes place in this subcategory. Micro practice was stated to cause duplication of services because everyone stays separate; there is no combination of services to delete the overlap that can occur when someone is being served by two or more delivery systems. In turn, the expense of this type of service delivery is costly. It was felt that macro practice lends itself to efficiency because there is a better job of service delivery.

This respondent identified some ways that macro practice provides efficient service delivery: pooling

resources, energies, issues, and planning efforts. When looking at a larger picture, common threads can be identified and incorporated so that more than one need can be taken care of at once. There were various levels of skills macro practitioners hold that were identified as creating efficiency: negotiation, reality application, and political capabilities.

Comparison to Micro Practice.

A micro practice respondent stated that micro practice can have too narrow of a view. This narrow view is the focus of practice, in that micro practitioners are trained to deal with individuals, families, and small groups. This is not to say that micro practice is bad or ineffective, but that there needs to be more. A macro practitioner felt that the micro concentration of practice in social work in the last 25 years has made it harder to work together because of the focus on splitting everyone's problems and solutions into smaller units and specializing in one area.

What is the Need for Macro Practice in this Region?

Five major issues related to need for macro practice were identified. The issues were the need for the approach of macro practice, training needs, needs within social services, roles which need to be filled, and

priority.

Need for the Approach of Macro Practice.

The approach of macro social work is seen as a need. No respondents denied this. Macro practitioners are considered to have the ability to bridge gaps that do not need to exist. A macro practitioner can pull together diverse organizations, people, and groups. Solutions and options cannot come from one discipline to be complete. By using the bridging skills, macro practitioners can help create well-rounded proposals for change.

Training Needs.

It was stated that education for macro practice has been lacking in schools of social work as compared to 25 years ago. This respondent sees a trend that is moving toward macro practice again. She predicted that there will be a large macro movement in approximately five years exemplifying the need that exists. Another respondent felt that the social work field has received hardly any training in the skill of community organizing, which was identified as being needed.

A micro practitioner stated that a need does exist for more training, practice, and skills in managerial and administrative levels for social workers. Although she thought it would be nice for education to expand into

these areas, she felt it was not the highest priority. As stated previously, she felt that there is still a shortage of micro social workers that needs to be eliminated. One would have to work his or her way up from the direct practice level to a supervisory position regardless of educational concentration if in a public agency. A non-profit would most likely be different in that they would accept somebody with less experience at the direct level.

Needs within Social Services.

Several needs in the area of social services were identified. One micro practitioner felt that communities expect certain things from its members, but currently, leave it up to those members to meet that standard with their own resources. The example of immigrants was given as a population who is expected to be like everybody else in a given community, but they do not necessarily have the resources required to fulfill the expectations. Another stated services for the needy are underdeveloped and, therefore, needy populations are underserved. One micro practitioner feels macro practice is needed because it has the ability to "save human dignities" through the creation of programs and laws that can serve populations who need it.

It was stated by a macro practitioner that social

services are not working like they should. For as costly as they are, there should be some justification for the expenses, or proof of effectiveness. Three respondents, two micro and one macro, agreed that macro social work can be a part of government to help plan needs, train workers, and save in spending. Macro practitioners would enhance the service delivery of social services because better planning and training equals better systems.

Roles that Need to be Filled.

Some needed roles that macro social workers could fill were identified. One statement was that the role is not necessarily figured out yet. Another stated that growing areas need macro social work to develop programs and run systems. Other recommendations were to find common data for the discovery of answers so that interventions could be planned accordingly. The discovery of selling concepts to people so they will listen and take heed was identified as an important example by a macro practitioner. "Messages need to get to people so they will listen and act on the information in an informed manner." Macro social workers can research when interventions are appropriate, what types of intervention would be best, and evaluate the effectiveness of the chosen interventions.

Several types of needed social work roles were identified as being macro oriented. Research to find solutions, or action oriented research was one role which was highlighted. Macro social workers can figure out how pieces fit together and measure the effectiveness of that fit. There is the need for macro practice in certain places such as community movements targeted at solving problems of people in that community. Macro social work can teach and empower a community to know how to help its members; help people help themselves. Macro social workers have the role of getting people to look at the big picture and see beyond the here and now. Many other roles were identified: advocacy, policy making, community organization, lobbying, education, program planning and implementation, needs assessment, resource pooling, negotiation, grant writing, damage control, consultation, and coalition building.

Priority.

Macro practice was seen by a micro practitioner as not being of the highest priority because of her feeling that there is a lack of direct practitioners. She stated that direct practice needs to come first. She further stated that a social worker cannot jump into a position of macro practice before doing the individual, micro oriented

work first. In other words, a social worker cannot run the show before practicing on the individual level.

The remaining responses, however, expressed that micro practice is not handling the all of the types of problems that society is having today. There is always a need for macro social work and there are current and potential jobs for macro social workers in all at-risk situations. Some at-risk areas that were identified were pregnant minors, gangs, drugs, violence. Schools were identified as a site where many problems could be addressed through programs created by macro social workers.

Are There Jobs for Macro Trained Social Workers?

Finally, the category of jobs emerged from the collected data. Respondents discussed resources to support macro jobs, existing jobs, and potential jobs.

Resources.

Resources in this subcategory include actual monies, as well as support and recognition of macro trained social workers. One respondent, a micro practitioner, offered the following information. "Society is currently away from people values." Due to this lack of societal unity, support for macro level community work would have to come from a grass roots level. An effect of this lack of

support is the fact that nobody is funding positions that graduate macro social workers could fill. An exception may be the federal government, but in general, macro social work is not seen as worthy by the government. Macro social work does not give the government quick solutions, rather it focuses more on the long run and what is beneficial to the most people. This respondent's opinion is that the managed care movement is shifting the needs away from macro practice. In conclusion, it was stated that macro practice can be harmful to social work practice in general, even though it is needed, because it threatens the pool of micro practitioners who are available to work on an individual level. The purpose of macro practitioners, therefore, should be on organizing movements targeted at solving people problems. That would then create support for the job of the macro practitioner while not discounting the role of direct practitioner.

Existing Positions.

The majority (5) of the respondents did not have knowledge of established positions for macro social workers outside of supervisory or managerial jobs. Some of the comments consisted of there being very few, if any jobs. One respondent stated there are no established positions. A micro respondent was concerned for the

situation if a graduate was educated for a specialty where there were no places to practice it. "We educate people to employ them, not to be idealistic."

While the need was found, the need was not found to be represented by established positions by two of the respondents, one micro and one macro practitioner. Jobs were seen as being created for supply, not need. A micro practitioner stated although positions for recent graduates do not exist in public agencies, positions could probably be found in private non-profit agencies. On the other end of the spectrum, a macro practitioner stated that jobs currently exist and can exist in the future.

Potential Positions.

In light of the opinions regarding established positions, the subcategory of potential positions emerged. Because of the fact that the community may not be ready for the macro practitioner's way of thinking, the social worker would have to create his or her own job. This could be done by making the community aware of the need and then providing it with a graduate who is trained to fill the need. People will begin to mobilize and be ready for action as they are adversely affected by changes made without their opinion being taken into consideration.

Another line of thinking was if someone is trained to

provide a service, that person can find a place to exercise that knowledge. Macro social workers can create their own jobs by seeing a need, getting something started, and monitoring the action which take place. A concern, however, is that funding may be a difficulty. A respondent stated funding will not be a problem if the trend of growing macro practice recognition and utilization she foresees develops. She thinks the surge for the need will take place in approximately five years.

Numerous areas for potential and existing jobs were listed by the respondents. High risk situations were the majority with suggestions such as: schools, AIDS, teen pregnancy, gangs, violence, and drug addiction. Governmental jobs were also popular: transportation, planning commission, health, and housing. Some other ideas were banking, immigration, farm workers, aging population, unions, and churches.

Discussion

Sample

First and foremost, the importance of the Community Advisory Board for the Department of Social Work must be

highlighted. The Advisory Board is a key link to many of the needs and resources discovered in this research. Their expertise and experience serves as a gateway to jobs, internships, and better curriculum development. Their involvement with the Department of Social Work is vital, and their participation in this study is greatly appreciated.

Findings

A distinct difference existed between the definitions given by macro and micro practitioners. The micro practitioners offered longer and more detailed definitions, while the macro practitioners gave succinct answers. A possible explanation for the difference in defining the term "macro practice" could be that macro practitioners have a clearer understanding of the meaning because they carry out the duties and tasks each day. The micro practitioners seemed to be coming up with definitions as they spoke, which led them to another idea or aspect of what macro practice could mean in that process. Since they may not be as readily exposed to the concepts and practices of macro practice, it may have been more difficult for them to succinctly define the term.

The proximate goal of this research was to find the kinds of needs that exist for specially trained macro

practitioners in the community. It was undeniable that macro practice is a need. As to other types of needs, the major findings were needs for training, needs for experience, and needs for resources to support macro practice.

The most common and prevalent issues identified throughout this research pertained to the community. It was unanimous that the community must get involved. There was expressions of the feeling that there is a lack of unity among community members, and that must be restored. None of the respondents denied that communities need help these days. The needs in communities are reminiscent of the sixties where change began at the grass roots level. The local levels need to unite to build initiatives and organizations. The needs of communities are not being met by waiting for a trickle down approach from top levels of government. There simply is no support from that level, therefore, a "local up" approach needs to take place. This approach will be difficult to begin and maintain without people who are trained to organize and mobilize.

Macro social work is a great profession to help communities make the changes necessary to improve their quality of life. With the skills to effect such levels of change added to the values and ethics which are the basis

of social work and the theoretical foundations in which the profession is trained, opportunities are possible. The skills, however, must be taught. More curriculum must be available to those students who find macro practice in their calling.

A large demand was identified in the social services and government. Program planning, development, and evaluation are current deficits in these arenas. For the communities to be served, the government and social services need to be able to meet the needs identified by the communities and evaluate their methods of serving those needs.

An exciting number of roles that macro practitioners can fill were identified. This proves the diversity that is allowed in such practice. Although so many roles were thought of, there was a diverse range of opinions as to availability of jobs. The continuum of opinion ranged from no jobs exist at all, through some jobs exist in certain arenas, to jobs are indeed out there. The majority of opinion does suggest that macro practitioners, for the most part, will have to create their own jobs. It must be realized, however, that as jobs are created, a perpetuation of opportunities is made. When the created jobs become more established, internships are possible,

new sources of education are available, and more jobs can evolve. The first step in this cyclical process is proper education and training.

Finally, it must be noted that micro practice is in no way being deemed ineffective or useless by this research. The point that is being made is just as micro social work is a needed practice, so is macro social work. The two target different types of problems. Micro social work is the current focus of the Department of Social Work in the geographic area targeted by this research. The need for macro practice has been exemplified and described in detail through this study.

Limitations of the Study

The sample size of this study was smaller than intended, although a good representation of opinion seems to have been explored. The researcher limited the number of questions and topics so as to not overwhelm and monopolize the time of the respondents. A less intrusive method of interviewing may have been helpful, but the results may have not been as complete.

Suggestions for Further Research

A suggestion for further research is to study an area which is served by a Department of Social Work that offers macro curriculum to its graduate students. As opposed to

exploring the needs, an exploration can be done regarding what is being fulfilled. Actual roles, positions, and functions can be defined. Graduate level social workers trained in macro practice can identify which courses have been invaluable and which have been less useful. This study was focused on looking into the future possibilities for curriculum development, but it is equally important to look with retrospect at the effectiveness of what has already been done.

Appendix A

List of Questions

1. What does the term "macro practice" mean to you?
2. Would the community be better served and what kind of impact can be made if a specialization of macro practice were to be offered to graduate social work students?
3. What needs do you feel exist for graduate social workers trained in macro practice?
4. Are there established or potential positions representing the need for macro specialized social workers within area agencies?

Appendix B

Informed Consent to Participate in Research

The study in which you are about to participate is designed to explore the need for macro trained graduate social workers. This study is being conducted by Crystal Shackelford and the advisor for the project is Dr. Nancy Mary from the Department of Social Work at California State University, San Bernardino.

I consent to participate in this study entitled, "An Exploration of the Need for Macro Trained Social Workers."

The interview should take no longer than forty-five minutes.

I understand that the researcher will protect my anonymity and confidentiality at all times because no names will be revealed in the data that is presented and analyzed by the researcher. I have the right to withdraw my participation from this study at any time with no threat of penalty because I am a voluntary participant.

Participant's Signature

Date

If you have any questions regarding this research project, please contact Crystal Shackelford at 880-5501, or Dr. Nancy Mary at 880-5560.

Appendix C

Debriefing Statement

This research is a part of a larger study being conducted by Dr. Nancy Mary in the Department of Social Work and California State University, San Bernardino. The purpose of this study is to explore the need for macro specialized social workers in an area in Southern California which is served by a Department of Social Work. The results are expected to be final by July, 1997.

If you have any questions regarding the results of the study or any concerns about your participation in the study, please feel free to contact:

Department of Social Work, CSUSB
5500 University Parkway
San Bernardino, CA 92407

Crystal Shackelford 880-5501

Dr. Nancy Mary 880-5560

Thank you for your help and participation in this research project,

Crystal Shackelford, M.S.W. Candidate

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