Going "Macro": Exploring the Careers of Macro Practitioners

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Important benefits accrue to the profession and to its vulnerable clientele when social workers hold positions with substantial community or policy influence. However, fewer social workers are holding these positions than in the past, and student preferences to pursue macro-specific training have declined. To improve the social work profession's ability to recruit and educate students interested in competing for leadership positions in human services organizations, this article analyzes data from a survey of MSW graduates of a public school of social work located in the southwestern United States and currently working as macro practitioners. Findings indicate that macro social workers can successfully compete for mid-level and top-level administrative and policy positions, and provide evidence contrary to many of the concerns students express when deciding whether to pursue a macro concentration or career. The article concludes with a discussion of the implications for supporting and educating social work students interested in pursuing a macro practice career.

KEY WORDS: *administration; concentration selection; macro social work*

Macro social work is an essential component of social work practice, targeting change in organizations, communities, and political systems and reflecting "social work's commitment to . . . the alleviation of social problems" (Long, Tice, & Morrison, 2006, p. 3). Important benefits can accrue to both the profession and the vulnerable clientele we serve when macro social workers lead human services organizations and hold positions with substantial community or policy influence. Social workers bring to these positions a combination of technical expertise and an understanding of the importance of contexts and relationships in guiding agency and governmental policy. Social workers in these positions also help to create a pipeline for future social work students and professionals to accrue to these positions (Pritzker & Lane, 2014). However, fewer social workers are holding the influential managerial and policy positions that once were regularly held by MSWs (see, for example, Rosenberg, 2012).

There is not a single explanation for why this shift has happened. Some agency leaders report that they intentionally avoid hiring social workers for leadership positions, perceiving them to lack the analytic and technical skills needed for management (Hoefer, 2003; Perlmutter, 2006). In addition, student preferences to pursue macro-specific training have declined in recent years (Ezell, Chernesky, & Healy, 2004; Rothman, 2013); currently, over 90 percent of MSW students enroll in micro or advanced generalist courses of study (Rothman & Mizrahi, 2014). Although the majority of licensed social workers ultimately engage in some administrative work in their careers, very few spend the majority of their time on tasks related to administration and management, community organizing, or policy development (National Association of Social Workers [NASW], Center for Workforce Development, 2006), suggesting that most social workers who have administrative roles currently hold lower management positions.

To increase the social work profession's ability to recruit and educate students interested in competing for leadership positions in human services organizations, it is important that we understand the dynamics of current macro professionals' careers. As the practice orientation of students' MSW education is an important factor in preparing social workers for their subsequent careers (Mor Barak, Travis, & Bess, 2004), greater knowledge about the experiences of macro professionals can assist educators in supporting students considering a macro concentration and career. Currently, limited career-related information is available for students interested in a macro career; however, we do know that common factors that social work students consider when deciding whether to pursue a macro concentration include

doi: 10.1093/sw/swv019

job availability, competition for positions with other master's-degree graduates, preparation for licensing exams, and the extent to which frontline experience is a prerequisite for professional macro positions (Corvo, Selmi, & Montemaro, 2003; Ezell et al., 2004; Pine & Healy, 1994; Rothman, 2013; Schwartz & Dattalo, 1990). Students also have expressed to the macro faculty authors that potential salaries are an important consideration in selecting a concentration.

This article seeks to provide empirical data about the preparation necessary for professional macro positions and about the career-related experiences of macro social workers. It analyzes survey data from MSW graduates of a public school of social work in the southwestern United States. It examines the contexts within which macro social workers practice, their macro practice jobs, and their post-MSW career paths. The findings offer implications for recruiting and educating students considering a macro practice career.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Social work has historical roots in both macro and direct practice. All social workers are expected to adhere to the NASW's (2008) *Code of Ethics* and its commitment to both meeting individual needs and furthering social justice through organizational, community, and societal interventions. Nonetheless, the profession has long struggled with a divide between macro and direct practice (Ezell et al., 2004; Rothman & Mizrahi, 2014). This divide may contribute to the lack of information students interested in macro practice face as they make education and career decisions.

Factors Influencing Students' Pursuit of a Macro Concentration and Career

Kaufman, Segal-Engelchin, and Huss (2012) found that although BSW students' practice orientations are influenced by their preenrollment interests and preferences, over the first year of enrollment motivation to pursue macro practice decreases and orientation toward direct practice increases. Macro social work scholars contend that programmatic factors discourage students' orientation to macro practice; more specifically, they suggest that program climates may communicate to students that macro education is elective, whereas frontline practice experience and training are necessary for all levels of social work practice (Ezell et al., 2004; Rothman, 2013). Without direct practice experience, students are told, they may be ill-prepared and unmarketable for the macro career path they desire (Ezell et al., 2004).

An underemphasis on macro content in generalist curricula (Rothman, 2013) also may limit the information students have when making concentration and career decisions. As a result, students interested in macro practice often must untangle a mix of myths and facts about macro opportunities. Career concerns, exacerbated by the disproportionate advertisement of clinical positions on social work job boards, can influence students' concentration selection (Schwartz & Dattalo, 1990). As leadership positions are often not limited to MSWs, they may not be marketed in social work–specific venues or using social work–specific language. As a result, social work students may lack information about job availability and their competitiveness relative to other master's-level professionals seeking these positions.

Licensure is also an important student consideration when selecting a concentration (Ezell et al., 2004). The growing emphasis on state licensing practices has been criticized, with scholars arguing that these state-level laws emphasize clinical mental health provision as social work's primary role (Donaldson, Hill, Ferguson, Fogel, & Erickson, 2014; Ezell et al., 2004; Pine & Healy, 1994). Even students with clear macro career interests may be unsure about whether a macro educational path will limit their ability to achieve licensure. Though macro positions may not require licensure, students consistently express concerns that without licensure they will face limited employment options (Pine & Healy, 1994; Rothman, 2013; Schwartz & Dattalo, 1990). An increasing number of states are mandating specific prelicensure clinical courses during students' MSW education, potentially further limiting students' ability to pursue macro coursework (Donaldson et al., 2014).

Extant literature suggests that the salary concerns the authors hear from students considering a macro concentration may not be based in job market realities. A 1990s-era study of Ohio State University MSW graduates found no significant difference between clinical and administrative graduates in terms of salaries or fringe benefits (Boettcher & Burke, 2000). However, although NASW's (2010) salary study does not compare salaries on the basis of concentration, social workers in administrative practice had the highest median base pay of 16 areas

of practice, at $13,000 higher than the second highest paid area. Furthermore, compensation increases as social workers supervise more employees and manage larger budgets (NASW, 2010). Executives earn a higher median pay than directors and managers, who earn more than supervisors and coordinators. These macro-oriented positions all earn a higher median pay than owners and partners and practitioners without any supervisory responsibilities.

Career Trajectories of Macro Practitioners

Several studies examine the macro responsibilities held by graduates soon after obtaining their MSW degree, though little is known about how macro careers progress over time. Zippay and Demone (2011) reviewed nearly two decades of data on immediate post-MSW employment experiences. Fifty to 70 percent of macro concentration graduates of a large public university in the northeastern United States held responsibilities in administration, supervision, program development, and planning within two years of graduation. Much smaller percentages of direct practice graduates held administrative responsibilities.

In contrast, a decade earlier, Boettcher & Burke (2000) found that just 27.5 percent of social administration concentration graduates at Ohio State University held solely administrative responsibilities in their first post-MSW position. The remaining graduates of this macro-oriented concentration held either solely direct practice positions or a combination of direct practice and administration responsibilities. Social administration graduates were more likely than direct practice graduates to have administrative responsibilities in their first job and in subsequent positions; however, the difference between the two groups narrows in subsequent positions.

Although substantial research has been conducted about challenges students face in selecting a macro concentration and pursuing a macro career, research on macro practitioners' career-related experiences is limited. To address this knowledge gap, three research questions were posed: (1) What are the contexts in which macro social workers practice? (2) What does macro social work practice look like in the field? and (3) How did macro social workers prepare for these positions?

METHOD

An online cross-sectional survey using the SurveyMonkey platform was designed and administered in the fall of 2011 to MSW graduates of a large public university in the southwestern United States currently practicing macro social work. This study was approved by the university's institutional review board. The survey consisted primarily of closed-ended questions, with a small number of open-ended questions such as "What is your current job title?"

Setting

The University of Houston Graduate College of Social Work (GCSW) offers the only MSW program in the major metropolitan city, with primary responsibility for preparing social workers to lead the area's public and nonprofit social services agencies. Over the program's history, the curriculum has taken different shapes. In the 1990s and early 2000s, students selected one of five distinct substantive fields of practice; since 2007, the program has offered two concentrations, one micro-oriented and one macro-oriented. The current macro curriculum focuses primarily on leadership, administration, community development, and policy advocacy. Macro students are currently a minority of all enrolled students.

Sample

Due to the curriculum shifts, the program does not have a comprehensive list of alumni engaged in macro practice. Thus, a purposive snowball method was used. The program's alumni relations staff, field office, and macro faculty were asked to identify an exhaustive list of alumni engaged in macro practice. All potential respondents were sent an e-mail requesting study participation and were asked to forward the survey link to all other alumni they were aware of who were engaged in macro practice. Although efforts were made to identify as many respondents as possible, this method may be less representative of alumni who have moved from the area or who have limited contact with other alumni.

A screening question asked survey respondents if they work in *macro practice*, defined as

> work in communities through public and private organizations that is designed to promote progressive social change contributing to the growth and empowerment of individuals, agencies, and communities. Macro responsibilities include, but are not limited to: program planning

and management, administration, human resources, volunteer management, marketing, training and development, grant writing, community development, advocacy and policy practice, and research and evaluation.

The survey was completed by 103 alumni who graduated from the program between 1972 and 2011. Just under half reported graduating in years in which the fields of practice concentrations were offered; the remainder received their education under a methods-based (micro or macro) curriculum. The large majority (80.6 percent) are employed full-time, with an average length of time in their current position of five to six years.

RESULTS

Contexts in Which Macro Social Workers Practice

The majority of respondents practice in nonprofit agencies (see Table 1). Approximately one-third work in the public sector. Substantially fewer are employed in the private sector, including with major corporations and for-profit hospitals.

Over 70 percent of respondents reported that their position was open to other professions during the hiring process, most commonly to MBAs, MPHs, MPAs, and MPPs. Only about one-third hold positions that require some type of licensure; of these positions, slightly less than 50 percent require the LMSW.

Macro Social Work Practice in the Field

Titles. Respondents provided both current and past job titles since receiving their MSW. The over 60 distinct titles reported reflect a range of positions that the authors broke down into eight discrete macro practice categories. Positions held by agency executives include CEO, executive director, vice president, and chief program officer. Director positions include director of development, director of public policy, director of planning and grant development, director of social responsibility, and assistant program director. Managers include program manager, employee assistance program manager, fund development manager, and marketing manager. Several alumni reported working in research and evaluation as research coordinator or evaluation coordinator. Macro practitioners in academia serve in positions such as professor and academic program manager. Alumni practicing in community outreach and legislative relations hold positions such as community outreach liaison, public affairs field specialist, and legislative director. Other positions include consultant, grant writer, and leadership and performance coach.

The word "director" appears most commonly across the reported positions, and the director category, with 29 distinct position titles, is the largest. Fifteen respondents reported current titles as agency executives. Within this group, the title "CEO" was provided by five respondents, and "executive director" by three respondents.

Responsibilities. Respondents were provided a list of macro responsibilities and asked, "How often do you perform the following responsibilities in your current position?" Responses were based on a five-point Likert-type scale (1 = never; 5 = very frequently); the most frequently performed were administrative responsibilities ($M = 4.38$, $SD = 0.93$). On average, the following responsibilities were performed between sometimes and frequently: program planning and development, program/project management, advocacy, program evaluation, coalition building, organizational development, and budgeting. Over 55 percent of the sample performed each of these macro responsibilities frequently or very frequently. (For more details, see Table 2.)

In contrast, respondents rarely held responsibilities related to fundraising, grant making, managing volunteers, or clinical duties. The least frequent responsibilities reported by respondents were clinical staff supervision, philanthropy/grant making, counseling/therapy, case management, volunteer management, and individual/corporate fundraising. Each of these tasks was never or rarely performed by over 55 percent of the sample.

Salaries. Respondents were asked to indicate their current salary range. Provided salary ranges began with "$29,999 or below" and increased by increments of $4,999 (for example, between $30,000 and $34,999), capping out at "$100,000 and above." The median salary range for the sample is between $60,000 and $64,999, and the mean salary is $63,750. The median salary range for those macro social workers holding full-time positions zero to three years postgraduation is between $45,000 and $49,999. The median salary steadily increases as years since graduation increase, with macro social workers employed 20 or more years since graduation earning a median income of between $80,000 and $84,999.

Table 1: Current Macro Social Work Practice and Prior Experience			
Characteristic	**%**	**Median ($)**	***M* ($)**
Current position			
Setting			
Nonprofit	57.5		
Public sector	34.5		
Private sector	8.0		
Position open to other professions			
MBAs	35.2		
MPHs	31.9		
MPAs	30.8		
MPPs	20.9		
JDs	20.9		
Other graduate degree or non–social work licensure	12.1		
Position requires a license			
Yes	32.8		
No	65.7		
LMSW required, if license required			
Yes	47.8		
No	52.2		
Salary range			
Entry level (0–3 years post-MSW)		45,000–45,999	
20 years postgraduation		80,000–84,999	
All macro social workers		60,000–64,999	63,750
Prior experience and licensure			
Prior positions			
Held previous post-MSW position(s)	74.7		
Held at least one primarily macro position	81.4		
Held at least one primarily clinical position	40.3		
Since graduating with an MSW			
"I have only held positions in a primarily macro role"	54.9		
"I have moved back and forth between primarily clinical and primarily macro roles"	11.1		
"I started my career in primarily clinical roles and have moved to primarily macro roles"	16.9		
Other	16.9		
Licensure			
Hold LMSW solely	42.3		
Hold LCSW	19.6		
No social work license	35.1		
Plan to seek further licensure	33.3		
Passed LMSW exam on first attempt	96.8		

Preparation for Current Macro Social Work Positions

Respondents were asked a series of questions to explore their job experiences and the paths their careers have taken. As indicated in Table 1, 74.7 percent of respondents held other post-MSW positions prior to their current position. Of these, 81.4 percent reported holding at least one prior primarily macro position; 40.3 percent have held at least one primarily clinical position. Of these respondents, 54.9 percent reported that all of their post-MSW positions have been in a primarily macro role. Approximately 11 percent reported moving back and forth between primarily clinical and primarily macro roles over their careers. Practitioners who started in a clinical role and later moved to primarily macro roles constituted just under 17 percent of the sample. The remainder described other paths, including holding positions that reflect a blend of macro and clinical work and working outside of social work.

Table 2: Responsibilities in Current Macro Practice Position

Macro Practice Responsibility	In Current Position: Frequency *M* (*SD*)	In Current Position: Performed Frequently or Very Frequently (%)	In Prior Positions: Performed Never or Rarely (%)	In Prior Positions: Performed (%)
Administration	4.38 (0.93)	81.5	2.5	83.3
Program planning and development	3.89 (1.21)	69.1	11.1	79.5
Program/project management	3.81 (1.31)	67.6	18.2	75.3
Advocacy	3.72 (1.00)	58.2	8.8	76.4
Program evaluation	3.62 (1.20)	57.7	17.9	65.8
Coalition building	3.61 (1.25)	58.2	17.8	62.5
Organizational development	3.59 (1.28)	55.2	19.3	65.8
Budgeting	3.52 (1.36)	56.9	26.6	76.4
Community development	3.15 (1.40)	44.4	30.7	47.2
Policy analysis	2.99 (1.31)	40.3	36.4	50.7
Research	2.99 (1.21)	35.1	35.1	52.1
Policy development	2.96 (1.38)	37.2	35.9	49.3
Grant writing	2.82 (1.51)	36.8	46.8	59.7
Group facilitation	2.72 (1.54)	34.6	50.6	52.8
Community organizing	2.60 (1.39)	28.2	51.3	48.6
Individual/corporate fundraising	2.52 (1.54)	27.9	57.0	34.2
Volunteer management	2.49 (1.43)	26.4	55.2	61.6
Case management	2.46 (1.39)	22.6	57.5	44.4
Counseling/therapy	2.14 (1.32)	16.7	65.4	45.8
Philanthropy/grant making	2.09 (1.44)	20.5	67.9	22.2
Clinical staff supervision	1.99 (1.44)	21.0	72.3	26.4

Note: Survey asked, "How often do you perform the following responsibilities in your current position?" Response options were provided using a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 = never to 5 = very frequently.

We also assessed task responsibilities respondents held in prior employment (see Table 2). Prior to their current position, over 75 percent held responsibility for the following tasks of a macro nature: administration, program/project management, advocacy, budgeting, and program planning and development. Over 50 percent previously engaged in macro responsibilities such as organizational development, program evaluation, coalition building, volunteer management, grant writing, research, and policy analysis. Group work, common in both macro and micro practice, was also reported by over half of the sample.

Much less common were prior responsibilities incorporating community-level practice or direct practice. Fewer than half of the sample had previous experience with policy development, community organizing, community development, counseling/therapy, case management, and individual/corporate fundraising. Least common were prior task responsibilities involving clinical staff supervision or philanthropy and grant making.

Regarding licensure, 35 percent of respondents reported having no social work license, particularly noteworthy as social work licensure is required in Texas to identify as a social worker; and 42.3 percent reported having solely an LMSW. Almost all (96.8 percent) respondents with an LMSW reported passing the licensure exam on the first try. Just under 20 percent of the sample held the LCSW license, and 5 percent held the state's LMSW-AP (recognizing advanced practitioners of nonclinical social work). One-third of the sample reported a desire to seek additional licensure. A small minority possessed additional degrees such as MBA, MPP, MPA, and MDiv or certifications in nonprofit management and leadership and mediation.

DISCUSSION

These findings offer implications for recruiting and educating social work students for professional macro practice careers. Findings indicate that macro social workers can successfully compete for mid- and

top-level administrative and policy positions in human services organizations. Our data provide evidence contrary to many of the concerns students voice in deciding whether to pursue a macro concentration or career, such as job availability, lower salaries, whether direct practice is a prerequisite for a successful macro career, and preparation for licensure.

Postgraduate Macro Employment

Macro social workers in our sample are employed in a wide array of positions in human services organizations and hold a diverse range of responsibilities, suggesting many potential avenues for macro social work practice. About 15 percent of our sample have effectively marketed themselves for positions at the highest levels of agency leadership (CEOs, executive directors, vice presidents, and so on). Over one-third hold mid-level management positions. Taking into account small distinctions in job titles between agencies (for example, director of development and director of fund development), at least 60 distinct current macro job titles were reported. Although the types of responsibilities social workers in macro positions hold vary considerably, our data indicate that, unsurprisingly, these responsibilities are frequently macro-specific. Macro practitioners in our sample rarely performed direct service tasks or supervised clinical staff.

Because the term "social work" is often absent from job titles and descriptions (only two of the 60 distinct job titles reported in our survey include this specific term), students may not recognize the opportunities for employment in such positions. It is therefore important that students and potential students be explicitly oriented to the broad array of macro positions a social worker may hold. Recruitment materials might include profiles or quotes from social work graduates practicing in diverse positions with explicit identification of their titles. Event panelists and classroom guest speakers with diverse position titles can expand student awareness of the broad array of potential macro positions. Efforts by field offices to identify placements with macro field instructors across the wide range of macro positions and settings can help students appreciate the breadth of macro social work opportunities and expand the knowledge and skills to which macro students are exposed.

The macro graduates in our study compete with MBAs, MPHs, MPAs, MPPs, and JDs for their positions. When social workers market their career strengths to employers, they are competitive for these positions (Corvo et al., 2003). Students preparing to enter the job market can benefit from macro-specific job search preparation, including guidance on effective search terms (for example, manager, director, supervisor, coordinator, liaison) and mentorship on effectively marketing the specific strengths a social worker brings to the position. Faculty and staff can support students by creating mock interview opportunities and encouraging students to seek out informational interviews and the week-long "externships" common in business education. Such opportunities can prepare students to articulate their strengths, strengthen their networking skills, and understand the range of opportunities available to macro graduates.

Salaries reported in our survey are higher than those reported by graduates from the GCSW program and social workers nationally. Our sample's mean salary range within three years of MSW graduation (between $50,000 and $54,999) is higher than the mean salary range reported for 2011 graduates of the program (GCSW, 2012). The median salary range of our sample (between $60,000 and $64,999) also exceeds the 2009 national median salary of social workers (NASW, 2010). This may be attributable in part to our sampling strategy, yet it is worth noting that 21.7 percent of respondents earned at least $90,000 a year, as compared with 12 percent of social workers nationally. Just 8 percent of this sample reported earning under $30,000, as compared with 12 percent of social workers nationally (NASW, 2010). These data, combined with previous evidence (Boettcher & Burke, 2000; NASW, 2010), indicate a lack of empirical support for concerns that macro practitioners are underpaid in comparison with direct practitioners. NASW and programs that collect and publish graduate salary data might consider including graduates' concentrations to identify concentration-specific distinctions.

Preparation for Macro Positions

The assertion many students hear that all social workers, regardless of their desired form of practice, must receive advanced clinical training, belies a basic premise that macro practice, like clinical practice, requires advanced knowledge, skills, theory, and methods that cannot be acquired solely through on-the-job training. Although a substantial minority of our sample brought primarily direct practice experience to their current position, students desiring a

long-term macro career can benefit most from a direct match between the types of macro responsibilities our respondents hold and the knowledge, skills, and practice behaviors they learn through MSW classes and field education. Mor Barak et al. (2004) found that macro-trained social work managers reported higher levels of quality and intensity in how their field experiences prepared them for a management career than clinically trained managers. Clinically trained managers reported minimal or no experiences during their MSW program that prepared them for their subsequent management responsibilities (Mor Barak et al., 2004).

Due to the shifting nature of concentrations offered by the program under study, we could not accurately distinguish between respondents whose MSW education had been more macro-oriented and those whose education was more micro in nature, limiting conclusions that can be made about the role of a macro concentration in preparing students for macro careers. However, the preponderance of prior macro positions and responsibilities held by respondents suggests that prior macro experiences play an important role in preparing graduates for their current positions. Advising students with long-range goals of agency leadership or substantive policy influence to pursue direct practice training during their MSW education may risk leaving them ill-prepared for the kinds of macro social work practice responsibilities identified in this study. As their careers progress, such training also may leave them unable to effectively compete for agency leadership positions for which agency leaders are seeking specific sets of analytical and technical skills (Hoefer, 2003; Perlmutter, 2006).

Licensure

Student perceptions that a macro concentration is an impediment to licensure are well documented (see, for example, Ezell et al., 2004; Pine & Healy, 1994; Schwartz & Dattalo, 1990). A key message for educators to communicate to students is that these concerns are not substantiated. Although shifts in licensing practices continue to affect educational curricula (Donaldson et al., 2014), this study indicates that a macro-oriented education is not an impediment to master's-level licensure and, in fact, may facilitate generalist licensure. Acknowledging the self-selection or social desirability bias that may be present, 96.8 percent of the LMSWs in our sample reported passing the generalist licensure exam on their first attempt. As might be expected, however, pursuing a macro career may inhibit achievement of advanced clinical licensure—in this study, just under 20 percent reported having an LCSW license.

These data indicate that macro professionals without licensure do not face limited employment options (Pine & Healy, 1994; Rothman, 2013; Schwartz & Dattalo, 1990). Only about 15 percent of respondents hold a position that requires an LMSW. In fact, 35 percent of respondents had no social work license at all, suggesting that many employers do not view licensure as a prerequisite to macro positions. However, these findings reveal a very real licensure concern. Licensure laws in Texas prohibit unlicensed MSWs from referring to themselves as social workers. Thus, over one-third of our sample is not considered to be practicing as social workers, potentially leaving them disconnected from the larger profession. The aggregate impact of individual decisions not to pursue licensure may well be the reinforcement of the message that macro practice is not an essential part of the social work profession.

Future research should explore whether large numbers of macro practitioners eschewing master's-level licensure is a national phenomenon, particularly in states where a separate macro license is not available, and if so, what are its causes and impacts. Social work programs, licensing boards, and NASW chapters might consider whether communication about the benefits of licensure and risks of nonlicensure are adequately tailored to the needs of students and graduates pursuing macro practice. The lack of macro-specific licenses in most states may have the unintended effect of reducing student interest in macro practice and ultimately limiting the educational opportunities available to them (Donaldson et al., 2014).

CONCLUSION

All social workers benefit from exposure to both clinical and macro content. In fact, a substantial number of respondents noted that they use clinical skills in their macro practice. However, our data suggest that macro-specific experience may be an important precursor to the responsibilities expected of professional macro practitioners. The large majority of the responsibilities held by macro practitioners in our sample seem to require substantial technical macro-focused expertise. If the social work profession wants to maintain (or reintroduce) a presence in the upper echelons of management of human services organizations, then preparing students to be competent agency leaders is

essential. To do this, social work programs' missions and objectives need to reflect the importance of both clinical and macro practice philosophies and methods, and advanced macro-specific education should be a key component of preparation for students who ultimately desire to engage in macro practice.

Yet students who enter MSW programs with their sights on agency leadership or substantial policy influence may feel pressured to reconsider their choice. Whether due to limited attention to macro practice in program materials (Corvo et al., 2003); limited macro faculty and limited generalist exposure to macro content (Rothman, 2013); or negative comments from fellow students, faculty, or field instructors (Ezell et al., 2004), these students may lack the necessary information to make educational career choices that match their personal goals. Our study indicates that a wide array of potential positions are open to macro graduates; that these positions rely substantially on macro-specific practice skills and behaviors; that macro salaries are competitive if not higher than their micro counterparts; and that obtaining master's-level licensure, though important, is neither unachievable nor essential for employment for many macro practitioners.

Moving forward, to increase the likelihood that social workers hold influential leadership and policy positions in our communities, it is important for the profession to successfully support students who are interested in pursuing macro concentrations and careers. This study provides information that can guide students considering pursuing a macro career. However, macro-oriented career myths are well ingrained in the profession and its educational institutions; substantial work is needed to help support students in choosing the career path that best fits their strengths and interests. SW

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The authors would like to thank Mesha Khan and Sarah Whitman for their contributions to study development and data collection, and Rebecca Mauldin for her editorial assistance.

Original manuscript received November 10, 2014
Final revision received February 3, 2015
Accepted February 5, 2015
Advance Access Publication May 1, 2015