The Merrill Social Work and Human Services Series

7TH EDITION

SOCIAL WORK MACRO PRACTICE

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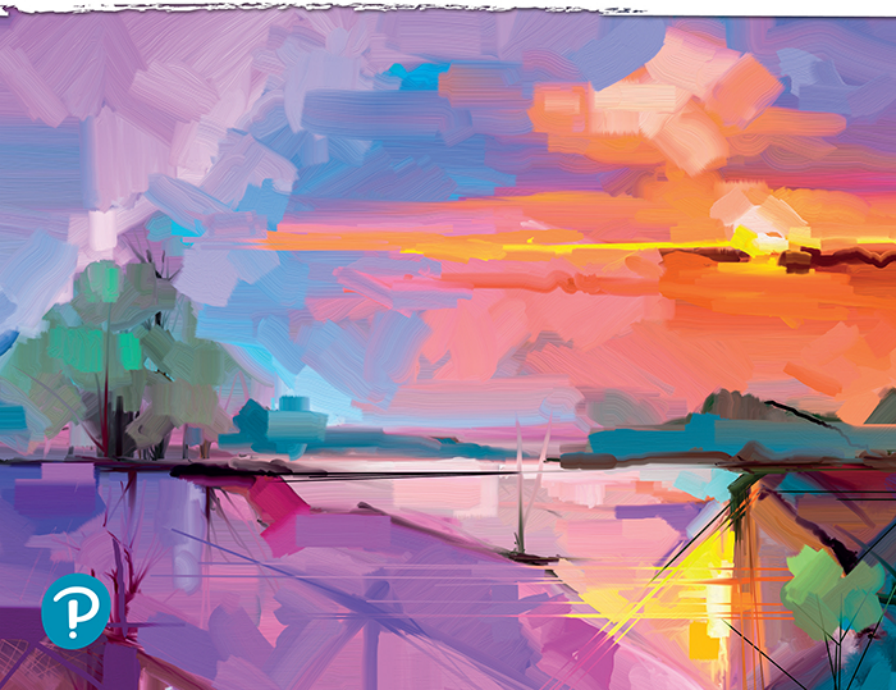
M. LORI THOMAS PETER M. KETTNER



Social Work Macro Practice

SEVENTH EDITION

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We dedicate this edition to the memory of
Peter M. Kettner
our cherished colleague, mentor, and friend

Much of the impetus for conceptualizing, drafting, and updating this book came from our long-time co-author and muse, Pete Kettner. Pete's intellectual contribution, along with his constancy and support, served as an anchor in our first edition and subsequent revisions. We could always count on him to clarify, focus, and guide us, no matter the challenge we faced in the writing and publishing process. Pete modeled collaboration in his gentle, purposeful way, and since his death we have missed him terribly. Working and learning with Pete was a gift to us all, and this book was made immeasurably better by his contributions. The quality of his work and the beauty of his friendship are legacies we will never forget.

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About the Authors

F. Ellen Netting is Professor Emerita and former Samuel S. Wurtzel Endowed Chair at Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) School of Social Work, where she taught courses in policy, administration, planning, and community. Her PhD is from the University of Chicago, her MSSW from University of Tennessee, and her BA from Duke University. Her scholarship focuses on aging, women, and nonprofit management. Her practice experience included directing an office on aging; developing the first community-based Foster Grandparent Program in Tennessee; and serving as Coordinator of Evaluation, Training, and Technical assistance for a 16-county Area Agency on Aging. Prior to coming to Virginia, she was a faculty member at Arizona State University. In retirement, she is Associate Editor of *Reflections: Narratives of Professional Helping* and serves on multiple boards and councils that advocate for, plan, and develop gerontological and long-term care services.

Steven L. McMurtry is Professor Emeritus at the Helen Bader School of Social Welfare at the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee, where he taught courses in research methods, macro practice, and social policy. His PhD is from the University of Wisconsin–Madison, his MSSW from the University of Texas–Arlington, and his BA from Texas Tech University. He was the founding director of the School's PhD program in Social Welfare; he also co-directed its Title IV-E child welfare training program. His practice experience included serving as a child welfare worker, researcher, and program evaluator, and his primary scholarly interests are in child and family welfare. Prior to coming to Wisconsin, he was a faculty member at Arizona State University and a Fulbright Research Fellow at the University of Calgary.

M. Lori Thomas is an Associate Professor of Social Work at UNC Charlotte, where she currently directs research at the UNC Charlotte Urban Institute and serves as Executive Director of the Institute for Social Capital, an integrated community data system. She holds a PhD and MSW from Virginia Commonwealth University. Her work at the institute facilitates the development of data and research capacity in the greater Charlotte region, with a particular focus on engagement and equity. Her research examines programmatic and systemic responses to homelessness and housing instability across the life course, particularly among older adults and people with health and mental health disorders. She has over 15 years of practice experience in affordable housing, community development, and homelessness, including developing and implementing the initial housing-first permanent supportive housing program in Virginia.

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Preface

Thirty years ago, three colleagues at Arizona State University School of Social Work decided to write a book to use in two courses in the foundation macro practice sequence in which we were teaching. At that point, we were using course packs comprising readings from professional journals and book chapters, and we needed a textbook that integrated a growing conceptual and empirically based literature on organizational and community change. Through multiple revisions, we continued our collaboration, and in 2012, we added a fourth author to our team.

Much has changed in 30 years, but our commitment to our original goal remains steadfast. From the beginning, we wanted to recapture a broader definition of *social work practice* that recognizes that all social workers must be able to engage, assess, and intervene with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. In short, we believed (and continue to believe) that active involvement in community and organizational change represents one of the richest and proudest traditions of social work practice.

The Importance of Macro Practice

Social workers who see clients every day identify patterns in the conditions and problems they encounter. This offers constant reminders of the need for macro-level change. We contend that even if social workers are not in a position to take the lead in initiating change, they need to understand the systems within which they operate well enough to know who is in a position to address those conditions and problems. They need to be voices for exposing the need for change, which means that all social workers must have macro practice skills, no matter what position they hold, and they have a responsibility to be supportive of others who are involved in macro-level efforts. Macro practice, understood within this context, defines the uniqueness of social work. Many professions claim expertise in working with individuals, groups, and families, but social work has a longstanding tradition of focusing on the organizational, community, and policy contexts in which service recipients are embedded. The concept of person-in-environment is therefore not simply a slogan but recognition that it can be the *environment* and not the *person* that needs to change. Mullaly and Dupre (2018) state that social workers are not simply called to be direct practitioners but are equally called to be change agents in situations that place service users' best interests first. Our book is designed to prepare social workers to be agents of change for the purpose of improving people's quality of life.

The history of social work as a profession has been marked by shifts in and tensions between intervention with individuals and intervention with and within larger systems. Early perspectives on the latter tended to focus primarily on policy-level involvements (especially legislative processes). As the need for content on social work administration and management and community practice was recognized and incorporated into the curriculum of many schools of social work, these topics were also

embraced as an area of concentration for those who wanted to work with and within larger systems. To manage oversubscribed curricula, students have often been forced to concentrate in *either* macro or micro areas, creating a false dichotomy, when social work of all professions is uniquely positioned to integrate both.

Therefore, over the years as we taught required foundation-level courses on community and organizational change, and as we worked with students and professionals in the field, we became aware of the changing dynamics of practice and expectations for practitioners. Both students and practitioners were working with populations such as homeless persons, members of teen street gangs, survivors of domestic violence, chronically unemployed persons, frail older adults, and disenfranchised groups. Although social workers will always need casework and clinical skills to help people in need on a one-to-one basis, it was becoming increasingly evident to many in the profession that they needed to intervene at the community level if any long-term change was going to happen. Typical activities included advocating for the development of safe shelters, developing neighborhood alternatives to gang membership and juvenile incarceration, addressing chronic unemployment, navigating the complexity of long-term care services, and finding transportation for people to access their voting precinct. It was becoming more and more evident that social workers must be contextual and critical thinkers, challenging the status quo and advocating for change.

These activities are not new; many closely mirror the work of settlement-house workers in the early days of the profession. Yet many social work students have traditionally seen themselves as preparing strictly for interventions at the individual or domestic level. It is unexpected and disconcerting when they find themselves being asked to initiate actions and design interventions that will affect large numbers of people, or to take on conditions that need to change at the community or organizational level if they are not prepared for these kinds of professional activities. When social work practice with macro systems is seen as solely the realm of administrators, community organizers, program planners, and others, a vital linkage to millions of people who struggle daily with deep-seated environmental constraints and racial injustice has been severed. Macro-level change may, but does not necessarily always, involve large-scale, costly reforms at the national and state levels or the election of candidates who recognize that systemic racism, discrimination, and environmental conditions must be addressed if we are to survive as a society. Sometimes useful macro-level change can involve organizing a local neighborhood to deal with blight or gentrification and displacement; sometimes it may mean initiating a self-help group and stepping back so that members will assume leadership roles. Thus, the focus of this book is on enabling social work practitioners to undertake whatever types of macro-level interventions are needed in an informed, analytical way and with a sense of confidence that they can join with others to effect change.

As this seventh edition goes to press, schools of social work and professional associations continue making hard decisions about what content to cover, what courses to offer, and which methods to use (e.g., classroom, hybrid, and online) in delivering that content. Reports on the state of macro practice social work have been issued, and a Special Commission to Advance Macro-Practice in Social Work continues its multipronged strategic approach to deal with imbalances between micro and macro content, the marginality of macro practitioners and educators, and the lack of support for

macro practice (ACOSA, 2018). Challenges to professional macro practitioners' identity, lack of knowledge from the public about the field, recognition of tensions among social work educators, and concerns about state licensing that privilege clinical roles all add fuel to a continuing dialogue (Calhoun et al, 2020).

Amid these debates and challenges within social work education and the public's perception of the profession is an increasing recognition of the need to "recenter social work as a profession uniquely capable of effective work with the poor, disenfranchised, and oppressed … reimagining what professional life and work can be in the 2lst century" (Burghardt, 2021, p. xxx). It means recognizing that skilled macro practitioners are needed more than ever within a global context (Santiago, Soska, & Gutierrez, 2014). So much has happened in the past 30 years that could not have been predicted. Within this global context, we believe it is critical to reiterate our original goal—to recapture a broader definition of *social work practice* that recognizes that all social workers must be able to engage, assess, and intervene with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Burghardt asserts that it means instilling the belief "that collective well-being for [social workers] themselves is as worthy as it is for their clients and communities," getting beyond "quick fixes" (p. xxx). Across the world, macro practice skills are needed more than we ever imagined 30 years ago when we started this endeavor. It is our hope that we may contribute to preparing the next generation of social workers to embrace their calling in the spirit of activism and change for the common good.

New to This Edition

It is our intent in this edition to bring readers abreast of the changes within our field. We have worked to make the seventh edition more practice-oriented, integrating more field-based vignettes and examples throughout and elaborating the planned change model originally introduced in earlier editions. We have paid special attention to the use of technology such as social media and electronic advocacy, in addition to adding video links to each chapter. We have provided four new, detailed vignettes to illustrate practice principles guiding social workers and the diverse roles they play in dealing with everything from disaster preparation to addressing microaggressions. Structurally, we have rearranged chapters, deleted dated material, added new material, and updated conceptual and empirical scholarship in all chapters. Across all chapters, at least one-half of all references are new to this edition. In all changes in this edition, we have tried to be as attentive and responsive to reviewers' feedback as possible while ensuring consistency with current professional literature on macro practice.

Specific changes follow:

1. **ADDING MORE IN-DEPTH CONTENT ON JUSTICE.** Framing macro practice within the current social and political environment requires attention to justice in all its forms and presents the question of how professional social workers can thrive in a rapidly changing and often contentious environment. For example, in Chapter 1, we have ramped up the social justice section to include new material on environmental, racial, and gender justice and created Spotlight 1.2 on different forms of justice. Also, Chapter 1 now introduces the concept of ecological justice and ecosocial work and offers more content on burnout, positionality, and

self-care. Chapter 2 extends this focus on justice, highlighting new material on intersectionality as well as social work's commitment to diverse and oppressed populations.

2. **INCORPORATING NEW PRACTICE-BASED VIGNETTES.** Early in Chapters 3 and 8, we integrated four new, detailed, practice-based vignettes that are used to introduce the frameworks for assessing focal populations and conditions. In Chapter 3, the "Persons with Dementia" section demonstrates how well-meaning professionals can get so caught up in planning *for* something to change that they engage in epistemological injustice that subjugates the contributions of the focal population. A second vignette offers insights into the microaggressions faced by a focal population of Native American youth in high school. In Chapter 8, "Disaster Preparation in Long-Term Care" provides an overview of the difficulties faced in preparing for potential environmental conditions that affect local communities. A second vignette, titled "Rebranding Women's Power," focuses on how feminist organizations evolve and change over time, requiring skill in balancing respect for an agency's history and ideology with the need to change in order to survive in challenging conditions.
3. **RE-LANGUAGING TO REINFORCE STRENGTHS.** We changed Figure 1.1 to reflect our revised approach to planned change, replacing "problem" with "condition." We then reinforced this reframing process throughout the book, changing "target population" to "focal population," since targeting implies that it is the population that needs to change when in fact, it is more often conditions to be targeted. We also added content on assets and strengths throughout each chapter to underscore how the lived experiences of focal populations offer crucial insight into any change effort. For example, in Chapter 3, we expanded our emphasis on cultural humility. It is our intent to avoid deficit-based language and focus on strengths.
4. **REORDERING CHAPTERS.** What in previous editions had been Chapter 4 (assessing conditions) is now Chapter 8. We believe this provides a more logical flow—starting with Chapter 3 on engaging with diverse populations, moving to community (Chapters 4–5) and organizational arenas (Chapters 6–7), and then finally moving to a chapter on assessing conditions (the relocated chapter). This allows Chapter 8 to lead directly into Chapter 9, smoothing the transition from an etiology hypothesis to a working intervention hypothesis.
5. **INTEGRATING CONCEPTS/METHODS OF FORMATIVE, PROCESS, AND SUMMATIVE EVALUATION THROUGHOUT THE BOOK.** We have reinforced the importance of evaluation throughout each chapter, adding content on qualitative methods that can be particularly useful in formative and process evaluation. For example, new Spotlights on Appreciative Inquiry and Photovoice now appear in Chapter 8 and on Ripple Effects Mapping in Chapter 9. Not only do these methods emphasize the importance of inclusion, but they reinforce the content on cultural humility and assets-based approaches to change. In revising Chapter 12, our chapter on evaluation, we have expanded content on qualitative as well as quantitative methods.

6. **INCREASING CONTENT ON POWER.** Although power has always been emphasized throughout the book, we have added additional content on types and forms of power. In Chapter 3, we define power as the ability to exert one's influence, and we explain that this ability can come in different forms. Recognizing that there are different ways to influence others, in Chapter 4 we offer a new Table 4.7 on six types of power. These types are applicable in organizational, community, and policy arenas, and we include definitions and relevant examples. This content is reinforced by recent research on power dynamics in organizational and community settings.
7. **ADDING CONTENT ON ECONOMIC FEASIBILITY AND ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES TO PLANNING.** In Chapter 10, we have added a section on economic feasibility, along with resources for locating funding and tips for applying. For example, new Spotlights 10.2 and 10.3 provide an overview of grants and contracts, and types of fundraising activities and sources of revenues. In Chapter 11, we discuss both emergent and outcome-based approaches to dealing with complex community changes. New Table 11.1 compares assumptions of linear and nonlinear approaches.
8. **UPDATING REFERENCES.** We have updated references throughout the book. Our goal was to tie content to the most recent conceptual and empirical work in hopes that readers will access these valuable sources to supplement their learning process.

Key Content Updates by Chapter

Specific chapter-by-chapter changes include:

Chapter 1: Coming from a strengths perspective, Figure 1.1 is updated so that "condition" replaces "problem" in the intersecting circles. Content on professional identity and leadership are added, and the four case examples are revised and introduced much earlier. The use of pronouns and misgendering is added to the section on The Importance of Terminology. New material on environmental, racial, and gender justice are featured, along with a new Spotlight 1.2 on different forms of justice. A new Spotlight 1.3 highlights strategies for thriving in professional practice. Concepts of ecological justice and ecosocial work are defined, along with more content on burnout, positionality, and self-care.

Chapter 2: Chapter 2 extends the focus on justice, highlighting new material on intersectionality as well as social work's commitment to diverse and oppressed populations. Historical trends include a new section on science-based practice, along with new material on the development of community and administrative practice. Facts and figures about population groups and contemporary policies have been updated throughout. Updated discussion on influential policies affecting the well-being of vulnerable populations includes more in-depth description on housing-related policies and the impact of post-industrialization on urban communities and concentrated poverty.

Chapter 3: Two new vignettes are added at the beginning of Chapter 3. "Persons with Dementia" demonstrates how well-meaning professionals can get so caught

up in planning *for* something to change that they engage in epistemological injustice that subjugates the contributions of the focal population. A second vignette offers insights into microaggressions faced by Native American youth in high school. Discussion of cultural humility is expanded, nativism has been added to the list of isms, and a new Spotlight 3.2 lists tenets of intersectionality. References to TribalCrit and LatCrit now accompany material on critical race theory (CRT).

Chapter 4 (formerly Chapter 5): Over 50 new references are added to Chapter 4 to update scholarship on community fully. Sections on assets mapping, capacity building, and social networking are expanded. Boundaries, boundary maintenance, and boundary-spanning concepts are explained, along with new sections on psychological sense of community theory and types of power. These types are applicable in organizational, community, and policy arenas and include definitions and relevant examples. This content is reinforced by recent research on power dynamics in organizational and community settings.

Chapter 5 (formerly Chapter 6): Vignettes on "Canyon City" and "Lakeside" are revised and updated, their implications threaded throughout the chapter. Expanded foci on building relationships, community organizing, and examples from the scholarly literature are incorporated into this revised chapter. A new Table 5.1 compares deliberation and community organizing approaches. Added to reasons for doing a community assessment is a new section on formative evaluation. Spotlight 5.2 highlights resiliency, Spotlight 5.3 focuses on different types of social enterprise, and Spotlight 5.4 is on community members' engagement.

Chapter 6 (formerly Chapter 7): The introduction is rewritten to tie into the discussion of power introduced in Chapter 4. There is also new material on leadership. The "Diversity as an Element of Culture" subsection is updated to include three themes that are important to theory-building and research on diversity as an element of organizational culture: (1) contextuality, (2) intersectionality, and (3) multiplexity. We reemphasize the need to think critically about how understanding diversity has moved from being a purely representational approach based on numbers of people in certain categories to exploring the complexity of a diverse workforce fully. Table 6.2, in which dimensions of key organizational theories are compared, is relocated toward the end of Chapter 6. (It was at the beginning in our previous edition.)

Chapter 7 (formerly Chapter 8): Vignettes on "Canyon City Department of Child Welfare" and "Lakeside Family Services" are revised and updated, their implications threaded throughout the chapter. Numerous studies are cited regarding newer approaches to management and leadership style and human resource management strategies used to address disparities in access and provision of services to groups having diverse characteristics. New content on methodologies such as meta-analysis and systematic reviews provide evidence-based interventions. Spotlight 7.3 is new to this edition and offers guidance in assessing organizational cultural competence.

Chapter 8 (formerly Chapter 4): This chapter is moved to immediately precede the changed plan model in Chapters 9 through 12. Two new vignettes have been

written to introduce Chapter 8: "Disaster Preparation in Long-Term Care" provides an overview of the difficulties faced in preparing for potential environmental conditions that affect local communities. "Rebranding Women's Power" focuses on how feminist organizations evolve and change over time, requiring skill in balancing respect for an agency's history and ideology with the need to change to survive in challenging conditions. Two new Spotlights highlight Appreciative Inquiry and Photovoice as methods used in assessing community and organizational conditions.

Chapter 9: Chapter 9 has been renamed "Designing and Building Support for an Intervention." The section titled "Frame the Statement of Change" has been completely revised and the language has shifted from problem (a deficits approach) to condition. Early in the chapter, the theory of change is introduced, along with studies demonstrating the use of ripple effect mapping. Material on digital storytelling and up-to-date use of social media is added to engage participants in the planned change process. The framework in Chapter 9 has been reorganized to identify additional approaches to monitoring and documenting the change process and is designed to reinforce the importance of formative evaluation.

Chapter 10: There are now four rather than three tasks in Chapter 10's framework so that politics and economics get equal attention. Over 25 new references are cited and used to point the student to further reading on the subject. In Chapter 10, a new section on economic feasibility has been added, along with a plethora of resources for locating funding and tips for applying for grants. For example, new Spotlights 10.2 and 10.3 provide an overview of grants and contracts and types of fundraising activities and sources of revenues. In addition, sections on lobbying, mass media, and civil disobedience have been expanded.

Chapter 11: The introduction in Chapter 11 has been revised to include both emergent and outcomes-based approaches to using logic models. We explain that there is a risk that those who use the dominant approach in this book can be lulled into reducing complex change opportunities into neat graphical displays that do not fully describe the complexity of social conditions. If the voices of participants are truly heard, an interactive process may occur in which action system members double back, reassess the original model, and recalibrate what they are doing. When this happens, participants will have engaged in episodes of emergent planning as they move through the change process. New Table 11.1 compares assumptions of linear and nonlinear approaches to change.

Chapter 12: In Chapter 12, "outcome evaluation" has been expanded to "summative evaluation" to include both outputs and outcomes as part of a final evaluation. A new section on formative evaluation reinforces earlier chapters in which formative evaluation was mentioned throughout the book. An emphasis on qualitative methods now accompanies content on quantitative evaluation methods, including information on one-on-one interviewing, conducting focus groups, engaging in community forums, and the use of nominal group and Delphi techniques. Spotlight 12.1, on how changes can fail, has all new references and updated examples from the latest research.

Pedagogical Features

Features specifically designed to facilitate instruction include:

Learning Outcomes Each chapter begins by listing major concepts the reader will understand with mastery of the chapter content.

2.1 Identify historical social conditions and ideologies leading to the establishment of social work as a profession.

2.2 Discuss how professional social work education and practice developed during the 1900s.

2.3 Describe issues faced by diverse and oppressed population groups.

2.4 Identify contemporary challenges related to social work macro practice.

2.5 Explain why change is so important to social work practice.

Principles in Practice To solidify key concepts, real-world vignettes have been included to show the principles under discussion in practice.

Principles in Practice: Two Vignettes

Vignette 1 Persons with Dementia

Around the world, persons are living with dementias that affect the normal functioning of the brain. Alzheimer's disease (AD) is most prevalent, but other common types include vascular dementia, Lewy body dementia, and

Tasks To help readers make the abstract more concrete, Tasks are included throughout. These break down larger concepts into more manageable steps that, together, lay the groundwork for the successful incorporation of theory into practice.

Task 1: Develop an Intervention Hypothesis

During the early phases of a change effort, many people involved in the process (paid staff, service users, volunteers, and others) are eager to propose a specific intervention. They may have experienced the frustration of working in what they perceive to be flawed programs, under perceived oppressive community or organizational policies, or as participants or members of communities that seem powerless to bring about meaningful change. Understandably, they are eager to propose immediate change and may be impatient with the idea of carefully thinking through the alternatives. This can be a great temptation and a potential pitfall if change agents do not insist on dealing with the findings developed to this point and avoid straying too far off course.

A well-informed, professional approach to macro-level change requires that the foregoing assessments of population, arena, and condition identified in Chapters 3 through 8 be addressed first. However, it is the unusual change agent who is not constantly mindful of a preferred intervention and who is not continually molding and

Learning Management System (LMS)–Compatible Assessment Bank, and Other Instructor Resources

LMS-Compatible Assessment Bank

With this new edition, all assessment types—quizzes and application exercises—are included in LMS-compatible banks for the following learning management systems: Blackboard (**9780135868218**), Canvas (**9780136821595**), D2L (**9780136821533**), and Moodle (**9780136821564**). These packaged files allow maximum flexibility to instructors when it comes to importing, assigning, and grading. Assessment types include:

- **Learning Outcome Quizzes:** Each chapter Learning Outcome is the focus of a Learning Outcome Quiz that is available for instructors to assign through their Learning Management System. Learning Outcomes identify chapter content that is most important for learners and serve as the organizational framework for each chapter. The higher-order, multiple-choice questions in each quiz will measure your understanding of chapter content, guide the expectations for your learning, and inform the accountability and the applications of your new knowledge. When used in the LMS environment, these multiple-choice questions are automatically graded and include feedback for the correct answer and for each distractor to help guide students' learning.
- **Application Exercises:** Each chapter provides opportunities for students to apply what they have learned through Application Exercises. The exercises require students to watch short videos, read scenarios, or revisit chapter elements and then answer open-ended questions. When used in the LMS environment, a model response written by experts is provided after students submit the exercise. This feedback helps guide students' learning and can assist the instructor in grading.

- **Chapter Tests:** Suggested test items are provided for each chapter and include questions in the following formats: multiple choice and short-answer/essay. When used in the LMS environment, the multiple-choice questions are automatically graded, and model responses are provided for short-answer and essay questions.

Instructor's Manual (9780135868362)

The Instructor's Manual is provided as a Word document and includes resources to assist professors in planning their course. These resources consist of suggestions for syllabus construction, chapter summaries, discussion prompts, learning exercises, and additional media resources. These have been carefully selected to provide opportunities to support, enrich, and expand on what students read in the textbook.

PowerPoint® Slides (9780135868447)

PowerPoint® slides are provided for each chapter, highlight key concepts, and summarize the content of the text to make it more meaningful for students.

Note: All instructor resources—LMS-compatible assessment bank, instructor's manual, and PowerPoint slides—are available for download at www.pearsonhighered.com. Use one of the following methods:

- From the main page, use the search function to look up the lead author (i.e., Netting) or the title (i.e., Social Work Macro Practice). Select the desired search result and then click the Resources tab to view and download all available resources.
- From the main page, use the search function to look up the ISBN (provided above) of the specific instructor resource you would like to download. When the product page loads, click the Downloadable Resources tab.

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Acknowledgments

As we finish this seventh edition, much has changed since our original 1993 publication. We are indebted to our colleagues and students at the four universities where we have worked who have given us constructive and helpful feedback throughout the years. We want to thank colleagues who provided feedback as they used our text at other universities. We appreciate as well the efforts of a number of reviewers who provided careful and thoughtful assessments of earlier drafts. For this seventh edition, these individuals are Jessica Nobile, Cleveland State University; Stephanie Lechuga-Peña, Arizona State University; Mary-Ellen Brown, Arizona State University; and Harold Eugene Briggs, University of Georgia.

To our editor, Rebecca Fox-Gieg, we express our sincere appreciation for her oversight, patience, interest, and assistance as we began the revision of our text. Throughout the writing process she always answered our questions and served as our advocate when changes needed to be made. To Curtis Vickers, our Developmental Editor, we thank you for being our cheerleader in providing excellent feedback and gentle suggestions throughout the revisioning process. Many thanks go to Neha Sharma, Pearson Content Producer, for overseeing the entire production process. Much appreciation goes to our project manager at Integra Software Services Mathivanan Durai for attention to detail, timeliness, and support throughout copyediting and production. Most of all, we thank those students and practitioners who, often in the face of seemingly insurmountable barriers, continue to practice social work the way it was intended. They intervene at whatever level is needed. They persist with what may appear to be intractable problems and work with clients who have lost hope until hope can be rediscovered and pursued. Their spirit and dedication continually inspire us in our efforts to provide whatever guidance we can for the next generation of social workers.

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Brief Contents

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Contents

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Chapter 1

An Introduction to Macro Practice in Social Work

Learning Outcomes

1.1 Define macro practice and its relationship to micro practice.

1.2 Discuss case examples used to illustrate macro practice.

1.3 Explain the theoretical and values foundation of macro practice.

1.4 Discuss methods used to address practice challenges.

Chapter Outline

What is Macro Practice?

Learning Outcome 1.1 Define macro practice and its relationship to micro practice.

This book is intended for all social workers, regardless of whether they specialize or concentrate in micro or macro tracks within schools of social work. We believe that all social workers are professional change agents; therefore, we use the terms *social worker, professional*, and *change agent* interchangeably throughout this book.

This book is also designed to be an introduction to macro practice as a set of professional activities in which all social workers are involved. Although some practitioners will concentrate their efforts primarily in one **arena** more than another, all social workers encounter situations in which macro-level interventions are the appropriate response to a need, a condition, or a problem. Therefore, we define **macro practice** as *professionally guided intervention(s) designed to bring about change in organizational, community, and/or policy arenas*.

Professional identity is a relational concept in that one identifies with a community of colleagues who share a common value base and who jointly engage in activities that enhance the common good. Motivations to pursue a particular career will vary, but wanting to become a professional social worker is typically not monetarily or authoritatively driven as much as it is attached to a personal desire to make a difference in the lives of others (Webb, 2017). This characteristic has led a number of writers to refer to professions as *callings* because they literally call members to contribute to the civic good. Professions are therefore client oriented and conform to a set of values that encapsulate the community good that is to be served. In many ways, it is this commitment to the understanding and changing of larger systems that defines social work. Sullivan (2005) argues that the very nature of professionalism implies a responsibility to the larger society and to the common good.

In his classic book, *Social Work as Cause and Function*, Porter Lee (1937) described the dual calling of social work—to address systemic social problems and to provide for the immediate needs of individuals and families. Lee acknowledged the inherent tension in trying to do both. In planning for social change while simultaneously responding to immediate need, social work finds its unique "both-and" contribution (Gates, 2017). This book is based on the assumption that professional social workers will always experience tension as long as they recognize the importance of both providing direct services and addressing organizational and community needs. Social workers must see themselves as doing both to truly be doing social work. The only other option is to ignore recurring larger system issues. Thus, macro practice is not an option but an integral part of being a professional social worker.

All social workers will engage in some form of macro practice and will become leaders. We are not referring to leadership with a capital *L*, but mean leadership in the way Wheatley (2017) defines the term: **Leaders** are people who are committed to serving people and who understand how important it is to engage with others to effect change.

The Interrelationship of Micro and Macro Social Work Practice

A broad focus on **arenas** for change is a feature that makes social work unique among helping professions. When the arena for change is limited solely to casework with individuals and families, an assumption is being made: that causal factors associated with the condition or need can be found only in some deficit in the micro system—the client, couple, or family coming for help—or in their abilities to access needed resources. Broadening one's analysis to include organizations and communities recognizes the possibility or likelihood that the pathology or causal factors may be identified in the policies and/or practices of macro systems—communities and their various institutions—and that there are strengths from which to draw that service recipients may not have even realized that they have. For example, an organization may fail to provide relevant and needed services or may provide them in a narrow and discriminatory manner so that clients feel disempowered. Or some members of a community may find themselves excluded from participation in decisions that affect them when they have a great deal to contribute in the decision-making process.

It is not unusual for direct practitioners to have clients ask for help with concerns that at first appear to be individual or interpersonal, but, after further examination, require macro-level intervention. A family that loses its primary source of income is subsequently evicted and finds that there is no affordable housing and a three-month waiting list to get into a homeless shelter represents a symptom of a community condition that needs to change. Clearly, the family's immediate shelter problem must be resolved, but just as obviously, the community-wide lack of affordable housing and emergency alternatives must be addressed.

A veteran may report having difficulty getting an appointment to see a specialist at the Veterans Administration and is put on a waiting list. This may seem like an isolated incident until social workers begin to see a pattern developing among their clients who are service members or veterans. When one of those social workers watches the news one night to learn that this delay is keeping thousands of veterans from getting health care services and that policies surrounding how waiting lists are handled need to change, what seemed like an individual's problem is quickly seen as a macro need for change within the veterans' health care system. Collecting data, advocating at the local level, and joining others around the country to advocate for system reform become necessary if clients are to receive what they need.

For example, a White social worker employed by a community-based agency on an American Indian reservation talks about the importance of her work, because she constantly has to educate herself and ask Indigenous people for advice so that she does not make assumptions about the people with whom she works. The concept of community and what it means to this tribe, even the value of the land as a part of their tradition, is crucial. It is much more complex than she had assumed when she was in school. In her position, this social worker has come to appreciate the false dichotomy between micro and macro social work. Although she works directly with tribal members, she is constantly assessing their environment and recognizing the cultural context in which all her actions are embedded. She is also learning about the structure of helping and the emotional burden that Black, Indigenous, and other Persons of Color (BIPOC) carry as they must regularly explain themselves to White people like her.

In instances like these, micro-level interventions alone may be inefficient, ineffective, and sometimes harmful ways to address macro-level conditions, and they also run the risk of dealing only with symptoms. In some ways, using micro-level interventions to address a macro-level condition is similar to treating individuals who are suffering from a new flu strain one at a time rather than vaccinating the whole population before they contract the disease. In short, it is as important for social workers to understand the nature of individual and group interventions as it is to understand the nature of organizational, community, and policy change. For more examples about the interconnections of micro and macro practice, see the special issue of *Reflections: Narratives of Professional Helping* edited by Bailey and Emmerson (2018).

Macro-Level Change

Intervention in organizations or communities is referred to as ***macro-level change***. Managing macro-level change requires a good deal of professional knowledge and skill. Poor management, inaccurate assumptions, and flawed decision making in the change process can result in serious setbacks that can make things worse for those already in need. On the other hand, many positive changes in organizations and communities have been orchestrated by social workers and others who have carefully planned, designed, and carried out the change process.

Social work students often express the concern that they came into the profession because of an interest in working with individuals and families, not with communities and organizations. This can sometimes present an **ethical dilemma**, because at times what a client or family most needs in the long run is macro-level change. This does not mean that the immediate need is not addressed. It also does not mean that the social worker is left alone to bring about community or organizational change. Macro practice is a collaborative effort, and change will rarely be immediate. In fact, macro change may take years, leading to multiple phases of intervention. But ignoring the need for change is not a viable option. Any social worker who encounters the need for change can at the very least take two basic actions: acknowledge and discuss the structural nature of the condition with their client and bring awareness of the condition to those persons who are positioned to effect change. Both actions can begin a process that will make a difference in the lives of multiple people.

Given the complexity of macro interventions, practitioners may begin to feel overwhelmed. Is it not enough to perform good direct practice or clinical work? Is it not enough to listen to a client and offer options? Our answer is that professional practice focusing only on an individual's intrapsychic concerns does not fit the definition of social work. Being a social worker requires seeing the client as part of multiple, overlapping systems that comprise the person's social and physical environment. The profession of social work is committed to seeking social and economic justice in concert with marginalized and underserved populations, and macro-practice skills are necessary in confronting these inequalities. For example, consider a woman reported for child neglect who lives in a rundown home with inadequate plumbing and a rodent and insect infestation her landlord refuses to address. A direct-practice intervention designed to strengthen her emotional coping skills might be useful, but that intervention alone would ignore the context of the conditions facing her and other women living in

similar situations. Social workers engaging only in working with their individual cases and ignoring larger-scale conditions may be doing so to the detriment of their clients.

Similarly, social workers who carry out episodes of macro practice must understand what is involved in the provision of direct services to clients at the individual, household, or group level. Without this understanding, macro practice may occur without an adequate grounding in understanding client conditions, needs, and problems. One example might be a social worker who conducts a community crime prevention campaign to combat high rates of petty theft in a neighborhood, unaware that most such acts are the work of a relatively small number of residents desperately in need of addiction intervention. The interconnectedness of micro and macro roles is the heart of social work practice (Austin, 2019; Rothman & Mizrahi, 2014; Tropman & McBeath, 2019).

Macro-Practice Arenas and Roles

This book is not designed to prepare practitioners for full-time agency administration, program planning, community organizing, or policy analysis positions. Social workers who assume full-time macro **roles** will need a more advanced understanding than this text provides. Nor is this a book on how to specialize in macro practice. Instead, it is designed to provide basic knowledge and skills on aspects of macro practice in which competent social work practitioners will need to engage. We also want to raise awareness about how versatile social work is as a profession and about the potential one has to engage at the macro level. It is critically important for social workers to see the big-picture social environment in which their clients live their daily lives and to know how to advocate for change (Reisch, 2017).

There are different ways to conceptualize the **arenas** in which macro social work practice occurs. Rothman, Erlich, and Tropman (2008) identify three arenas of intervention: communities, organizations, and small groups. We have selected communities and organizations as the arenas on which the majority of this text will focus, folding small-group work in as a critical part of most interventions in both communities and organizations. ***Small groups*** are seen as collections of people who collaborate on tasks that move toward agreed-upon changes. Small groups are often the nucleus around which change strategies are developed in both communities and organizations, and they are therefore more logically conceptualized as part of the strategy or medium for change than as the focus of change.

Other writers focus on the policy context in which macro intervention occurs (Barusch, 2018; Jansson, 2018, 2019; Chapin & Lewis, 2020; Lane, Palley, & Shdaimah, 2020; Popple & Leighninger, 2019; Pyles, 2021). Organizational and community arenas are deeply embedded in political systems, which are typically the starting points for development of social policies. Although the creation and analysis of these policies are not our main focus, an understanding of how ideologies and values are manifested in local, state, national, and international politics is fundamental to macro change. Also, it is important to recognize that policies are developed, enacted, and implemented in every arena. For example, groups develop working rules, organizations have governing boards that establish policies and procedures, communities develop policies that pertain to their jurisdictions, and associations develop policies to guide the actions of their

membership. Thus, it becomes important for practitioners to know what body created a policy that needs to be changed, and who to target when policy change is needed.

The majority of social workers deal with change directly with clients, usually working with individuals one on one or with families or small groups. Some practitioners focus on communitywide conditions (Gutiérrez & Gant, 2018). Others work in the areas of planning, management, and administration of organizations (Austin, 2018). Regardless of the professional social worker's primary practice orientation, it is crucial that all social work practitioners support the position that although some conditions can be resolved at an individual or family level, others will require intervention that takes on a broader scope, including the need to effect changes in organizations and communities. Social workers are constantly identifying changes needed to make systems more responsive or sensitive to **focal populations**. Other professionals may also see themselves as change agents, and it is important for the contemporary social work practitioner to collaborate and partner with those from other professions so that the knowledge of diverse fields can be used in planning effective change. Macro changes are typically too complex for one to address alone.

It is not uncommon to have social workers describe themselves as *psychiatric social workers, geriatric specialists, child welfare workers*, and so on. These specialties denote the populations with whom these practitioners work. Just as common are terms such as *medical social worker* and *behavioral health specialist*, indicating a setting in which these professionals are employed. Within all of these specialties or settings, there are multiple roles one can play as a social worker (Kerson & McCoyd, 2013).

Terms such as *planner, manager, community organizer, case manager*, and *group worker* describe actual functions social workers perform. In addition, social workers plan, develop, and coordinate programs as well as administer, manage, and supervise staff in human service organizations. Social workers develop and organize communities around the world. They advocate for policy change and work as policy analysts in local, regional, national, and international arenas (Santiago & Smith, 2018).

Social work practice is broadly defined and allows for both micro (individual, domestic unit, or group) and macro interventions (organization, community, or policy). See Spotlight 1.1. Social workers who undertake macro interventions will often be engaged in what is called "policy practice" (Jansson, 2018) because policy change is so integral to what happens in organizations and communities. Given this division of labor, some professional roles require the social worker to be involved full-time in macro practice. These professional roles are often referred to by such titles as *planner, policy analyst, program coordinator, community organizer, manager*, and *administrator.*

The micro service worker or clinical social worker also bears responsibility for contextualizing problems for their clients and initiating change in organizations and communities. Workers in micro-level roles are often the first to acknowledge or recognize patterns indicating the need for change. If one or two persons present a particular problem, a logical response is to deal with them as individuals. However, as more individuals present the same situation, it may become evident that something is awry in the systems with which these clients are interacting. The social worker must then assume leadership in alerting the appropriate persons who can identify the system(s) in need of change and the type of change needed. The nature of the system(s) in need of change and the type of change needed may lead to communitywide intervention or intervention in a single organization.

SPOTLIGHT 1.1

Focus of Intervention and Examples of Roles

	Primary Focus of Intervention	Examples of Roles
Micro	Individuals	Clinician Care Coordinator
Micro	Households	Family Counselor Case Manager
Micro & Macro	Small Groups	Group Worker Supervisor
Macro	Organizations	Human Service Administrator Midlevel Manager Program Coordinator Supervisor
Macro	Community	Community Developer Community Organizer Community Planner Social Activist
Macro	Policy	Legislative Advocate Policy Analyst

Suppose, for example, the staff in a senior center discovers that a number of older persons in the community are malnourished because of self-neglect and social isolation. A caseworker could follow up with each person, one at a time, in an attempt to provide outreach and needed services. But this could take a long time and produce hit-or-miss results. An alternative would be to deal with the condition from a macro perspective—to invest time in organizing agency and community resources to identify older people who need the senior center's services and to ensure that nutritional and socialization services are provided through a combination of staff and volunteer efforts.

Or assume that a social worker begins seeing more and more mixed-status families, composed of members with varying legal status. Parents fear being targeted by deportation laws that could force them to leave the country without their citizen-children. Hard choices are made every day because parents must face either leaving their children in hopes that they will have a better life, or taking their children with them even though this will mean taking them into danger or limited economic opportunities. The social worker recognizes how untenable this position is for parents and decides to document these cases and asks her colleagues to do the same thing, so that they can join forces in advocating for immigration reform (Finno-Velasquez & Faulkner, 2018).

This may seem like a complex undertaking for someone who came into social work expecting to work with people one person or family at a time. Yet, these social workers know that they have valuable practice experience that can be used to advocate for change and, as social workers, they are committed to amplifying voices that are unheard or ignored.

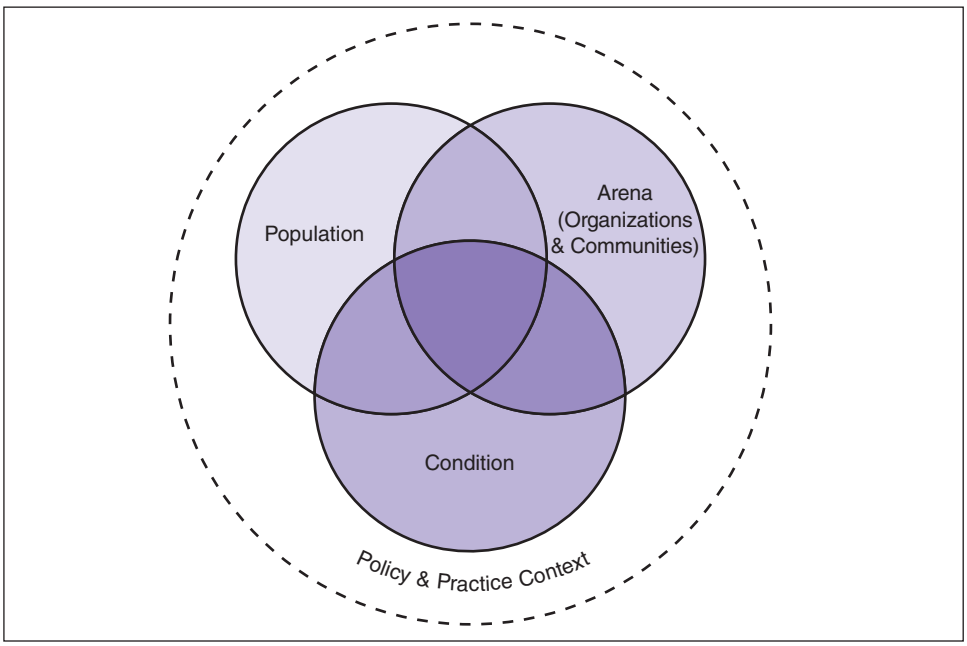
Although it is true that macro-level interventions can be complicated, we will offer a somewhat systematic approach that attempts to make such efforts more manageable. Remember, too, that these interventions are typically accomplished with the help of others, not alone.

A Systematic Approach to Macro Social Work Practice

Social workers find themselves drawn into aspects of macro practice through a number of avenues, which we will refer to as (1) population, (2) arena, and (3) condition. The three overlapping circles in Figure 1.1 illustrate the focal points of the social worker's efforts in undertaking a macro-level change episode. As the intervention becomes more clearly conceptualized and defined, political and policy contexts must also be taken into consideration. Figure 1.1 illustrates an approach that social workers can use to identify, study, and analyze the need for change and to begin formulating solutions.

Initial awareness that a condition in need of change exists may occur in a variety of ways. A client might bring it to a social worker's attention. A group of residents within a neighborhood may present issues and concerns that need to be addressed. Issues in the workplace, such as the quality of service to clients, may surface and require organized intervention. Community conditions may be so glaring that the need for change comes from many directions. Social problems may be broadcast around the world, illustrating that multiple societies are struggling with some of the same challenges that one has identified in a local arena. Regardless of how social workers identify change opportunities, they function in a political environment that cannot be ignored.

Figure 1.1 Macro Practice Conceptual Framework: Understanding Population, Arena, and Condition



More will be said about these interacting factors later in this book, as the analytical and intervention phases of macro-level change are described. The following examples will illustrate these different points of entry into an **episode of change**.

- A social worker working with a senior center discovers that assisted-living resources in the community are limited for low-income seniors. In this instance, the worker's point of entry into the episode of change may be through the *population* of low-income older adults, helping them organize and approach the city council, county commission, or the state legislature about the need for more options for low-income seniors who can no longer live alone.
- A social worker at a community center learns that many apartments in the neighborhood are being used as drop points for undocumented immigrants, where they wait until they are sent to various communities across the country. Some community members express concerns about exploitation. Other community members argue that they are concerned about safety and sanitation. In this instance, the worker's point of entry into the episode of change may be the community or neighborhood, perhaps by sponsoring some communitywide meetings to discuss the impact, involving the appropriate community leaders, and working toward a resolution. This represents entry through the community *arena*.
- A social worker with a neighborhood service center may discover that among the many families served by the center are five or six single parents who have recently secured employment but are unable to find affordable child care. Working with this group's *condition* or need (children who need to be cared for while the parent is at work) as his or her point of entry into the episode of change, the social worker and others develop a plan for child care for the children of these single parents.

In the course of engaging with and assessing populations, arenas, and conditions, the social worker will inevitably focus on the areas of overlap depicted in Figure 1.1. To engage in macro practice to help a client who has a substance use disorder, for example, the social worker must understand the background of the person addicted (e.g., older, retired men), the arena (community or organization) within which the people live, and the condition (alcoholism). It would be important to review literature on the population, theory about how alcohol addiction develops, and reports from studies testing various interventions. As the change agent builds a body of knowledge about the population and condition, it becomes especially important to focus on the overlap between alcoholism as a condition and its unique impact on the population of retired people.

It is likewise important to understand how the phenomenon of alcoholism affects the local community (the overlap between condition and arena), and to what extent the needs of the population is understood and addressed in the local community (overlap between population and arena). Ultimately, in an episode of macro practice, the objective is to work toward an understanding of the area where all three circles overlap (alcoholism and its impact on retired men in a given neighborhood or town).

Social and community needs must also be addressed within a larger context that affects the population, the condition, and the community or organization. Dealing with social and community conditions and needs effectively requires an awareness of the political environment within which the change episode will be undertaken. For these