

Who needs Poverty-Aware
Social Work:

And Why?



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Lecture Outline

- Israeli Context
- Why do we need a poverty-aware paradigm?
- What is the Poverty-Aware Paradigm?
- Poverty-Aware practice (principles and evidence)
- Beyond social work: PAP's current developments

Israeli Context

social democratic
ideology and policy



to neo-liberal
ideology and policy

20% of all families and 30% of all children live in poverty

Israeli Context

Two main institutions are providing social care to people in poverty:

1

The National Insurance
Institute

provides allowances
(e.g. children allowance, allowance
for the elderly and income support
allowance)

2

The local Social Services
Departments

provide psychosocial
care, mediation, advocacy



Why do we need a poverty-aware paradigm?

T R A N S F O R M A T I O N

From an individual failure → societal failure

From focus on problems → a focus on people's knowledge, needs and their resistance to poverty

From a focus on functioning and behavior
→ full subjectivity of people in poverty

PAP

Adopted by
the Ministry
of Welfare

Changes in policy - regulations, new role of social workers, budgets

9 programs - nationwide

PAP training - thousands of social workers

PAP courses - academia

Research - programs' evaluation, peer reviews articles, books

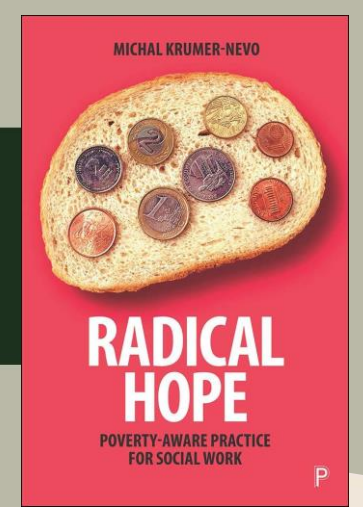


What is the Poverty-Aware Paradigm?

The conservative paradigm blames people for their poverty, individualizes poverty, speaks the language of deficits, problems and risk management
inspires personal psychosocial care

The structural poverty as a problem of societal institutions and arrangements, speaks the language of empowerment and social justice
inspires community work

Poverty-Aware Paradigm a radical-critical paradigm
speaks the language of rights and recognition



What is PAP?

Poverty is a violation of human rights

In the structural sphere



housing



employment



welfare



health



education

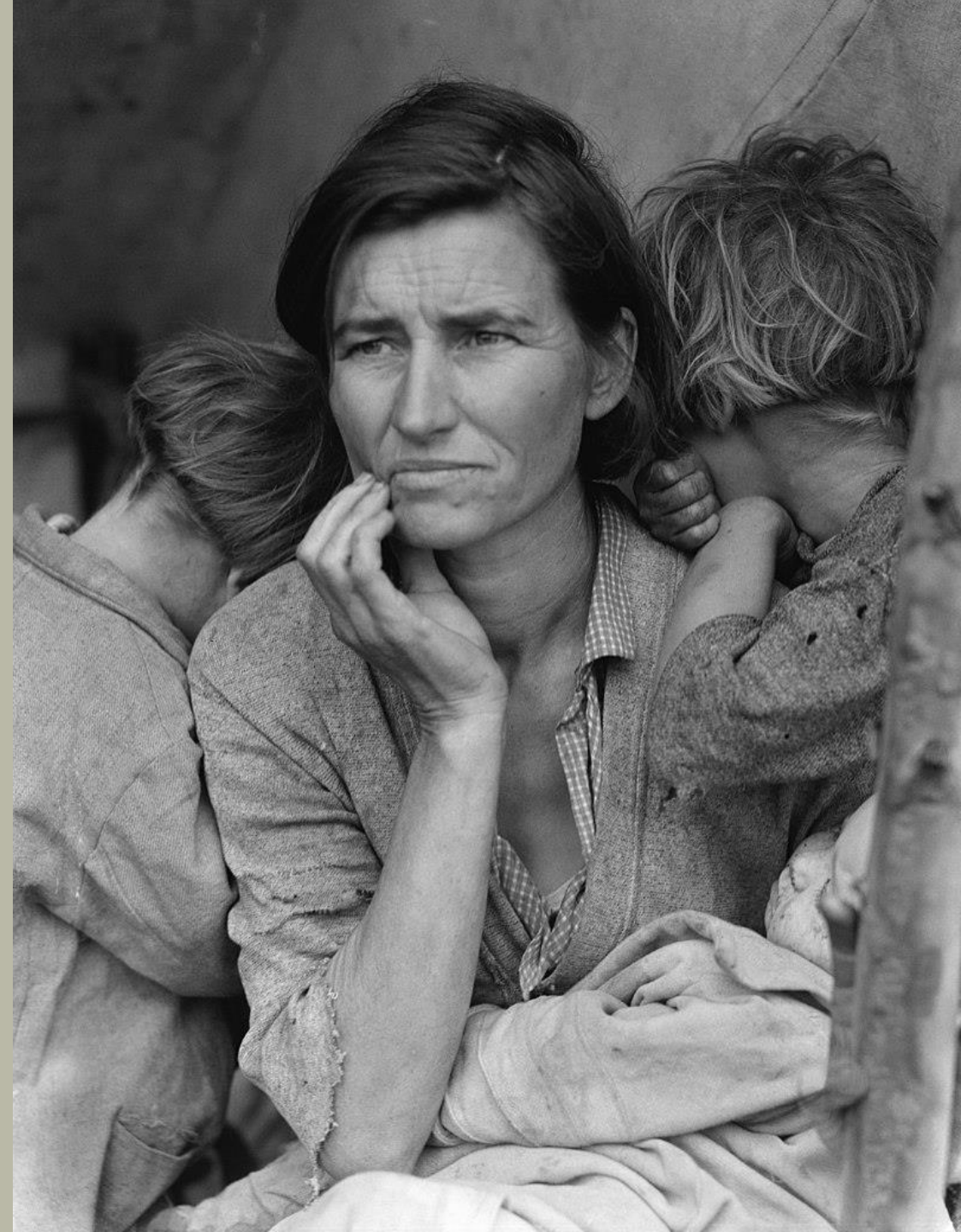
in the relational – symbolic sphere

Shame | Othering | Micro-aggressions
Undermining of peoples' knowledge



2

The violation of
rights create
pain



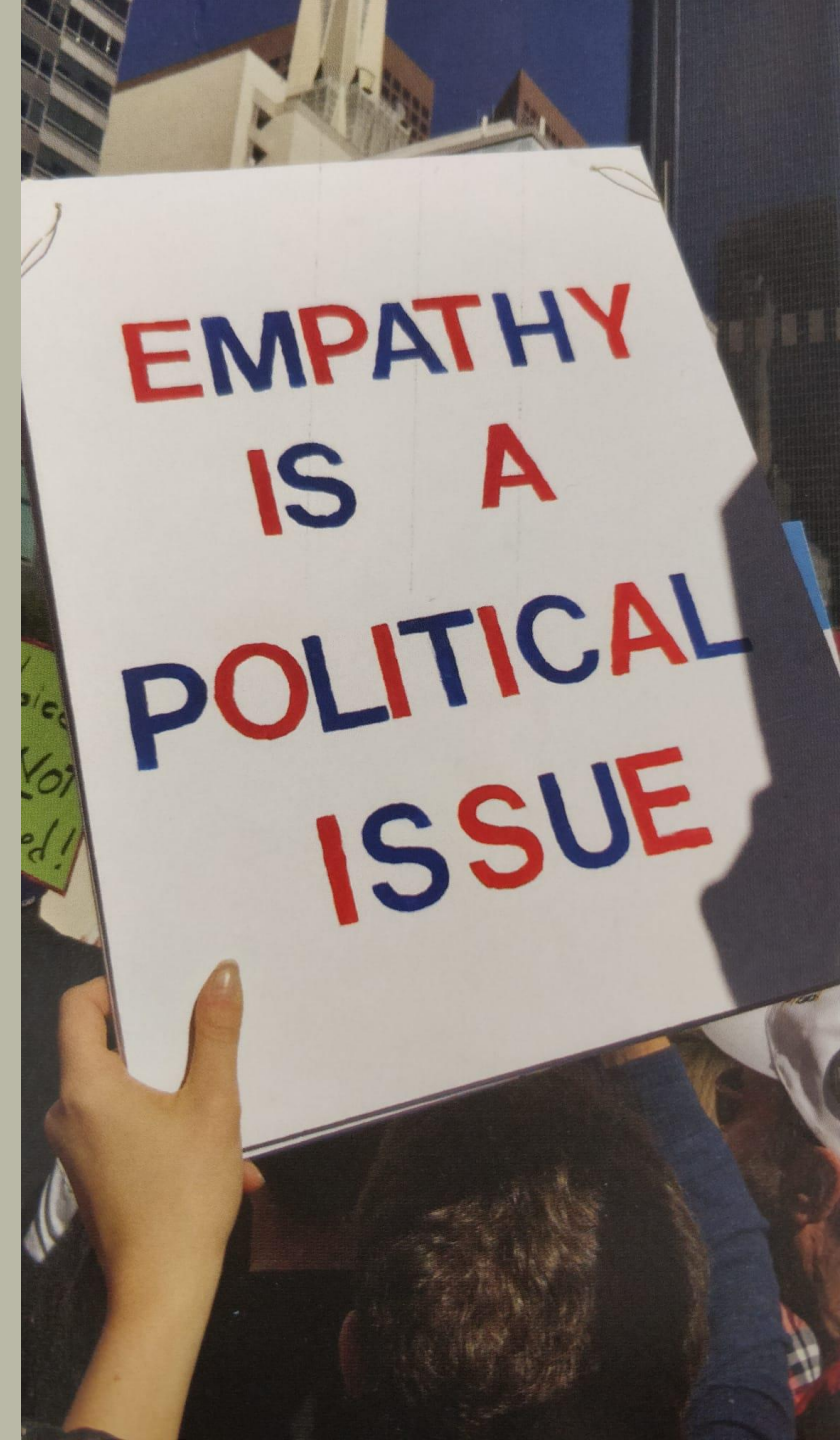
3

People resist poverty however, their acts of resistance are not recognized as such



4

The role of
social workers:
to stand by
people in
poverty



PAP's practice


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graph TD; A[PAP's practice] --- B[Practice of rights]; A --- C[Practice of relationships]; B <--> C;
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Practice of rights

Aims to respond to the structural failures that create poverty through **politics of redistribution**

Practice of relationships

Aims to respond to the symbolic-relational aspects of poverty through **politics of recognition**



“a genuinely critical perspective must probe the hidden connections between redistribution and recognition. It must make visible, and *criticizable*, both the cultural subtexts of nominally economic processes and the economic subtexts of nominally cultural practices.’ Practice, then, should be simultaneously economic and cultural, ‘albeit not necessarily in equal proportions.... It must assume both the standpoint of distribution and the standpoint of recognition, without reducing either one of these perspectives to the other”

(Fraser, 2003 : 63)

Cutting off one's electricity
because of debt is
_____ both _____
a problem at the realm of rights
_____ and _____
a problem at the realm of
recognition



Practices of rights:

active rights practice

active rights social worker

flexible budget

community work

services development

social activism

policy practice



Practice of recognition/relationships

relationship-based therapy

permanent meetings

active approach

meetings at homes

Intervention in real life context


validation


working through experiences


of microaggression and powerlessness intervention
in real life context standing by

Recognition

“The normative core of such notions of justice is always constituted by expectations of respect for one’s own dignity, honor or integrity ... the normative presupposition of all communicative action is to be seen in the acquisition of social recognition: subjects encounter each other within the parameters of the reciprocal expectation that they be given recognition as moral persons and for their social achievements ... moral injustice is at hand whenever, contrary to their expectations, human subjects are denied the recognition they feel they deserve. I would like to refer to such moral experiences as feelings of social disrespect. “ (Honneth, 2007, 71)

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- *“Although I have known these families for years, this was the first time I really heard their story.”*
 - *“The contribution of the program is our ability to pause before judging service users and our ability to understand their life contexts.”*

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- *“We gave [the incident] an interpretation that was a bit different. We understood that the service user had experienced the social worker as disrespectful and patronizing and then responded without thinking. So we didn’t immediately say, “Let’s go to the police”. We had heated arguments among ourselves, but ultimately succeeded in speaking with the service user, to take responsibility for our own actions and to tell her that her behaviour was unacceptable.”*



Our task is to work alongside people in poverty, to become relevant for them and to find a way to open up possibilities and opportunities for them, through commitment, involvement, caring and solidarity.

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Thank you