

Poverty-Conscious Social Work: A Novel Approach to Engaging with Impoverished Individuals

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Abstract

This article presents the "poverty aware social work paradigm," a new approach for working with individuals who are currently facing the challenges of poverty. The changing landscape necessitates a reevaluation of the way in which the body of knowledge, known as new welfare theory or critical poverty knowledge, interacts with the field of social work. One of the three interconnected parts of the paradigm focuses on addressing questions such as "What defines poverty?" and "What are the key traits of service recipients?" (Furthermore, I would like to inquire about the source of your information and the method by which you evaluated the situation.) This study focuses on the axiological element, specifically discussing the moral obligations that arise from the existence of

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Introduction

Researchers in the field of social work have, over the course of the past decade, placed an increased emphasis on the necessity of redefining the interactions that take place between social workers and those facing poverty in a variety of nations, including Israel, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, and New Zealand. These researchers, including Krumer et al. (2009) and Strier and Binyamin (2010) in Israel, In the UK, Craig (2002), Davis and Wainwright (2005), Jones (2002), Mantle and Back with (2010), and Parrott (2014), as well as in the USA, Deka (2012) and in New Zealand, Waldegrave (2005), have all advocated for a social justice-oriented approach that places importance on principles such as rights, democracy, inclusion, and respect. In New Zealand, Waldegrave (2005) is the only author to make this argument. Davis and Wainwright (2005) were the ones who coined the term "poverty-aware approach." They underlined the requirement for social workers to have a complete awareness of the impact that poverty has on their clients across individual, organizational, and societal dimensions.

This is where the name "poverty-aware approach" comes from. If you need any further clarification, please look at page 261. A comprehensive understanding of the theoretical underpinnings and practical repercussions of choosing a strategy that is cognizant of poverty has not yet been achieved as a result of the body of study that already exists in this sector. This article's purpose is to introduce the concept of poverty-aware social work as a paradigm (PAP), which functions as an all-encompassing theoretical framework that addresses significant problems in philosophy, ethics, and practice. Furthermore, the Participatory Action Research (PAR) methodology acts as a modern connection between the discipline of social work and

the developing area of poverty research. This type of study is sometimes referred to as critical poverty knowledge (Krumer-Nevo and Benjamin, 2010) or new welfare theory (Lister, 2004).

The author established a social work program in Israel in 2010 that was centered on raising awareness of poverty, and he has served as the program's director ever since then. Due to the fact that they are founded on abstract conceptions and conceptualizations, theoretical frameworks play an extremely important part in directing and influencing the practical applications of research. The essay can be understood as a contribution to the larger debate that has developed around this particular subject. The issue that is being taught has a strong basis, not only in actual practice but also in the teacher's own experiences. Following a discussion regarding the potential benefits of a novel approach to reducing poverty, the purpose of this essay is to provide a comprehensive explanation of the aforementioned approach, after which there will be a discussion regarding those potential benefits. In conclusion, this article conducts an investigation of the value of the paradigm for social workers as well as the difficulties related with the paradigm.

Ideas about poverty and social work

A paradigm refers to a comprehensive collection of fundamental ideas that encompass and handle essential themes. Lincoln and Guba (1994, p. 107) and Heron and Reason (1997, p. [page number]) are notable scholars whose works have contributed significantly to the academic discourse. Every paradigm exists in a state of dynamic equilibrium, where its various components (ontological, epistemological, and axiological) interact to determine the conduct of practice. Additionally, practice itself has an influence on and shapes these constituent aspects of the paradigm. In the present context, the ontological dimension gives rise to inquiries such as "What constitutes the essence of poverty?" and "What attributes are inherent to individuals experiencing poverty?" The epistemological dimension pertains to the methodologies employed in understanding and assessing the circumstances at hand, specifically inquiring about the type of knowledge necessary while engaging with individuals experiencing poverty.

What is the appropriate ethical stance for a social worker to adopt while engaging with those experiencing poverty? Similar to other professions, social work with individuals experiencing poverty is guided by ontological, epistemological, and ethical principles. However, these underpinnings often become hidden, and the mechanisms through which they operate remain unclear. In reality, the professional engagement with the destitute population has led to either a cultivation of an investigative approach towards the foundational principles of social theory or a sustained involvement with these principles. The existing focus of academic research on practice evaluation, which regards practice as a distinct technology, has further intensified this split. Given the aforementioned circumstances, the conceptual framework put out offers four noteworthy contributions.

The provided guidance serves to reconcile the much-debated dichotomy between theory and practice (Gray and Schubert, 2013; Parton, 2000; Sheppard, 1995, 1998), as it offers practitioners practical advice that is firmly rooted in theory.

Therefore, it demonstrates the essential professional skill of seamlessly transitioning between the description of a practice and the examination of its fundamental assumptions (Heron and Reason, 1997). Furthermore, the fundamental components that constitute the framework of a paradigm consist of conceptions pertaining to the subject of examination, cognition, and moral principles. This inquiry pertains to the rationale, methodology, and intended outcomes of engaging in practice. Furthermore, this approach establishes a connection between politics and practice by contextualizing activity within intricate power dynamics. In addition, it facilitates the differentiation of diverse practice modalities, fosters novel endeavors in professional conduct, and enables the discerning utilization of varied practice methodologies.

The paradigm of poverty-aware social work

The discipline of social work is today governed by two predominant paradigms, namely the conservative paradigm and the structural paradigm. While not usually overtly acknowledged, these paradigms play a significant role in shaping the practice of social work. This essay undertakes a comparative analysis of the PAP in relation to their various beginnings. This paper will examine the three fundamental principles of paradigms, namely ontology, epistemology, and ethics. Each principle will be explored separately in three distinct sections, and real-world examples will be provided for each principle (see to Table 1). In light of the intricate and intricate nature of real-world cases, it is important to acknowledge that one case might exemplify numerous premises. However, I contend that this approach to presentation will effectively circumvent the potential drawback of segregating theory and practice in education.

The PAP epistemology

It is possible to reformulate the questions that belong to the nature of knowledge and the ways in which it is obtained as follows: "What specific knowledge is required of social workers in their interactions with individuals experiencing poverty, and where does this knowledge originate?" "What specific knowledge is required of social workers in their interactions with individuals experiencing poverty?" Epistemology provides responses to these questions and concerns. In the profession of social work, the ability to understand and appreciate the viewpoints and experiences of other people is a vital talent, particularly in the context of performing assessments, making diagnoses, doing evaluations, and putting interventions into place. The conservative paradigm takes a positivist epistemological stance, which posits that the primary goal of knowledge generation within this framework is for practitioners to employ scientific methodologies, strive for impartiality and objectivity, and seek to understand reality in its true form (Anastas, 2012; Witkin, 1991). This framework also posits that the primary goal of knowledge generation is for practitioners to understand reality in its true form.

According to Bell (2012), the positivist framework encompasses concepts for the evaluation of individuals receiving services, as well as their families and even entire communities, in a way that is objective, objective, and as trustworthy as possible. Even while the structural paradigm has a positive orientation at its foundation, it does permit some constructivist aberrations in terms of mutual comprehension. In spite of this, the primary emphasis is still placed on data that is both factual and objective. This

method departs from the traditional focus on evaluating and diagnosing pathological problems in favor of a framework that emphasizes on the assessment of clients' strengths rather than their pathologies. In practical implementation, this method diverges from the conventional focus on assessing and diagnosing pathological situations. In light of this, the extensive research that is conducted in this particular field about the associations of individuals with low socioeconomic status and their active engagement in combating poverty would prioritize the examination of their public manifestations of identity, as opposed to their relatively restrained private expressions of identity. The epistemological foundation of the PAP, which is a critical constructivist approach. The fundamental assumptions that positivism is based on are called into question by this epistemological point of view.

The authors Parton and O'Byrne (2000) and Anastas (2012) investigate the use of paradigmology in an effort to unearth objective truth or to forcibly depict an autonomous reality. The PAP's epistemology integrates a constructivist approach, which places significance on the idea that reality is socially produced through interactions. Constructivism focuses significance on the notion that reality is socially constructed via interactions. According to Kincheloe (2005), this viewpoint highlights the significance of power interactions and processes in the development of reality and knowledge. This particular epistemological perspective proposes, according to Foucault (1986), that all processes that are engaged in the development of knowledge are essentially political in nature. As a result, in the quest to understand other people, professional knowledge either needs to support the current condition of affairs or it needs to oppose it. For instance, the judgment of a service user's motivation by a professional is regarded as valid; on the other hand, the appraisal of a social worker's motivation to support an individual who is experiencing bereavement by a service user is not recognised (Ife, 2005; Rossiter, 1996).

The critical epistemology of the Post-Analytic Philosophy (PAP) sheds light on the professional activities that are encapsulated under interpretation and representation politics. The question of whether or whether the family has the motivation to bring about change is no longer the primary focus of the conversation; instead, the conversation has switched its attention to an investigation of the individuals responsible for deciding the family's motivation and the degree of autonomy afforded to the family in determining the amount of its own motivational factors. The relationship that exists between professionals and the people who receive their services is the basis of PAP's epistemology and serves as the primary setting for the acquisition of professional information that can be used for evaluation and intervention. On the other hand, individuals who subscribe to a positivist perspective regard this association to be a barrier to the acquisition of objective knowledge (Howe, 1997, 1998; Ruch, 2005). The information that is being presented is referred to as "relationship-based knowledge," which is consistent with Howe's (1998, page 55) concept for an all-encompassing framework that unifies our comprehension and interaction with persons.

The five characteristics of relationship-based knowledge are closely tied to the practice of Person-Associated Practice (PAP), which determines whether or not this

type of knowledge is cultivated or inhibited. This type of knowledge is relationship-based. A connection that is complicated and has a lot of depth should serve as the foundation for relationships that last a long time. In order for social workers to have a complete comprehension of the subjective experiences of their clients, it is necessary that they collect information about their clients' lives through a varied range of encounters that disclose the genuine context of their clients' experiences. This information can be gathered in a variety of ways. This strategy extends beyond relying simply on one-on-one contacts or on reports that are only superficially offered by other specialists.

In addition, in order to be in line with the ontological assumption, it is very necessary for the information that is being sought to be founded on a full grasp of the multidimensional influence that poverty has on each and every aspect of the lives of the people who are receiving services. It is imperative for a social worker to demonstrate a keen interest in comprehending the precise ramifications of individuals' material insufficiency, their engagements with the societal frameworks that regulate their day-to-day existence, and their personal encounters with the dearth of symbolic resources. Based on this perspective, it is essential for a social worker to demonstrate a keen interest in comprehending the precise ramifications of individuals' material insufficiency. In order to acquire information that is founded on relationships, it is absolutely necessary to have a thorough awareness of the perspectives held by those who are experiencing poverty.

The positionality theory contends that people who have lived in poverty and who are marginalized in other ways, such as due to their gender or race, have unique points of view regarding the meaning and purpose of life. As a result, it is very necessary for the field of social work to go through a process of modification in order to bring it into line with this newly gained understanding and successfully include the perspectives and abilities of people who are receiving services. The goal of the hermeneutics of faith, in contrast to the objective of the hermeneutics of skepticism, is to give a given text a renewed sense of meaning. According to Josselson (1997), Michael Krumer-Nevo visited the Aranne Library on the Ben Gurion University campus on December 20, 2015, and viewed page 8 of 16. The hermeneutics of faith is utilized as a directing principle by social workers, yet at the same time their perspectives are positioned within the context of power dynamics.

This method helps their customers develop a sense of trust and confidence in the company. In addition, the acquisition of information through relationships does not call for the employment of predetermined terminology or specialist language. This reduces the subjective nature of service users and acknowledges the validity of their one-of-a-kind experiences. According to McFarland (1999), in order to facilitate a collaborative exploration of potential resolutions for the challenges faced by service users, it is imperative that conversations involving or pertaining to service users adhere to a concrete and specific approach, employing language that articulates their everyday struggles (Rojeck et al., 1987; Weiss-Gal et al., 2014). In addition, it is imperative that the composition of psycho-social assessments adhere to a concrete and specific approach.

The following illustration shows the potential for subversion that is inherent in the utilization of knowledge that is based on relationships. In order to acquire a dining set, Dana enlisted the assistance of her social worker. The use of iron legs was the primary factor in her decision to decline the offer; in previous conversations, she had stated that she has a preference for legs made of wood rather than iron. The social worker felt forced to view Dana's reaction as symptomatic of a probable disparity between her professed level of impoverishment and her level of thankfulness. Dana had stated that she was living in poverty, yet she expressed a high level of gratitude.

In spite of this, while considering Dana's rejection of the first set of furnishings, one must. Dana kept a record of the instances in which her partner displayed hostile conduct toward both her and their children, including the use of furniture as a means of exerting physical force against them. The act of the woman throwing away the table and chairs that stood on two legs should not be interpreted as a statement of being "spoiled" or spiteful; rather, it should be understood as a protective step taken by a mother who was striving to protect herself and her children from potential danger. The social worker's understanding of the topic went through a profound change as a result of this new information.

Discussion

This essay introduces the idea of Participatory Action Research (PAP) as an innovative paradigm for social work practice, connecting with recent advances in research on critical social work and poverty. Start any discussion with the significance of applying social work theory in practice by introducing it with an example to illustrate your point. The inclusion of a report from the children's schools as a criterion for social workers when responding to a mother's request for assistance in purchasing clothing for her children serves as an example to demonstrate the application of the three premises supplied in this study. This example is provided as a demonstration of the applicability of the information presented in this study.

Even when dealing with duties that appear to be simple and routine, this illustration highlights the impact that paradigmatic analysis has made to the proliferation of varied everyday tactics used in the field of social services. The goal of taking the step of making a request to the school for a report is to reduce the likelihood that persons who are in receipt of social care services may inappropriately use the resources that are made available to them. When the ontological basis of this administrative practice is examined more closely, it becomes clear that it is based on the underlying belief that people living in poverty will engage in dishonest behavior in order to acquire resources, regardless of whether or not they are legally entitled to those resources.

This assumption drives the practice when the epistemological premise of the procedure is examined, it becomes apparent that, in accordance with this assumption, the social worker ought to accord more significance to a report that was authored by an unfamiliar professional (such as a teacher or counselor), as opposed to the information that was provided by the family and any insights that were acquired through personal interactions with them. This is because the social worker believes that the information provided by the family is less reliable than the information that

was authored by an unfamiliar professional. After conducting an investigation into the axiological assumption at hand, it has become abundantly clear that the client and the social worker have opposing points of view regarding the topic at hand.

When it comes to putting this strategy into action, the family anticipates that the social worker will argue for both herself and the resources that are available to her. On the other side, the PAP views the family's plea as a request for the social worker to lend assistance to them in their fight against societal marginalization and economic suffering. Within the framework of the conservative worldview, it is believed that poverty is the result of the failures of individuals. According to Handler and Hasenfeld (2007), tackling the issue of poverty needs a change in both the attitudes and behaviors of individuals who are currently experiencing poverty. The phenomena that is sometimes referred to as the "cycle of deprivation" is the focus of a great number of intervention strategies, all of which are designed to break the deeply ingrained individual, familial, and cultural patterns that contribute to the phenomenon.

This methodology is essential to the operation of these programs. As a consequence of this, a sizeable percentage of the duties that social workers are expected to perform involve the monitoring and rehabilitation of individuals who are living in poverty, with the intention of shielding these people from the harm that may be caused by either the actions of others or by their own choices. This includes protecting children from their moms, protecting women from their partners, and protecting males from the potential for participating in self-destructive behaviors such as violence, addiction, and other types of self-harm. While it is true that empathy can assist minimize the bad impacts of monitoring on the connection between social workers and service users, it is crucial to emphasize that surveillance can still hamper clients' ability to bring about real change (Moffatt, 1999). Empathy can help lessen the negative effects of monitoring on the connection between social workers and service users. According to Lister (2004), the structural paradigm lays an emphasis on the politics of redistribution and identifies poverty as the result of institutional and structural arrangements.

Consequently, the structural paradigm views redistribution as central to the problem of poverty. According to Gal and Weiss-Gal (2013), as a consequence of this, it makes it easier to promote community action, community empowerment, and policy practices. In spite of the fact that Mullaly (1997) and Lundy (2004) have both written about the subject, the structural paradigm used in social work frequently ignores how important interpersonal relationships are. As a direct result of this, it has not contributed as much as it could have to the overall growth of casework management and practice. The Person-in-Environment Perspective, often known as PAP, is an analytical approach to social work practice that aims to incorporate key theories of the interpersonal interactions that occur between social workers and the individuals who are the recipients of services. This is done with the intention of bringing about societal development. The combination of the ontological, epistemological, axiological, and practical aspects of social work in regard to persons who are experiencing poverty is what gives the paradigms their distinctive quality and makes them stand out from other approaches. In order to support the growth of social work practitioners in the

areas of social justice and poverty alleviation, the establishment of these partnerships is critical. PAP (Participatory Action Research) is distinct from other critical social work practices, such as anti-oppressive, feminist, postmodern, and social work for human rights, in that it places a greater emphasis on poverty and conceptualizes the absence of symbolic capital and structural inequality as defining features.

Despite the fact that there are similarities between elements of PAP (Participatory Action Research) and other critical social work practices, such as social work for human rights. In addition to this, it continues to investigate the ways in which the fundamental characteristics influence and are influenced by day-to-day life. In addition, the ongoing reflective study of ontological, epistemological, and axiological assumptions promotes the acquisition of new perspectives and stimulates the development of unique methods for starting change throughout each phase of the professional decision-making process. This is significant since these analyses are the foundation upon which professional decisions are made. The examples given in this article apply to the processes that are carried out inside Israel's social care departments. Nevertheless, the findings and implications that were addressed can be applied to other social service sectors that serve to populations that are economically disadvantaged, such as mental health services, child services, and probation offices, albeit with some minor modifications. The paradigm is applicable in a variety of different national situations despite the fact that it is of an abstract character.

Both the acceptance of modern managerialism policies, which prioritize accomplishing particular goals, and the implementation of neoliberal policies, which prioritize economic development at the expense of individuals, have resulted in a degradation of the ethical foundation that social work practices are built upon. As a direct consequence of this, these policies have contributed to the individualization of societal issues and the marginalization of people who are economically disadvantaged. The PAP communicates its disdain of these tendencies and encourages social workers to engage with social structures, ideologies, and social constructions in their professional endeavors using a method that is more discriminating and analytical. This comprehension emerges as a result of recognizing the political dynamics that are inherently present within the interpersonal engagements that take place between social workers and the people who are receiving services. On the basis of this comprehension, social workers have the ability to adopt a particular perspective, devise a strategic approach to address poverty, provide assistance to individuals experiencing poverty in the challenges they face on a day-to-day basis, actively engage and assume a certain role, and modify existing practices in order to promote the advancement of social justice.

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- Page 14 of 16 Michal Krumer-Nevoat Ben Gurion University - Aranne Library on December 20, 2015 <http://bjsw.oxfordjournals.org/> Downloaded from
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