

## **The effects of globalization and social changes on marginalized populations: Is a new social work curriculum for the 21<sup>st</sup> century needed?**

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Since the inception of the social work profession in the late nineteenth century, there has always been an emphasis on the importance of working with marginalized populations. Recent societal changes and globalization processes, however, have had a powerful effect not only on those populations defined as marginalized and/or vulnerable – i.e., a diverse range of people including migrants, individuals who live in impoverished conditions, minorities, and victims of social violence – but also on the people and communities all over the world, including social workers, who absorb them.

As such, a debate regarding what constitutes the essence of social work practice has emerged: Does the social worker serving marginalized populations work to improve these populations' social position, as an agent of social change, or does he/she act as something akin to a social "controller," offering aid and assistance but essentially maintaining their inferior position in society?

Based on examples of actual teaching experiences and methods, this lecture will explore the perennial – and, in the context of current events, newly urgent – debate about working with these issues, particularly as they relate to three aspects: (1) the traditional construction of professional identity in social work; e.g., charity and generosity versus professionalism; (2) the debate relating to the universal paradigm versus the paradigm of cultural competence, cultural relativism and indigenous and cultural humility; (3) and the continued tension between the clinical and social action perspectives and its implications for service users and on service providers in terms of bettering the lives of marginalized populations and changing their social stratification.

Several novel teaching recommendations, which constitute an integral part of adapting assessment and treatment processes to the zeitgeist of the times, will be offered.

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