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Poverty and/or Inclusion/Exclusion – Social Work and its Relationship to social Inequality

This paper deals with the semantic shift from poverty to social exclusion which is taken place during the last years in politic and academic debates. After a critical dealing with arguments given to promote this shift, I come to the thesis that the semantic of exclusion can be used as an addition but not as a substitute for the notion of poverty, because it deals with questions of belonging while the second is concerned with questions of distribution. From this point I take a closer look on the relationship of the two perspectives closely related to the practice of social work. Therefore, the distinction between two kinds of inclusion is being made: inclusion by the market (interdependency) and inclusion by the status of citizenship (participation).

Main question in these concerns are: If inclusion and equality are not the same, does an orientation of social work on inclusion as interdependency also foster more equality? Which aspects are necessary to be aware of, if social work wants to orient itself on questions of inclusion as participation in the kind of citizenship?