

THEORY IN SOCIAL WORK

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ANALISYS PLAN

RESEARCH

EPISTEMOLOGY

THEORY

MODELS

TECHNIQUES

INFORMED
PRACTICE

THEORY IN SOCIAL WORK

- In Social Work theory emerges in a dialectical relationship between theory and practice and through a reflexive practice.

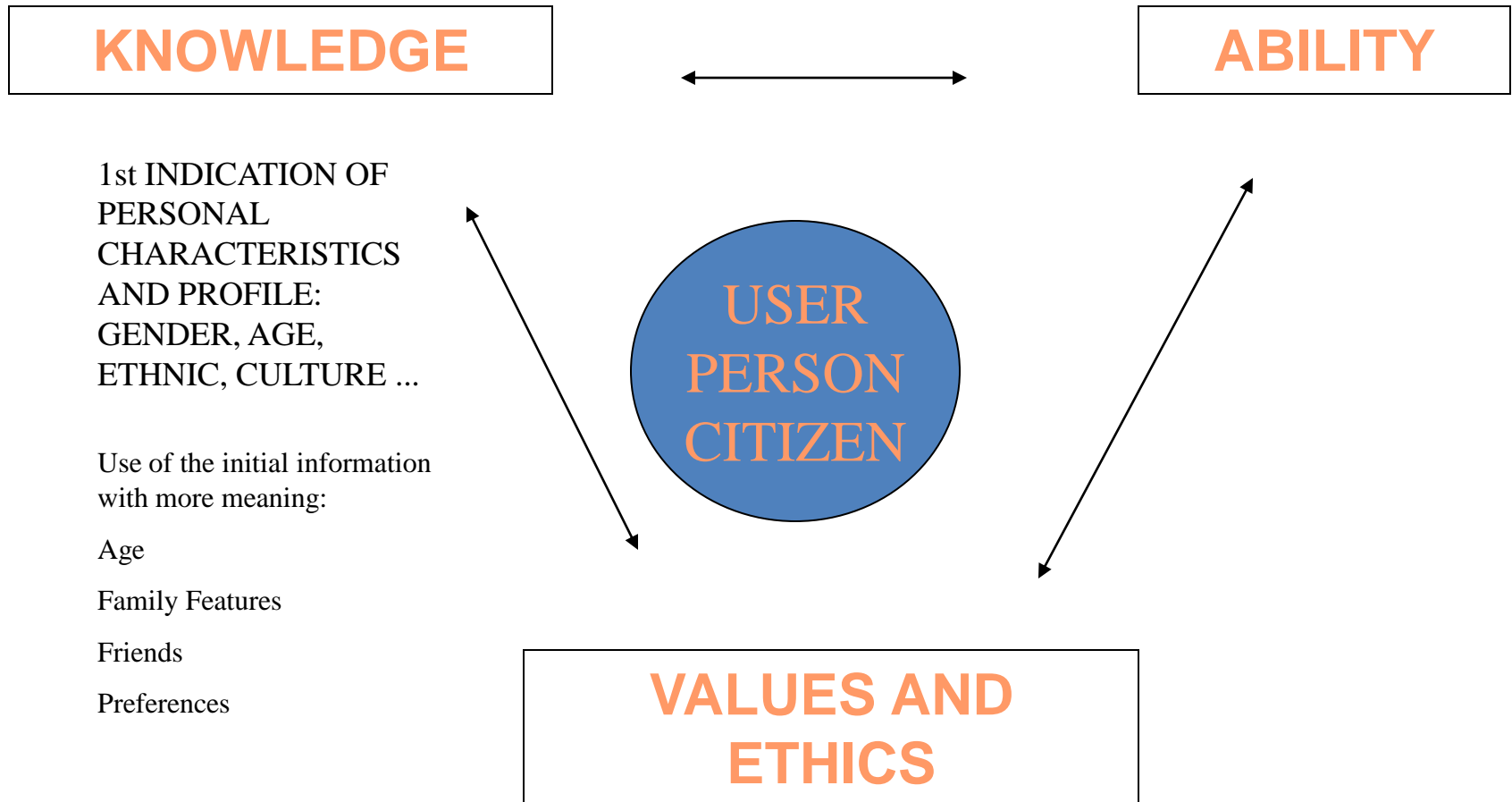
Epistemological Questions

- Social Work theory is based on the epistemology recognized as doctrine of scientific knowledge, (relation theory and practice).
- Howe (1999) considers that theory is what allows us to define the ways of seeing the world and explain the behavior of people, objects and situations.

Collins Dictionary of Social Work (1999[1995])

- Distinguishes three levels of theory in Social Work:
- the theories borrowed from Social Sciences;
- the theories about welfare systems, and
- the theories developed by those working in Social Work and related fields.

3 steps to practice social work



Relationship theory/practice in Social Work

Source: David Howe (in Martin Davies, 2008)

HUMAN BEHAVIOR ↔ **SOCIAL CONTEXT**

Some people have problems and some people are problems

THINK ↔ **INTERVENE**

WHAT

FOR WHAT

WHY

HOW?

There is nothing more practical than a good theory

Social Work intervention process in: *jazz on swing*

1. **OBSERVATION** (analysis of reality and complex social relations)
2. **FORMULATION OF THE PROBLEM**
3. **DESCRIPTION** (conceptual vocabulary about the observed and lived) **HOW IS THE PROBLEM PROCESSED AND LIVED? CASE / SITUATION ANALYSIS**
4. **EXPLANATION** (establishment of causal interrelations between the various elements) **WHAT HAS TO BE DONE?**
5. **PREDICTION** (indicates what may happen next)
6. **INTERVENTION** (suggests what to do and how to achieve **CHANGE**) **OBJECTIVES, GOALS, PURPOSES, METHODS, TECHNIQUES, RESOURCES**

To induce theory from the practice and from the observation

Deduct from theory what to see and what to do

**ASSUMPTIONS FOR
UNDERSTANDING
REALITY**

Understanding Reality

- Nowadays there are some mistakes in the professional field in the domain of understanding **the model of the state and society**, in particular the **Social Protection System**.
- In this context we can put in debate, some elements, such as:
 - Providence State;
 - European Social Model;
 - Providence Society;
 - Or a social protection system guided by the State budget. In this case a floating model.
- **What is the dominant understanding in Social Work?**

1st understanding domain of social reality

Thought Currents (Classical and Contemporary):

Marxism

Positivism

Structuralism

Systemic

Ecological

Economic currents:

Keynesian

Neo-Liberals

Liberals

CURRENTLY THE PREDOMINANT THOUGHT CURRENT :

SYSTEMIC

ECOLOGICAL

STRUCTURAL

Economic Currents:

Neo - Liberal



LIBERAL


**WHAT IS THE IMPACT ON THE SOCIAL WORK
PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE?**

CIRCULAR THEORY OF KNOWLEDGETO

COLLIGWOOD (2005)

3º estágio da Teoria Circular: conhecimento, competências e valores





**INFORMED
PRACTICE IN SOCIAL
WORK**

Practices are supported in scientific and theoretical-methodological knowledge

The Social Worker develops the intervention based on a theoretical methodological framework:

- The ultimate goal of Social Work intervention is to create opportunities for the development of individual and collective capacities so that each citizen can exercise its individual and social powers and responsibilities (Active Social Citizenship/ Empowerment).

Importance of the method in the construction of the scientific object:

- The method leads to a precision of the object of intervention, study and research.
- However the Social Worker presents difficulties in the definition of its object, namely in the process of definition of concepts and specific terminology, which calls for its deepening.

In other words, a research topic.

**ROLE OR PLACE OF THE
RESEARCH IN SOCIAL
WORK**

Research in Social Work

- The changes and transformations that take place in contemporary society impose to Social Work the use of research as a safe and rigorous way to interpret social reality and its complexity in order to find effective and adequate responses to its object of intervention.

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THANK YOU