



Social Work Practice: The Challenge of Construction

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It is essential to integrate the elements of the intervention process into three elements (Neuman, 1994):

- The **Positivist Perspective**, based on knowledge (accepts different methods more appropriate to the situation); in objectivity (White, 2004) and aims to explain and predict phenomena.
- The **Interpretative Perspective**, based on knowledge (all knowledge is subject to the interpretation of behavior, attitude, means, ...); in the interpretation of relativistic and reflexive nature of the context in which it occurs and which integrates the means and available resources. Its objectives are understanding.
- The **Critical Perspective**, based on knowledge (truth is imposed on the configuration of knowledge as control). These are pluralistic theories that privilege the power of the system and have as objectives the emancipation and empowerment of vulnerable groups.

Intervention Strategies:

- **Deductive Orientation** - describes simply in an attempt to increase the understanding of Man, in order to promote explanations about what is studied and observed.
- Becomes relevant the **inductive dimension** characterized by generalizations from the empirical field, which allows us to construct and / or develop the theory.

It should be noted that research in Social Service is already based on a theory made, emphasizing the deductive practice, although we recognize that for an effective theoretical construction it is necessary to apply the deductive and inductive method in the construction of the theory.

A NEW CHALLENGE

IS PLACED TO THE PROFESSIONAL

Vocabulary and terminology: own or loan?

Social Intervention, Social Work or Social Assistance?

- Social Work Higher Technician
- Social Worker
- Social intervenor
- Social Dynamizer
- Social scientist
- Or
- I'm from the social area
- !!!!!!!!!

Linguistics in professional practice:

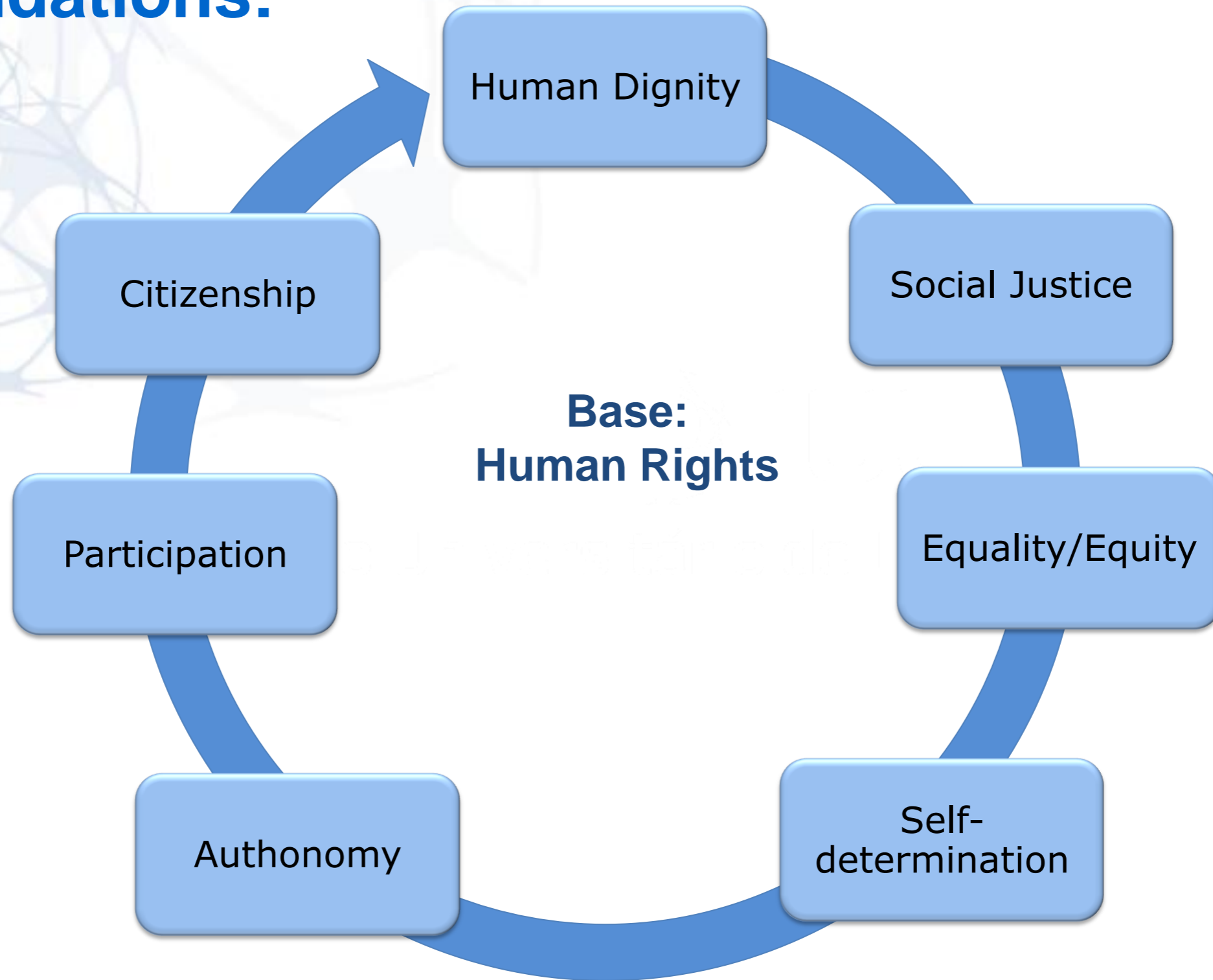
IN TRAINING	IN THE PROFESSION EXERCISE
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Subject (attention and/or intervention)- Person- Citizen	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Individual- Client- Beneficiary- User- Patient

The misconceptions:

- We value the terminology of politics and forget our terminological identity;
- They ask us for a social report and we base it on legal arguments and forget our technical reading reference in Social Work;
- We learn the theory and do not apply it in practice. But we take as good the instruments and the theories of others.

Is it a training problem? Or deformation of the profession?

Let us recall the Social Work Principles/ Foundations:



CONTEMPORARY PROBLEMS

IN SOCIAL INTERVENTION

Nowadays the professional faces a set:

- of conditioning factors and threats resulting from the risk society and the economic and financial framework that Portugal has been facing since 2008 as a country intervened by the Troika.
- the social worker operates within a framework of neoliberal (sometimes liberal) public and social policies,
- reorienting their professional intervention by **control and oversight practices** and less emancipatory and promoting of a full social citizenship of all citizens in a democratic society.

Similar to the Anglo-Saxon Social Work

- the Portuguese Social Work in the new matrix of work organization (polyvalence and interdisciplinarity) is suffering from fragilities at the level of the the profession fundamental values, transforming it into a technical activity, deprived of its principles and ethical values. (Ferguson, 2012).

Social Work Threats

- The social worker develops its action according to a matrix of performance evaluation and achievement of goals and with greater use of the new information and communication technologies, approaching it to the technocratic model.
- Questions that identify the profession as an evidence-based practice and are questioning the political ethical project of Social Work in promoting social welfare and improving the quality of life of people, recognized as fundamental values of the social worker action.

INOVATION

IN SOCIAL INTERVENTION

How do we change the diagnostic indicators of the problem situation?

Investment in the operational dimension :

Current Situation:	What should be:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Centrality in policies- Satisfying basic needs- State and institutional identification- Economic and financial responses emphasized by the principle of solidarity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Centrality in knowing / knowledge- Developing skills and capabilities- Enhancing the synergies of civil society- To rent social, ecological, environmental and human resources <p>Human rights.</p>

WHAT WE PROPOSE?



Research - Intervention ? Is it a dichotomy?

- **PBR** – Practice-based research
- **EBP** – Evidence Based Practice

EBP – Evidence Based Practice	PBR – Practice-based research
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Deductive practice- Qualitative methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Inductive practice- Quantitative and qualitative methods

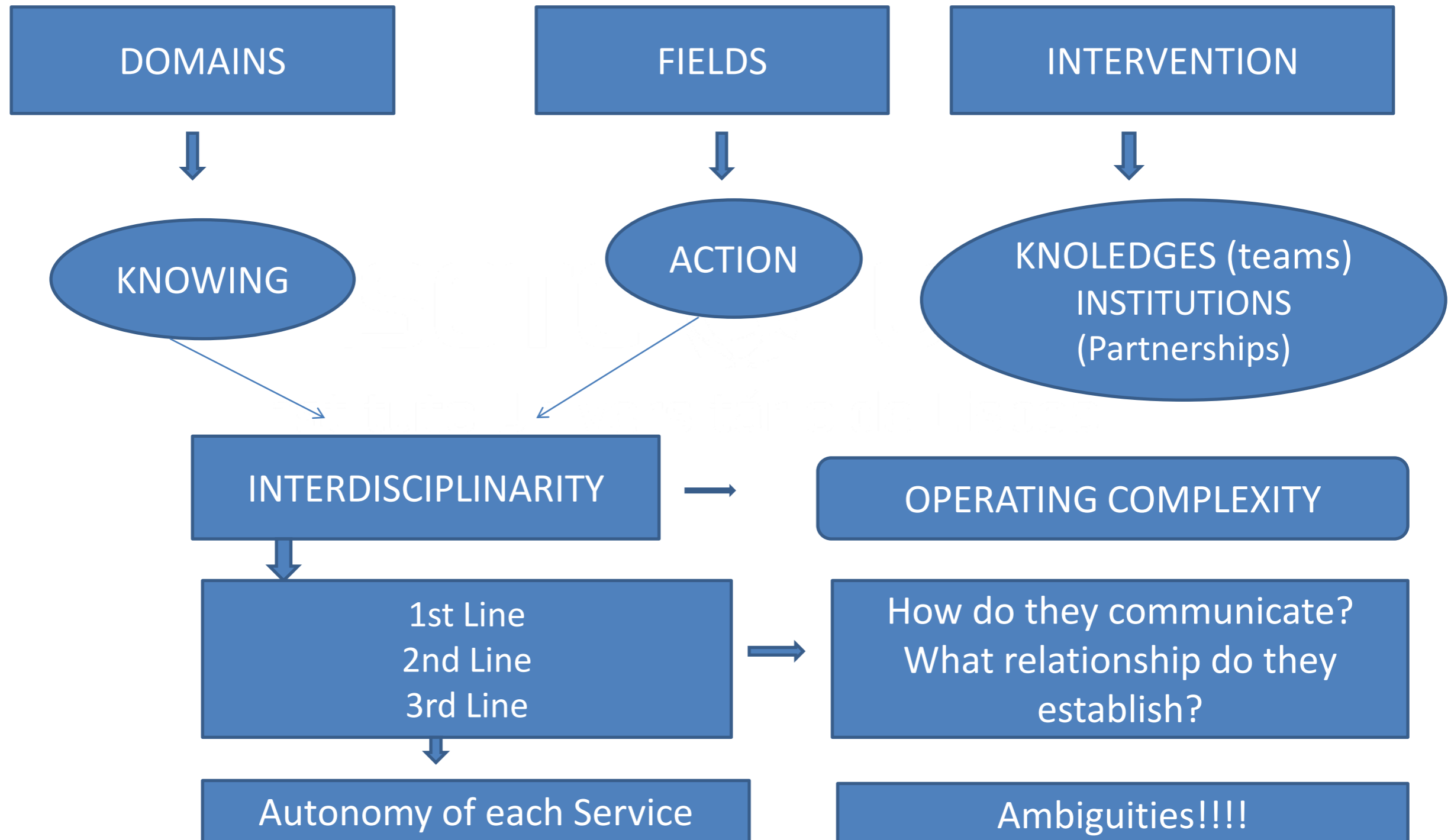
EBP – Evidence Based Practice	PBR – Practice-based research
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identification of the problems of the attention subjects - Characterization of the subject - Define interventions - Develop an intervention plan - Evaluation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Systematize and review the literature on the problem (documentary research) - That allows to do research - Design a informed intervention by research



EXERCISE

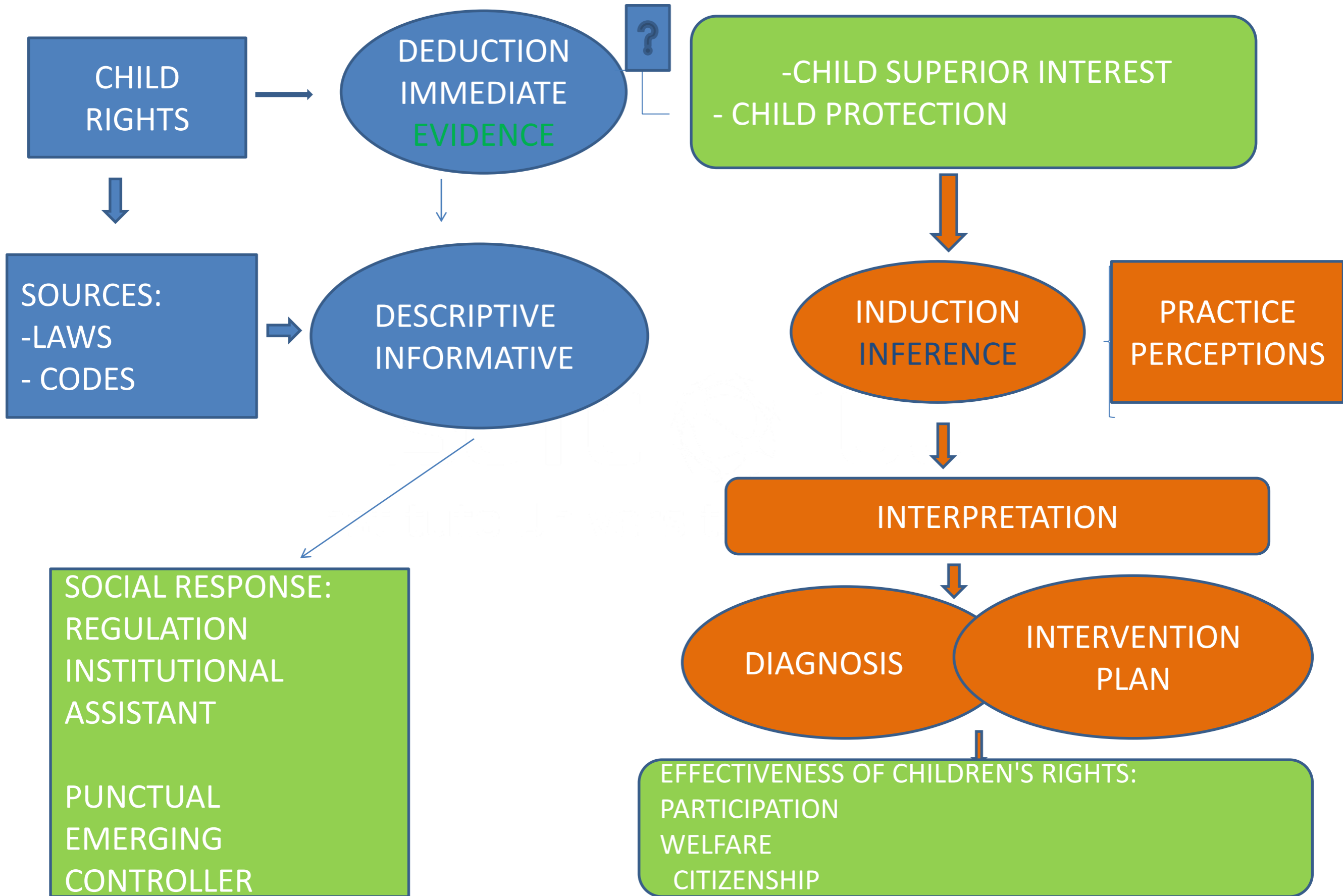
BUILDING THE SOCIAL RESPONSE

A stimulus to a reflexive exercise





An Example CHILD PROTECTION



What Can We Conclude? Confusion in professional practices about conceptual dimensions:

WHAT IS DONE	WHAT SHOULD BE DONE
Support, Help, Assistance	<i>Protection, well-being; Rights</i>
Public and Social Policy Assistentialist of philanthropic nature	Child Rights; Participation and Citizenship
Collective consciousness based on norm, structure and market	Based on the democratic values of human dignity, autonomy and self-determination

Seducing ambiguities of an austerity social climate

- Guidance for a controlling, auditing practice with impacts on the social accommodation of individuals, communities, social services and professionals.

Subjectivities lost in immediate appeals camouflaged in social solidarities

- The valuation of basic needs and the loss of social and human development in the promotion of competences of self-determination, autonomy, participation and citizenship.

Emergence of a practice that takes up the pragmatism of well-doing

- Devaluation of the reflexive, analytical and critical practice that promotes innovative and creative proposals in the promotion of human dignity and in the promotion of Human Rights that place in professional practice the foundations of Social Work, of social justice and social and human development.

Dialectic inter and intertwined in the fields of the State, Society, institutions, communities, people and the world.

- A state that decapitalizes public and social policies, promoting social inequalities and impoverishment of the population. Democratic, neo liberal but promoter of elites;
- A civil society that is weakening at every moment that increases the rate of austerity. Accommodation instead of participation and citizenship;
- Institutions transformed into care services instead of centers of innovation, participation and serve the sustained development of communities and citizens.

Dialectic inter and intertwined in the fields of the State, Society, institutions, communities, people and the world.

- Communities that reverse their integration processes in exclusion processes. Communities that become territorial units of differentiated intervention that go from the priority, preventive to an integrated intervention.
- People who ghettoize themselves by hiding in concepts of minorities, ethnic groups, multiculturalism,
- **World** - from globalization to world-lization: in Europe open borders - free movement of people and goods illustrated by mobility controlled by laws or police standards.

What implications for Social Work in the 21st century

- Valorization of knowledge;
- Foundations and principles of the profession;
- Reflexivity and critical analysis;
- Recognition of social work as an autonomous area of scientific knowledge both within the social sciences and within the professions.

THE BIG CHALLENGE

How can we ensure that our students are prepared for the challenges of the future?

People are the actors of
development



THANK YOU

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