

Scientific  
Journal of  
**Applied  
Social and  
Clinical  
Science**

**SOCIAL WORK:  
DISCIPLINE OR SOCIAL  
TECHNOLOGY? THE  
NEED FOR A RIGOR  
EPISTEMOLOGICAL  
ANALYSIS**

---

*Saúl Marcelo Chinche Calizaya*

All content in this magazine is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution License. Attribution-Non-Commercial-Non-Derivatives 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0).



**Abstract:** The beginnings of Social Work can well be considered turbulent and unstable in terms of its precision and theoretical-conceptual solidity, mainly due to the structural epistemological weakness with which it bursts onto the scene of the academic world framed in the Social Sciences.

This situation somehow- has contributed to the deepening of the epistemological debate around identifying it as social technology or visualizing it as a scientific discipline attached to the field of Social Sciences. For this reason, it is interesting to observe that in the process of its historical construction, it is impregnated by a strong heterogeneity that, like a pendulum, places it around two orientations: on the one hand, research and, on the other, action. as such.

The truth is that in addition to going deeper into the analysis and reflection of both orientations, we openly assume the urgent need to adopt a permanent epistemological vigilance in all production of valid knowledge that considers at all times, the concrete and situated implication of the historical subject in the cognitive experience that takes place.

**Keywords:** Social technology, discipline, epistemology, social problem, intervention, scientific praxis, doing social, social reality, specificity, professional status.

## INTRODUCTION

This paper aims to address with some clarity, those theoretical arguments that make up the historical development of Social Work that in its beginnings reflected a strong tendency to identify it as social technology, to then progressively be considered as a scientific discipline as specialized knowledge and its progressive consolidation. within the Social Sciences.

Thus, plausibly, the professional work of Social Work has been characterized by making visible an image of “*professionals only from*

*practice*”, allowing himself to be carried away by the dynamism of the action, recharging -by inertia- his labor (acting); renouncing the structural and pressing concern of going deeper into the study, analysis, reflection and theorizing about their own disciplinary work. Contrary to this intention of progressive consolidation of the disciplinary niche and consequently managing to dominate their own practice, it seems that they have been inexorably subjugated by it.

It is appropriate to clarify promptly, that we do not intend under any circumstances to underestimate the richness of the practice of the professional practice of social work; On the contrary, we believe that it is precisely this practice that must be considered as the generator, producer of experiences and the instance from which specific knowledge can be forged and the construction of the identity of the profession.

It must be taken into consideration, however, that in this purpose of construction of the disciplinary identity, the epistemological horizon cannot be left aside –that as a permanent surveillance of the production of knowledge-; the same one that operates around the fact that “*know what social workers do*”, in times in which not only social work -but also the other disciplines of the Social Sciences-, are exposed to overcoming the dilemma between what is desired and what is permissible, or what is the same, between what is desirable and what is possible that they would probably contribute to clarify in a better way, the consolidation of the task of the discipline within the Social Sciences.

## DEVELOPMENT

The beginnings of Social Work can well be considered turbulent and unstable in terms of its precision and theoretical-conceptual solidity, mainly due to the structural weakness with which it bursts onto the scene of the

academic world framed in the Social Sciences.

This situation has somehow contributed to the deepening of the epistemological debate around identifying it as social technology or visualizing it as a scientific discipline attached to the field of Social Sciences.

Hence, it is interesting to observe that in the process of its historical construction, it is impregnated by a strong heterogeneity that, like a pendulum, places it around two orientations: on the one hand, research and, on the other, action as such.

In the first case, it represents the starting point of the work of the social worker, resorting to the indications, to the tests that characterize the scenario of social reality from which the tests are extracted, as well as the interpretation of the factors in a social context. and cultural delimited in time and historical space; Then, in the second case, consider possible options and/or alternatives for concrete responses to the problems detected, the mobilization of resources, as well as the application of means and intervention strategies.

Notwithstanding this, as a constant in the professional work of Social Work, it has been characterized by making visible an image of **“professionals only from practice”**, *allowing himself to be carried away by the dynamism of the action, recharging -by inertia- his labor (acting); renouncing the structural and pressing concern of going deeper into the study, analysis, reflection and theorizing about their own disciplinary work. Contrary to this intention of progressive consolidation of the disciplinary niche and consequently managing to dominate their own practice, it seems that they have been inexorably subjugated by it.*

It is appropriate to clarify promptly, that we do not intend under any circumstances to underestimate the richness of the practice of the professional practice of social work; On the contrary, we believe that it is precisely this practice that must be considered as the

generator, producer of experiences and the instance from which specific knowledge about the profession itself can be forged.

Another issue that adheres to this analysis is linked to the need to further reflect on and clarify the scope of the **“social problem”**, since it is urgent to recognize that no *social problem is of its own or independent such problem*, given that it is produced and develops socially guided by circumstances of negotiation, construction and deconstruction of a determined structural, daily and historically conditioned reality by the social actors themselves; thereby acknowledging that there is no observation *“from nowhere”*, position that is widely defended by positivists and that gave way to the construction of insurmountable barriers between subject and object.

Furthermore, it is necessary to recognize that *“in the course of investigations we often forget who is asking the questions and how the question is asked. By not including ourselves in the reflection, we pursue only a partial reflection and our question is no longer embodied; seeks to express in the words of Thomas Nagel, a perspective from nowhere. It is ironic that this attempt to achieve a non-embodied perspective leads us precisely to adopt a perspective from a theoretically limited, pre-conceptually trapped and very specific place”* (Varela.1996:94); For this reason, it is urgent to adopt a permanent epistemological vigilance in all production of valid knowledge that considers the unavoidable concrete and situated implication of the subject in the cognitive experience that takes place.

Now, in this process of construction of the disciplinary identity, the epistemological horizon that characterizes it cannot be left aside, the same one that operates around the fact of *“knowing what social workers do”*, in times in which there is no Only social work -but also the other disciplines of the Social Sciences- are inexorably exposed to

overcoming the dilemma between what is desired and what is permissible, or what is the same, between what is desirable and what is possible, which would probably help to clarify best way, the consolidation of the task of the discipline in the field of Social Sciences.

It must also be added to this that the specific case of the professional space of Social Work has been developing on the basis of the existence of tensions between its field of analysis (the macrosocial) and its field of intervention (the microsocal), aspects that historically they have been expressed in dichotomous terms and that somehow explain the predominance of the **intervention**<sup>1</sup> as a social mandate – a field of problems characterized by the social question that encompasses the reproduction of the life of the subjects, groups and communities in in which the worker is immersed-, in relation to the field of analysis which has been relegated and historically postponed at the moment to assume as a priority the systematic theoretical-methodological reflection and the construction of logical bridges between the macrosocial (field of analysis) and the microsocal (field of intervention).

Thus, it is unequivocal to affirm that *“one of the main difficulties that Social Work still has to develop theory for its own consumption is that it is not known what is going to be studied, because there is no precision on the object. This, added to the underestimation of the theory, which hinders the articulation with the totality and with history, and added to the practice of an inductive methodology, determines that Social Work investigations remain enclosed in a description of the particular, without overcoming criticism of the theoretical practices of Traditional Social Work”* (Escalada. 1986:92).

Hence, probably the questions about **that** is

social work **which** is its object, they represent to be insignificant and priority in front of the question referred to **that** studies Social Work, since this could open up new possibilities for discussion that allow it to be defined in terms of an object of knowledge or as an object of intervention.

In the case of accentuating the latent concern around the intention of knowing **what** social workers do, it requires inexorably weighing some difficulties that gradually tend to become more complex due to the fact that it is not always easy to know what is done in daily practice.

Precisely, this propensity of the social worker to respond with a certain speed and urgency to the diverse circumstantial situations, typical of the historical-social reality scenario that he faces -an aspect that is consistent with his vocation of help-, has given rise to leaving in the background, the urgent need to systematize and formalize the knowledge and experiences acquired in daily encounters and interactions with the sociocultural context scenario in which it intervenes and which -in our opinion- would greatly enable the construction of a universe own symbolic.

In fact, the construction of that symbolic universe typical of Social Work would favor the use of a wide range of ethical-political choices, axiological and moral precepts, resulting from the rich social production of life in common; in addition to promoting the exercise of a theoretical practice that contributes to legitimize the consolidation of the disciplinary niche, the recognition and identity within the field of Social Sciences.

In this direction, we believe that the unavoidable challenge of Social Work today is aimed at overcoming the intervention imprint, subalternity -assigned or most of the

1. By way of justification, it is undeniable to historically make visible in social work a marked practical interventional character that defines its particular performance, the same that is constitutive and constituent of its professional ethos.

times assumed- and theoretical marginality -which is expressed as a constant in the profession-, referred to the absence of the necessary epistemological reflection and that historically accompanied its appearance. Such a situation has given rise to the formulation of guidelines referring to conceiving it as **social technology** or as a **scientific discipline**.

Without the intention of extending the rhetorical rather than dialectical discussion around such orientations, we believe that it is much more fruitful to return to theoretical-conceptual issues that under no circumstances can we take for granted, as is the case of the self-definition of Social Work and even more so. from the necessary reflection and epistemological surveillance of the construction of certain or probable knowledge that *“it comes from irrecusable a priori principles, evident from what is the necessary consequence, since the senses alone cannot provide more than a confused and provisional vision of the truth.”* (Di Tella; Chumbita; Gamba; Gajardo. 2008:587)

From such orientations, it is appropriate to make some theoretical precisions around epistemology as a *“treatise on science”* and that it constitutes a critical metatheory of scientific knowledge, of its genesis; the foundations, methodologies, development, projections and results of knowledge.

Epistemology proposes *“studying the production of scientific knowledge in all its aspects: logical, linguistic, historical, ideological, given that sciences are born and evolve in certain historical circumstances, the epistemologist will also wonder what are the relationships that may exist between science and society, between science and religions, or between the various sciences”* (Toledo.2004:4).

Currently, epistemology is concerned with developing tasks related to the production of criticism and self-criticism about the science

of knowledge, without neglecting the internal and external historical framework in which the productions of scientific knowledge arise (processes and contexts), seeking to establish a series of reasoning that widely values social elements, since science is a social product that must respond to questions that arise in the specific contexts in which they occur.

Hence, the possibility of constituting *“Any discipline of the social sciences in a deep and rigorous reflection, is based on the essential requirement of maintaining a permanent epistemological vigilance on scientific praxis. This is because, only if there is a solid reflection on the assumptions of knowledge that underlie each specific scientific process, it will be possible to develop analyzes and suggest solutions from the specific phenomena and not exclusively from the underlying models in the practitioner’s mind. of the scientific discipline* (Varela.1971:5).

In this regard, it must be specified, however, that the meaning of the discipline in modernity was conceived as an organizational category within scientific knowledge, which although it is encompassed through a vaster scientific group; naturally tends towards autonomy and specialization, not only because of the rigidity and demarcation of its borders, but also because it entails a reduction in accumulated knowledge ranging from communicability (teaching), insertion in social practices to the specificity of content and typical methods of a specialization<sup>2</sup>.

Discipline is always *“a way of organizing and delimiting a work territory, of concentrating research and experiences within a certain angle of vision”* (Torres.1998:58). Such criteria were always backed by complex organizational structures of knowledge, laws, axioms, border demarcation rules, the language that is built on it; of theories that are their own, of the techniques that they elaborate and/or use; in addition to the permanent disputes

2. A specialist person is one who knows a lot about an increasingly small and limited scientific field; therefore, locked in a splendid isolation of its own methodologies and making of science an absolute knowledge, a kind of science of sciences.



to recognize jurisdictions over one or another knowledge; added to the intentions of subordination, hierarchization and hegemonization of knowledge.

This disciplinary logic<sup>3</sup> not only recognizes differences in knowledge but also designs a universe of knowledge, assigning places and functions, in order to ensure the unity of the social subject of knowledge, guarantee social control of its circulation and efficiently carry out its purposes; although it is clear, however, to the detriment of authentic integration processes, exchange of concepts, methodologies, models, etc.

The fertility of the discipline in the history of science has not been demonstrated; since on the one hand, it operates from the circumscription of a domain of competence as an essential requirement, without which knowledge would lack meaning and significance and, on the other hand, the discipline reveals, extracts or constructs a non-trivial object for scientific study.

To close this brief analysis of the discipline, we must point out that the *Although these disciplines show a certain continuity throughout their existence (especially in their strategies to select the problems they deal with, as well as the changes in their contents), however, they are not eternal and immutable corpuses, quite the contrary. They are the result of a certain historical evolution* (Torres.1998:62), and are subject to continuous transformations and evolutions.

Returning to the guiding thread of epistemological vigilance, so vital in the production of legitimized knowledge in the different disciplines of the Social Sciences, it has special value due to two main aspects.

The first reinforces the idea of reflecting on the scientific praxis in which the scientist is inescapably immersed, since it is clear that

3. In this regard, it must be noted that the disciplines are intellectually justified on the condition that they do not hide the existence of global realities and, above all, keep a specific field of vision that recognizes and conceives the necessary existence of relationships and solidarities that enable the progress of same

he has defined what he intends to know and, above all, what is the position he occupies as a subject of knowledge. The second widely recognizes that in this act of knowing social reality, as a researcher, he is included in the space he aspires to or intends to know, since he cannot escape from it, neither in the first degree (common sense) or second degree (possibility to critically reveal what appears natural and evident).

Now, if Social Work would be reduced to a **social technology** considered a human activity that applies knowledge from other disciplines to solve historical-concrete everyday situations; then it would be unnecessary to analyze and reflect on the assumptions that underlie this scientific process of knowledge.

Social technology constitutes that “*activity that leads to the planning of solutions to social problems, through combinations of the findings derived from different areas of the social sciences*” (Toledo.2004:6). In this line, the term intervention, which somehow reflects this trend, is the product of an extensive continuity of modern rationality that is based on the precept that it is possible to build realities from a linear and progressive development, thanks to reason. on which science and its technical application are built.

In the same way, social intervention constitutes “*that dimension of social theory whose purpose is to explain and guide the modification of concrete situations...In this sense, the elaboration of intervention models constitutes a component of said theory and they are conceived as structures that organize diverse types of knowledge, knowledge, techniques articulated around an object of intervention and the process through which it is intended to achieve its modification.* (Dieringer and Dellacroce, 2006:197).

Therefore, it must be considered as that

cultural product of modernity that is clinging to its own foundations, because it is from there that we provide confidence, power, efficiency and effectiveness to execute an exclusive action to who owns and executes it; that is to say, it reflects that necessary instrumental load that makes it possible to execute a certain **make practical** in the field of Social Work.

To this must be added that this presentation as a technique from the origins of social work, although it has helped to particularly particularize its trajectory, adequately channeling the empirical bases of instrumental application to address the social problems of their professional practices; It has also implied and conditioned its development and consolidation from a marginality or theoretical absence of those spaces for the production and reproduction of knowledge and which is currently still quite limited.

When we talk about technology, actions such as the **Do** and the **Know**, processes that have as common dimensionality a distinctive form of rationalization.

For example, if we aspire to rationalize the act of knowing, we project to constitute science, while there are constant modifications of the subject who knows and of his tools for the apprehension of the object of study whose referent is to reach the truth; but if we seek to rationalize the act of doing as an action, we are constituting the technique, while the object is sought to be adapted to the subject, its adequacy referent being to ensure effectiveness.

From such orientations, when social work is conceived as social technology, priority is given to the development of experiences and intellectual productions that are at the service of professional practice that materializes in the construction of models as an articulatory instrument of the technique, although without totally discarding it. To science.

Thus, when one insists that the social worker

become a technologist, the propensity falls for the latter to allow himself to be dominated by technique as an exclusive possibility of his professional work as utilitarian, although this by itself does not have the capacity to prove a truth and a useful belief. Hence, the "*social technologist is not concerned with discovering reality; that is left to the scientists and, based on the findings of these (scientists) he seeks to develop useful techniques and procedures to solve problems*" (Toledo. 2005: 69).

Regarding the objectives of the social scientist and the social technologist, they are abysmally different. The first aspires to obtain knowledge of the reality that he contributes with veracity and solvency guided by research; denoting an intellectual orientation, whose purpose is to achieve a credible explanation of the phenomena or social facts, which are translated into research, production and knowledge transfer actions.

On the other hand, the second -social technologist-, only aspires to solve problems through useful techniques that were not sufficiently fully verified, denoting an absence of research as a **sine qua non** condition to discover reality and obtain relevant findings about of reality.

Consequently, epistemology and research are outside of social technology, evidencing its weakness in its approach, as well as the lack of reflection on the knowledge it uses, since it guides its action on simple assumptions accepted as reliable and true but arbitrary -given its nature - hardly justifiable in rational terms.

According to Natalio Kisnerman, the "*conception of Social Work as technology responds to a liberal positivist framework, which privileges practice. The social worker is thus an operator of methods and techniques that intervenes in the immediate, in the evident... technology is the set of rules that establish the ways of proceeding to control and dominate*

*nature. They can be highly standardized and scientifically substantiated”* (Kisnerman. 1998:154)

Following this approach, when the social worker operates as a social technologist, he continually resorts to the use of conceptual tools from different disciplines in the field of Social Sciences and applies them indistinctly in his daily professional activity; although he is unaware of its relevance and epistemological foundations, given his operational pragmatism that makes it difficult -most of the time- to appreciate the latent probability of inconsistencies that implies indiscriminately assuming such theoretical notions.

Now, continuing with this analysis, it is appropriate to formulate some arguments about Social Work conceived as **scientific discipline** and that entails assuming, on the one hand, the continuous promotion of actions of epistemological reflection -which, as a watchdog in the production of specific knowledge-, guides the very praxis of the profession -understood as professional intervention in relation to various social problems-, guided by the rationalization that provides the necessary and sufficient rigor as a behavioral norm of action with respect to the object of study; and on the other, the need to constantly resort in an organized way, to the use of theories to approach the phenomena and objects related to their professional work; to then systematize experiences resulting from encounters with concrete and historical reality that contribute to the production, reproduction and consequent accumulation of specialized knowledge about the discipline.

To the extent that Social Work shows interest and concern for developing efforts to rationalize its action and assumes the rigor expressed in its daily professional work as a behavioral norm, it tends to become a scientific discipline of Social Sciences.

Undoubtedly, these efforts were widely favored by the movements for the reconceptualization of social work initiated in the continental meetings of Porto Alegre (1965), Araxá (1967) and Tesópolis (1970), whose recommendations revolved around outlining technical possibilities and practices for a social work rooted in the reality of a **here and now**, but that at the same time can contribute elements of transformation and modification of those historical social realities in which the profession is inserted.

The reconceptualization movement in the case of Social Work coincided with the strong challenges of societies to the different scientific disciplines and which revolved around the need to promote alternative interpretations of reality, with active, committed, organized and mobilized participation. of societies in decision-making in economic, political and social life strongly conditioned by the irruption and consolidation of modern capitalism.

Regarding the effects of the reconceptualization of social work, although it did not manage to delve into the theoretical-epistemological discussion, it did have the capacity to arrive at the formulation of methodological approaches; without underestimating -of course- under any circumstances, the rich contributions around the concern and analysis about the character of scientificity and hierarchization of the discipline.

Likewise, this formulation of methodological proposals in the case of Social Work, placed special emphasis on the need to build promotional socio-educational models that contribute, on the one hand, to the expansion of the bases of social participation from popular organizations and, on the other, enable the consolidation and strengthening of one's own professional identity that unfolds from the conditions of development that the current situation indicates to the profession.



These interpellations -originated in the reconceptualization movement- have allowed not only Social Work, but also the other disciplines of the Social Sciences, to search for the historical place from which to act, explain and intervene in the social changes characterized by the growing disintegration of the social fabric caused by the market as the main regulator of social relations, the gradual increase in inequalities and the gaps of inequality and injustice existing between individuals, classes and social groups.

Related to these implications and difficulties of the Social Sciences, as in Social Work; We can well affirm that they constitute their object of study in the midst of a complexity much higher than that of Natural Sciences; because the intentionality, or the significance that man subjectively attributes to his actions, turns out to be much more difficult and complex to decipher and interpret; because the foreseeable, the expected is foreign to the Social Sciences.

For this reason, foreseeable situations are ruled out in the Social Sciences in general, given that although they are “*Sciences like the others.....have a special difficulty in being sciences like the others*”(Bourdieu.2003:150); because they must be capable of advancing even more than the Natural Sciences, assuming the difficult task of staging what is hidden par excellence and that escapes the superficial gaze of science, because it takes refuge in the very gaze of the scientist, whose objectification is the condition of science’s access to self-awareness; that is to say, to the knowledge of its historical presuppositions that take place in it.

This is confirmed in the sense that “*One does not escape the work of building the object and the responsibility that it implies. There is no object that does not carry a point of view, even if it is the object produced with the intention of abolishing the point of view, that is,*

*partiality; to go beyond the partial perspective that is associated with a position in the studied space*” (Bourdieu.2008:17). In this regard, we must mention that the purpose of science is to build a body of logically interrelated propositions (theory), capable of explaining certain relationships between the phenomena studied. In the particular case of Social Work, it is about building empirical generalizations to later incorporate them into a system of general propositions; that is to say, to a theory, which tends to increase -but which is also susceptible to partial or total modifications- constantly, as a result of the research that takes place in it.

To this must be added that the Social Sciences “*have not yet assimilated the idea that the validity of the experience, to the extent that its object is essentially mediated by subjectivity, increases with the subjective participation of the knowing subject*” (Adorno.2001 :28). In fact, one of the characteristics of human life and also of social life is, above all, its qualitative transformability and linked to it, its most disconcerting unpredictability; because transformations are always possible or required, according to needs and reasons that probably could not be predicted.

Consequently, our intellectual efforts and with it, our theories and concepts, are built with the clear purpose of progressively reducing a set of changing complexities, resulting from the extreme dynamics of the social world that makes us always find ourselves in the need to permanently observe much of our work on the production of knowledge about the reality of the social world (need for epistemological vigilance).

From such arguments, it is clear that thinking about Social Work implies “*turning it into an object of reflection, locating it there, in its constitutive practices, where social events happen intertwined in social interactions.... It is this practice that today forces us to reformulate*

*the social, the epistemological assumptions, the necessary integration of the main contributions of contemporary thought, to understand that the social belongs to everyday life”* (Kisnerman. 1998:158).

Under this logic, we could well indicate that Social Work constitutes a true **“do social”**, an almost conjunctural knowledge of a specific and particular reality that is inescapably connected to a social practice, be it assistance, empowerment, awareness and community organization, linked at all times -of course- to the man of flesh and blood, who in The historical evolution suffers from the vicissitudes of the prevailing social system (deficiencies, unsatisfied needs in health, education, employment, housing and access to basic services, among others, which abundantly reflect the misfortune of humanity).

Faced with this scenario, it is urgent for Social Work to propose strategic actions for social change that place it increasingly closer to a **“do generalized politics”**, without ruling out and even less neglecting the presence of the ultimate object of their efforts and concerns, which is the **human being** situated in a historical-concrete reality and defined by the circumstances of a political, social, cultural and economic order.

A possibility of visualizing Social Work as a discipline implies openly acknowledging that it *“has to its credit a conceptual management of the problems it addresses. It has accumulated an enormous amount of information about its practices. There is an extensive bibliography written by social workers that implies systematizations and critical reflection on these practices. And, unlike other social disciplines, it is an authentic social praxis, since its exercise requires direct and continuous contact with social reality, through direct work with and together with the people with whom you work,*

*wherever their daily activities take place”* (Kisnerman. 1998:155).

Such characteristics make the profession a specialized action based on developed knowledge, attitudes and socially recognized skills; in addition to having its own content that allows specifying an object of study and its own concepts; a work philosophy and a professional ethic dedicated to the search for the individual and collective well-being of people, groups and communities located in historical time and space.

To the extent that Social Work keeps in mind at all times, the incessant and inalienable search for the progressive construction of its own autonomous theoretical corpus and integrated into an object of study, the interest in building methods and methodologies aimed at solving problems related to its specific professional field, we believe that it has sufficient merits to be considered as a discipline.

To this, it must be added that social work, in its desire to consolidate itself as a discipline, must have the ability to firmly transcend the sphere of practical application as the ultimate object of its professional work. Overcoming this conventionalism implies paying special interest to the specific theoretical production conditioned to the continuous and permanent critical reflection and the necessary reading and re-reading of what is produced; the evaluation of contributions and methodological experiences; to then carry out the systematization of the studies developed throughout its historical trajectory with the purpose of gradually constituting the body of disciplinary knowledge.

Finally, it is convenient to refer to what is proper to social work and its special transformative intention that guides its professional activity, aspects that mark a constant search regarding its specificity<sup>4</sup>,

4. Without the intention of making conceptual deepening in relation to specificity, for the purposes of this work we consider it as that quality that a certain body or species has attributes or properties that make it special and different from the rest of the

which mainly refers to the construction of identity, the recognition of the rest of the other professions, but also provide some cohesion as members who share the same discipline.

This specificity tends to be expressed in different dimensions that are developed simultaneously and autonomously but closely related to each other, such as the professional exercise that involves critically reflecting on practical experiences and interventions in specific historical settings; the production of knowledge or specialized knowledge that entails the systematization of professional experiences duly supported in theoretical and methodological terms; the work space in which it develops and acts; in addition to the identity and professional status that expresses what is proper to the profession and the efforts to reaffirm before others everything they know and how much they know about their own trade.

Finally, we believe that both identity and professional status are subject to turbulent changes in complex social dynamics that continually pose challenges to the profession as well as adaptations and responses to such changes; as well as the consolidation of differentiations and particularities in relation to the other disciplines of the social field.

## CONCLUSION

The beginnings of Social Work can well be considered as turbulent and unstable in terms of its precision and theoretical-conceptual solidity, mainly due to its structural epistemological weakness with which it bursts onto the scene of the academic world framed in the Social Sciences. This situation has contributed to the deepening of the epistemological debate around identifying it as social technology or visualizing it as a scientific discipline attached to the field of

Social Sciences.

Hence, it is interesting to observe that in the process of its historical construction, it is impregnated by a strong heterogeneity that, like a pendulum, places it around two orientations: on the one hand, research and, on the other, action as such. In the first case, it represents the starting point of the work of the social worker, resorting to the indications, to the tests that characterize the scenario of social reality from which the tests are extracted, as well as the interpretation of the factors in a social context. and cultural delimited in time and historical space; Then, in the second case, consider possible options and/or alternatives for concrete responses to the problems detected, the mobilization of resources, as well as the application of means and intervention strategies.

The professional task of Social Work, allows to visualize with certain clarity, an image of **“professionals only from practice”**, those who have been carried away by the dynamism of the action, recharging -by inertia- their labor (acting); renouncing the structural and pressing concern of going deeper into the study, analysis, reflection and theorizing about their own disciplinary work. Thus, contrary to this idealized intention of progressive consolidation of the disciplinary niche and consequently managing to dominate their own practice, it seems that they have been inexorably subjugated by it.

Another issue that needs to be analyzed with some caution is linked to the clarification of the scope of the **“social problem”**, since it is urgent to recognize that no *social problem is of its own or independent such problem*, given that it is produced and develops socially guided by circumstances of negotiation, construction and deconstruction of a determined structural, daily and historically conditioned

others, requiring it as a sine qua non condition. the existence of the inclusive dimension (existence of a certain uniformity present in that species or body) and the exclusive dimension (impossibility of finding such attributes and/or qualities in other bodies or species).

reality by the social actors themselves; thereby acknowledging that there is no observation “from nowhere”.

Another structural concern to be taken into consideration, revolves around the difficulty expressed in the scarce elaboration of theory for its own consumption, denoting an underestimation of it and that makes it even more impossible to articulate with the totality and with history. This observed weakness is probably linked to questions regarding **that** is social work **which** is its object, which represent to be insignificant and priority compared to the question referring to **that** study Social Work. Responding accurately to the latter could well open up new possibilities for discussion that allow it to be defined in terms of an object of knowledge or as an object of intervention.

Without leaving aside, the structural concern around the search for increasingly elaborate answers regarding **that** is social work, **which** it is its object; We believe that it is more important and significant to refer to the **that** Study Social Work. This last question requires weighing difficulties that gradually tend to become more complex due to the fact that it is not always easy to know what is done in the daily practice of the social worker.

Precisely, this propensity of the social worker to respond with a certain speed and urgency to the diverse circumstantial situations typical of the scenario of the historical-social reality that he faces -an aspect that is consistent with his vocation to help-, has given rise to leaving in the background, the urgent need to systematize and formalize the knowledge and experiences acquired in

daily encounters and interactions with the sociocultural context scenario in which it intervenes and which -in our opinion- would greatly enable the construction of a universe own symbolic; the use of a wide range of ethical-political choices, axiological and moral precepts, resulting from the rich social production of life in common; in addition to promoting the exercise of a theoretical practice that contributes to legitimize the consolidation of the disciplinary niche, the recognition and identity within the field of Social Sciences.

Such aspects allow, on the one hand, to constitute Social Work as a true “**make social**”, an almost conjunctural knowledge of a specific and particular reality that is inescapably connected to a social practice, be it assistance, empowerment, awareness and community organization, linked at all times -of course- to the man of flesh and blood, who in the Historical evolution suffers from the vicissitudes of the prevailing social system (deficiencies, unsatisfied needs in health, education, employment, housing and access to basic services, among others, which abundantly reflect the misfortune of humanity).

On the other hand, it is appropriate to recognize that Social Work is a promoter of social change that, through strategic actions, places it increasingly closer to a “**do generalized politics**”, without ruling out and even less neglecting the presence of the ultimate object of their efforts and concerns, which is the **human being** situated in a historical-concrete reality and defined by the prevailing political, social, cultural and economic circumstances.

## REFERENCES

- ADORNO, Theodor W. 2001. Epistemología y Ciencias Sociales. Madrid – España: Frónesis Cátedra Universitat de Valencia.
- BOURDIEU, Jean Pierre. 2003. El Oficio de Científico. Ciencia de la Ciencia y Reflexividad. Barcelona – España: ANAGRAMA.
- BOURDIEU, Jean Pierre. 2008. Homo Academicus. Buenos Aires – Argentina. Siglo XXI
- DI TELLA, Torcuato; CHUMBITA, Hugo; GAMBA, Susana; GAJARDO, Paz. 2008. *Diccionario de ciencias sociales y políticas*. Buenos Aires – Argentina. EMECE.
- DIERINGER, A; DELLACROCE, M. (2006) *Las prácticas profesionales en el ámbito de la formación universitaria y del ejercicio profesional de los trabajadores sociales*. En **IERULLO, Martin. 2012**. “Reflexiones acerca de los desafíos del Trabajo Social en relación a la investigación en Ciencias Sociales”. Buenos Aires – Argentina. Revista Debate Público. Reflexión de Trabajo Social.
- KISNERMAN, Natalio. 1998. Pensar el Trabajo Social. Buenos Aires-Argentina: LUMEN HUMANITAS.
- VARELA, Francisco. 1996. Ética y acción. Santiago - Chile: DOLMEN.
- VARELA, Jacobo. 1971. Psychological Solutions to Social Problems. Social Technology. Nueva York. Academic Press. En: TOLEDO, Ulises.2004. ¿Una epistemología del Trabajo Social? Santiago – Chile: CINTA DE MOEBIO
- TORRES, Jurjo. 1998. Globalización e interdisciplinariedad: el curriculum integrado. Madrid – España: MORATA.
- TOLEDO, Ulises.2005. ¿Una epistemología del Trabajo Social? Concepción – Chile: Cuadernos de Trabajo Social - Universidad San Sebastián