

# Transatlantic issues in social pedagogy: What the United Kingdom can learn from Iberoamerica

Jacob Kornbeck

## Abstract

The article discusses whether the fact that social pedagogy originated in Germany can be assumed to constitute a barrier to its successful establishment in the UK: would cultural and other differences suggest that social pedagogy might be 'too German' for a UK context? The article draws on material illustrating how social pedagogy travelled from Germany via Spain to Latin America, whence it has now arrived in the USA. Reflections are added as to the UK's role as an Anglo-Saxon as well as a European country.

## Key Words:

social work; social pedagogy; England; UK; Germany; Spain; Latin America; USA

## Introduction

In Europe there are countries with and countries without a social pedagogy tradition. While the United Kingdom is a country without such a traditional paradigm - until now, there has been no equivalent to the social work/social pedagogy dichotomy which can be found in most European countries (Kornbeck & Rosendal Jensen, 2009, 2011, 2012 - the country is in the process of discovering social pedagogy (Petrie & Cameron, 2009; Stephens, 2009). As this paper will show, however, the new concept is not met with unanimous enthusiasm. For as one example - a debate in the professional journal *Community Care* in 2010 - will demonstrate, the German roots of social pedagogy are perceived by some as a barrier to its introduction in a British context.

The paper will attempt to explain how it happened that social pedagogy became partly obscured in the country where it originated - Germany - and on this basis will develop a discussion of whether its 'Germanness' really needs to make it incompatible with British and indeed Anglo-Saxon traditions; this will point to implications which should be addressed in an Iberoamerican context. The basic submission is that, whereas the absence of a social pedagogy tradition in the Anglophone world may suggest that the paradigm cannot, or cannot easily, be transferred there from its original German context, realities are more complex and the social pedagogy community of the Iberoamerican world

might contribute constructively to such debates, including by illustrating the successful transfer from Germany to Spain and thence to Latin America. It follows from the realisation that Latin America may have something to teach the UK, in particular in the light of the creation at Arizona State University, in 2012, of the first US degree course in social pedagogy (ASU, 2012).

At a time when British social pedagogy scholarship seems to be taking off - the first two monographic textbooks were published in February and March 2013 respectively (Stephens, 2013; Storo, 2013) - it seems appropriate also to locate discussions of the locus of an emerging British (or English, Scottish, Welsh or Northern Irish) social pedagogy within a wide discursive framework: one that recognises the simultaneous embeddedness of the UK within a European and an Atlantic context. The paper aims to make a contribution in this direction.

### Conceptual framework

Conceptually, the paper is inspired by the concept of educational borrowing, as derived from Sadler (1900) and as applied to social pedagogy borrowing by Winther-Jensen (2011) with reference to Erlandsen & Kornbeck's (2004) case study on how social pedagogy was borrowed, around 1900, from Germany to Denmark. Central to this model is the realisation that borrowing involves adaptation and transformation:

Its origin in German thinking gradually faded away in the darkness of history. On the one hand export of the German concept to Denmark might be called a success. On the other hand it turned out - in the hand of the practitioners - as something different from German Sozialpädagogik. Even today where Germany and Denmark belong to a group of European countries in which socialrådgivning (social work) and socialpædagogik (social pedagogy) are contrasted, the difference between the two countries manifests itself in the fact that the two fields in Germany tend to integrate while in Denmark they apparently are separating. (Winther-Jensen, 2011, p. 61)

The analysis presented in this paper builds upon an understanding of social pedagogy as being parallel and complementary to social work: not in the sense of there being any subordination between the two, but rather in the sense of a dichotomy (Kornbeck, 2008) and, according to one model, as parts of the aggregate 'social professions' field (Otto & Lorenz, 1998). In Germany this dichotomy has almost vanished as the two traditional paradigms have been largely merged (Kornbeck, 2009, 2012), but they continue to live on in most other European countries (Kornbeck & Rosendal Jensen, 2009, 2011, 2012) and in the UK, where no social pedagogy tradition has existed so far but a social pedagogy profession appears to be emerging in parallel to, and discernable from, that of social work, it is believed that an emerging social work/social pedagogy dichotomy can currently be observed.

This illustrates perfectly well that rather than being 'the result of a scientifically constructed and professionally conducted analysis, social work and social pedagogy tend to 'enact and represent the type of citizenship that characterises the political culture of a

country generally' (Lorenz, 2006, p. 165). They are however distinct, with social work being more concerned with compensation and treatment, building upon knowledge and values from psychology, therapy, sociology and law, while social pedagogy is directed towards the facilitation of learning experiences, being more open to engage with others (and less inclined to assume an expert role) and drawing its knowledge and values from education (pedagogy), philosophy, the humanities, but also various creative disciplines (Kornbeck, 2008, 2012). In professional practice, social pedagogy is generally seen as being 'not primarily "deficit-oriented"' (Lorenz, 2008, p. 636), this in stark contrast with social work.

### Methodological framework

Drawing upon the already introduced concept of social pedagogy borrowing (Winther-Jensen, 2011) this paper aims to inform current British debates on social pedagogy by pointing to possible alternatives. This is addressed by discussing a collection of case study material ranging from contexts with a higher level of linguistic and cultural affinity with the UK (Germany, USA) to contexts with far less affinity (Spain, Iberoamerica). Although the UK and Germany do not share the same language, English is a partly Germanic language and British culture can be assumed to have more in common with Germanic cultures than with Iberic cultures. The UK and the USA are famously separated by a common language (George Bernard Shaw). This approach thus promises to deliver evidence including 'most similar' as well as 'most different' cases within the meaning coined by John Stuart Mill in *System of Logic*, 1843 by looking for evidence of social pedagogy borrowing both in contexts with a higher degree of affinity with the UK (Germany, USA) and in cases with a lower degree of affinity (Spain, Iberoamerica), it aims to isolate the most decisive aspects of social pedagogy borrowing.

The risk of 'concept extension' (Sartori, 1970; cf., Goertz, 2006, p. 69) involved in climbing too high on Sartori's 'ladder of abstraction,' where 'concept stretching' (Goertz, 2006, p. 69) is evident to the author. Yet this risk would only manifest itself significantly if the aim of the paper was to detect the presence of social pedagogy in the national contexts concerned, in which case a challenge would be posed in relation to defining social pedagogy (discernible practice methods, theories, textbooks, curricula?). Since, on the contrary, the aim is to detect the borrowing of social pedagogy, case studies are merely expected to show whether or not the concept was consciously and visibly imported into another national context than the German one in which it initially emerged. This method will largely suffice to demonstrate whether or not alternatives to current reticence, in certain quarters of the UK, exist and can be confirmed. This permits concluding that current British social pedagogy debates need to be recalibrated to take this evidence into account, irrespective of what the implications may be in operational terms.

### British perspectives

In the UK, until very recently, neither has there been a profession of social pedagogue, nor has there been an academic discipline called social pedagogy. The basic pattern was one of social workers overseeing the work of a largely unskilled workforce in residential

care settings and of professionals in other, potentially social pedagogical fields, having various other qualifications. This has changed recently as cases of shortcomings in residential care as well as child deaths and abuse in families overseen by social services have suggested that social work education and training might not always be sufficient for professional practice. A feeling that the UK was 'failing its most vulnerable' (Gentleman, 2009b) even led to the recruitment of staff with social pedagogy qualifications from other European countries (Gentleman, 2009a). Yet it seems, now, that social pedagogy may be 'gaining a firm foothold' in the UK (Petrie, 2013).

In addition hereto, a desire has emerged to invest more in 'early years' service provision, as well as extra-curricular services for children at school age. All these aggregated developments have led to a number of initiatives whereby the UK has sought to learn what social pedagogy stands for in European countries having this tradition, and to establish social pedagogy both in higher education and professional practice in the UK. Both 'as a discipline and a practice,' social pedagogy is now 'drawing attention in British political circles,' (Stephens, 2009, p. 343). For example, there are:

indications that England is now ready to contemplate the introduction of social pedagogy as an academic discipline, and the introduction of the profession of social pedagogue (Petrie & Cameron, 2009, p. 145).

At the same time, scepticism remains a factor to be counted. Not only has the recession hit the UK hard, with consequences for the roll-out of initially agreed social pedagogy measures (Cooper, 2011), but also the final report from the UK Government-commissioned external evaluation of the first phase of the social pedagogy agenda in England showed restraint in its conclusions and did not plead unambiguously in favour of a whole-scale implementation (Berridge, et al., 2011). The UK may not be in the process of a wholesale 'import', but is maybe rather 'trying it on for size' (Petrie & Cameron, 2009, p. 145).

When a Draft Guidance document on work with looked-after children was put into public consultation by the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence and the Social Care Institute for Excellence (NICE & SCIE, 2010), an otherwise short and very timid paragraph on social pedagogy attracted an aggressive comment from a general medical practitioner based in Hackney, East London. Dr Fitzpatrick thought that New Labour had merely stopped shopping for new ideas in the US and gone European instead. Commenting on reports that Danish looked-after children are more likely to live successful lives after their stay in residential care, he reflected that funding was probably more generous in Denmark and staff better trained (Fitzpatrick, 2010). This being so, one could have expected support for social pedagogy, but instead Dr Fitzpatrick found it to be discredited by Nazi connections (a well-known claim which, nevertheless, applies equally to social work). Fitzpatrick thought it had taken social pedagogy:

several decades to recover from its association with the Nazi regime. Then it was used to facilitate the extension of state authority into intimate spheres of family and personal life, just as these new Nice/Scie guidelines would incorporate the sort of intrusive and moralising therapeutic outlook that permeates public health policy into the education and social care of looked-after children (Fitzpatrick, 2010).

While actually implying that criticisms voiced against the English residential care system were justified, Fitzpatrick found them caused by social work-bashing: the Government simply liked social pedagogy because it was not social work (in itself an interesting indication):

It seems likely that the main appeal for New Labour is that a social pedagogue is not a social worker, that most disparaged and discredited professional of the past 10 years. [...] The social pedagogue - new, glossy, Scandinavian, spouting platitudes about providing a "holistic package of support" and "integrated care and education" - emerges as the solution to a problem largely created by New Labour (Fitzpatrick, 2010).

To Fitzpatrick, the problem was simple: better pay, recognition of social work, but not recruitment of social pedagogues from overseas (as currently practised):

... But there is no need to go in search of gimmicks to Denmark or Germany or even Pennsylvania ... Politicians could help by ceasing to produce more policy guidance like this, by ceasing their bad-mouthing of social workers and by putting the pedagogues on their bicycles (Fitzpatrick, 2010).

Apart from a certain protectionism (support our people, don't recruit from abroad) and a glaring ignorance of the subject matter, the author made an involuntary contribution to a (then unknown) debate on the relationship between social work and social pedagogy, by uttering unconditional support for the social work profession and refusing any idea of an social pedagogy profession next to it.

The uninformed nature of this contribution becomes particularly obvious if one examines the incriminated Draft Guidance. Far from being prescriptive, let alone unashamedly in love with Scandinavia or Germany, the text did not go an inch beyond providing guidance. Its authors had 'heard about research in England' and a 'pilot programme that is introducing social pedagogic values in residential care homes here'. It noted that this seemed to be in line with the UK Government's Care Matters paper for England (H.M. Government, DCSF, 2008) (NICE & SCIE, 2010, p. 15, sec. 3.14) but was kept resolutely factual:

Social pedagogy is an important development for all care provision in Europe, as the PDG heard in evidence from Denmark and the UK. Its central tenet is 'building relations' that are crucial to further healthy emotional development, based on the importance of attachment theory, having a 'secure base' and developing good social skills. Social pedagogy puts the child or young person at the centre and builds outwards, integrating care and education in its broadest sense to provide a holistic package of support. The PDG also heard about research in England - inspired by the approach in European children's homes - on a pilot programme that is introducing social pedagogic values in residential care homes here (NICE & SCIE, 2010, p. 15).

It should also be noted this was half a page out of a total of 139 pages: that such a text should prompt so virulent a reaction, is remarkable, yet seems to be symptomatic of attitudes held at least in some quarters of English and British society. Other quarters, however, did not agree, as can be seen from the reactions published in the journal shortly after.

Community Care printed several reactions by academics and practitioners who disagreed with Fitzpatrick. Brody (2010) found comparisons with Nazi Germany offensive and not a representation of current practice in Germany, recommended a UNICEF report on children's lives in various European countries, and found Fitzpatrick to be:

...clearly ignorant of the strong youth work tradition in the UK which shares the values of social pedagogy and the work of educationalists such as A[.]S[.] Neil whose work predates the rise of fascism in Germany (Brody, 2010).

In this last point, Brody (2010) followed the same line as Petrie & Cameron (2009) who have seen social pedagogy precursors in certain British educationists and social reformists of the 18th and 19th centuries. Under the title 'The rest of Europe values pedagogy,' Boddy & Statham (2010) referred to their recent Nuffield briefing paper, drawing on two cross-European studies, and remarked that they had found practice teams, elsewhere in Europe, to be multi-professional:

Social pedagogy was not seen as an alternative to social work, but as a key complementary profession, specialising in direct work with children and families (Boddy & Statham, 2010).

Without prejudicing the value of the different arguments put forward, it is significant that such a debate could take place at all. Even without having a fully-fledged social pedagogy profession in place, what we were witnessing in the spring 2010 was a discursive struggle based on the social work/social pedagogy dichotomy template (Kornbeck, 2008, 2009), yet it was also a potentially xenophobic rejection of concepts coming from the UK's European partners.

It may be argued that building arguments of this section solely around the frustrations of one sole practitioner writing a piece for a professional magazine (Fitzpatrick, 2010) would seem far-fetched and unrepresentative. Yet something rather similar happened, in 2009, in response to a very factual social pedagogy article published on the Childrenwebmag site (Chowcat, 2009). This other debate will not be summarised here, yet it deserves being mentioned that reactions of this type may be expected to represent a more widely-held attitude in the UK.

### German perspectives

But what happened to social pedagogy in its German Heimat? For a long time, social work (known as Fürsorge before and as Sozialarbeit after 1945) and social pedagogy (Sozialpädagogik) were two different, tradition-based paradigms in professional education and practice alike (Lowy, 1983). While social work set off in the shape of specific training

programmes before 1914 and only entered universities in the 1970s (and then only slowly), social pedagogy offered the diametrically opposed picture: what had started in the mid-19th Century as a concept in university-based philosophy and education (pedagogy) courses only very gradually entered into specific qualifying programmes. Hence, social work had a clear professional profile early on, but not a clear intellectual profile, and vice versa: social pedagogy was sure about its intellectual but not about its professional stance.

However, what Hans Pfaffenberger [1966] (1974) analysed in the late 1960s was going to be of prophetic dimensions: social work and social pedagogy were set to converge, very slowly yet somehow unavoidably, as six different schools of thought sought to define their respective identities and their mutual relationship (see Mühlum, 2001). Finally, a federal 'framework regulation' defining the core curriculum elements, adopted in 2001, disposed totally of social pedagogy as a concept and claimed to have subsumed social work and social pedagogy under a purportedly generic label (Soziale Arbeit), which nevertheless smacked dangerously of social work (Sozialarbeit) (KMK, 2001). The same applies to a 'core curriculum' adopted in 2006 by a professional organisation (FTSA, 2006). The 'convergence' of social work and social pedagogy has established itself firmly, and seemingly to the detriment of social pedagogy, but why?

Against the backdrop of this turn of events, it is hard not to see social work as having won over social pedagogy, and there are numerous indications in German academic and professional literature that social pedagogy had been associated with something domestic, and therefore authoritarian and old-fashioned, while social work was seen not only as Anglo-Saxon, and therefore modern, developed and automatically emancipated, but also more open towards the rest of the world (Kornbeck, 2009). This having been said, it needs to be born in mind that the seemingly unavoidable 'convergence' of social work and social pedagogy was, in a pre-1990 context, only unavoidable in West Germany (the Federal Republic of Germany). In East Germany (the German Democratic Republic), by contrast, social work and social pedagogy remained two distinct professions, although they were so inadequately represented in academia that they could not, in the context of German reunification, resist a wholesale import of the already largely merged West German system of professional education. This evidence points strongly to West Germany's transatlantic connection, involving largely importation of ideas from the USA, as a likely factor (Kornbeck, 2012).

It is worthwhile reflecting upon whether Germans have become so focussed on Anglo-Saxon ideals of academic knowledge and professional skills that they have become immune to the virtues of domestic concepts. Indeed, the conclusions to the country note for Germany in the OECD Starting Strong review of early childhood education and care point very much in this direction, urging:

that Germany should take the lead in developing cross-national exchanges about important theories, concepts and practices that have originated in Germany and have influenced other Continental European countries. We are thinking here in particular of 'social pedagogy', Bildung and Erziehung. Again we would hope that the Federal and Länder governments - and German foundations - would take a lead

in such initiatives, for example, as a starting point, to support the publication in English of some key German publications (Moss, et al., 2004, para. 204, p. 65).

Outside of the narrow confines of specialised (social) pedagogy debates, intellectual historian and former journalist Peter Watson has challenged British clichés of Germany; in a magisterial book revisiting German contributions of the last 300 years to the arts, sciences, humanities, etc., he has attempted demonstrating to an Anglo-American public that German contributions have been (and are) substantial, creative and often groundbreaking (Watson, 2010). In line with these contributions (Moss, et al., 2004; Watson, 2010), it may be claimed that there is a need for Germany to reclaim its heritage in educational thought and practice, including social pedagogy, especially in the face of Anglo-American hegemony. Yet it may be that Germany would need help from abroad to make the necessary realisations:

- Such help might come from a comparative analysis of the merger of social work and social pedagogy in Germany, contrasted with the perpetuated differentiation between social work and social pedagogy in many European countries (Kornbeck, 2009);
- it might come from documented case studies from such countries (Kornbeck & Rosendal Jensen, 2009, 2011, 2012);
- it could come from descriptions and analyses of the UK's current efforts to discover social pedagogy (Berridge, et al., 2011; Petrie & Cameron, 2009, Stephens, 2009; Petrie, 2013; Storo, 2013; Hatton, 2013);
- finally, it could come from evidence of social pedagogy's voyage from Germany to Spain and thence to Latin America (Fermoso Estébanez, 2003; Úcar, 2011, 2012).

If the British debates presented at the beginning of the paper are reassessed in the light of these German developments, it is easy to interpret them as vindicating those British views according to which social pedagogy is simply 'too German' to be compatible with Anglo-American traditions. The fact that progressive Germans found it more progressive to import the Anglo-Saxon 'social work-only' model and throw out social pedagogy with the bath water would seem to confirm the British social pedagogy-sceptical position. Yet Iberoamerican perspectives and experiences may help overcome this analysis and show it to be erroneous.

### Iberoamerican perspectives

We have now seen that social pedagogy is being rejected by some people in the UK because of its 'Germanness,' but we have also seen that social pedagogy has been more or less rejected by many Germans themselves. The West German rejection of social pedagogy has been explained partly as a result of West German 'transatlanticism,' while it is clear that the analysis must draw on slightly different concepts in the case of the UK. In attempting to explain British reticence towards social pedagogy, the word 'Anglosphere' might be more appropriate, as it highlights the fact that the UK is part of a large, worldwide family of English-speaking nations, and that bonds are particularly tight between those members of the Anglosphere which have emanated from previous white settler colonies (Australia, Canada, USA, New Zealand) and the UK. The concept of



Anglosphere is uncontroversial if it simply represents the objective reality that a certain number of nations have English as their official language, largely English-speaking populations and many shared values based on similar institutions, legal traditions, etc.; as such, the concept is not really different from the French francophonie concept.

Yet there is another notion of Anglosphere, one which is far more exclusive and tends to postulate the incommensurability of non-Anglophone concepts and values with Anglophone ones. While it is easy to challenge the relevance of the UK-US 'special relationship' - see for instance British reactions to the Obama administration's invitation, in January 2012, to discuss the Falklands sovereignty issue (thereby even using the Argentine term Malvinas alongside the official English name Falklands) (Gardiner, 2012) - challenging the cultural and educational implications of the Anglosphere concept is far more difficult.

If the Anglosphere is understood as a racially or ethnically constructed, global community of destiny (Vucetic, 2011) (whereas such communities - Schicksalsgemeinschaften - are usually regional in character), then it should not come as a surprise if Anglosphere proponents are particularly intent to refuse importing cultural concepts from non-Anglosphere cultures. The mechanism in 19th Century Germany, following the unification of the German states, whereby culture became the driver of unity, as identified by Lorenz (2006, p. 88) drawing on Zimmer (1996), may be seen as working here in basically similar fashions.

For the German nation, created from an array of independent kingdoms by the uniting force of war against France in 1871, culture had a much stronger and more direct collective function. Here the programme of national unification could not be grounded in a unified religion or in justifiable claims of ethnic unity, nor indeed did geography provide clear assistance in the drawing of national boundaries as did the coastline in the case of Britain (leaving aside the vexed problem of Ireland) (Lorenz (2006, p. 88).

As such, there is nothing exceptional about it, but there also is no particular reason for purporting its modernity over a seemingly backwards German model. Though the two cases are not identical - Wilhelmine Germany was one quite amorphous, heterogeneous new state located in central Europe, while today's Anglosphere is spread over most of the world; the merging German states had partly diverging legal and administrative systems, while the more disparate Anglosphere has a surprisingly similar one - the central point about them is similar: when doubts can arise as to the identity of a largely linguistically and culturally determined community, language and culture are naturally resorted to as referential points. There is nothing very surprising in what happened in Wilhelmine Germany, yet this identity strategy bore the risk of becoming ethnocentric; according to Vucetic (2011), the same risk is borne by the Anglosphere.

This in turn means that Anglo-Saxon concepts cannot per se be taken to be more modern and emancipated than German concepts. While this realisation may seem straightforward, it may pose a problem to many Anglophone monoglots:

... because they are less likely to be competent in other languages than colleagues from other countries. Because we rely to such a large extent on translation and interpretation, it is difficult, for English people to recognise ways of thinking which are not possible and ideas that are not thinkable in English but may be important in other traditions. Nevertheless, the struggle to do so is rewarding, revealing as it does other reference points and realities that are culturally bound, specific to historical periods and different countries (Petrie & Cameron, 2009, p. 148).

For European and Latin American Hispanophones and Lusophones the validity of German contributions to the worldwide civilisation may pose less of a problem. Stoetzer (1996) has pointed to the immense influence of German (in his case: Krausean) philosophy in Latin America, and the diffusion of German social pedagogy via Spain to Latin America is well documented (Fermose Estébanez, 2003; Úcar, 2011, 2012). Marín Eced (1989) has explained the links between Natorp's pedagogical concepts and those of Lorenzo Luzuriaga Medina (1889-1959); such operations of translation and adaptation from the Spanish to the Latin American context are as important as the initial move, from Germany to Spain, which was facilitated around the time of World War I by José Ortega y Gasset. While much research undoubtedly remains to be done, it may be safely assumed that the Iberoamerican social pedagogy community is open to a discussion of what implications can be drawn from these Iberoamerican experiences with regards to the UK's current social pedagogy agenda: how can Iberoamerican experiences disprove British social pedagogy scepticism and reticence?

As regards West Germany's Transatlantic connection, West Germany was essentially at the receiving end of the social work diffusion process, albeit after North American academia, one decade earlier, had received substantial impulses from Germany, Austria, Central and Eastern Europe emigré academics from those countries; in the field of social work, we may quote Walter Friedländer (1891-1984), a German emigré whose social work textbook became a standard text, including in West Germany, in Hans Pfaffenberger's (1922-2012) translation and adaptation (see Pfaffenberger, [1966] 1974). But essentially, after 1945, the pattern was that of a simple one-way street: social work knowledge (even if it had been created by a German-American, as in the case of Friedländer) was exported wholesale to West Germany.

An Iberoamerican perspective should yield different results, if used as a template upon which to draw up the implications of this case study, already because the diffusion process is no more a one-way street:

For example, the ideas of Freire and popular education that arrived in Spain were welcomed because they helped to understand and interpret the socio-cultural issues experienced at the time, and they showed how to act for changing them or to fight for overcoming them. More recently, in mid 90's, the 'processes of systematization' [...] came to us [...], and, in the first decade of this new millennium, they are beginning to be applied and developed in Spain (Úcar, 2012, p.186).

Moreover, within the larger pattern of diffusion, Spain itself has served as a relay station via which social pedagogy-relevant knowledge, values and models could be channelled not only from Germany, but indeed also from France and the UK (Úcar, 2011). In addition hereto:

Social pedagogy and social education that Spanish authors have shared with Latin America has been constructed from the couplings and uncouplings of Spanish reality with that of Latin America countries. It could be said that Spain has been ambassador for European social pedagogy in Latin America (Úcar, 2012, p. 185).

Úcar's (2012, p. 193) warning that social pedagogy is far from static (it is rather constantly evolving as theory takes on board new knowledge derived from practice), in connection with his instance on the adaptation to Latin American realities that has taken place (ibid., p. 185), together point to the initially presented conceptual framework of this paper (see above). What Sadler (1900) realised over a century ago, still holds true: diffusion without adaptation is not a realistic option (Bereday, 1964).

Against this backdrop, the Iberoamerican social work community may understand this case study as an invitation to look critically at such issues as:

1. Iberoamerican social pedagogy borrowing from Europe: to what extent has social pedagogy been borrowed 'pure', and to what extent has the borrowed product already been fashioned by North American understandings of social work, psychology, psychotherapy, sociology, social policy, etc.?
2. Iberoamerican (and other European) borrowing from the Iberoamerican countries: to what extent has social pedagogy been without a mediating influence from the North American sphere? Would, for instance, European interest in Paulo Freire's pedagogy (an essential social pedagogy author in the eyes of many) have been reinforced by Brazil being able to offer a 'non-US' alternative? Like, some critics claimed that Obama's Nobel Prize (and some might also say his electoral victory) was attributable, in part, to 'not being George W. Bush' (Beaumont, 2009), did Latin American scholars profit, sometimes, from not being North American?
3. Iberoamerican social pedagogy's own relationship with North America: how much has been borrowed (deliberately or unwittingly), and how much has been eschewed (deliberately or unwittingly) because it was of North American provenance?
4. Finally, North America's relationship with Iberoamerican social pedagogy: How much has been borrowed until now? To what extent may Iberoamerican social pedagogy academics' contributions have been eschewed because they were Iberoamerican, and possibly associated with (real or imagined) socialism?

Maybe the fourth and last point will, in the long run, prove the most fertile path to follow. It may be expected that excavations in past layers will not unearth very much, yet maybe the future holds more surprises. The increasing contribution of US academics and professionals of Iberoamerican origin may suggest a move in this direction, and geography is a factor. When Arizona State University decided, in January 2012, to establish the first social pedagogy degree programme in the USA (ASU, 2012), in all probability the location in Tempe, Arizona will not have been coincidental; similarly, the leadership attributed to an Argentinian-born academic, Professor Daniel Schugurensky, points in the same direction, Argentina having been the fertile refuge of Luzuriaga. And there may actually be more to build on in the American tradition than what can be gauged from studying the social work tradition: 'in the first decades of the 20th Century, some North American educators came in contact with some progressive European educational philosophies and practices, even if they were not called 'social pedagogy' (Schugurensky & Silver, 2013, p. 6). After all, today's Americans only partly descend from English ancestors, while many have roots on other countries, including Continental and Nordic Europe.

Should this scenario materialise, then US scholars might soon find that social pedagogy is not per se incompatible with Anglo-Saxon traditions. It may be argued, for instance, that the Richmond-Addams dichotomy in US social work is largely analogous to the social work-social pedagogy dichotomy in Europe: while Mary Richmond (1861-1928) shaped social work as an expert profession, involving disengaged distance, scientific assessment and therapeutic interventions, Jane Addams (1860-1935) stands for an engaged, embedded approach sharing the lives of the people concerned: an approach akin to that of social pedagogy, even if it does not draw extensively on education as a theoretical framework (Eberhardt, [1995] 2009; Kornbeck, 2010). US-based social pedagogy scholarship might soon provide cogent arguments with which to challenge current British social pedagogy reticence, and Latin American contributions could provide a powerful backing to such research.

## Conclusion

The paper will have demonstrated that there is good reason to assume that the UK can learn much from the Iberoamerican experience of importing German social pedagogy from Spain. While the feasibility of this line of thought depends largely upon the degree to which it will be possible to unearth cogent evidence from the past, the path identified here is a promising one by all standards.

The Iberoamerican experience also confirms the inevitability of adaptation whenever social pedagogy diffusion takes place (Sadler, 1900; Erlandsen & Kornbeck, 2004; Winther-Jensen, 2011), thereby echoing a seminal statement by two of the currently leading British social pedagogy proponents:

This stance recognises the undesirability, impossibility even, of importing social pedagogy as a package. If the Danish, the German or the French system were to be imported whole and entire - and a knotty question would be which one to choose? - then it would soon begin to adapt to local conditions (Petrie & Cameron, 2009, p. 164).

The Iberoamerican experience may possibly allow overcoming some British anxieties by showing that social pedagogy diffusion has never meant wholesale imports of ideas and methods. If such anxieties can be overcome, it must be recognised that the 'Germanness' of social pedagogy does not make it unfit for the British context.

The successful diffusion of social pedagogy from Germany over Spain to Latin America provides evidence which deserves to be known in the UK:

- With the British speaking a half-Germanic, half-Romance language, while Hispanophones and Lusophones in Europe and Latin America speak two entirely Romance languages, should not the distance between Germany and the UK be shorter and less insurmountable?
- With the UK being a Member State of the European Union, together with Germany, thereby having recourse to more opportunities for academic exchange as well as unrestricted transborder recruitment (Kornbeck, 2003), should not these realities make it easier, too, for the UK to adopt German social pedagogy than has been the case for Latin America? The pattern known from social work, where graduates from non-European Anglophone countries have often had their qualifications validated in greater numbers, in the UK, than have EU graduates (Kornbeck, 2004), does not need to be repeated in connection with social pedagogy: indeed there is evidence of widespread intra-EU social pedagogy recruitment (Gentleman, 2009a).
- Finally, if social pedagogy can establish itself successfully and sustainably in the USA, starting from its base in Arizona, will this not provide sceptics in the UK with evidence that adopting social pedagogy is possible, even in a (predominantly) Anglo-Saxon culture?

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### Jacob Kornbeck

Jacob Kornbeck is a civil servant (Policy Officer) in the European Commission where he works on sports policy issues. He has a track record of publishing academic papers and book reviews, and of editing books, in the fields of social work, social pedagogy and sport-related topics. He is the Book Review Editor of the European Journal of Social Work and serves on the board of *Tidskrift for Socialpædagogik* (Denmark). Jacob is a Danish expatriate who has spent most of his life comparing European cultures.