

Reflections on the Exportability of Social Pedagogy and its Possible Limits

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Motto:

“Education is what survives when what has been learned has been forgotten”.

(B.F. Skinner, quoted in Partington, 1996: p.308)

1. Introduction

1.1. Subject matter and plan

This paper focuses on recent British discussions, especially the debate in this journal, regarding the introduction of Continental-style social pedagogy - hereinafter: **SP** - programmes (akin to *Sozialpädagogik* in German, *éducation spécialisée* in French and similar traditions) into British social work education. Without rejecting the claim for such measures, it raises the question whether there may be a limit to the exportability of SP. SP is used here in a narrow sense and the abbreviation is intended to emphasise this and avoid confusion. Similarly, distinction is made between the non-SP portions of social work which can be found in Continental systems (for example *Sozialarbeit* in Germany, *assistance sociale* in France) - hereinafter: **SW** - , while the unspecified notion of ‘social work’ is used to signify either British generic social work or social work in a large, undefined sense, depending on the context. In fact, according to one author, *Sozialarbeit* and *assistance sociale* equate with the British term ‘field social work’ (Rowlings, 1997: p. 116).

The motto has been chosen because it highlights the largely indefinable nature of education: “What survives when what has been learned has been forgotten” must be something that has truly impregnated the person in question. Yet much of the discourse around the British SP project - a debate which I sympathise strongly with - coincides with ongoing attempts to strengthen centrist agendas in the delivery of social work education. Such policies are contrary to the nature of education which Skinner has so brilliantly characterised and might obscure the British SP project.

In the subsequent sections, recent discussions are revisited and attention is drawn to some difficulties which may be encountered with the exportability assumption. The embeddedness of German *Sozialpädagogik* in German culture is highlighted, and the tradition of Socio-Cultural Animation - hereinafter: **SCA** - in Latin cultures is referred to as yet another paradigm outside the UK. On concluding the essay, inspiration is taken from the francophone *exception culturelle* notion used in GATT/WTO debates, and it is asked whether possible limits might be of a cultural kind.

1.2. The European context

Curriculum development and the creation of new qualifications and sometimes even entire new professions are always exciting and challenging to observe. This is especially true with regard to the influence exercised on these by European integration. In the case of tertiary education, to which social work, including SW, SP and SCA, education counts, European integration - in the shape of EU and EEA policies - has a marked impact despite the lack of a direct EU/EEA competence in the field. Academic exchange like that pursued under the ERASMUS programme provides the occasion to learn from one’s neighbour’s best practice. The result may be a convergence between curricula, notwithstanding the fact that national authorities have until now successfully preserved the exclusive power over curricula as well as access to exercise as a professional. However, the degree to which they actually exercise their right varies considerably. In some countries, schools/departments of social work are entitled to run their curricula themselves, and in a range of countries the professions are not regulated nor protected by law. It may be difficult to come to terms with all the nuances of such problems.

In this context, the current British discussion over the introduction of curricula and posts comparable to those of SP in continental Europe and in

Scandinavia deserves earnest attention not only from within Britain but also from people like myself who observe it from overseas. It is thrilling to follow debates over whether a national educational system which hitherto had no SP equivalent could and should import this paradigm. At the same time, I feel obliged to ask where the limits of exportability lie. This question will be discussed here. I will show why it seems plausible to claim that SP has some cultural characteristics which may limit its exportability.

1.3. *Two central hypotheses*

I believe, in particular, that SP as it has been designed and developed in Germanic Europe is a reflection not only of a particular view of self and society - an observation which I owe to Lorenz (1999) and Smith (1999), but also of the sense and status of education within society - my own observation, which is based on analogous comparisons in other areas made by Große & Trautmann (1997) and Große & Lüger (2000).

2. Revisiting British debates

2.1. *Petrie's claim for SP*

In her article in this journal, Petrie (2000) gives an introduction to SP for a largely British readership. She chooses to call it 'pedagogy' despite some discomfort with a word that is a bit unusual in English: " 'Pedagogy' is difficult for English ears, and outside certain specialist circles, it is largely unused." (Ibid., p. 23) She notes it is rather used "in the sense of the science of teaching and learning, which would often equate with 'didactics' on the Continent" (Ibid., p. 23).

Petrie is aware that SP is largely undefined and variable depending on national contexts:

"While it may be named differently in different countries, a distinct field is generally recognised at four important and connected levels: the development of theory, daily practice with children, the formulation of policy and the training and education of workers." (Ibid., p. 24)

In this quote, it is clear that she only takes SP to cover work with children, which is the focus of her paper. However, she does mention later on that SP professionals may work with adults also:

"In continental Europe generally, the field of pedagogy/education covers a wide spectrum of work, from children's and young people's mainstream services to special services for adults and children, with the somewhat different emphases in different countries." (Ibid., p. 24)

This habit of linking education narrowly to practice seems to be part of the problem. Petrie regrets the way professional practice in the UK is split up according to bureaucratic boundaries:

"Much of the current training approach, based on skills and competencies relating to the requirements of specific settings, can blur the similarities to be found across the whole area (of 'the children's sector'), and there seems little sense of commonality across the sector."

(Ibid., p. 25)

This view, that professionals are rather trained than educated, and rather prepared for particular 'settings' than for holistic practice, seems to be quite widely held in British social work education. Clearly, comparisons with the UK's European partners are of great interest as they may reveal the existence of more autonomous and more holistic models.

The critique fits with Payne's view of a profession with few theoretical orientations, one that largely follows a bureaucratic logic:

"If the predominant model is casework, its theoretical model is eclectic, and some would say administrative. That is, British social workers are led primarily by the administrative and legal requirements for service provision and use the interpersonal skills gained in social work training to respond to members from the public and to organize services sensitively. [...] However, faced with many personal problems, they inevitably use theoretical models to condition their response." (Payne, 1997, p. 173)

In the same spirit, Harris has talked of British social work in terms of 'bureau-professionalism' (Harris, 1998). He thereby echoes a range of researchers starting in the 1970s.

"Autonomous professionalism was never a serious possibility for social workers, partly because of the drive towards state managerialism, but also because of limited market opportunities. What in fact emerged was a hybrid form of organization for social services which was reflected in the Seebohm report and incorporated in the reform of local government in 1974. This form we have called bureau-professionalism (Parry & Parry, 1979, p. 47)." (May & Buck, 1998, pt. 4.2).

The chief argument why SP should be introduced to the UK is that "recourse to 'pedagogy' and 'education' has the potential for an inclusive, normalising approach" (p. 24). Interestingly, this is precisely what four Swiss authors see as the distinguishing trait of SCA (*animation socio-culturelle / soziokulturelle Animation*) in

Switzerland (Moser, et al., 1999, p. 38, table). In the 1970s, Hubert Kirchgässner warned against treating SP and SCA as comparable disciplines:

“Speaking of social pedagogy when referring to animation should be avoided, although there is considerable overlapping between the two. The word ‘pedagogy’ is quite simply too contrary to the spirit of animation for it to be used to describe animation, which is an activity with a broad scope.”²

(Kirchgässner, 1979, quoted in Moser, et al., 1999, p. 18).

Interestingly, he did not think it necessary to extend his warning to SW (*Sozialarbeit, assistance sociale*) - which implies it must be the least emancipatory discipline and profession.

2.2. A comparison with the rest of Europe

Like some other British authors, Petrie refers both to (social) pedagogy and to (social) education. The ‘Radisson Report’ made the point that the question

whichever of either is a more appropriate label, is rather unimportant: “Clearly, there is no single definition of social pedagogy or social education, and in this Report the two terms are used interchangeably. Certain features appear to be found widely, though not universally, however, in the countries which use the model” (Social Education Trust, 2001, pt. 4.1). I have chosen to use the ‘SP’ short-cut throughout (see above), for the sake of simplicity - an essentially pragmatic choice.

Other authors have demonstrated the marked variation in curricula, credentials and professional profiles in the SP field within Europe. An anthology published 16 years ago by FICE (*Fédération Internationale des Communautés Educatives* - a European SP association) is still referred to regularly (Courtioux, et al., 1986). It provides valuable information about the historical

Table 1: Names of branches / specialisation / degrees			
One kind of social work	Two or three kinds of social work		
Generic social work	SW	SP or Specialised Education	SCA
<i>Social Work</i> (UK) (with youth work situated outside and disengaged from it)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Assistance Social</i> (Belgium, France, Luxembourg, Switzerland) • <i>Maatschappelijk Werk</i> (Belgium, Netherlands) • <i>(Scienze di) Servizio Sociale</i> (Italy) • <i>socialrådgivning</i> (Denmark) • <i>Sozialarbeit</i> (Austria, Germany) • <i>Trabajo Social</i> (Spain) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Educación Especializada</i> (Spain) • <i>(formazione di) Educatore Professionale</i> (Italy) • <i>Education spécialisée</i> (Belgium, France Luxembourg, Switzerland) • <i>Heilpädagogik</i> (Germany) • <i>Orthopedagogie</i> (Belgium, Netherlands) • <i>Socialpædagogik</i> (Denmark) • <i>Sozialpädagogik</i> (Austria, Germany) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Animación Sociocultural</i> (Spain) • <i>Animation Socio-Culturelle</i> (Belgium, France Switzerland) • <i>Soziokulturelle Animation</i> (Switzerland)

2. Kirchengässner’s condensed style, rich in typically German neologisms, is rendered here in its original version: “*Schon gar sollte man vermeiden, an Stelle von Animation von Sozialpädagogik zu sprechen, so sehr sich die beiden Gebiete überschneiden. Das Wort Pädagogik ist von sich aus einfach zu antianimatorisch, als das es für die in die Breite zielende Tätigkeit der Animation gebraucht werden könnte.*”

background to some national traditions (e.g., Jones, 1986; Tuggener, 1986) and therefore has not become obsolete in a field where otherwise information tends to be very closely related to the immediate context at a given moment. From a UK perspective - being a country without an SP tradition and, as Petrie (2000, p. 23) notes, one where the word 'pedagogy' is not in general use - a range of interesting papers have been published which compare and contrast various non-British programmes, credentials and professions with British ones (Crimmens, 1998; Jones, 1994a, 1994b). Higham has analysed the new English Diploma for Connexions Personal Advisers by comparing this with programmes in other countries (Higham, 2001) and thereby places her contribution within the same debate as that which Petrie participates in. I have also contributed to such discussions myself, both from a UK perspective (Kornbeck, 2000) and in a more general, European context (Kornbeck, 2001). One French research project on social work professionals' access to masters' and doctoral programmes in a number of European countries also includes important findings about the SW/SP split (Laot, 2000). In Table 1, based on contributions from various authors as well as my own reflections, some of the most important disciplines/professions in some European countries are listed. (The list is not exhaustive.)

As shown in Table 1, there is an uneven distribution of the various possible sub-disciplines of social work. First of all, a few countries, including the UK, have until now not known another branch identified as belonging to social work and not being SW. Then, among countries with other social work branches, there are some with two branches, essentially SW and SP (the Scandinavian-Germanic group), and others with three branches: SW, Specialised Education (=SP) and Socio-Cultural SCA. I have presented these three 'families' of European social work in a recent paper in German language (Kornbeck, 2001). It may be assumed that the way in which education is - or is not - organised in relation to social policy and social work reflects more than narrow concepts related to social work education and practice. It results from important, underpinning, but largely unstated views on the role and objectives of education in society.

2.3. Comparisons with limitations

Comparisons are not easy. Cordeaux (1999, p. 17), in her study on training for child care in five

European countries (France, Italy, the UK, Denmark and Spain), ended up showing, in a comparative table covering four occupations/professions, that in Denmark four of them were reserved for persons with the *pædagog* degree while in all other countries, each group had its own, more specialised qualification (as was indeed the case in Denmark until the 1990s). Giarchi & Lankshear (1998, p. 30) state that German social pedagogues "do similar work to the 'special educators' (*animateurs socio-culturels*) in France". They have overlooked the fact that the two French groups are not identical but sharply separated in education and practice.

Following an approach similar to that of the 'Radisson Report' (Social Education Trust, 2001), Petrie (2000) focuses in particular on the group- and relations-oriented style of SP as opposed to standard youth and community work or social work in the UK. *Living with others as a profession* - in fact the subtitle of a book (Courtioux, 1986) which is still referred to in many texts - is a good description of this philosophy. But again, an author from a country with the SP and the SCA tradition credits SCA for this positive quality. According to Trilla (1998b, p. 26), in Spain, *educación social* is individual-centred while *animación sociocultural* targets individuals in group settings and deals with them in their capacity of group members. The nature of SP, therefore, can be very unclear from one country to another. One might get the idea that a Swiss or Spanish author, if reading Petrie's (2001) text with blanks instead of her references to SP, might think she was referring to SCA instead. This points to an inherent difficulty involved in importing a tradition from another culture.

If such export/import is difficult, it may be because it is hard enough just to get a realistic impression of qualifications in other countries and how they equate with domestic ones. This is certainly not only the case when looking from Britain towards the rest of Europe. Defining social work Europe-wide is a very hard task due to its numerous forms of manifestation in national contexts. There is so much which carries the social work label, as Jeffries and Müller (1997) noted (cf. Giarchi & Lankshear, 1998: p. 25). Defining the 'occupational space' (Littlechild, 2001) of social work is difficult because of subdivisions and because the limits towards other occupations and professionals tend to be unclear. These difficulties are shared by all. The only UK-specific difficulty would be the absence of an SP or SCA tradition in the UK. This

may be the reason why Lorenz (1994, pp. 7-8) preferred not to use any definition at all: “No attempt at a definition of social work will be made since all definitions are bound to be either so vague as to be all-encompassing and meaningless or so subjectively biased as to omit crucial details.”

2.4. Reactions to Petrie’s (2001) article

The same year, *Social Work in Europe* published a paper by Higham (2001) consisting in a presentation and analysis of a new British social professional qualification: The Diploma for Connexions Personal Advisers. Higham stresses that the social pedagogue and the Personal Adviser share beliefs in human development, life long learning, and working towards developing a person’s inherent potential. Just as social pedagogy developed in the nineteenth century as a response to materialism and industrialisation, the Personal Adviser role adapts the concept of social pedagogy to the context of the post modern decline of Western industrialisation (Higham, 2001). She provides details of the course programme and the intended career pathways for diplomates and raises the claim that the introduction of the Diploma for Connexions Personal Advisers constitutes the introduction of a SP paradigm. Of course, there are significant differences. This Diploma is very short - it is a diploma in the UK sense, not a degree - and organised around a series of competencies and settings. German SP is more general, philosophical and as a study programme, more lengthy. Notwithstanding these important differences, the fact that a training programme for social professionals is introduced which draws mainly on education/pedagogy is highly significant.

Subsequent commentaries were contributed by Crimmens (2001) and Reverda (2001). Crimmens hopes that the papers by Petrie (2000) and Higham (2001) “may herald the start of a new enthusiastic debate about the fundamental location of social professionals in the UK as new practices emerge.” (Crimmens, 2001, p. 30) Speaking of Higham, he stresses the heuristic value of opening up such a debate: “While her analysis does not prove the case, the very act of making the connection establishes new territory for further examination.” (Ibid., p. 30)

He goes on to make very significant claims about the state of the debate in the UK and which stage it seems to have reached:

“I suggest that the paradigm has been struggling to emerge for a number of years. [...] Norman Warner (1992) attempted to push the idea of social

pedagogy onto more mainstream agendas, in arguing for a more European approach to educating social professionals working with children and young people. He maintained that residential child care has more similarities with child and adolescent psychiatry for example than with its traditional Anglo-Saxon location in mainstream social work.” (Ibid., p. 30)

This would in fact mean that systematic, in-depth research about what SP on the Continent is really about should be a priority. Reference is made to similar recommendations put forward by Madge (1994), Jones (1994a,b) and Kent (1997). (Crimmens, 2001, p. 30).

The number of contributions on the same topic (one in 2000 and three in 2001) for a journal publishing 3 times a year indicates that the subject discussed must benefit from an outspoken interest among academics and professionals alike.

3. Some problems with the exportability assumption

As Petrie (2000), Higham (2001) and Crimmens (2001) show, several attempts have been made to prove that SP should be introduced in the UK. The drafters of the ‘Radisson Report’ (Social Education Trust, 2001) were fully aware of the ambiguities involved, while at the same time providing a useful list of what SP may contain. Subsequently, the report lists nine characteristics of SP as opposed to British generic social work. A few of these are shown below.

“ [...] (b) Social pedagogues / educators often share the life-space of the children or young people with whom they work. [...]

(c) Human relations are seen as essential to work with children and young people, and the work is therefore seen as social. [...]

(f) Education is seen as encompassing not only formal schooling but also the learning of social competencies and moral development. [...]

(j) Social pedagogues / educators may work with children and young people of any age from babyhood to adulthood, and with any type of presenting problem, including physical and learning disabilities, social, emotional and mental health problems and offending. [...]

(l) Social pedagogues / educators view a child’s situation holistically, including all aspects of their lives in assessing their situations, planning to meet their needs and working with them. [...]

(n) Social pedagogues / educators are seen in some countries as having their own professional

identity, distinct from social work, teaching, psychology, nursing or other established professions.”

(Social Education Trust, 2001, pt. 4.1)

The only point of criticism is perhaps a certain over-emphasis on work with children and young people, whereas SP is just as much about working with adults. In an English context, this needs to be underlined strongly. The drafters show a high level of humility facing the huge task of presenting SP, which is different from country to country and encompasses different sub-disciplines:

“The above list is not a definition, but a collection of aspects [...] found in various places. As noted earlier, these terms are used in different ways in different countries, and it could be argued that the debate will be clarified and made more comprehensible to childcare workers if social education / pedagogy were defined. However, in developing new ideas, it is more important to open up debates and encourage creative thinking than to close down discussion and attempt to insist that a single model be considered.”

(Social Education Trust, 2001, pt. 4.2)

Social professions in Europe are not purely rational creations which can be remodelled according to a plan based on technicalities. They “emerge as profoundly historical entities that do not follow a universal logic or principle. There simply exists no standard that could serve as a unifying paradigm for all of Europe” (Lorenz, 2001, p. 9). In the same edited publication, Payne (2001) is more optimistic, by referring to the standards-promoting nature of EASSW membership and the prospect of EU accession. He relates this in particular to job mobility in the EU. However, neither social workers nor other highly skilled workers have been able to make very intensive use of the possibilities granted under the free movement of labour and the right of settlement (Peixoto, 2001) so that part of his argument is doubtful. The low levels of achieved mobility point to the importance of culture in these professions. And though the SW/SP split is so obvious, there may be many other differences with a cultural base which could be even more difficult to overcome.

Lorenz has stated that, even if the parallel occurrence of SW and SP in national contexts has become “almost legendary” and led to misunderstandings, it is no isolated phenomenon (Lorenz, 2002, p. 11). The status of social work in national hierarchies of tertiary education is a similar

case and one which allows us to rediscover some of the same social work ‘families’ as we have seen in this essay. Hamburger, et al. (2001, p. 115) think that social work as an academic discipline has developed well in countries with no SP tradition - because SP tends to be more academic and closer to philosophy, for example. The situation in Germany certainly seems to sustain this claim (Wilken, 1999): SW is essentially based in polytechnics (*Fachhochschulen*) and graduates have only limited access to research degrees. SP may be based in polytechnics or universities and has all the traits of an established university discipline. Wilken claims that many positions taken in debates over the future of SW and SP education reflect the personal interests of those involved.

The questions raised in this paper are not just academic pastimes for people who find satisfaction in dialectic exercises. A workshop summary from an ERASMUS evaluation conference in Modra (Slovakia) in 1999, for instance, shows that there can be quite strong feelings about the role of SP in relation to that of SW, and how it is credited:

“The different philosophical origins and orientations of the social pedagogy and social work traditions were raised and it was suggested that ‘social work had usurped’ the social role and either ignored or failed to recognise sufficiently the contribution of social pedagogy. This in turn relates to what employers want and what qualifications are acceptable to them [...]” (Hämäläinen & Lyons, 2000, p. 153)

In the same conference proceedings, SP is quoted as “an example of the limits of language” in contexts where one language - English - too often dominates exchange activities. Because SP is “not established in the English-speaking area”, it cannot be dealt with appropriately in exchange activities (Hämäläinen, 2000, p. 150). This is a valuable and highly thought-provoking observation. It suggests, in fact, that the English language might handicap a group where the majority of participants came from countries with the SP traditions - even a group where all of them did. This example illustrates very neatly how alienating communication via English can be, if most or all participants would be familiar with SP but unable to talk about it, because they were using a language where the concept has no fixed place.

4. Case study: The embeddedness of German *Sozialpädagogik* in German culture

4.1. The status of values

Petrie concedes “that pedagogy is not value free. [...] At its starkest, a totalitarian regime produces an oppressive pedagogy, while the politics of emancipation produce a pedagogy of equality, citizenship and respect for diversity.” (Petrie, 2001, p. 24) According to Walter Lorenz, who is equally at home in the German and in the Anglo-Saxon tradition, this danger is rooted in the very concept and history of SP: “Social pedagogy as the constitutive paradigm of German social work is [...] a cultural project and one that extends far beyond school pedagogy and hence the notion of ‘education’ in the English language” (Lorenz 1999, p. 32). This cultural determinacy might be a major obstacle to SP’s exportation to countries with a more citizenship-oriented approach to social work. Whether the French version of SP is less culturally determined would be a very worthwhile research question.

Mark Smith is aware of this, too, and issues a warning: “The German tradition of social pedagogy has become associated with social work. This tends to obscure its educational credentials, particularly to English-language readers.” (Smith, 1999) There is, however, a fundamental problem with his warning: In Germany itself, SW and SP have practically melted together. In most German states, education is largely or almost completely integrated. Equating SP with SW is therefore not wrong. Still, the specific history of SP must be borne in mind. Originating in 19th century Germany, the term SP is believed to have been coined by Karl Mager in 1844. It was seen largely as an alternative to mainstream education which did not sufficiently take account of the degree to which individuals interact with the social world around them. Following this thinking, SP simply means *Kollektivpädagogik* as opposed to *Individualpädagogik* (van Ghent, 1994, p. 95). “However, it was the work of Friedrich Diesterweg (1790-1866), the Prussian educational thinker, whose concern with primary education brought the idea to a broader audience” (Smith, 1999).

“One of his theories is that individual intentions are already directed (by their nature as human intentions) towards sociability, towards universal social goals. The other is that only democracy allows the individual will to form. Public life needs to correspond to and reflect what is pedagogically, psychologically necessary for the healthy growth of the individual. The conditions for good education are those of a sound

democracy; pedagogical and political processes condition each other.” (Lorenz, 1994, pp. 91-92)

Such a theory - however efficient it may seem from a utilitarianist viewpoint - challenges the very *raison d’être* of educational philosophy and faces it with an important ethical dilemma:

“Is social pedagogy essentially the embodiment of dominant societal interests which regard all educational projects, schools, kindergarten or adult education, as a way of taking its values to all sections of the population and of exercising more effective social control; or is social pedagogy the critical conscience of pedagogy, the thorn in the flesh of official agenda, an emancipatory programme for self-directed learning processes inside and outside the education system geared towards the transformation of society?” (Lorenz, 1994, p. 93)

4.2. SP in Germany under Nazism

Lorenz (1999) demonstrates how social policy and education became linked under a cultural label in the 19th century - a natural process given that Germany did not exist in a legal and political sense, but was very well established in a cultural sense. What had been a rather progressive movement unfortunately degenerated into an overtly nationalistic discipline which ended up serving the Nazi regime in many ways. This allows for a more general reflection (JK, not Lorenz): When education is social and has to convey values because they are collectively held, the danger is that educators may forget about values in an absolute sense and merely promote the prevailing ones. *Mos* wins over *Ethos*, legality over legitimacy, immanent over abstract values. The highest law is then the *Lex fori*, the law of the place. One reason why SP emerged in the 19th century was that education was generally individual-centred and that a paradigm was needed which would place him/her in his/her social context. After 1945, masses of German professionals were retrained according to North American social work models with the aim to promote individual-centred and culturally neutral professional practice:

“[...] the retraining programmes in social, group and community work were on value neutrality, individualism and client self-determination. The case work model [...] [was] regarded as exportable to every country of the world. This model espoused a liberal notion of formal equality and democracy in the public realm which relegated all questions of cultural differences to the sphere of the private.” (Lorenz 1999a, p. 36)

However, in the long run these attempts were unsuccessful and German SP was able to retain its cultural orientation. German society is no doubt more culturally deterministic than American society is, which prompts the question: Did the managers of the retraining programmes reach the limit of exportability?

4.3. The status of education in society

The role and concept of education in German society has been contrasted in two recent books: Große & Trautmann (1997) have compared with Italy, Große & Lüger (2000) with France, and both books refer to Anglo-Saxon traditions as well. In Latin countries, the underlying belief had been for centuries that schools must only provide knowledge and should not contribute to their pupils' socialisation. Education (in the narrow sense) was seen as the exclusive competence of families (Große & Trautmann 1997, p. 199). This was, and is still, highly visible in Italy and France where schools have been concentrating heavily, if not exclusively, on academic subjects and examinations of all kinds have a cult status. The German notion of *Bildung*, encompassing notions of learning as well as socialisation, personal development and refinement towards the arts, contrasts sharply with the Latin view of education. The notions of *Bildung* and *éducation* have been contrasted by Große & Lüger (2000, pp. 242-244) with references to Catholic, especially Jesuit, teaching as opposed to Protestant traditions.

Summing up, Catholicism, Descartes, 17th/18th century French rationalism and the grand project of 1789 have impinged on the Latin tradition as have Protestantism, Prussian sincerity and the German philosophers, poets and pedagogues of the 19th century on the Germanic tradition (JK), while the British notions of 'learning' 'education' and 'extracurricular activities' represent a third view which almost seems to reconcile the two first ones (Große & Trautmann 1997, pp. 199-200). In line with these differences, *éducation* was very little spoken of in France in the past. *Instruction*, *instruction publique* and *enseignement* were the preferred notions, all of which are more focused on the bureaucratic aspects of education than of the purpose and possible outcome of the process (ibid.). After World War II this has gradually been changing. Today the relevant ministry is called *Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale* (in the 19th century it was devoted to *Instruction publique*) and *éducation* has become an important state activity, among others in the fields of SP

(*éducation spécialisée*) and SCA (JK). Italy has entered a similar phase. Traditional teaching is being rejected as *nozionismo*. In Spain the same is happening, and the word used is *memorismo* (Große & Trautmann, 1997, pp. 199-200). In 1991, Spain introduced Social Education into its higher education system (Trilla, 1998b, p. 106).

4.4. Implications for exportability

These digressions indicate the big and tangible differences in national educational traditions - differences which are deeply rooted and suggest that the exportability of paradigms is rather limited. Such differences can make attempts to export educational models difficult.

5. Other models

In this section, an overview of SP variation in Europe is given. The objective is to show the great diversity found and suggest that there is much to choose from.

Table 2 is based on a similar table drawn up by Moser, et al. (1999, p. 38). While using their template, I have translated some of their definitions and examples and added material from other authors as well as my own reflections. Their table is the best attempt I have seen to present and explain the three traditions of SW, SP and SCA in juxtaposition.

6. An exception culturelle?

6.1. Cultural limits in society in general

The notion of *exception culturelle* became a commonplace in francophone countries some years ago in the context of GATT- and later WTO-related discussions. It represents the view that 'culture' - being itself an arguably undefined concept - marks the limits beyond which goods and services cannot be freely commodified and exported/imported. It suggests that cultural products - whether material or immaterial, being linked to individuals' and groups' identities, qualify for a certain measure of legitimate protectionism. For more details on this concept, which has been overwhelmingly welcomed by some and strongly rejected by others, see for example Cederman (2001); Peltier & Benzoni (2002); and Tinel (2000). *Exception culturelle* might also, in a more philosophical sense going far beyond the essentially political and economic rhetoric in which it is usually used, be taken to signify that the cultural limit

Table 2: Attributes of three social work traditions			
	SW	SP	SCA
Type of relationship with target population	'Client system' (Moser et al., 1999) a frequently bureaucratic system based in social administration structures (JK)	An educational relationship (bilateral or multilateral) (JK)	A largeley undefined situation of interaction within a group (JK); 'the sum of interaction by individuals, groups or institutions in a given community (or part of it) in a given place with the aim, principally, to promote, in its members, an attitude of active participation in the process of their own social and cultural development' (Trilla, 1998: p.22)
Historic background	'Help to adults', 'adult welfare' (<i>Erwachsenenfürsorge</i>) (Schilling, 1997)	'Help to children and young people', 'children's and youth welfare' (<i>Jugendfürsorge</i>) (Schilling, 1997)	Arising from French <i>éducation populaire</i> before WW II (an entirely different activity) (Moser et al., 1999)
Persons addressed are:	Clients, persons in need of assistance, persons with material and sometimes psychosocial needs, persons with deficits (JK)	'Persons who need education.' (Moser et al., 1999)	Partners, citizens, participants in group activities offered (JK)
Justification of intervention	'Social problems and deficits arising from these' (Moser et al., 1999)	Problems arising from incomplete socialisation, incomplete education (Moser et al., 1999)	'Social change and tasks arising therefrom which need to be tackled' (Moser et al., 1999)
Type of compensation	Compensation of material deficits, some psychosocial deficits (Moser et al., 1999) <i>assistance sociale, aide aux populations en difficulté</i> (Laot, 2000); <i>accompagnement personnel et/ou communautaire</i> (Laot, 2000)	Compensation of incomplete socialisation, incomplete education (Moser et al., 1999); enable the individual to lead his/her own life (<i>lebensfähig machen</i>) (Moser et al., 1999)	Participation, self-organisation (Moser et al., 1999)
Wider political context	A (sub)system within public welfare and social security provision providing various services (Schilling, 1997). Provision through private organisations is also possible (JK)	A (sub)system within public education providing general and specifically social education (Schilling, 1997). Provision through private organisations is also possible (JK)	A (sub)system within public provision of leisure and recreation activities, with a view to promoting social and cultural activities where individuals can develop as members of a group. Provision through private organisations is also possible (JK)

marks the real, factual limits of a product's exportability. This latter view is the hypothesis on which the analysis in this paper is based - based on the assumption that the reader will allow an analogous use of the notion of 'product'. The paper is not an attempt to reproduce francophone GATT/WTO-related arguments. It does, however, recognise the validity of the *exception culturelle* argument by taking it a step further and asking: What if this cultural limit marks not only a political and ideological, but indeed even a factual, practical limit?

It was the paper by Petrie (2000) and the subsequent reactions to it in this journal which sparked off the reflections presented here. Petrie's paper has been written within the greater framework of current discussions in the United Kingdom over the desirability and practicality of introducing (a) new discipline(s) and profession(s) in social work based on education/pedagogy broadly along the lines of Continental SP (including *éducation spécialisée*). This is a valid and very important exercise since all educational systems should be open to the import of concepts and practices from other systems. Without rejecting the thinking expressed by Petrie and others I have tried to examine the ambition and project which their thinking represents under the aspect of the *exception culturelle* hypothesis.

6.2. Cultural limits in and to social work

The very notion of 'culture' has gained momentum in social work literature in recent years. While the cultural affinities and determinacy of people - i.e., service users - has always been on the minds of social work authors, discourses on how the state, the laws it makes and the professionals it employs are culturally determined are more recent. Taking this perspective on board marks a break with the technocratic thinking which seems to have prevailed in the heyday of bureaucratic welfare professionalism - i.e., the 50s, 60s and 70s. This thinking was based on a more or less unstated assumption that western democratic societies produce value-free bureaucracies. Such thinking has, however, become untenable in an increasingly multicultural society. An interesting contribution to this discussion is a recent anthology (Chamberlayne, et al., 1999). Recognising cultural limits and constraints on the operational ability of professionals and organisations is a logical next step. The key question is then: If limits are cultural, where are they? This question remains open-ended.

6.3. Cultural limits versus the usefulness of learning from each other

Despite the critical attitude reflected in the preceding sections of this essay, the case of importing SP to the UK is not one for concern but one for reflection. Educational policy makers should assess the cultural differences between British and - for example - German social work practice and check how far the paradigm they want to import is culturally rooted. If they import a tradition and thereby import cultural elements as well, they should do so willingly and wittingly, in which case the importing act is perfectly justified. The reverse should be avoided, because the choice must be an informed one. Such a move would not be unprecedented. Spain used to have three big traditions: *Trabajo Social*, *Educación Social* and *Animación Sociocultural*, but in 1991 the decision was taken to set up university programmes in *Educación Social* (Decree of 10.10.1991) (Trilla, 1998b, p. 106) and the German inspiration is more than just coincidental. Relevant textbooks - when dealing with *Educación Social* - draw more on German authors than on any other non-Spanish authors (Ortega Esteban, 1999; Petrus, 2000; Trilla, 1998a). So even though there is something very German about SP (Kornbeck, 2002), it is exportable.

7. Conclusion

7.1. Summary

We have revisited the British debate and compared it with realities in other European countries as well as with the cultural embeddedness of SP. The objective has been to search for the cultural limits to its exportability. These limits cannot be determined but indications of their relevance have been identified.

'Pedagogy' and 'education' are more about raising and upbringing (in German: *Erziehung*) than about education in the sense of instruction (in German: *Bildung*, *Unterricht*). They have more to do with personal growth and the acquisition of social competencies than with the aggregation of knowledge. One possible reason why SP has been misunderstood so often (not only abroad but also in the country of origin, Germany) might be that the attempt is usually made to equate SP with specific, concrete jobs, professions, sectors, settings, competencies and methods. The comments made above on the differences between *Bildung* in German and *éducation* in French should be borne

in mind: both are difficult to determine because they are not concrete, but universal and abstract. SP remains largely incomprehensible when translated into something concrete. In the best of cases a correct translation of concrete settings in which SP work is performed will be achieved. In less fortunate cases the very translation may be incomprehensible. This is well demonstrated in this paper's motto (Skinner, 1964). The essence of SP is still the combination of a social objective and educational means. This also fits the 'Diploma for Connexions Personal Advisers' referred to above (Higham, 2001). Innovation is possible in every system and given the amount of exchange in Europe today it is a natural and positive thing. As Szmagalski notes, "political, social and economic differences among the countries and regions of Europe result in a variety of issues facing local social services and social workers. But there are also common challenges for all social workers" (Szmagalski, 1999: p. 233). This is one reason why such attempts deserve to be made.

7.2. Implications for British social work education and practice

It remains to be seen whether one of Europe's most centralised systems of social work education (Lymbery, et al., 2000), where "rather restrictive and prescribed training regulations [...] emphasise national consistency of standards of competence rather than international compatibility" (Lorenz, et al., 1998, p. 126), is ready to incorporate something which is fundamentally different. A Salomonic, or eclectic solution would be to incorporate and transform SP (something the British have always been good at, and which makes them stand out in many ways, both positively and negatively). Academic debates put aside, the ultimate litmus test which the British SP project will have to face sooner or later is, of course, the acceptance of persons thus trained by employing agencies.

Here, Lyons' observation of an inherent paradox in current recruitment practice is worth a good deal of consideration: "current efforts [...] tend to focus on employment of social workers from Australia or South Africa, while experienced social pedagogues have had difficulty gaining employment as social workers in the London area (personal communication)." (Lyons, 2002, p. 29).

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changing social conditions through education – Rousseau is most famous for his Social Contract (1762) – its primary focus had been on the individual and his or her upbringing, which Rousseau had aimed to protect from the negative influences of society. Pedagogic thinkers like Pestalozzi and later on Montessori followed in his tradition of developing a child-centred pedagogy, which was increasingly criticised by an emerging school of thought that promoted a pedagogy focused on the collective, on the community and how to use pedagogic ideas for social betterment – or a social pedagogy, as the Ge... – Reflections on the Exportability of Social Pedagogy and its Possible Limits. *Social Work in Europe*, 9(2), pp37–49. The theoretical traditions of social pedagogy in Europe and the diverse ways to professionalize in different countries are presented first. Next, the chapter analyzes the current characterization of social pedagogy and the main issues still pending. The chapter concludes by presenting the principals of social pedagogy when working with youngsters. Save to Library. by Xavier Šscar. Social Pedagogy in Britain – Further Developments. *The International Social Work & Society News Journal*, 7. Kornbeck, J. (2006). Reflections on the Exportability of Social Pedagogy and its Possible Limits. *Social Work in Europe*, 9(2), pp37–49. Stewart, W. A. C., & McCann, W. P. (1967). *The Educational Innovators. Volume 1 1750–1880*. London: Macmillan. Further information. PDF | This article argues that social pedagogy can make a contribution to discussions on learning democracy through participation. The latest | Find, read and cite all the research you need on ResearchGate. – Social pedagogy, community building and agency. Since its origins in the late 19th century and early 20th century, social pedagogy has conceptualized education and socialization as overlapping processes. – individual and social goals. – we claim that, on the one hand, social pedagogy should foster the autonomy, freedom and self-realization of learners, and, on the other hand it should nurture the development of responsible and engaged citizens who are concerned with the common good. Moreover, inspired.