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Social Pedagogy – the Directions of Spreading Across the World

O pedagogice społecznej na świecie

STRESZCZENIE: Artykuł jest przeglądem wybranych wątków żywo toczącej się międzynarodowej debaty o pedagogice społecznej, charakteryzujących jej rozprzestrzenianie się poza europejskie terytoria, na których jest tradycyjnie rozwijana. Wątki dotyczące Europy obejmują Rosję, Anglię, Szkocję i Hiszpanię. Poza Europą wątki te dotyczą Ameryki łacińskiej i Ameryki Północnej, głównie USA. Przedstawione są także koncepcyjne podobieństwa między pedagogiką społeczną a edukacją dorosłych i radykalną pedagogiką w Republice Południowej Afryki, edukacją społeczną w Japonii oraz edukacją społeczną i animacją społeczno-kulturalną we Francji. W zakończeniu przedstawiono przegląd znaczeń pedagogiki społecznej dyskutowanych przez uczestników tej debaty.

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE: Animacja społeczno-kulturalna, edukacja środowiskowa, edukacja radykalna, edukacja społeczna, empowerment, ludowa edukacja, metoda organizacji społeczności lokalnej, pedagogika publiczna.

ABSTRACT: This paper presents an overview of selected threads of the animated international debate on social pedagogy, which characterize its spread beyond the European territories, where it is traditionally developed. The threads concerning Europe include Russia, England, Scotland and Spain. Outside Europe, these threads concern Latin America and North America, mainly the USA. Conceptual similarities are also presented between social pedagogy and adult education and radical pedagogy in South Africa, social education in Japan and social education and socio-cultural animation in France. It concludes with an overview of the meanings of social pedagogy discussed by the participants in this debate.

KEYWORDS: Socio-cultural animation, environmental education, radical education, social education, empowerment, folk education, local community organization method, public pedagogy.

Social pedagogy is described by many researchers as a European concept (cf. e.g. Payne 2014, p. 212). The current wave of interest in the concept, consolidated in publications mainly from this decade, shows new implementations of the concept as a theory, field of education and practice within Europe and beyond. This text is intended not only to review these novelties, in a scope limited by the framework, but also – as far as possible – to identify a number of easily accessible sources for in-depth study of the spread of social pedagogy throughout the world.

In Europe

As a reminder: the first conceptualization of the concept of social pedagogy was formulated in Germany by Karl F. Mager in 1844. It was supposed to be “a theory of the entirety of upbringing existing in a given society, including the description of the practice taking place in it” (quoted from Winkler 2004, p. 53). This concept was inspired by Jan Amos Komeński, Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi, Friedrich Fröbel, who in their writings and pedagogical practice sought educational solutions to social problems (Hämäläinen 2003, p. 71). Over time, the pedagogical concept has proved so dynamic that it has spread beyond Germany.

In addition, without wishing to provide an exhaustive list, there are other countries in Europe where social pedagogy is practiced, such as Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden (Eriksson, Markström 2009; Hämäläinen, Eriksson 2016; Kornbeck 2002; Kornbeck 2014; Kornbeck, Rosendal Jensen (ed.) 2009; Storø 2012). In all these countries, social pedagogy is developing in different but obvious ways in relation to social work.

Particular attention should be paid to the reception of social pedagogy in countries which are culturally more distant from Germany, i.e. Russia, Great Britain and Spain. There were various ways in which it could reach these countries, but it seems that theorists and practitioners of social education and social work working there found social pedagogy appealing through the attractiveness of its potential to solve social problems. Pedagogues in Greece also invest their interest and hope in social pedagogy.

In Russia, Leo Tolstoy’s idea of “unconscious pedagogy” – the influence of all everyday living conditions on education – is considered a precursor concept for social pedagogy, which he embodied in a folk school founded by him in his own land property called Bright Glade. Theoretical foundations and practical implementations of Russian social pedagogy at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries were introduced by Konstanty Uszyński and Stanisław

Szacki. The shock of the October Revolution caused an explosion of social problems among children and young people. Soviet educators tried to solve them in educational collectives, which were to shape the new man of the communist state. In the 1930s, under Stalin's authority, social pedagogy in theory and practice was politically cursed and banned as a threat of individualization of upbringing. It returned in 1991 just before the dissolution of the USSR, when pedagogues reacted to the growing social problems and started to rehabilitate it. The Association of Social Pedagogues and Social Workers was established, which in its provisions referred to Western models for both these fields. Education of social pedagogues was introduced at Russian universities (Romm 2016; Szmagalski 2016, pp. 111–118).

British interest in social pedagogy is developing in different contexts in England and Scotland. In England, it was an unknown concept until the late 1980s. Among the most active initiators of interest in education is Pat Petrie from the Institute of Education, University of London, who has worked together with a small team on the first publications on the subject, in 2007 – the creation of the Centre for Understanding Social Pedagogy at her home institute and at the beginning of the 2010s – a master's level study programme. Earlier, also in 2007, the idea of introducing social pedagogy into the practice of foster child care was supported by the *Department for Education and Skills* in the document "Care Matters. Time for Change" (Cameron 2016, p. 202). Organizational entities implementing social pedagogy into practice, such as ThemPra Social Pedagogy, Social Pedagogy Professional Association, Social Pedagogy Development Network emerged. Since 2012, the annual "International Journal of Social Pedagogy", co-edited by Pat Petrie, has been published. In addition, at three universities in England, it is included in the first cycle social study curriculums (Hatton 2013, p. VI). Despite her interest in this field as a theory and practice, Petrie (2013) said that government agencies still lacked support for its development. This situation is explained by the fact that social aid and social work are rooted in the traditional individualistic orientation in England. The community work method, which is present in the heritage of Anglo-Saxon social work and close to projects inspired by social pedagogy, has been periodically supported by the authorities, but is rather marginalised (Szmagalski 2011). Petrie (2013, p. 3) pointed out other reasons, such as widespread ignorance of foreign languages, imperialistic orientation at a time when social pedagogy was developing in continental Europe, fears of European radicalism born of the French Revolution, English isolationism. The findings of anthropologists confirm the frequently expressed opinion that

there has been a longstanding reluctance among English people to be a part of Europe (Fox 2004, p.15; Paxman 1999, p. 30).

In Scotland, the reception of social pedagogy is conditioned by a different tradition of social aid than the English one. By joining the United Kingdom in 1707, Scotland retained its own legal and educational systems and the Church of Scotland established during the Reformation, professing the dogma of studying the Bible without the help of clergy. Under the influence of this dogma, the provision of social welfare was the responsibility of the parishioners to provide education for all believers that would allow them to read the Bible. In Scotland, with the exception of a few cities, there was no legally binding isolation of the poor in workhouses, unlike in England and Wales. Scottish Enlightenment thinkers suggested that social problems should be considered in their social context and that education should be treated as the basis for their resolution. In Scotland, this approach is synonymous with the European one. Today, the autonomy of Scotland, as well as that of the other countries of the United Kingdom, except England, which is under the direct authority of Her Majesty's Government, is enhanced by the decentralization of powers, known as the Devolution, introduced in 1998. The Scottish social aid system, unlike the Anglo-Saxon system, is dominated by local work. From both a Scottish and an English perspective, Scotland's native social aid traditions seem to naturally facilitate the adaptation of social pedagogy there (Smith, Whyte 2008): Smith 2012; Petrie 2013, pp. 8, 10). Its leading promoter in the country, Mark Smith, wrote (2012, p. 53): "When Scotland enters a particular moment in its history, social pedagogy could offer a specific Scottish approach to social aid, both compatible with many national traditions and bringing us closer to the European mainstream".

In Spain, social pedagogy has developed from the German inspiration, which has found fertile ground in the pursuit of intellectual Europeanization. These efforts began to develop in the mid-19th century under the influence of the French Revolution, Pestalozzi and other similarly active pedagogues, socialist ideas and philanthropy. Despite strong resistance to changes in education on the part of the Catholic Church and conservative groups, these efforts were cumulated by the organization for free education Institución Libre de Enseñanza, the ILE established in 1876, which was treated by the Church as a threat to be disposed of. The ILE survived this resistance, becoming a major channel for the transmission of the European pedagogical principles to Spain in the first three decades of the twentieth century. The organization has gained the support of the country's leading intellectual authorities who were in favor of cultural Europeanization in their pursuit of "regenerationism" – the

renaissance of Spain and the regaining of its lost splendor. Some intellectuals from this circle attended Paul Natorp's lectures at the University of Marburg, among them Ortega y Gasset, who became a promoter of his concept of pedagogy in the country. In 1915, translations of two books by Natorp were published. In the 1930s, Lorenzo Luzuriaga, a professor of pedagogy inspired by the ideas of Pestalozzi and Natorp, gave social pedagogy a strong political character, assigning it with social and political functions. In the mid-1940s, social pedagogy, focused on the problem of maladjustment of children and young people, was introduced into university education. The practice and professionalization of social pedagogy began after the death of dictator General Franco in 1975, when, as a result of the democratic transformation of the state system, the solving of social problems was transferred to the local level. This created favorable conditions for the development of social pedagogy at universities all over the country, to achieve the status of a specialization in the master's field of pedagogy. According to Spanish educational theorists, the similarity between German and Spanish understanding of social pedagogy is due to the similarity of the failures of both countries in the first half of the 20th century. The crises of fundamental values of human coexistence that both societies went through at that time required that social education undertake a civic mission for the cultural and ethical transformation of societies with respect for the rights and duties of all under conditions of freedom, equality and social justice, i.e. values that are fundamental to social pedagogy (Bartyzel, Caride, Ortega 2015).

Spanish researchers of the situation of social pedagogy in their country presented it as a key discipline in the reconstructing educational sciences (*las Ciencias de la Educación*) in response to the challenges and needs of the society and the welfare state. As early as the 1990s, the renewal of social pedagogy became one of the most important events in these sciences at universities and in practice. The introduction of studies in social education (*Educación Social*) to universities contributed to this. Current research on the situation of social pedagogy at universities providing social education studies has shown its growing connection with practice, as well as its weaknesses and challenges faced by social pedagogues. According to researchers, social educators should research social problem-solving programmes in an effort to generalize results and social problems, providing a scientific basis for socio-educational activities. Summarizing the research, their authors recommended education through action and deepening the approach to socio-educational activities based on scientific evidence, probably referring to the so-called evidence based approach promoted in contemporary social work, especially

in the USA. In their opinion, such a strategy is realistic and will exponentially broaden the significance of social pedagogy, social education studies and the credibility of professional social educators (March et al. 2016).

To Latin America

The name refers to lands also called Ibero-American, distinguished geographically as Central, South and North America. They were colonized mainly by Spain and Portugal, to a lesser extent by France. The geographical scope of the area is drawn differently from one source to another. A Brazilian pedagogue, taking into account the geopolitical perspective, enumerates 20 countries, that is: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, the Dominican Republic, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, El Salvador, Uruguay and Venezuela, and 11 dependent territories. These lands are inhabited by descendants of indigenous people and comers from Europe and Africa. Spanish is the dominant official language there, the only exception being Brazil, where the official language is Portuguese (Machado 2015, p. 39). Theorists and educational practitioners interested in social pedagogy from Spain and other European countries often consider its presence in the broad Latin American perspective.

The concept of social pedagogy emerged in the Latin American discourses at the beginning of this century thanks to three trends of inspiration: Spanish, German and international. The first one was developed thanks to the language which made it easier for the community to study the work of authors who began to learn this concept in Spain, including from Ortega y Gasset. The second trend began with studies on the works of German authors translated in Spain, especially Natorp, and direct contacts with contemporary social pedagogues. The third trend initiated contacts with the International Association of Social Educators (AEJI). The exchange of ideas on social education in Europe associated with social pedagogy and the concept of folk education began in this trend (Spanish: *la educación popular*, Eng.: *popular education*) (Úcar 2012). In addition, Spanish educators took initiatives to facilitate the transfer of the concept of social pedagogy to Latin America by launching the “Pedagogía Social: Revista Interuniversitaria”, a biyearly launched in 1986, published in Spanish, Castilian, Portuguese and English. In 2004, several Spanish universities contributed to the establishment of Sociedad Iberoamericana de Pedagogía Social. In both of these projects, cooperation was established with scholars from Latin American universities.

The current situation of social pedagogy in Latin America was supplemented by the Chilean pedagogue Eusebio Nájera Martínez in his study of the trends in its development, based on publications from Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Uruguay, documentation of conference debates and experiences of practitioners. Social pedagogy is rooted there because of: firstly, the awareness of inequalities, injustice and marginalization; secondly, the recognition of education as a need and right of all populations and generations; thirdly, the reality of the diversity of socialization experiences conditioning educational needs in society, which go beyond the traditional possibilities of schools treated as the only valuable place of socialization. Researchers see the roots of social pedagogy in the time of the emergence of independent nation states on the continent. (Nájera 2015, p. 24).

The Colombian pedagogue Alfredo Manuel Ghiso (2015) explains the roots of social pedagogy in Latin America through the delayed reaction to the changes in education related to social and economic changes that began there in the 1950s. The policy of modernizing the industry and agriculture has created socio-cultural tensions between the tradition cultivated in rural life and the modernity associated with the city and industrialization. The tension was to be eased by education, aimed at integrating the Latin American people into the capitalist order, which, however, was not able to fully absorb the popular masses, leaving many people excluded with their newly acquired knowledge, without a great chance of finding their place in that order. The economic crises of the 1960s and 1970s, resulting in military dictatorships, contributed to the intensification of authoritarian educational approaches adapted to the economic development model imposed by the US government. At that time, universities in Brazil and several other countries started to look for ways to counteract authoritarian, oppressive education in dialog-based solutions. The Brazilian pedagogue – a practitioner and education reformer – Paulo Freire, has made an inspiring contribution to this effort by proposing a dialog with the people as a knowledge-building approach that resists the oppression and demobilization generated by authoritarian education. At the end of the seventies, thanks to these efforts, a folk education movement was established, bringing together trade unions, peasant organizations, literacy teachers, hygiene instructors, women's and youth movements, indigenous peoples' organizations, church communities, intellectual groups and cultural workers. This movement, motivated ethically and politically, sought to empower excluded members of the society. The experience of the movement in the 1980s showed that many initiatives lacked a theoretical pedagogical basis. People's education at the end of this decade was blocked by the change of 1989 in Europe, which was

interpreted as a crisis of socialism, and by the consolidation of neoliberal policies that brought technocratic and bureaucratic standards to education. In such circumstances, some initiatives of folk education lost their original meaning, while others, in the name of ideological purity, chose self-isolation. In the 1990s, some of the folk educators started to renovate the field with the aim of referring to the European achievements of social education, social pedagogy and socio-cultural animation.

In 2000, numerous social professions in a number of Latin American countries began to demand education in social pedagogy from universities. Ghiso (2015, p. 82) listed: social workers, psychologists, sociologists, anthropologists, lawyers, librarians, teachers of kindergartens and elementary schools, educators, nurses, doctors, bacteriologists, communication specialists and practitioners as well as folk educators, leaders of local communities, youth animators, members of peasant, indigenous peoples' and women's organizations, educational committees of cooperatives and other social economy undertakings, sports instructors and recreation organizers. Opinion leaders from these professions have recognized the need to apply knowledge and methods of social pedagogy to, inter alia, schools, organizations, citizens' associations, clubs, trade unions, youth rehabilitation institutions, prisons, socio-cultural centers, museums, the streets, homeless shelters, libraries, hospitals and health centers, nursing homes. Universities are responding to this need with semesterly courses or summer social pedagogical workshops in several countries combined with the study of social work, psychology and sociology. University pedagogues, as well as practitioners interested in the development of social pedagogy, insist on scientific disciplining and professionalization of this field. Conferences and numerous publications devoted to social pedagogy in Latin America (Ghiso 2015) have become significant events demonstrating its rooting. The above mentioned initiatives of Spanish pedagogues, i.e. *Pedagogia Social: Revista Interuniversitaria* and the *Sociedad Iberoamericana de Pedagogía Social* serve as forums for academic debate for the development of social pedagogy.

The specific dynamic of the development of social pedagogy in Latin America is connected with the theology of liberation, which was developed in late sixties among the practitioners of Catholicism under the influence of the Paul VI Encyclical *Populorum progressio*, published in 1967, and which was adopted at the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965). In Latin American countries, the ideology of liberation derived from Marxism was widespread at the time, proclaiming the need for a socialist revolution in order to achieve social justice and freedom from economic exploitation by the USA.

The intellectual currents and the political revolutionary actions of that time created an atmosphere in which the clergy was also radicalized. Paulo Freire contributed to the development of the theology of liberation with his theory of emancipatory programs in folk education presented in the book titled *Pedagogia do oprimido* (Pedagogy of the Oppressed). In this atmosphere, the doctrines of the Catholic Church were reinterpreted – from charitable work for the poor to helping the people to become the perpetrators of their own liberation. The implementation of the theology of liberation in folk communities led to their empowerment not only in religious practices, but also in educational and social activities (Szmagalski 1994, pp. 164–165).

At present, we can read the common features in the context of Latin American social pedagogy, theology of liberation and the pedagogy of liberation according to Freire: focusing on poverty as complete exclusion without the possibility of any self-determination, emphasizing the law of dialectics between national and individual self-determination, creating bonds as a way of overcoming exclusion and heteronomy, empowerment as a means and a goal (Hermann 2015). It seems that social pedagogy in this context promises something more than the liberation theology and Freire's pedagogy, namely the authority of academic theory.

To North America

In the USA and Canada, the concept of social pedagogy is a relative novelty. Daniel Schugurensky (2016, p. 227) from Arizona State University, recalls that this concept appeared already in 1902 in William Byron Forbush's book *The Boy Problem. A Study in Social Pedagogy*. The author was a doctor of philosophy and pastor of a religious community of quakers, considered to be the precursors of social work in America, and the author of several theoretical books and a guide on upbringing written from the point of view of his religious beliefs. In fact, the first edition of *The Boy Problem...* Was published in 1901, and 1902 already saw the publication of the fourth edition. The title problem relates to the difficult period of boys' puberty. The book, addressed to educators, contains psychological characteristics of this period, an analysis of spontaneous socialization of boys in peer groups – “gangs”, and controlled in organizations created by adults, including the Church, and also pedagogical advice. The author did not devote much attention to explaining the concept of *social pedagogy*, but used it several times in contexts concerning learning by acting together. Forbush does not seem to have drawn inspiration for understanding social pedagogy from German authors. Neither the text nor

the bibliography indicate this. It seems that the explanation of its significance for the upbringing of boys going through puberty, as understood by Forbush (1902, p. 28), is contained in the sentence: “For this age, new and very important science, social pedagogy, i.e. linking educational interactions with social direction, is of help”. Apparently, this science has not aroused interest in North America for many years, since the collections of the US Congress Library include only 13 books containing the concept of *social pedagogy*, written or edited by English or American education researchers, the oldest from 2008 and two published in 2017. There is also a book published in 1998 by A. Radziewicz-Winnicki “Tradition and Reality in Educational Ethnography of Post-Communist Poland: Essays in Sociology of Education and Social Pedagogy”.

According to Schugurensky, contemporary interest in social pedagogy in North America has been aroused for three reasons. The first one is an unprecedented wealth of books in English devoted to this field. Between 2008 and 2014, several European books were published, mainly by English authors. (Not all of them went to the Congress Library.) The second reason is the avalanche of articles in scientific journals. Shugurensky, referring to his search through the *Google Scholar* for the articles with *social pedagogy* in the title, showed an increase from 791 articles in the years 2001–2005, 2610 in the years 2006–2010 and 4480 in the years from 2011 to July 2015. The studies of social pedagogy in the USA and Canada are supported by, among other initiatives, the above-mentioned “International Journal of Social Pedagogy”. In 2013, the Arizona State University published the first special issue of the academic journal “Education Policy Analysis Archives” devoted to social pedagogy in the United States. The third reason was the launch of the first university studies in the entire Anglo-Saxon world in social pedagogy at master level at the London University and at the Arizona State University, ASU. These programs were launched independently of each other in 2011. The subject of the program in ASU is defined as social and cultural pedagogy. It is oriented towards a holistic understanding of education and democratic values. At the same time, social pedagogy studies at the level of the Bachelor of Arts started at Robert Gordon University in Scotland, recognized as eligible for social work by the Scottish Social Service Council. According to Schugurensky, this is because in the Anglo-Saxon world it is time to understand social pedagogy as a concept that combines social intervention with education. It should be added that the Social Pedagogy Association was established in 2016 at the initiative of the students and graduates of the ASU’s social and cultural pedagogy department.

It is hard not to notice that just as the activity of Spanish educators has aroused interest in social pedagogy in Latin America, the activity of English theoreticians in education and social work in the acquisition of social pedagogy has contributed to awakening interest in it in North America. It should be added that Schugurensky also highlights his inspirations with his Latin American approaches to pedagogy, which he knows well. Born and raised in Argentina, he completed his studies in pedagogy there and worked ten years in Mexico, taking part in educational programs alternative to traditional models of education. He has also participated in the research and education of pedagogues in a number of Latin American countries (Schugurensky). The partner relationship of the social pedagogues educated at ASU and the pedagogues from Latin America is evidenced by the international conference co-organized in February 2018 in Mexico by ASU, the above-mentioned “Social Pedagogy Association” and the “Universidad Autónoma de Puebla on Social Pedagogy and Social Education: Bridging traditions and innovations”.

Before the assimilation of the concept of social pedagogy began in North America quite recently, the practice of combining education with social aid began many years before. Schugurensky (2016, pp. 228–229) highlights the three trends of this tradition: indigenous education, progressive education and social movement learning.

The US has an indigenous population of 5.2 million people living in 562 tribal communities and 1.4 million living in more than 600 communities in Canada. Unlike Western models of education focused on teaching and checking results, indigenous education uses community life, cooperation, learning through direct experience and participation in group activities. Even the youngest children are introduced to the community and encouraged to participate in many community activities. They learn to interact with other children and with nature, through helping adults, direct experience, trials and mistakes, observing nature and human behavior, participating in information exchange, cultivating stories, songs and rituals. In indigenous education, knowledge is passed down from generation to generation through modeling, practice and animation. The educational message focuses on communities, cooperation and responsibility towards communities, a strong commitment to territory, holistic epistemology, responsible use of force, and environmental awareness. Indigenous schools lead the learning process through open questions, student participation, inductive reasoning and group work. This approach to education has, without accident, influenced the assumptions of the above mentioned Master's Programme in Social and Cultural Pedagogy at ASU. The Arizona territory has been inhabited by indifferent peoples for

millennia and now has twenty tribes there, placing it in second place among the US states inhabited by these peoples. The assumptions of the program are being implemented in the course of, among others, courses on the history of American Indian education, critical theory of race, revitalization of indigenous languages, research in schools and indigenous communities. Of the twelve full-time professors in this program, four are American Indians who conduct research, publish, and teach in the field of indigenous education (Schugurensky 2016, pp. 229–230).

The second stream of influence on the development of social pedagogy in North America is progressive education, especially in this orientation which combines education, social work, critical thinking, democracy and community building. John Dewey and Jane Addams played pioneering roles in progressive education in the USA. According to Dewey, the centre of the pedagogical process should be occupied by the student, and the role of the teacher should be to create educational experiences. As a supporter of reforms for the development of an egalitarian and democratic society, he saw the democratization of educational institutions as a leaven for the democratization of communities and societies. Schugurensky presents Jane Addams, known in the world for her pioneering achievements in sociology, feminism, the women's movement for world peace, and social work, as a precursor of social pedagogy, with one of her greatest achievements, the creation of the Hull House settlement in Chicago in 1889. It was one of the first settlements in the USA, but a model for their avalanche development in the country. The multidirectional social-educational work of settlements located in poor neighbourhoods of big cities gives an incentive to Schugurensky, as well as European researchers he refers to, such as Juha Hämäläinen and Jacob Kornbeck, to attribute to Addams the role of a pioneer in America in this field. Although she is credited with being the founding mother of social work, Kornbeck points out that the theory and working methods of settlements are closer to social pedagogy than to the method of working with an individual case, which is fundamental for American social work (Schugurensky 2016, pp. 230–233).

Getting acquainted with the third stream of socio-pedagogic practice, i.e. learning in social movements, requires capturing their essence. They are a form of political or cultural association of individuals, groups or organizations for a common purpose; they develop a common identity and engage people in activities aimed at social change. Social movements are characterized by four features: informal communication networks, shared beliefs, joint actions focusing on conflict and protest. Learning through them takes place in three areas. Internally, the movement participants learn

in the process of achieving its goals. Externally, the movement passes on new knowledge to non-participants. The third range of learning is the result of interactions between the actors of different social movements. Examples of movement educators are the Highlander Folk School (Glen 2010) founded in the early 1930s in the South of the USA and the New Scotland People's School, which was transformed a little earlier into the Antigonish Movement (Macpherson 2013), in the Canadian province of Nova Scotia. They used the educational potential of anti-discrimination movements to improve living the conditions in economically disadvantaged communities (Schugurensky 2016, pp. 233–237).

The Arizona State University – a centre initiating social pedagogical solutions in America – refers to these three fields of study, drawing on inspiration from seven other traditions: 1) community development, 2) Latin American concept of folk education, 3) social economics, 4) participatory research in action, 5) participatory democracy and 6) critical theory according to the Frankfurt School. These traditions, well known to European social educators, do not need to be explained. The seventh, more recent tradition, initiated in the mid-1990s, is public pedagogy (Ibid. 238). Here it also is a relatively new concept, probably known to the readers of "Social Pedagogy" thanks to Bohdan Skrzypczak (2016, see also Skrzypczak 2012).

At this point, however, we should convey the meaning of public pedagogy from the American perspective. Schugurensky (2016, p. 239–240) presents it as "...a theoretical construct used in research focused on educational processes and places outside formal education, especially in the spheres of folk cultural and social activism, with particular emphasis on the cultural dynamics of social reproduction and social contestation". The research horizon of public pedagogy should include the educational and reproductive role of films, TV programmes, advertisements, newspapers and magazines, theatre and music, such places as theme parks and museums.

Such social pedagogy anchoring in North America, drawing on the existing traditions, starts to creatively combine social and educational theories and practices in order to improve the well-being of people. By adopting a holistic approach to human beings, an integrated approach that takes into account the interdependence of individual and social dynamics and an interdisciplinary approach, social pedagogy combines a variety of theoretical and professional fields with an overarching desire to address social problems and promote social change through educational and social interventions (Schugurensky 2016, p. 246).

Countries where the concept of social pedagogy does not exist

The robustness of the concept of social pedagogy is attested to by the international debate on it, which has been particularly lively this decade. It also includes educational researchers from countries where the concept of social pedagogy does not exist, as they themselves say. The sources mentioned here include statements by authors from South Africa, Japan and France.

Authors from South Africa: Astrid von Kotze from the University of Kwazulu Natal, Salma Ismail and Linda Cooper from the University of Cape Town explain that in their country all extracurricular education is covered by the term adult education. *Community* education, also known as “radical” or “folk” education inspired by Paul Freire’s pedagogy and oriented towards social, political and economic transformation, is evident. These orientations developed during the mass democratic struggle against apartheid. The authors, referring to Hämäläinen, who assigned two functions to social pedagogy: dealing with the problems of social exclusion in order to increase the opportunities for inclusion and improvement of the lives of people at risk of exclusion, and to contribute to the development of active citizenship through civic education, show that both functions are firmly rooted in the tradition of adult education in their country. *Therefore*, as they wrote, “they use the term adult education to denote social pedagogy”. The education of adults in apartheid was significantly influenced by examples of radical Latin American pedagogy. Freire’s *Pedagogy of the oppressed* has entered into circulation with its ideas of democracy learning by its application and of dialogue between learners instead of teaching by dictating information to learners. (von Kotze et al. 2016, quote p. 285).

Adult educator education in universities developed in the 1980s and early 1990s on the basis of programmes advocating radical social change, using democratic educational methods, offering support to political and environmental activists who have not yet had access to higher education. Some faculties of education became “battlefields”, joining the movement against apartheid. Taking advantage of the relative autonomy of universities, they invited workers and political activists to attend courses, organise meetings and workshops, and provided the means to support these tasks (von Kotze et al. 2016, p. 290).

These radical pedagogical approaches weakened after 1994, when apartheid was banned by law. Paradoxically, the democratic transition has contributed to this. The changes in the political system have moved in the

direction of neoliberal economic policy, which has hit the poorest hardest, resulting in an increase in unemployment. The racial inequalities defined in the past are increasing, placing South Africa among the countries with the highest levels of social inequality. Under these conditions, the authorities have imposed training requirements for adults to be effective on the labour market, instead of civic education; adult education is aimed at enabling the country to compete on the global market. This was followed by erosion and even the abolition of university adult education faculties. It defends itself outside universities by means of civic initiatives carried out by non-governmental organisations, and in universities by means of activating teaching methods and recourse to the classics of radical pedagogy (von Kotze et al. 2016, pp. 291–292).

It seems that it is a political choice for von Kotze, Ismail and Cooper to identify radical pedagogy with adult education, and it in turn with social pedagogy. They believe that international social pedagogy supports radical education among marginalised groups and contributes to building global solidarity among adult educators, who transfer the experiences of their past struggles to their young successors, who create and introduce new forms of radical pedagogy for the future (von Kotze et al. 2016, p. 303).

In the debate on social pedagogy, the author Takeo Matsuda and authors Asuka Kawano and Lan Xiao from Nagoya University, presented Japan with the study entitled *Social education in Japan*, in which they demonstrated that this is a field conceptually similar to social pedagogy. The development of this education began there in the seventies of the nineteenth century. It should be added that in the 1920s, German social pedagogy arrived in Japan, providing a theoretical basis for social education. Gradually, and partly in parallel, four concepts of understanding it as: self-education, as a supplement to school education, as a socialization of education and education of the society, and as an education for the development of local communities were developed. The latter, nowadays, is useful for combining education and social assistance, as well as cultivating self-governance and implementing the “common good” in the community. “The aim of social education is to achieve individual fulfilment either by systematic organisation of formal and non-formal education or by accumulation of non-formal education with simultaneous action for a better society. These activities contribute to the creation of social capital in local communities”. Such an objective is the same as the objective of social assistance. Recently, efforts have been made in Japan to integrate social education and welfare in the form of structurally linked practice in some local communities. The authors mentioned here postulate this direction of change for the whole country (Matsuda et al. 2016, quote: p. 277).

In France, unlike francophone countries such as Belgium and Switzerland, according to Christine Bon (2009, p. 34) "...the concept of social pedagogy as an intellectual discipline of social work and intervention, as well as the technical and praxeological concept of social pedagogy as a profession, does not exist". Researchers interested in social pedagogy show, however, that similar educational concepts have been developed there for a long time. As early as 1895, the orientation called "éducation sociale" began to develop, and from it a social movement was born, which developed an idea of social education in the spirit of human solidarity popular at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, and one later to be forgotten. It echoed in the concept of "éducation spécialisée" introduced in 1909 r., which included the so-called mentally handicapped children for education in regular schools, but in separate so-called classes of education. This innovative solution, although quasi-integrative, was paradoxically transformed into a medical-educational trend at that time, which led to the current result of the highest rate of isolation of children with special needs among OECD countries in peripherally located care institutions. The orientation similar to social pedagogy, on the other hand, is "animation socioculturelle" inspired by social Catholicism, by socially oriented philanthropy of the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, and the experience of scouting teams, including girls as guides, and youth religious groups. In this trend, numerous employee specialties have developed, including those identified as animateurs socio-culturels and éducateurs spécialisés serving various marginalised communities. These specialties are axiologically and praxologically rooted in assumptions close to social pedagogy (Bon 2009; Laot, Marynowicz-Hetka 2007). As a result of this proximity, social and cultural animation is absorbed into social pedagogy in Latin America and the USA, as well as for many years in our country (Żebrowski 1987; Kopczyńska 1993).

Social pedagogy – searching for meaning

In the current international debate on social pedagogy, there are many proposals for understanding it, of which a choice had been made within the limited scope of the article. It seems that attention should be paid, above all, to those authors who, at the end of previous debates, have raised concerns about its identity. Whether it is science, practice or art (see Eichsteller, Holthoff 2012), or maybe all of this at once; is it intercultural and transdisciplinary or, on the contrary, is it necessary to define as many social pedagogies as there are cultural contexts? Should we agree that social pedagogy is implemented in different approaches depending on historical data and geographical contexts?

Should it be assumed that it is a broad, complex, ambiguous, even unclear concept that can serve various applications (Rosendal Jensen, 2013, p. 2; Schugurensky, Silver 2013, p. 1; Úcar 2013, pp. 2–3)?

This debate was attended by authors for whom the relativity of the concept of social pedagogy depending on the context seems obvious. This approach is most apparent in Russia and Latin America. In Russia it is understood as: “the field of professional activity different from that of social work in that it educates people when social work provides them with specific assistance; as a specific field of integrated knowledge covering the basics of pedagogy, psychology, sociology, social and pedagogical technologies, defectology, etc.; as a subject taught in pedagogical institutions” (Romm 2016, p. 96). In Latin American countries too, social pedagogy is understood in a specific way both in its theoretical and practical reception, which is conditioned by its contextual history and specific cultural environments. Eusebio Najera (2015, p. 25) identified three different meanings of social pedagogy in literature: 1) as a reflective, conscious pedagogical direction of social and cultural work, taking into account the contextual nature of the theoretical and practical aspects of this orientation oriented towards the well-being and quality of life of citizens in various social and institutional areas. 2) as a pedagogy looking for ways to promote education in and for public life; and 3) as an education science that questions the logic of exclusion and equips actors with adequate resources to face the challenges of a historical moment.

Authors referred to above: Rosendal Jensen, Schugurensky and Silver, as well as Úcar, who are concerned about the unclear identity of social pedagogy, encourage the generalization of its meaning. Rosendal Jensen (2013, p. 8) stipulates that the creation of a universal paradigm cannot succeed, but recommends closer cooperation between academic researchers and practitioners in order to overcome the impression that social pedagogy is simply a fragmented practice. Local activity of social pedagogues in the conditions of internationalisation, globalisation and Europeanisation faces similar challenges in different countries. Schugurensky and Silver (2013, p. 1), recognising the contextual diversity of social pedagogy in different regions of the world, point out that it is everywhere an interdisciplinary field of research and practice at the crossroads of education, social work and community organisation. Its common thread is to address the educational dimension of social problems or the social dimension of educational problems. The paradoxical approach to the generalization of social pedagogy was demonstrated by Úcar (2013, p. 3). In his opinion, its features such as hybridity, interdisciplinarity, extraordinary multifunctionality, complexity, openness and dynamism, variability, traditionally

perceived as weaknesses, can become its strengths and capabilities, because these alleged disadvantages are also characteristic of people and communities. “The complexity of social pedagogy – wrote Úcar – fits well into the inherent complexity of societies”.

Its approach to social pedagogy in Latin American countries and South Africa, where economic and social disparities are much greater than in European countries, is enhanced by its functions of opposing social marginalisation and counteracting it through education and empowerment. An example of such an approach is the strong political declaration of the importance of social pedagogy of A. von Kotze, S. Ismail and L. Cooper from South Africa in their socially stratified country. Referring to Walter Lorenzo's questions in his 1994 book *Social Work in a Changing Europe*, whether social pedagogy is, in its essence, the embodiment of the dominant interest in social or critical conscience of pedagogy, friction in the body of the official agenda, an emancipatory program focused on the transformation of society, the authors stated that at the time of the fight against apartheid it was the latter and this orientation persists today (von Kotze et al. 2016).

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